

Going Back to Pakistan for Education? The Interplay of Return Mobilities, Education, and Transnational Living

Marta Bivand Erdal^{1,*}, Anum Amjad², Qamar Zaman Bodla² and Asma Rubab²

¹*Peace Research Institute Oslo, Oslo, Norway*

²*Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan*

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the ways in which experiences with return migration are intertwined with considerations about education. How is education a part of returnees' stories about return to Pakistan, and what are the implications that can be drawn to better understand return mobilities and transnational living? While the academic discussion of education in relation to migration has been pre-occupied with integration concerns, bringing together literatures on transnational parenting, return migration, and integration, with the intersecting theme of education, provides valuable synergies. The paper draws on 21 semi-structured interviews with returnees from Norway in Pakistani Punjab and focus groups with returnees from Europe and with non-migrants in returnee-areas in Pakistan. We argue that education is one of a few reoccurring issues that return migrants mention as a motivation for returning, alongside various family considerations. For many returnees, education is as much about the cultural Pakistani, or religious Islamic dimensions, as it is about purely academic objectives. Seven different ways in which education and return migration are intertwined are identified and discussed. The paper shows the ways in which education and mobility choices are closely connected, for a particular sub-group of Pakistani migrants' who over their lifespan lead transnational lives.

© 2015 The Authors. *Population, Space and Place* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Accepted 8 May 2015

*Correspondence to: Marta Bivand Erdal, Peace Research Institute Oslo, PO Box 9229 Grønland, NO-0134 Oslo, Norway. E-mail: marta@prio.no

Keywords: return; transnational; mobilities; education; parenting

INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out to address the following question: How is education a part of return migrants' stories about their return to Pakistan, and what are the implications for our understanding of return mobilities and transnational living? The term *return mobilities* is used in this paper, following King and Christou (2011: 460–461) in their argument that the binary divide between migration and return in the context of sustained transnational social fields should rather be understood as repeated instances of mobility. Our discussion addresses interactions of migrants' ongoing mobilities between country of origin and settlement – with education – understood in a broad sense. It does so from the perspective of returning migrants, who for a longer period of time have decided to stay in Pakistan and explores how their education choices are intertwined with ongoing mobilities across transnational social fields (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004; Mazzucato, 2008).

Much as education can be a motivation for emigration, directly or indirectly, for one self or for one's children, subsequent mobilities, onward to third countries, back to the country of origin, or back again to a former country of settlement, may also be motivated by education (Huang & Yeoh, 2011; Waters, 2012; Raghuram, 2013). Education is understood broadly here, including academic qualifications and the environment within which children and youth are brought up, drawing on research participants own conceptualizations, which are centred on the concepts of *tarbiyat* (upbringing, training, and teaching) and

taleem (education). These conceptualizations are reflective of different forms of cultural capital (Erel, 2010) in transnational social fields, also referred to as 'migrant capital' (Ryan *et al.*, 2015), which encompasses cultural and social capital, and political and legal dimensions of capital, while acknowledging the inherent spatialities of involved capital conversions (Waters & Leung, 2013).

Worrying about whether or not children are balancing the country of origin and settlement aspects of their identities in a satisfactory manner is a concern for many migrant parents (Giguère *et al.*, 2010; Foner & Dreby, 2011; Bolognani, 2014). In the context of Pakistani migration, these are concerns over children becoming too *gora*.¹ Among Pakistani-origin populations in the UK, there are significant gender dimensions to this, where special attention is paid to girls' identities (Shaw, 2000). However, most migrant parents do not decide to move back to their country of origin, or relocate to a third country. Yet, among Pakistani migrants, there exists a minority who given particular circumstances may actively consider, and sometimes act upon, the option of return to the country of origin for an extended period of time or for good (Rytter, 2013).

For those contemplating return, because of the financial resources gained in countries of settlement, paying tuition fees in private education in countries of origin, previously an unachievable dream may be within reach. But for many migrant parents, considerations about upbringing within a context with particular cultural, religious, and linguistic characteristics are the most significant (Shaw, 2000). For some, this may become part of an education otherwise completed in the country of settlement, as a brief experience in the parents' country of origin. For others, relocating and completing formal schooling in the parents' country of origin becomes the alternative. As with initial migration decisions, return migration decisions, even if not permanent, are always complex, and considerations about education become intertwined with other family concerns, such as elderly parents (or in-laws), financial commitments, or the desire to return on the part of the parents (e.g. King & Christou, 2010; Hunter, 2011; Geddie, 2013).

The next section discusses points drawn from literatures on migrant integration and education, transnational parenthood and education, and

return migration and education, providing the conceptual backdrop for the analysis and discussion sections. The third part presents the methods and data, which are followed by a presentation and discussion of the ways in which return mobilities and education were found to be intertwined. The paper goes on to argue that, firstly, within the broader transnational social field spanning Norway and Pakistan, there exists a small-scale phenomenon of intensive transnational living, which challenges assumptions about settlement in Norway as permanent and as universally preferred. Secondly, this has implications for the ways in which (return) mobilities within a sustained transnational field are seen, both from the perspectives of societies of settlement and origin – as 'instances of mobility'. And thirdly, there is a need for a transnational view of both parenting and of choices related to education and upbringing of children, which take on board the reality of transnational living, rather than making judgments from moral points of view, often spatially located either 'here' or 'there'.

