Understanding Teaching in Post-Soviet, Rural, Mountainous Tajikistan: Case Studies of Teachers’ Life and Work

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
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University of Toronto

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Abstract

These qualitative life history case studies explore how five Tajik teachers in three sites of the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province of Tajikistan understand and improve their practices in a politically unstable, ideologically complex, impoverished, geographically harsh, isolated, but culturally rich and diverse environment. In depth examination of two teachers, Sino and Nigin, reveals how these teachers' practices interact with their changing world. Their struggle about what to retain and what to change reflects their working conditions, their life histories, and the physical and socio-cultural realities of life in post-Soviet, rural, mountainous Tajikistan. The analysis demonstrates how meaningful and sustained educational reform interconnects with changes in the fabric of the society.

The analysis illustrates a number of continuities and changes in the teachers' practices across the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. At one level, Sino's and Nigin's professional lives remain much the same as in the Soviet period. They retain their commitment to teach and serve their students, their community and the authorities. They strive to uphold and transmit their long-held cultural values and ethical principles. Their practices remain predominantly teacher-centred. They work within a hierarchical structure where those in authority determine the policies which govern their practices. They both overtly comply with the mandated regulations and policies and subtly reshape them to serve their students.

Yet, at another level, these continuities confront strong forces for change. Despite the intensification of their work, Sino and Nigin no longer have the unquestioned high status they had in Soviet times. Their longstanding beliefs about their subjects' importance now undergo debate and revision. Growing impoverishment of their students' and their own lives, increased social malaise, shifts of authorities and discourses, confusion created by a protracted civil war, the collapse of the Soviet social infrastructure, and a fledgling market economy all have affected their professional world.
The teachers in this study emerge as knowledgeable, caring and capable educators, exhibiting a broad and complex notion of teaching, and willing to be active partners in educational and social reform. To date, reformers have not seriously sought and considered their knowledge. I argue that any meaningful, sustainable reform in Tajikistan must listen to the teachers' voices, build on what teachers know and can do, and transform the conditions of their professional and personal lives.

More generally, the study gives prominence to the dynamic and critical aspects of context in teachers' professional and personal lives. Contextual forces frame and interact with the teachers' work in ways which both confirm and extend current Western perspectives on the role of context in teachers' life.
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AKDN</td>
<td>Aga Khan Development Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKF</td>
<td>Aga Khan Foundation, Geneva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKU/IED</td>
<td>Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKES</td>
<td>Aga Khan Education Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKTC</td>
<td>Aga Khan Trust for Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTL</td>
<td>Curriculum Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Int.</td>
<td>Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Field Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>Former Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>KSU</td>
<td>Khorog State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>MBAP/RT</td>
<td>Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province, Republic of Tajikistan (The Site of This Study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSDSP</td>
<td>Mountain Societies Support Development Program, a project of the Aga Khan Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Nigin, a principal participant of the study</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obs.</td>
<td>Observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OISE/UT</td>
<td>Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University Of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Sino, a principal participant of the study</td>
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<tr>
<td>VUZ</td>
<td><em>Vishee Ucheboe Zavedenie</em> (Tertiary Educational Institution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<td>UTO</td>
<td>United Tajik Opposition</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>The World Bank</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study aimed to produce educationally valuable stories about teachers and teaching in the dramatically changing conditions of rural, mountainous and unstable post-Soviet Tajikistan; these stories would help understand how teachers and schools have become as they are and how to help them to become better.

In the following pages, I describe the physical, social and historical context of my research. I then discuss how the study emerged and state my own interests and position in undertaking the challenge of conducting it. Next, I present the major research questions and elaborate on their various aspects. I then argue the study’s significance for understanding the theory and practice of teaching, teacher, teacher development, and educational reform in Tajikistan and elsewhere. Last, I provide a detailed outline of the organisation of this thesis and briefly highlight the major points of the content of each chapter.

The Setting

I collected my information by exploring the various aspects of the teachers' life and work in the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province (MBAP) of the Republic of Tajikistan. Eighty percent of the population of Tajikistan live in rural areas, and mountains cover 93% of its territory. Tajikistan belongs among the countries formed as a result of the socialist revolution in the Russian Empire in 1917 and united as republics within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). As an independent republic, Tajikistan emerged from the “ruins” of the Soviet Union in 1991.

