

Doctoral Thesis Summary
Academic mobility and cultural capital building.
Nepalese students and academics in Poland

The thesis focuses on educational trajectories of Nepalese students and academics who visited Poland in the years 2010-2017, in the context of urgent problems that the Nepalese higher education is facing. Its main aim is to analyse how academic mobility contributes to cultural capital building and, consequently, has an impact on individual trajectories and on forming intellectual elites in Nepal, who can affect the development of education. The research questions also concern the motivation behind choosing studies in Poland and in the European Union by the Nepalese as the destination of their academic mobility; social conditions of this phenomenon; the results of academic mobility and the use of the acquired knowledge, skills and competences on the individual level and, to some extent, on the institutional level. It has been assumed that the thesis will have a practical dimension: the results can be used by Nepalese universities, as well as by institutions which design programmes supporting education in developing countries.

Within the research project, I conducted 26 semi-structured interviews with Nepalese students and academics who visited Polish universities, plus 20 interviews during the field studies in Nepal in April 2017. In 11 cases it was the second interview – a few years after the interviewee's return to Nepal. Hence, we can say that the studies had longitudinal characteristics. Most of my interviewees were the scholarship holders of the European Commission programme Erasmus Mundus Action 2. In addition, I talked to self-funding Nepalese students in Poland, representatives of the management of Nepalese universities and consulting agencies which recruit young people to study abroad. The research methods embrace: semi-structured interviews; informal conversations; participant observation; conversations with experts; review of literature concerning such aspects as the tradition of migration in the Nepalese society, development of education and the unusual popularity of studies abroad, mobility, internationalisation and globalisation in higher education. Both emic and ethic perspective was applied. The thesis includes numerous references to Pierre Bourdieu's works and his theory of capitals, to the concept of human capital and mobility capital.

The dissertation is composed of five parts: introduction, methodology chapter, analytical

part (on the basis of the research results), conclusion and bibliography. The introductory part presents the scope and aim of the research, research questions, justification of the choice of topic, literature review. The next chapter is devoted to the description of the research methods, characteristics of the research and the target group, dynamics of the field work, any difficulties encountered, justification of the choice of the research methods, ethical considerations. The analytical part includes the following chapters: “About education in Nepal”, “Academic mobility in Nepal”, “Why Poland?”, “ On the way to *ijjat* – educational trajectories of Nepalese students and academics in Poland”, “Mobility as the source of capital”. It concerns the context, determinants and motivation connected with the participation of Nepalese students and academics in mobility programmes, motivation behind choosing Poland and the European Union as the destination of their academic mobility, perceived results of studies abroad, interconnected with cultural capital building. In addition, it seeks to discuss the benefits of involvement in academic exchange programmes from the institutional perspective. The thesis finishes with a summary and conclusions, including suggestions with regards to possible further studies and recommendations how the results of the research could be applied in practice.

The results of my research indicate that academic mobility of Nepalese students and academics is deeply rooted in wider social phenomena and migration traditions in Nepal. It highly contributes to cultural capital building in the three forms, as described by Bourdieu: embodied state (for example, through acquisition of knowledge, competences and skills during the international mobility), objectified state (for example, as a result of an attractive job and acquisition of material goods) and institutionalised state (demonstrated by degrees, diplomas and certificates brought from abroad). At the same time, the study confirms the existence of correlation between the position in the Nepalese society and the destination of migration: those who are more privileged and enjoy a higher status migrate to places which offer more benefits, but also require more investment, that is, to Nepalese cities and abroad. Most of my interviewees belong to this group. The poorer tend to migrate to other rural areas in Nepal and to India. We can agree with the researchers who state that ethnicity (and caste) affects the acquisition of cultural capital and the dynamics of social exclusion – which is also visible in the context of academic mobility. A large part of my dissertation has been devoted to the interpretation of capital building and the conversion of capitals (cultural, social, educational), as well as the importance of prestige and mobility capital. The thesis demonstrates how valuable it is to participate in the international academic community, both in the case of individuals and institutions engaged in international cooperation. It is a contribution to the world research regarding the development of education in Nepal, including

major obstacles and difficulties. It also contains very unique topics, rarely discussed by other researchers, such as the consequences of the extreme politicisation of Nepalese universities (radicalisation of the student organizations and the political involvement of students and staff) and sustainable results of international academic mobility, after return to the home country. My work can allow for a better understanding of the intercultural dimension of academic exchange and its multi-layered effects.

Abstract of the doctoral thesis
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The thesis focuses on educational trajectories of Nepalese students and academics who visited Poland in the years 2010-2017, in the context of urgent problems that the Nepalese higher education is facing. Its main aim is to analyse how academic mobility contributes to cultural capital building and how the participants of the exchange programme perceive the results of their international experience. The research questions also concern the motivation behind choosing studies in Poland and in the European Union by the Nepalese as the destination of their academic mobility; social conditions of this phenomenon; the results of academic mobility and the use of the acquired knowledge, skills and competences after return to Nepal.

Within the research project, I conducted 26 semi-structured interviews with Nepalese students and academics who visited Polish universities, plus 20 interviews during the field studies in Nepal in April 2017. In 11 cases it was the second interview – a few years after the interviewee's return to Nepal. Hence, we can say that the studies had longitudinal characteristics. Most of my interviewees were the scholarship holders of the European Commission programme Erasmus Mundus Action 2. In addition, I talked to self-funding Nepalese students in Poland, representatives of the management of Nepalese universities and consulting agencies which recruit young people to study abroad. The research methods embrace: semi-structured interviews; informal conversations; participant observation; conversations with experts; literature review. The thesis includes numerous references to Pierre Bourdieu's works and his theory of capitals, to the concept of human capital and mobility capital.

The results of my research indicate that academic mobility of Nepalese students and academics is deeply rooted in wider social phenomena and migration traditions in Nepal. It highly contributes to cultural capital building in the three forms, as described by Bourdieu: embodied state, objectified state and institutionalised state. At the same time, the study confirms the existence of correlation between the position in the Nepalese society and the destination of migration: those who are more privileged and enjoy a higher status migrate to places which offer more benefits, but also require more investment, that is, to Nepalese cities and abroad. Most of my interviewees belong to this group. A large part of my dissertation has been devoted to the interpretation of capital building and the conversion of capitals (cultural, social, educational), as well as the importance of prestige and mobility capital. The thesis demonstrates how valuable it is to participate in the international academic community, both in the case of individuals and institutions engaged in international cooperation.

Key words: Nepal, education, mobility, academic mobility, cultural capital, conversion of capitals, competence building