EDUCATION, RETURN MOBILITIES AND TRANSNATIONAL LIVING

Education as an Integration Strategy

Education is seen as a key part of integration processes in migrants' settlement countries, with schools as key integration arenas, where migrant parents and their children meet the institutions of societies of settlement. Much has been written on differing educational achievements of migrants' children, including the significance of pupil composition in schools and about the significance of migration history and transnational ties (Rytter, 2011). In his analysis of education and money as two main strategies for family improvement among Pakistani migrant families in Denmark, Rytter (2011) discusses these as long-term strategies invested in by the extended family. Often integration in Denmark was experienced as impossible, even when educational achievements were accomplished, leading to disillusionment with the prospects for real equality in Denmark (*ibid.*). Despite disillusionment, there is no evidence of counter-diasporic mobility (return to Pakistan) among 'second generation' Pakistanis in Denmark. This suggests that renewed interest

in the possibility of moving to the parents' country of origin in the face of discrimination, in particular since 9/11 (Bolognani, 2007), are in fact rarely acted upon (Bolognani, 2014).

In Norway, educational choices and performance of children of migrants of Pakistani and Indian origin should be understood in terms of gratefulness towards parents and in relation to social status (Leirvik, 2010, 2012). Children of migrants underline how they appreciate parents' sacrifices through migration and settlement in a foreign country, which has opened up educational opportunities that the parents never had (Leirvik, 2010). Status and different forms of capital are important factors, both affecting educational choices and performance, where forms of 'subcultural capital' related to caste, to rural or urban origins, and to educational and economic dimensions are far more significant than class *per se* in explaining education choices (Leirvik, 2012).

Two existing studies of Norwegian-Pakistani schooling their children in Pakistan (Ahmad *et al.*, 2006; Liden *et al.*, 2014) have found that such return mobility is motivated by a mixture of reasons. Firstly, to family responsibilities, typically care for elderly parents or in-laws. Secondly, to children's upbringing, either as a way of removing them from a perceived threatening environment, in cultural or religious ways, or as a way of ensuring transfer of cultural and religious traditions and values, or in relation to specific academic preferences, such as an English language education (sometimes in elite, or perceived elite schools in Pakistan). The findings of these studies suggest that the phenomenon of migrant's educating their children in Pakistan seems to be decreasing as compared with the situation in the mid-1990s. It is argued that this is reflective of the maturing of the Pakistani communities in Norway and can be associated with the changing perceptions of life in Norway (e.g. it may have become easier to practise Islam, as more mosques have come into existence) and a possible weakening of ties with Pakistan.

This paper draws on findings from these earlier analyses in its focus on the phenomenon of education, but links the analysis to return mobilities in the context of a long-standing transnational social field, where instances of time-specific intensive transnational living continue, as exceptions to the norm of less intensive

transnational ties in most migrant families. Thus, the paper seeks to address the neglected focus on time-specific intensive transnational living as a dimension of understanding the interplay of education and return mobilities within the transnational social field spanning Norway and Pakistan, rather than foregrounding integration concerns in settlement societies.

Transnational Parenthood and Education

The literature on transnational parenthood has emerged as an important strand within the study of migrant transnationalism, focusing specifically on parenting across transnational social fields, as opposed to the broader focus of studies of transnational families, where there is not necessarily a spatial split-up of parents and children. In a recent review of this literature, Carling *et al.* (2012) set out seven areas as keys to understanding transnational parenthood: gender, care arrangements, legislation, class, communication, moralities, and age of children. Within this literature attention is paid to education in relation to remittance-sending to pay for tuition fees, books or uniforms, and how fluctuations in remittance-sending may impact both school attendance and choice of schools (more or less expensive). The broader notions of care arrangements relate specifically to issues of upbringing that are not covered through the formal schooling system, but cared for by extended families or trusted others.

The double engagements of migrant families in countries of origin and settlement often result in split families (Grillo & Mazzucato, 2008), where considerations about children and about upbringing and education as a whole become significant for decisions about mobility. This reflects the significance of a focus on the interplay of education choices and mobilities and of acknowledging that formal education is one component within the larger frame of upbringing of children. This larger frame of upbringing is about creating the best environment for children to grow up within and making migration decisions based on this, even when children themselves do not move (Carling *et al.*, 2012).

Migration decisions are often explained in economic terms, but increasingly more social and cultural components are added. Ryan and Sales (2013) do so through a focus on the age of children as key to understanding family migration

dynamics. In the context of Polish migration to the UK, they found that parents clearly differentiated decisions based on the age of children, where very young children were seen to be easily moved, whereas children at crucial educational crossroads were not moved. The age of children also lead to decisions about keeping families split between countries of origin and settlement, or united in one of the two. Besides age of children, type and prestige of education have also been found to be significant with regard to transnational parenting. For instance, Waters (2006) found that overseas education was seen as an important form of cultural capital, which merited splitting families up for a period of time.