While within the USSR, Tajikistan experienced comparative industrial, educational and cultural modernisation. After the collapse of the USSR and six years of civil war (1991-97), Tajikistan, already one of the poorest states of the USSR (Curtis, 1996), ended up with the social indicators of the very poor developing countries. Its per capita annual income, for example, averages about $350-425 CDN; more than 80% of the population live below the poverty line (World Bank, 1998, 1999). The protracted civil war killed an estimated 50,000 people and displaced around 600,000. The economy was ruined and Tajikistan several times verged on national and economic collapse (see Chapter 4; also Curtis, 1996; Keshavjee, 1998; World Bank, 1998).

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1 Throughout this thesis, I also refer to Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous province as Badakhshan and Pamir. Other titles for the province appear in the literature, among them the Russian term, Gorny-Badakhshan, and the Tajik phrase, Wiloyati khusmuhtori kohistanoni Badakhson.
The majority of its people found the collapse of the USSR untimely, sudden and shocking (Niyozov, 1996). For Tajikistan, particularly the MBAP, its breakdown resulted in a cut in basic supplies, an influx of civil war refugees, an absolute reduction in paid jobs, dramatic fall in salaries, poor living conditions, isolation, and a shortage of land and other basic necessities. These declines made the exotically attractive region almost unbearable to live in.

Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province (MBAP) of Tajikistan lies in the high Pamir Mountain Range. Deep green valleys riddle its West; the East is a cold, high plateau desert. As with many other mountainous areas, the province’s fundamental quality is its incredibly complex natural, biological, social, cultural, and economic diversity (Pratt, 1996).

People in Badakhshan live at the elevations between 1000 and 4000 meters. In the province’s lower parts, the weather is almost subtropical, and there are even citrus tropical fruits. However, in the higher areas, there is extreme poverty of vegetation; even the grass does not grow.

Culturally, MBAP is the homeland of six small Eastern Iranian ethnicities also known as Pamirians (Shugnani, Roshani, Wakhi, Ishkashimi, Yazgulami, and Bartangi). These ethnicities speak their own distinct languages and live in the different valleys. MBAP is also a land where two larger nations (Iranian Tajiks and Turkic Kyrgyz) and two branches of Islam (Sunni and Ismaili Shi’ite) have lived together for centuries (Bashiri, 1998; Curtis, 1996; Keshavjee, 1998; Shoeberlein-Engel, 1994). In this regard, MBAP has the important distinction of being the only place in the world where Ismaili adherents constitute a majority of not only the population but also the Government and non-governmental decision-making structures (Keshavjee, 1998). At the same time, the post-Soviet transitional period has seen not only the revival of the Badakhshani cultural and linguistic identities but also the encounter among various forces of an increasingly globalised world: socialism (including Communism) Islam (including Ismailism), and nationalism (including ethnic nationalism and regionalism).

Economic diversity has flourished after the collapse of the USSR, when the centralised, state-run and tightly-controlled economy was dismantled in favour of a pluralist, market-driven economy. Accompanied by chaos, lack of experience in a market economy and a crisis of ethics, this freedom, among many positive things, also gave birth to illegal, socially and ecologically harmful socio-economic activities, such as drug trafficking, gun running, armed violence, and

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2 Not all population of MBAP speaks the Pamirian languages. In Darvaz, Wanj and parts of Ishkashim, Tajik is spoken.
poaching of endangered species. Consequently, the socio-economic transition has provided access to unimaginable wealth for a few but has caused tremendous impoverishment, misery and hardship for the majority (see Chapter 4; also Keshavjee, 1998; Lewis, in press).

The current situation of post-Soviet Badakhshan, Tajikistan and Central Asia could be described as a Hegelian, dialectical negation of their situation at the end of 19th century. In other words, at the surface things appear to have dramatically changed, but in essence these countries have reverted to where they were before Russia’s annexation of Central Asia at the end of the 19th century and the Soviet Revolution in 1917. However, the present situation has deeper implications and far-reaching consequences (see Chapter 4). Like the developing countries, Tajikistan, and perhaps other Central Asian states have been assigned subordinate roles in the new world order (Giddens, 1984; Helsby, 1999; Huntington, 1996). They have been demoted to dependent followers, receivers of external wisdom and solutions, providers of raw materials, fields of experimentation, and buffer states between the strategic zones of interests of the larger forces (Bacchus, 1981; Glen, 1999; Keshavjee, 1998; Said, 1989).