Drawing on insights from the study of transnational parenthood, we see the children's and youth's upbringing environment as a larger frame, within which education choices are being made and that these may or may not interact with mobilities of parents and/or children. The transnational parenthood literature raises important questions about the moralities of transnational parenting, within transnational family networks, between parents, and about the nature of parenting itself. Such moralities are of relevance to understanding the interplay of Pakistani migrants' return mobilities and education choices, with regard to acknowledging different kinds of asymmetries within transnational families and between parents (Carling, 2008), but also with regard to judgments made from the position of the country of settlement on the migrant parents' way of parenting, in particular when this involves return mobilities of children.

Return Migration and Education

The literature on return migration links questions about education to 'brain drain' and 'brain gain', often framed in terms of human capital (Dustmann *et al.*, 2011). These debates are often focused on the macroeconomic (as well as social) consequences of migration and the potential of return migration in this context. Human capital here is understood quite technically (Acemoglu & Autor, 2012) and in the context of this study of individual return migration experiences, can valuably be complemented by perspectives on 'migrating cultural capital' (Erel, 2010) or 'migrant capital' (Ryan *et al.*, 2015), as these are articulated in particular social fields (Sagmo 2014). Cultural capital can be migration-

specific and thus relevant to a particular transnational social field, including the geographic localities within that transnational social field. In order to understand the ways in which migrants and returnees within a transnational social field consider questions about education, understood in a broad sense, these should be seen in terms of investing in, transferring, or protecting cultural capital – within their particular transnational social field and in relation to time-specific instances of mobility and transnational living located in and across particular societal contexts.

Within the literature on return migration, education of children has not been an important area of study, but there is research on youth transitions in the contexts of parents who have returned to the country of origin and adolescents who remain in countries of settlement for education (Tse & Waters, 2013). Children's own experiences of return mobilities are also foregrounded, focusing on transitions between different school systems and cultural contexts (Wen, 2010), exploring the narratives of childhood return (Ní Laoire, 2011), or the everyday mundane experiences of children's return migration (Hatfield, 2010). In the context of post-conflict return, Lindley (2008) discusses how Somali refugees from Europe return to Somaliland, most often for extended periods of time, and their children attend school there for time-specific periods, before moving back to Europe. Somali return mobilities and education are further intertwined through remittances being sent for educational purposes and through diaspora contributions towards education projects.

'[C]hildren's experiences of migration, mobility and transnational living' (King & Christou, 2011: 459) are set within the broader context of return mobilities as instances of ongoing mobility. King *et al.* (2011) propose a typology of childhood return, identifying (i) return visits/holidays to the country of origin; (ii) being cared for by grandparents or others in the country of origin for extended periods of time; and (iii) family return to the country origin. This raises the question of what kinds of mobilities are of relevance to education, as well as how education is understood bearing in mind the idea of migrating cultural capital.

This paper aims to contribute to literatures engaging with the migration-education nexus from different vantage points (Madge *et al.*, 2014), with an emphasis on education as a lens on concerns about children and their upbringing more

generally, whether in relation to integration or to transnational parenthood. The paper addresses interactions between education, mobility, and transnational living, with a particular focus on individuals and families that are intensively transnational.

EMPIRICAL CONTEXT AND DATA

The empirical context of this study spans the transnational social field (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004) between Norway (larger Oslo) and Pakistan (predominantly within the districts of Jhelum and Gujrat, Punjab). The Norwegian-Pakistani community has developed along the same lines as that in Denmark (Rytter, 2013) and parallel to the earlier migration history of Pakistanis in the UK (Werbner, 1990; Shaw, 2000; Charsley, 2007). The Norwegian-Pakistani population is among the largest groups of non-European descent in Norway and counts around 38,000 people, mainly settled in the larger Oslo area. Their origins are predominantly, although not exclusively, in Pakistani Punjab.

While the vast majority of Norwegian-Pakistanis are Norwegian citizens (78%), and are permanently settled in Norway, transnational ties are sustained. As in other migration contexts remittances, return visits, and transnational marriages are usual; however, in this context, return migration is not particularly common and is currently not seen as a viable option by most. During the 1990s, more Norwegian-Pakistanis tried to return, and there are many stories in these communities of families who came back to Norway after a few years and had to rebuild their lives in Oslo (reference removed for peer-review). There are however many instances of return mobilities, and there are at any given time many Norwegian-Pakistanis around in the Kharian area, Punjab, including a number of families there and elsewhere in Pakistan, who are residing there on a long-term basis. The experiences of this particular and exceptional subgroup of people in this transnational social field are the concern of this paper.

We draw on 21 semi-structured interviews with 'return migrants' from Norway, conducted in Pakistan in 2012 and 2013. 'Return migration' was here taken to mean living in Pakistan on a permanent basis for at least a year, although in many cases research participants had been living

in Pakistan for several years but with both actual and potential mobility as a constant backdrop. The interview material was combined with data from six focus group discussions, one with five returnees from Norway, and five with a total of 28 persons without an international migration history, who all had personal experience with return migrants in their local communities. All interviews and focus groups followed common guides developed within the project.² The interview and focus group guides emphasised motivations, planning and experiences of return to Pakistan, and perceptions of returnees in Pakistan. The interviews also covered prior mobility, experiences of life in Norway, transnational family ties, and plans for future mobility. Education was one among several themes that were cross-cutting, providing a rich set of data where education issues were raised in relation to different themes.