To reshape these realities to serve the interests of the emerging, but culturally rich, Tajikistan will, among other things, depend on the quality of education and human resources in Tajikistan. Ultimately, its people’s intellectual, technical, practical and ethical abilities to critically understand, adapt and reshape the post-Soviet realities will decide Tajikistan’s future roles within the region and the world at large.

Given the above background, currently Tajikistan’s education lies in a state of misery. Any historical analysis will reveal that the roots of this misery, in addition to the civil war, go back to Soviet times. The current social and educational crisis essentially testifies to unsustainable and dogmatic approach to development and the contradictions between rhetoric and reality in Soviet educational and social policy. Soviet Marxist-Leninism talked about empowerment, independence, agency, equity, freedom and democracy for people of all nations, languages and convictions; however, in reality, the vast and expensive infrastructure, universal access to schooling, the demanding and centralised curriculum, the high level of literacy, the promotion of gender equality, national cultures and languages, and the high status of teachers all had fundamental flaws The Soviet system paid little attention to questions of relevance and

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3 Ismailism is a major branch of Shi’ite Islam. For discussions on Ismailism, see Daftry, 1990; Keshavjee, 1998; Nanji, 1987; Nasr, 1987; also Chapters 4, 7 and 8 of this study).

4 Keshavjee (1998) and Lewis (in press) have observed that the majority of these beneficiaries constitute the former Communist elite. According to these authors democracy has benefited the ex-Communism more than Communism did.

The teachers too, regardless of their high social status and broader political and professional roles were trained to the role of servants of State and Party (Denisova, 1990; Ekloff & Dneprov, 1993; Glen, 1999; Melnikov, 1997). In sum, the true history of the Soviet Union and Soviet education reveals an unethical and continuous manipulation of Marxist-Leninist egalitarian, liberatory and emancipatory philosophy to cover corruption, repression, cynicism, hypocrisy, inequity and disempowerment. As a result of all these contradictory, dogmatic and one-sided approaches, and of the repression of critical reflection on these policies (Davies, 1989), post-Soviet Tajikistan inherited a socio-political and economic infrastructure, including the educational system, which is unsustainable, ineffective, and riddled with continuing misleading contradictions. The World Bank (1999) found several major structural and cultural problems in current Tajik education: deterioration of the quality of education; a need for a change of "mentality" among teachers, students and educational administrators; inequitable access to school; inadequate management capacity; insufficient funding; unsatisfactory school facilities; and a serious shortage of textbooks. Administratively the post-Soviet Tajik education, particularly at the school level has changed very little from its Soviet predecessor. Almost all schools in Tajikistan continue to be public.

The dominant Government approaches to educational reform, including teacher development, remain mainly top-down, bureaucratic and largely rhetorical. One of the major terms used in education circles is "changing the mentality of the teachers so that they can teach according to new realities" (personal communication at the official structures between April and December 1999, also in World Bank, 1999). Changing the mentality of education personnel may be a necessity for building a democratic post-Soviet Tajik society.  But emphasising training and a focus on teachers' mentality as the prime "object of change" tends to demean teachers,

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5 Demanding pro-Soviet loyalty and belief, in addition to whatever intellectual achievements.
consider their knowledge as a “problem and obstacle to improvement”, and creates ground for manipulating and controlling them (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Coie & Knowles, 2000; Diamond & Mullen, 2000; Farell, 1994; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Thiessen, 1993b).

In MBAP, the education system, assisted by international organisations, especially the Aga Khan Development Network, has continued to operate and maintain its inherited infrastructure (Greenland, 1993; Kruder, 1996). However, the challenges remain enormous and the general educational situation is deteriorating. The current educational establishment has been increasingly unable to sustain the expensive infrastructure, let alone improve it.

In 1999, there were 315 schools enrolling 55 thousand students in MBAP. Out of 315 schools, 89 are primary (grades 1-4), 66 middle school, (grades 1-9), and 160 complete secondary schools (the full 11 grades). There are around 6500 teachers in the province, the majority of whom obtained their schooling and higher education during the Soviet period, previous to 1992 (Kruder, 1996).

Reform activities in education in MBAP have mainly been structural. Since 1991, almost all schools in MBAP have been streamed into natural-mathematical science, social science and general streams. The general stream accepts the students who cannot meet the criteria for joining either of the other two. Since 1993, however, the number of teachers leaving teaching has steadily increased. Unofficial figures obtained from the MBAP Department of Education suggest that in 1999 about 120 and in 2000 about 70 qualified teachers left the profession in the province (e-mail communication, December 2000). To compensate, the schools hire their own graduates without any further qualifications. The teachers and students continue using the old Soviet textbooks. There are no laboratory facilities for teaching science in most of the schools.

The reform efforts arise partly from economic reasons as well as from attempts to re-invigorate the system intellectually. Parent-teacher associations (PTA) have been revived to take charge of several school activities, such as renovation, budgeting, and attendance. Fee-paying classes are being opened in each school. In addition, schools and PTAs have initiated complementary fundraising activities, such as selling the school gardens’ agricultural products, opening of school revolving funds, seeking sponsors, and selling teaching materials.

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6 In fact the WB document (1999) mentions the importance of mentality change for market economy and democracy and suggest the necessity of this mentality change for all education stakeholders, not only teachers.

7 Both are internal reports for the Aga Khan Foundation (available from the Foundation).
On the intellectual side, the transition from one level to another (i.e., from primary to secondary) no longer can be taken for granted but depends on a rigorous examination. Students are streamed into natural-mathematical science, social science and general groups right after the primary level (i.e., Grade 4). Finally, there has been a program of accreditation of schools and teachers to ensure that they meet certain standards.

The majority of the reform efforts in Tajikistan and MBAP lack grounding in research and empirical data. They are largely based on the policy-makers and bureaucrats’ views about what is good for education and the country. Often these policies simply imitate similar efforts in other former Soviet countries. These reform efforts largely ignore the voices of the teachers, who are the ultimate providers and reformers of education. In order to compensate for this neglect, to bring in the voices of the highly-committed teachers and other close stakeholders I undertook this study.

_Emergence of the Study_

This inquiry into understanding teachers’ life and work from their own perspective has arisen from my personal, professional and political interests.

Professionally, I am a teacher and teacher educator who belongs to a family of teachers and a community where education has had a high priority. As a teacher educator and researcher, I have had some learning experiences working with teachers. From my Master’s research on teacher change, where I tried to change teachers by urging them to strictly follow a strategy I had borrowed from research, I learned that (a) changing teachers means changing the lives of the human beings (Louden, 1991) and changing the conditions, time and culture of their work (Hargreaves, 1994); (b) teacher development entails enabling teachers to critically engage their voices, practices, emotions, cultures and contexts and bring their voices into a critical dialog with external ideas, rather than just pouring into their minds ideas borrowed from elsewhere (Freire, 1970; Posner et al., 1982); (c) teaching and teacher development include much more than just what teachers do in rectangularly shaped classrooms; and (d) taking teachers’ perspectives and empathising with their successful and frustrating realities in and outside their classrooms is vital (Javorski, 1996; Niyozov, 1995; Niyozov & Dean, 1997).

My subsequent work and research on teaching and teacher education at the Institute for Educational Development of the Aga Khan University (IED/AKU) and recent studies at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) have taught me that: (a) teachers’ voices are important for sorting out the perceived and real differences between what
change agents suggests and what the teachers already know; (b) that any change effort must endorse teachers as knowledgeable people, appreciate their experiences, engage their concerns and knowledge and work with them for change (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Diamond & Mullen, 2000; Farell, 1994; Thiessen 1993b; Thiessen & Kilcher, 1991).

This impetus has become stronger because I have since 1993 participated in some of the current attempts to reform education in Tajikistan, primarily by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and related institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN: Aga Khan Education Services, Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Aga Khan University), local government and other NGOs. These involvements have provided me with the insight that the majority of the educational reformers in Tajikistan largely neglect the voices of the teachers, who they nonetheless see as the ultimate providers of quality education.

Politically, as a citizen of Tajikistan, I believe that the participants of this inquiry, including myself, deeply care about the education of Tajik citizens and its role in creating a just, tolerant, democratic and pluralistic society. My future professional aspiration is to work with all those involved in educational reform in my country (and perhaps elsewhere) so as to jointly provide a better education to the learners, regardless of their age, class, gender, conviction, language and ethnicity. Thus I follow my personal commitment to free inquiry, justice, reasoning, intellectual and political freedom, and respect for diversity and equity of genders, languages, religious interpretations, classes and other groups in society (Giroux, 1992; Noddings, 1992).

Ethically, this study fundamentally and finally comprises my representation of the participants’ understanding of their classroom practices (Stacey, 1988). Yet, to reduce the infiltration of my biases and presence, I have let the participants’ voices and actions fill up the pages, while positioning myself at the margins, particularly in the texts of the cases (Diamond & Mullen, 2000); I extensively represent the participants’ views and classroom practices, their emotions and hopes, their worries and concerns, and their criticisms and praises.