The research was carried out by a team consisting of four researchers, three females and one male. All interviews were carried out by researchers from Pakistan without an international migration history of their own. This is significant in terms of their positionality vis-à-vis international return migrants as research participants (Carling *et al.*, 2014), as the analysis draws on data that were not produced in interaction with a researcher directly or indirectly assumed to be associated with the Norwegian state. Thus, reflections on encounters both with the Norwegian society and institutions are not responses to particular discourses with regard to Norwegian-Pakistanis in Norway.

Research participants included roughly half and half women and men and were between the ages of 19 and 68 years. They had migrated from the early 1970s onward, up to 2010, and most of them left as young people. Reasons for migration were for work or family, either reunification with parents or for marriage. The sample also included two research participants who came to Norway for studies. Both of them returned to Pakistan after completing degrees and had no intentions for remigration, nor did they have Norwegian citizenship. Attempts at establishing the return migrants' length of stay in Norway prior to return, and time in Pakistan post-return, were methodologically difficult because of intensive transnational connections between the countries (Tables 1 and 2). Research participants' transnational living

Table 1. Interviewees dual ties (Pakistan/Norway).

	Pakistan	Norway
Born in	17	4
Income from ^a	4	17
Spouse in	9	9
Children in ^b	11	10
Parents in ^c	11	6
Citizenship ^d	5	16

^aIncome from here denotes, main income source.

^bIncludes families with children in both Pakistan and Norway.

^cIncludes families where one parent is in Pakistan and one in Norway.

^dNorwegian citizenship holders include some also holding Pakistani citizenship, and others holding NICOP (National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis).

was differing in intensity and also clearly had changed over time, for some intensifying with longer stays in Pakistan (6–8 years), for others becoming less intensive (more transnational commuting with 2–3 months in Pakistan and 6–8 months in Norway). These forms of transnational living are further discussed in the analysis section. Table 1 in the following summarises some key characteristics of interviewees’ transnational living.

Research participants education levels varied, from below matric (incomplete primary education) (2), matric (primary education) (2), intermediate (secondary education) (7), BA (7), and Master’s level (2). The sample included several persons with current and past own experiences of going to school in Pakistan. Six research participants had previously had children in school in Pakistan, while nine research participants currently had children attending school in Pakistan.

Among research participants, 16 reported that their source of income was in Norway, either through remittances from a spouse, children, or parents in Norway, or through pension transfers from Norway. Based on the geographical location of the source of income, citizenship status, and the picture drawn in interviews, 16 of the research participants may be seen to be engaging in a form of transnational living at the time of the interview, with multiple instances of mobilities between Norway and Pakistan, extending beyond stays, which can be described as ‘visits’.

GOING BACK FOR EDUCATION?

Stories of return mobilities to Pakistan interacted with education choices in a range of different ways, to some extent depending on the spatial

Table 2. Mobility trajectories of intensive transnational living.

<i>Aisha, female, Norwegian citizen, intermediate education, father and siblings in Norway</i>			
Born Norway	Age 4 years Pakistan	Age 15 years Norway	Age 21 years Pakistan
	Shorter stays Norway		Age 23 years Planned move to Norway
<i>Tayyab, male, Norwegian citizen, BA level education, wife and children in Norway, parents in Norway</i>			
Born Pakistan	Age 6 years Norway	Age 17 years Norway	Age 34 years Pakistan
	Age 8 years Pakistan		Shorter stays Norway
<i>Raheela, female, Norwegian citizen, below matric level education, husband, children, parents in Norway</i>			
Born Pakistan	Age 8 years Norway	Age 20 years Norway	Age 28 years Pakistan
	Shorter stays Pakistan and Norway	Age 34 years Norway	Age 42 years Pakistan
			Age 44 years Planned move to Norway

location and temporal location of research participants, in the transnational social field, and in their life cycle. Seven themes stood out as significant with regard to such interactions and will be discussed in turn in the following.

Firstly, the notion of coming back for the sake of upbringing of children versus a more narrow approach to (formal) education was clear among those who had chosen to return to Pakistan with their children. Secondly, among both returnees and locals in Pakistan, a fear of the corrupting effect of Western societies on children was clearly articulated and seen as a driver of return migration. Thirdly, among returnees who lived in Pakistan with school-going children, many lived in well-to-do areas and sent their children to private English language schools, thus complicating the picture of what kind of Pakistan they returned to. Fourthly, returnees who lived in Pakistan with school-going children stressed the open-ended nature of their return, often with remigration to Norway as a planned aim, thus underlining how these mobility and education choices were part of an enduring form of transnational living. Fifthly, among some returnees, and certainly among Norwegian-Pakistanis in Norway, there was a retrospective narrative of having tried to go back to Pakistan to provide children with Pakistani culture but ultimately having returned to Norway. Sixthly, a strong narrative against returning for the education of children was found among some returnees (without school-going children) and some locals in Pakistan, as well as many Norwegian-Pakistanis living in Norway. Lastly, among a few returnees (and among some Norwegian-Pakistanis in Norway), there is a sense of wanting to improve the education system in Pakistan, as part of a commitment to development, where return is motivated in a philanthropic way.

(1) 'Tarbiyat you get from your family'

Coming back 'for education' was a clear narrative in returnee's stories. Together with responsibilities for elderly parents and parents-in-law, children's education was the most articulated reason for return. Returnees have a broad notion of education, as Maryam told us: *They have returned back for their children, for the education of their children.* Another research participant explained how this is connected with the concept of *tarbiyat*, which is

about training, teaching and upbringing, and notions of socialisation. This is far more than the narrower concept of *taleem*, which is about education more as formal schooling. Faiza explains further:

Basically I had a sense of obligation [ikhlaqi farz], umm, for my children. I wanted them to get introduced with Pakistani culture too. Moreover, all my relatives were here, so I decided to come back to Pakistan. Umm, their education, cultural environment and upbringing. So in every aspect I wanted my children to get oriented with what is our country? How is our culture? Many people keep their children abroad and keep telling them about their homeland just with words. But I wanted my children to see all this with their own eyes and internalize our own traditions in a better way by living here.

Faiza's perspective was echoed in most interviews with those that had returned to Pakistan with school-going children, present and past. It was also a narrative that resonated with the perspectives of many locals, stressing the value of Pakistani culture in a patriotic way, combined with a focus on the value of an Islamic majority context for the upbringing of children. The narrative is interesting in that the relative importance of formal education versus that of *tarbiyat* mostly gives more weight to the latter, although returnees do what they can to also secure the best possible formal education for their children.

(2) 'The attitude of the children'

A more reactive and negative take on the idea of return to Pakistan in relation to education was also evident. As opposed to the more positive framing of coming back for *tarbiyat*, this narrative about return is based on fear of the unknown and unfamiliar, and particularly so in relation to one's children, as Masooda and Monazza elaborate on:

Main reason [for return] is that they are forced due to their children, the attitude of children. Those children who are brought up in that environment [abroad]; there is great effect of that environment on the thinking of the children.

Parents perceive that the children would become deviants, their relationships would become weak, so they are forced to come back.

Everyone has their own reasons [to return], I know a person; he just has left London because he got a young daughter and he does not want his young daughter brought up in England and that atmosphere, he want to give her religious education, Islamic education, and try to teach her in Islamic ways, that's why he moved back.

The narrative of taking children back to the country of origin in the face of challenges with upbringing and discipline also exists in countries of settlement, although rarely acted upon. There are also signs of changes among Norwegian-Pakistanis in terms of dominating narratives about return, for instance as an option in the face of difficulties in Norway. While return was previously perceived as a more likely option, in particular during the 1990s, this is now less the case. As the migrant population as a whole has a longer average length of stay in Norway, and greater proportions of the population are born in Norway, the sense of alienation in Norway decreases.

(3) 'We find everything up to the international standards'

Among the nine research participants with children currently attending school in Pakistan, only two did not live in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore or in Kharian cant.³ An example of an area popular among overseas Pakistanis is Behria town in Islamabad, a fairly recent property development, targeting well-off Pakistanis and overseas Pakistanis. The area has extra security provisions and independent electricity supplies, meaning that inhabitants escape the otherwise common 'loud shedding' by which the electricity is cut off in order to save power because of severe power shortages in Pakistan. Ghazala returned in 2010, lives with her husband, daughter-in-law and grandchildren, while her son is living and working in Norway:

We are back in Pakistan now and we came back and residing here in Behria town. Here we find everything up to the international standards whether they are schools, or basic amenities of life, everything is matching with international standards. As Behria town is posh

area in Islamabad. Here maintenance personnel is very devoted and responsible. Here we don't face load shedding or electricity failure, while whole the country is facing this dilemma.

Migrants here are returning to urban enclaves, rather than to their places of birth, often in villages in Pakistani Punjab, producing very particular geographies of return mobilities. The fact that returnees choose to settle in these locations is connected with the availability of formal education of a certain standard, complementing the narrative of *tarbiyat* as a motivation for return, but it is also about the provision of a standard of living that they have grown accustomed to abroad.

(4) 'If my children want to go to Norway, they have an open choice'

A significant cross-cutting theme with regard to education choices and return mobilities is that of the 'open choice'. Returnees narrated return in terms of education, or *tarbiyat*, but simultaneously, these returnees hold Norwegian citizenship and sustain transnational lifestyles. Their income sources are by and large located in Norway, and there is a real option of multiple instances of mobility. A question with regard to education of children then is to what extent transnational living constitutes a sustainable choice, if the aim is a good education, as a basis for a professional career, in Norway or in Pakistan. However, such a framing follows a narrow understanding of education, as human capital, as opposed to notions of *tarbiyat* and cultural capital. As the three case studies of Aisha, Tayyab, and Raheela presented in Table 2 illustrate, these kinds of transnationally mobile individuals (and families) challenge sedentary assumptions about one location over time necessarily becoming transnational more important than other locations within a transnational social field.

Among Norwegian-Pakistanis, there are different forms of transnational ties, usually of the kind where families may own or co-own a house or a flat, remittances are sent, and visits to Pakistan occur (reference removed for peer-review). But there are also those who sustain far more intensive forms of transnational living, with periods of time spent in Pakistan, for some with sections of their education there, and for others with their entire primary education there. These education experiences, which returnees in

Pakistan told us about, are part of complex family migration histories. Such intensive transnational living results in a transnational perspective on choices, both here and there, without a final settlement in one location exclusively.