These teachers’ voices are critical and creative. They are coloured with images, metaphors, and poetic expressions in Tajik, Wakhi, Roshani, Shugnani, and Russian, the languages the participants used to represent their life and work, their aspirations and actualities. I examined every possible word, my emotions and passions conceptually, technically and ethically. In writing the thesis, I vacillated between being creative and critical, scientific and artistic, formal and informal, stiff and flexible and cautious and adventurous (Diamond &
Mullen, 2000). As I moved into the analysis, I attempted to critically engage the teachers' voices and visions (Hargreaves, 1992, 1994), to provide context and history to their stories of action (Goodson, 1991), to identify continuities in their biographies and reveal the contexts of their experiences (Butt et al., 1992; Goodson & Cole, 1994).

**Research Questions and Purpose of the Study**

I had one principal inquiry question: *How do teachers in post-Soviet, rural, mountainous Tajikistan understand their classroom practices?*

In order to elaborate the intent of this question, I briefly discuss its two main components (i.e., context of teaching and dynamics of teaching), and spell out my interests in each area. For each, I describe the nature of the study, what it will explore, and the key questions to be considered. The two main components are:

1. Context of teaching. This includes two related areas:
   - (a) Post-Soviet era: highlights the historical, economic, political and ideological forces that interact with teachers' classroom practices and knowledge.
   - (b) Rural, mountainous environment: brings social geography, culture and identity to the fore.

2. Dynamics of teaching. This highlights how these teachers make sense of their classroom practices, address the daily complexities and challenges of their professional life, evaluate their own teaching, and achieve their goals within the foregoing realities.

As readers travel along my elaborations, they will notice that I highlight a number of questions on each of the major points. Although this study may not respond to all these questions, my purpose here is twofold: First, I want readers to get the depth of the drama, visualise the context of the study, realise the complexity and notice the interactions between variables and forces. Second, I invite readers to take the participants' perspective more imaginatively and more consciously and intensely share their experiences.

Tajikistan has always been rural and mountainous. These geographical and cultural forces have always, consciously or unconsciously, strongly influenced teaching and learning here. They provide a sense of continuity to life and work, to what it is like to be a teacher in this environment, regardless of the passage of time, shifts in ideologies or replacement of empires. I ask, what it means to be a teacher in the mountains, and what teachers think about their rural, mountainous identities. I wonder how these views evolve in relation to or despite geo-political changes. I also wonder how much human individual and collective efforts mediate and reshape the harshest influences of physical geography. These answers may explain how the notions of "ruralness" and "mountainousness" have become embedded in the teachers’ practices.
Although the rural, mountainous context provides a sense of continuity, the post-Soviet reality brings to the fore economic, political and ideological changes, the amalgam of which makes Tajikistan an unstable, complex society. Within the context of the post-Soviet world, Tajikistan represents an extreme case, where teachers' salaries are equal to no more than $5-10 CDN per month, while they mostly have medium-size or large-size families. There is an extreme shortage of facilities and resources for teaching (textbooks, chalk, notebooks, pens, clothes, shoes, heating). There is chronic political and economic instability. The resulting despair, hunger, poverty, and lack of resources must affect teachers' self-esteem, status, beliefs, and classroom practices. Somehow teachers manage to sustain their large families and also improve their practices on their meagre salaries. Several factors have devalued the status of teaching and teachers. I want to assess how the teachers feel about their current status, and what others think, in order to expose what teachers' status and salary tells about their society and its priorities.

One striking post-Soviet reality has been the ideological transformation (Ekloff & Dneprov, 1993). In the case of Badakhshan, this has not been a mere ideological shift from a Party/State monopoly to a multi-party, market system (Heynemann, 1998). It has involved multi-layered transformations: from a secular and even anti-religious ideology that dominated the society for nearly 70 years to a system primarily grounded in the revival of Islam, particularly Ismailism. In case of Tajikistan and other Central Asian states, this transformation has included a move from an internationalist Soviet ideology with a Russian bias to a nationalist one with an ethnic overtone. I wanted to see how such transformations affect the teachers' educational practices and beliefs. I wondered what practices and beliefs have survived the shift from serving one ideology to serving its opposite and which have changed. Particularly, the teachers must now address secular versus religious interpretations of educational topics in the classroom and outside it in a context where Islam is increasingly becoming a dominant force.

Although I focus on the post-Soviet era, most of the teachers in Tajikistan come from a Soviet educational background. Soviet education, particularly in the Asian republics, has been both under-researched and sometimes misunderstood (DeYoung & Suzhikova, 1997; Dunstan, 1992; Heynemann, 2000; Medlin et al., 1971; Menlo & Poppleton, 1999; Tabachnik et al., 1981). I did not purport to delve into Tajik education during the Soviet period; however, due to my study's socio-historical nature, discussions on the Soviet period arise. I expected the teachers to recall and retell stories of the past, as well as to compare and connect them with the present and future. I wanted their view of how the past informs the present and the future, and what should
be preserved from the past and what should be deplored. In particular, I asked how has the collapse of the Soviet Union affected their teaching.

It is important to visualise Mountainous Badakhshan and Tajikistan as contexts where the continuity and traditions have always had a stronger influence than change (Holmes et al., 1995). Despite the Marxists-Leninists claims of creating a continent of utopian dreams, Tajikistan remained largely a poor, male-oriented, hierarchical tradition-dominated society. This is still the context, where the majority of teachers are women and most teachers struggle for survival (Keshavjee, 1998; Kruder, 1996; Tadjbakhsh, 1998; Touhidi, 1995). Furthermore, Tajikistan represents an environment where change is driven by an ideological interplay between pre-Soviet (Islam), Soviet (socialist) and post-Soviet (market, democracy and revived Islam) forces. Questions emerge about how Tajik women view their classroom practices and how that view differs from anywhere else. One wonders how teachers handle the tensions between these conflicting ideologies and between what their home and work demand (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Nelson, 1992; Weiler, 1998). Surely this dilemma affects their beliefs, values and practices.

The sudden, unexpected, radical changes in Tajik teachers’ life and work that have made an impact upon their teaching are important factors to explore. Together with the teachers’ Soviet past, they help one understand the continuities and changes in the teachers’ practices, beliefs and values. These continuities and changes will illuminate broader systemic and societal continuities and changes that have a fundamental importance for understanding the rhetoric and reality of educational change in Tajikistan, and for predicting the possible outcomes of the some of the current reform initiatives (Cuban, 1998; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

This study also focuses on exploring the experiences of teachers who are improvement-oriented. In selecting these teachers, I do not purport to label the other teachers as ‘bad’, docile or desperate (Waller, 1932); rather, my purpose is pragmatic. The stories of those teachers who try to improve upon their teaching without adequate facilities, with very little recognition, appreciation, and support, and with increasing pressures to provide instruction comparable to that in advanced Western societies represent a powerful case for learning. They provide possibilities for providing good education in impoverished conditions, not only in developing countries (Farrell & Oliveira, 1993; Farrell, 1994), but also in the industrialised world (Berliner, 1986 in Collinson, 1996). There is value in learning how they maintain their good practices with no support and what common and particular instructional approaches they use. I wanted to know
what knowledge, beliefs, commitments, cultural, and contextual factors enable them to keep going. Moreover, society can only benefit if their views and perspectives are accepted, desired and shared, and their voices and visions heard.

Theorists, researchers and practitioners, ultimately aim to understand classrooms and what happens there, regardless of differences in their approaches and perspectives (see Chapter 3). In Tajikistan, as it is anywhere else, how well any educational reform succeeds will ultimately be judged by the quality of instruction in the classroom, and how that affects the students' learning and lives. I asked what sense these teachers make of their own practice and how. I wanted them to tell me what their goals are, how they achieve them, and how they measure their success. I wondered how, in their own view, they could teach better and learn new ideas. Given the pressures to educate people for the new economy, I also wanted to know what their students and the larger community think about their teaching.

This study builds upon the premises that making sense of and improving certain classroom practices deeply interconnect with the forces that influence from outside the classroom. These outside forces could be close or remote; they could be personal, institutional or societal; teachers may be aware of them or not. Further, what happens in the classroom closely relates to its participants' life and work outside it. The teachers' reasons, knowledge and thinking, reflected in their practices, have deep roots in their history, background, traditions, ongoing struggles, achievements, future intentions, and hopes (Louden, 1991). As human beings, teachers, consciously or not, are both products and producers of the socio-historical circumstances in which they live and work (Borko & Eisenhart, 1993; Britzman, 1986; Goodson & Cole, 1994; Hargreaves, 1997; Liston & Zeichner, 1991). A deeper level of consciousness of classroom realities and how they connect with other realities outside the classroom will provide a fundamental ethical basis for the provision of sustainable and meaningful instruction (Avalos, 1992; Bacchus, 1983, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Therefore, this study goes beyond exploring the particularities of classroom teaching to include how they interact with contextual forces.