(5) 'We wanted to provide them with Pakistani culture'

In the past (particularly in the 1990s), a number of Norwegian-Pakistani families tried to return on a permanent basis to Pakistan. For some, the outcomes were not as planned initially, as Mansur told us, in retrospect:

The reason for return back to Pakistan was the education of my children. I was married and when we became parents we thought we should return back to Pakistan for the education of our children. We wanted to provide them with Pakistani culture. [...] Main reason [for return] was education of our children and second was obligation to my parents. It was only our thinking in the beginning that the children should be educated in Pakistan. We have faced the problem of the education of our children. [...] My children and my family once again moved to Norway [after 6 years in Pakistan]. My children got their higher education in Norway. We live in Oslo. Now my children are married in Norway. [...] We went to Norway for work. We returned back to Pakistan for the education of our children. We did not provide them an education in Pakistan. We went back again to Norway. I think we did not have a financial loss, but we wasted a lot of time. Time was precious, and it was a bad experience.

His example illustrates the changes that occur over time – and space – in the lives of individuals and families, who are engaged in the transnational social field that spans Norway and Pakistan, including how education choices are a part of this and how perspectives change over time.

The changing perspectives over time were also significant with regard to gendered dimensions of interactions of return mobilities and education. Raheela (Table 2) told us about how she had not attended school in Pakistan; as her father (in the early 1980s) had not seen it as necessary for her and her sister to attend school. Meanwhile, her brothers had been going to school. Gendered

notions of education and upbringing are closely connected with different views of cultural capital within the transnational social field – and change over time and across space. Among the returnees with school-going children currently in Pakistan, there was little evidence of gender differentiation with regard to schooling, including ambitions for higher education. However, with regard to the returnees themselves, there was a clear gendered bias in that women came back with children to look after parents or in-laws, while men remained in Norway providing for their returned families through remittances. Among the older retired returnees, more men were spending substantial time in Pakistan, while their wives remained for longer periods in Norway, usually with reference to staying with their grandchildren (reference removed for peer-review).

(6) 'Why would you go back to a third world country for education?'

Most Norwegian-Pakistanis question the idea of returning to Pakistan for education. The quality of schools and educational facilities in Pakistan, as compared with Norway, does not suggest return to Pakistan as the most obvious strategy for pursuing education. This is reflected in Shakil's summary of his family's migration history and the outcomes in terms of the children's education and work:

We went to Norway, and then we got a job in the factory. We did our job with great responsibility. Then with the experience from this job we have started our own businesses. Then our children came to Norway. They have got their education in Norway. They are working in Norway as Norwegian officials. [...] Many Pakistani children are doctors in Norway. Many are engineers, pilots, they are doing every kind of job.

Among returnees, in particular the older ones, explicitly in Pakistan for a limited period of time, there was a clear preference for a professional career in Norway. Yet some Norwegian-Pakistanis still choose to return for extended stays (or for good) to Pakistan. These narratives are supported by the more patriotic idea of return to Pakistan, found among many in Pakistan, centering on nostalgia for the homeland, roots, and familial belonging.

(7) 'You should send your children to school and increase the literacy rate'

Finally, a different education related motivation for return mobilities is that of engagement in development initiatives with a focus on education. Many Norwegian-Pakistanis send remittances for education purposes on an individual basis. However, there are also more organised initiatives supporting schools, scholarship programmes, vocational training, and other education projects. Khalid explains how he is engaged in encouraging people to send their children to school and how he draws inspiration from his own experiences in Norway:

The education system in this country is defective and children are not sent to school to get education. So it was my effort that I'll give information to the people of my village, my city that you should send your children to school and increase the literacy rate. [...] I think that the experience of Norway proved very helpful for me [...] I want to implement that kind of life style or pattern that I observed in the sector of education and health, which should be started in Pakistan. So that people would be free from this tension, about how they get education for their children...

Education as part of diaspora engagement for development in countries of origin is also echoed in other cases, as in the case of Somalis returning (for extended periods of time) to Somaliland (Lindley, 2008). This is different from returning for the education of one's own children but is an important part of how education plays a role as a driver for transnational engagements and for particular activities in relation to return mobilities, where philanthropic motivations are involved (Rytter, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Investing in education in the country of origin connects with the idea of building human capital, but in the context of this study, it does so by drawing on migration-specific cultural capital (Erel, 2010; Ryan *et al.*, 2015), where migrants can make use of knowledge and experiences from countries of settlement. This is the case both when return mobilities are motivated by the education of one's own children and when the motivation is a broader engagement in education in

a philanthropic way. While knowledge transfers from migrants back to countries of origin have been discussed in terms of 'social remittances' (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011), there are challenges with the unidirectional assumptions this can imply. In the context of return mobilities from Norway to Pakistan and understanding these narratives of return and education within their migration-specific cultural capital context, it is problematic to locate the direction of value-flows in a set way. Rather, the intensive transnational living that constitutes this particular form of migration-specific cultural capital, with choices associated with education and upbringing of children, is located within a transnational social field characterised by multiple mobilities and back-and-forth flows of both people and of perspectives, for instance on education and upbringing.