To summarise, this inquiry starts with how teachers in a certain unique context make sense of their classroom practices. Further, it connects these behaviours to the reasons, emotions, values and beliefs behind them. Similarly, it traces the relations of these dimensions of teachers' knowledge to the forces not only within but also outside the classroom. In exploring and exposing these various dimensions and their interactions, this study gives primary importance to the teachers' perspectives, views and feelings.
Significance of the Study

This study’s fundamental significance lies in the major argument I make, which crosses the borders between developed and developing countries, rural and urban contexts, and different times. I argue that all those genuinely interested in the educational development have to take seriously the fact that no education reform has succeeded without considering teachers’ voice and vision, without actively involving teachers in reform, without working with them, and without taking care of their life and work conditions (Anderson, 1997; Aronovitz & Giroux, 1991; Beckner, 1996; Clandinin & Connelly, 1992, 1995; De Young, 1991; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Huberman & Miller, 1999; Fuller & Clarke 1994; Little & McLaughlin, 1993; Long & Long, 1999; Farell & Oliveira, 1993; Rust & Dalin, 1990; Sher, 1991; Thiessen 1993a, 1998; see the overview of literature, Chapter 2).

The basic principle of my argument and involvement in this study acknowledges that teachers possess the major share of available knowledge about teaching and education. I do not take the quality of teachers’ knowledge for granted; neither do I want to become a dogmatic advocate for teachers. I, however, advocate for listening to teachers and mining their knowledge, regardless of it quality, because only by articulating and understanding of this knowledge, whether good or bad, and critically and jointly engaging it, can one truly begin to find ways to improve schools (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Lieberman, 1997; Richardson, 1996). In order to be able to fulfil this commitment more ethically, effectively and sensitively, I became involved in this study to learn better ways of understanding and exposing teachers’ knowledge and their life and work conditions.

In so doing, my inquiry forms part of the larger strategic thinking of the Aga Khan Foundation (and more generally the Aga Khan Development Network) and perhaps also local educational circles about how to achieve sustainable, quality, and contextually sensitive educational reform in Tajikistan. At the same time, the views and critique represented in this study belong to me, not to these institutions.

Having stated the above, I do not purport to produce generalised rules, laws and truths to resolve the educational problems of Tajikistan or countries in similar conditions. Rather I aim at producing educationally valuable stories so that all might learn about teachers and teaching in the conditions of rural, mountainous, unstable post-Soviet Tajik society, about how they have become so and how one could help them to become better.
Except for a few surveys (Greenland, 1993; Kruder, 1996) and opinion papers and publications, which present more official views than empirical studies (Denisova, 1990; Inoyatova, 1995, 1996; Ilolov, 1996; Nazarshoev, 1982; Nazarshoev & Nazarshoev, 1985; Shonavruzov & Haidarsho, 1991), there are no in-depth studies in Russian, Tajik, English or any other language of the teachers' classroom practices in MBAP. Nor has anyone researched these teachers' knowledge, perspectives and voices. Though the policy-makers' views are important, the teachers are the ultimate providers of education and it is they who ultimately make a policy work, implement an innovation and enact improvement (Anderson, 1992; Connelly & Clandinin, 1995; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Freire, 1983; Fullan, 1993; Helsby, 1999; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Farrell & Oliveira, 1993; Thiessen & Kilcher, 1991; Woods & Jeffery, 1997).

Similarly, most literature on rural and mountain education contains opinions and conclusions drawn from limited experience (for a review, see Yarrow et al., 1999; also Beckner, 1996; Burke, 1997; De Young, 1991; Sher, 1991). The research lacks first-hand knowledge, sophistication, rigor, relevance, empathy and depth; its conclusions, therefore, often fail to consider and represent the insiders' perspective (Beckner, 1996; Pratt, 1996; Yarrow et al., 1999).