Returning to the typology of childhood return presented by King *et al.* (2011), which identified (i) return visits, (ii) stays with grandparents, and (iii) family return migration, an additional category emerges from this paper: (iv) extended and multiple stays in the country of origin, involving transnationally split families. These kinds of childhood return mobilities occur where transnational living is the norm, either as an ongoing lifestyle, or for specific periods of time. Yet they are distinctively different from the situation of transnational parenting with remaining children with grandparents (or others), or split families where only one parent is transnationally mobile. In these cases, the whole family is transnationally mobile, and so the split-family situation is a matter of choice and not related to immigration control regimes in the Global North. This kind of childhood return mobility is also different from visits and short holidays, in that these extended stays can last for several or many years, involve attending school in the country of origin, and are often framed in terms of education and upbringing environment for children and youth. Simultaneously, they are usually paired with long 'return' visits to the country of settlement, during school holidays, in order to sustain family, language, and other transnational commitments.

When considering intensive transnational living, it becomes clear that where you are based and where you see things from makes a difference. Most migrants are not 'that' transnational, although they engage in transnational practices. However, some individuals within particular family networks

really live transnationally here – and there – and their choices, whether about mobilities or about education and upbringing of their children, are affected by their multiple perspectives. For education purposes in formal schooling, this can become a challenge. Education systems are very much located in particular places. However, spending a few years of school age – or even the whole primary education – in another country is not unique to migrant families. With a transnational view, this need not represent a problem, although it does so from a traditional integration perspective.

Challenges of integration, and the role of education in overcoming such, should not be underplayed. But cultural capital-based choices made by migrant parents, where *cultural capital* trumps narrowly defined *human capital* concerns of formal education, should be acknowledged. This echoes the distinction made by research participants between *tarbyiat* (upbringing, training, and teaching) and *taleem* (education), where the value of *tarbyiat* is calculated from perspectives embedded in the transnational social field. From the perspective of migrant integration in settlement countries, acknowledging that transnationalism and integration are not a zero-sum game is significant. While the two may mutually affect one another, causal relationships between them have not been empirically established (Snel et al., 2006; Erdal & Oeppen, 2013).

Finally, a transnational view of parenting – involving education and upbringing choices – takes on board the reality of transnational living, where perspectives are located in the country of origin, and/or settlement, at the family level, and where the location of the ‘point of gravity’ will change over time, perhaps with multiple instances of mobility. Rather than judging particular ways of parenting from moral points of view in the country of settlement – or indeed the country of origin – an increased understanding of the reflections and choices that migrants’ as parents and their children make is necessary. Multiple instances of mobility for adults do not in the same way constitute a systemic challenge, for instance in Norway, as the absence of children of school age does. Yet the question is to what extent are states mandated to control parents’ choices? In cases of north–north mobilities where children are involved, there are fewer alarmist calls, yet when the same questions apply to north–south mobilities, it is more easily framed as a problem, which is a

paradox and raises questions about equal treatment. There is, however, a question of children’s rights associated with schooling and extended stays in parents’ countries of origin. Often decisions about migration are made at the family level, and the extent to which children are involved is unclear. Yet this does not seem a sufficient argument for challenging parenting modes that do not comply with sedentary norms *per se*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Mikkel Rytter, Erlend Paasche and Marta Bolognani for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper, and to the two anonymous reviewers for constructive feedback which helped develop the paper.

NOTES

- (1) White, here: ‘too European’.
- (2) Possibilities and Realities of Return Migration, www.prio.org/premig.
- (3) Kharian cantonement, Pakistan army area, where non-army residents also live. This is a ‘gated community’ with own security, electricity provision, and private schools.

REFERENCES

- Acemoglu D, Autor D. 2012. What Does Human Capital Do? A Review of Goldin and Katz’s the Race Between Education and Technology. *Journal of Economic Literature* **50**: 426–463.
- Ahmad S, Døving CA, Storeng M, Aarsæther F, Østberg S. 2006. skolegang i Pakistan. Barn med innvandrerbakgrunn som går på skole i foreldrenes opprinnelsesland. In *HiO Rapport 23/2006*. Høyskolen i Oslo: Oslo.
- Bolognani M. 2007. The myth of return: dismissal, survival or revival? a Bradford example of transnationalism as a political instrument. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* **33**: 59–76.
- Bolognani M. 2014. Visits to the country of origin: how second-generation British Pakistanis shape transnational identity and maintain power asymmetries. *Global Networks* **14**: 103–120.
- Carling J. 2008. The human dynamics of migrant transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* **31**: 1452–1477.
- Carling J, Menjivar C, Schmalzbauer L. 2012. Central themes in the study of transnational parenthood. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* **38**: 191–217.

- Carling J, Erdal MB, Ezzati R. 2014. Beyond the insider-outsider divide in migration research. *Migration Studies* 2: 36–54.
- Charsley K. 2007. Risk, trust, gender and transnational cousin marriage among British Pakistanis. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30: 1117–1131.
- Dustmann C, Fadlon I, Weiss Y. 2011. Return migration, human capital accumulation and the brain drain. *Journal of Development Economics* 95: 58–67.
- Erdal MB, Oeppen C. 2013. Migrant balancing acts: ways of understanding the interactions between integration and transnationalism. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39: 867–884.
- Erel U. 2010. Migrating cultural capital: Bourdieu in migration studies. *Sociology* 44: 642–660.
- Foner N, Dreby J. 2011. Relations between the generations in immigrant families. *Annual Review of Sociology* 37: 545–564.
- Geddie K. 2013. The transnational ties that bind: relationship considerations for graduating international science and engineering research students. *Population, Space and Place* 19: 196–208. DOI: 10.1002/psp.1751
- Giguère B, Lalonde R, Lou E. 2010. Living at the crossroads of cultural worlds: the experience of normative conflicts by second generation immigrant youth. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 4: 14–29.
- Grillo R, Mazzucato V. 2008. Africa <> Europe: a double engagement. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34: 175–198.
- Hatfield ME. 2010. Children moving 'Home'? Everyday experiences of return migration in highly skilled households. *Childhood—a Global Journal of Child Research* 17: 243–257.
- Huang S, Yeoh BS. 2011. Navigating the terrains of transnational education: children of Chinese 'study mothers' in Singapore. *Geoforum* 42: 394–403.
- Hunter A. 2011. Theory and practice of return migration at retirement: the case of migrant worker hostel residents in France. *Population, Space and Place* 17: 179–192.
- King R, Christou A. 2010. Cultural geographies of counter-diasporic migration: perspectives from the study of second-generation 'returnees' to Greece. *Population, Space and Place* 16: 103–119.
- King R, Christou A. 2011. Of counter-diaspora and reverse transnationalism: Return mobilities to and from the ancestral homeland. *Mobilities* 6: 451–466.
- King R, Christou A, Teerling J. 2011. 'We took a bath with the chickens': memories of childhood visits to the homeland by second-generation Greek and Greek Cypriot 'Returnees'. *Global Networks* 11: 1–23.
- Leirvik MS. 2010. «For mors skyld». Utdanning, takknemlighet og status blant unge med pakistansk og indisk bakgrunn. *Tidsskrift for Ungdomsforskning* 10: 23–47.
- Leirvik MS. 2012. «Å ta kunsthistorie eller statsvitenskap er en luksus ikke alle kan unne seg» Kan utdanningsatferd forstås ut fra ulike kapitalformer i etniske nettverk? *Tidsskrift for Samfunnsforskning* 2: 189–215.
- Levitt P, Glick-Schiller N. 2004. Conceptualizing simultaneity: a transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review* 38: 595–629.
- Levitt P, Lamba-Nieves D. 2011. Social remittances revisited. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37: 1–22.
- Liden H, Bredal A, Reisel L. 2014. *Transnasjonal Oppvekst: Om Lengre Utenlandsopphold Blant Barn Med Innvandrerbakgrunn*. Institutt for samfunnsforskning: Oslo.
- Lindley A. 2008. Transnational connections and education in the Somali context. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2: 401–414.
- Mazzucato V. 2008. The double engagement: transnationalism and integration. Ghanaian migrant's lives between Ghana and the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34: 199–216.
- Ní Laoire C. 2011. Narratives of 'innocent Irish childhoods': return migration and intergenerational family dynamics. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37: 1253–1271.
- Raghuram P. 2013. Theorizing the spaces of student migration. *Population, Space and Place* 19: 138–154.
- Ryan L, Sales R. 2013. Family migration: the role of children and education in family decision-making strategies of polish migrants in London. *International Migration* 51: 90–103.
- Ryan L, Erel U, D'Angelo A (eds). 2015. *Migrant Capital: Networks, Identities and Strategies*. Palgrave Macmillan: London.
- Rytter M. 2011. Money or education? Improvement strategies among Pakistani families in Denmark. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37: 197–215.
- Rytter M. 2013. *Family Upheaval: Generation, Mobility and Relatedness Among Pakistani Migrants in Denmark*. Berghahn Books: Oxford.
- Sagmo T. 2014. Return visits as a marker of differentiation in the social field. *Mobilities*. DOI: 10.1080/17450101.2014.891860.
- Shaw A. 2000. *Kinship and Continuity: Pakistani Families in Britain*. Routledge: London.
- Snel E, Engbersen G, Leerkes A. 2006. Transnational involvement and social integration. *Global Networks* 6: 285–308.
- Tse J, Waters J. 2013. Transnational youth transitions: becoming adults between Vancouver and Hong Kong. *Global Networks* 13: 535–550.
- Waters JL. 2006. Geographies of cultural capital: education, international migration and family strategies between Hong Kong and Canada. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 31: 179–192.

- Waters JL. 2012. Geographies of international education: mobilities and the reproduction of social (dis)advantage. *Geography Compass* **6**: 123–136.
- Waters J, Leung M. 2013. A colourful university life? Transnational higher education and the spatial dimensions of institutional social capital in Hong Kong. *Population, Space and Place* **19**: 155–167. DOI: 10.1002/psp.1748
- Wen M. 2010. Bumpy journeys: a young Chinese adolescent's transitional schooling across two sociocultural contexts. *Journal of Language Identity and Education* **9**: 107–123.
- Werbner P. 1990. *The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts and Offerings Among British Pakistanis*. Berg: Oxford.