This study has significant pioneering value, because it researches teaching, teachers and their knowledge in Tajikistan on the basis of insights articulated by the teachers themselves from their own experiences and perspectives. As such, this study might contribute not only to understanding these teachers' practices but also to sharing their educationally valuable stories with other teachers and stakeholders. This study involves teachers who share similar: (a) socio-economic status and living conditions (low and lower-middle), (b) opportunities for teaching and learning (including professional development and pre-service education), (c) radical ideological and educational experiences and reorientation (e.g., Soviet/post-Soviet), and (d) cultural experience and traditions (rural, mountain, Muslim). Despite these details of apparent uniqueness, these teachers generally resemble, and in many ways work in the same kind of situations as teachers in many other parts of the world, particularly developing nations. Therefore, the study can claim to have insights that speak about teachers and teaching in some generalised sense.

On the other hand, these teachers have not given up, have sustained their 'good' practices and have tried to improve upon them. They are articulate, respected and active in their
community; at the same time they are neither super-human and nor sweeping change agents (Britzman, 1991).

Listening to and engaging with their voices constitute a valuable endeavor (Berliner, 1986 in Collinson, 1996; Clark, 1986; Jackson, 1968) that has deep implications for understanding teaching, learning, educational reform, and teacher and educational development in post-Soviet Tajikistan and elsewhere.

More and more researchers argue that teachers’ attitudes, beliefs and knowledge strongly affect the ways they teach and relate to their students, colleagues, reform initiatives and even the community (Block & Hazelip, 1995; Borko & Putnam, 1995; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Clandinin, 1986; Elbaz, 1991; Munby et al., in press; Pajares, 1992; Prawat, 1992; Randi & Corno, 1997, Richardson, 1996). The teachers’ own voices might reveal why they continue some of their practices and change others, thus revealing insights about opportunities and obstacles for educational reform.

Through exploring the interplay of the teachers’ micro and macro contextual realities, this study should contribute to furthering the contextualized conception of school, teacher and teaching. In other words, exploring the interaction between teachers’ classrooms and the various layers of the contexts will tell about the choices the teachers have and the traditions, cultural constructs, political and systemic forces that impinge upon their choices and practices. We need the teachers’ views about these forces, for example, to see whether they are aware of these larger forces, whether they view them as fixed and immutable or as social constructs and therefore amenable to re-shaping. Exploring this interaction will provide insights into the rhetoric and realities of education and society in Soviet and post-Soviet Tajikistan. What the policy makers and bureaucrats say about educational reform agendas matters little; how the teachers and students implement and experience these agendas in reality and practice matters greatly. Both the analysis of Soviet education (Ekloff 1993, Melnikov, 1997, Tabachnik et al., 1981) and the analysis of Western education (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Liston & Zeichner, 1991) point to this same conclusion.

Further, by delving into the teachers’ views inside and outside the classrooms, this study, contributes to the post-Soviet discussions about what kind of knowledge the educational system should provide to the people of Tajikistan in particular, and to all those who live in similar contexts in general. The particular value of this contribution derives from the fact that I, the researcher, come from the mountainous and rural setting of Tajikistan and have lived the
experiences of Soviet and post-Soviet Tajikistan. As such, this study may enrich the conclusions of the Organisation Commission of the University of Central Asia about the kind of education, training and research programs that are relevant, sensitive and empowering to life and work in rural, mountainous contexts.8

In doing all the above, this inquiry illuminates some aspects of teaching that move beyond Tajik teachers alone. It may speak to all those teachers who despite working under similarly restrictive, unstable and difficult conditions, persist in meeting the challenges of their work. Demand for studies of teaching and teacher knowledge in the societies that are undergoing ideological transition and political instability is rapidly mounting (Avalos, 1992; Belle & Ward, 1990; Dunstan, 1992; Ekloff & Dneprov, 1993; Farrell, 1994; Fullan, 1997; Fuller & Clarke, 1994; Heynemann, 1998; Long & Long, 1999; Menlo & Poppleton, 1999; Porter, 1996; Tabulawa, 1997; Rust & Dalin, 1990; Webber, 2000). Joining these, my study will provide valuable insights into how macro-societal transformations affect the educational system and the teachers, and into whether the claimed efficiency, quality, and effectiveness of these reforms in reality lead to improvement and to the creation of more humane and just societies (Ginsburg, 1991, 1995, Rust, 2000).

I have also tried to discover the distinct dimensions that differentiate Tajik teachers from other more Western representations of the teachers’ role and status (see overview of literature, Chapter 2). One can compare their stories with Western views of how teachers act, think, and sustain and improve their practices, as well as what it takes to be a teacher in contextual terms (Ayers, 1993; Broadfoot et al., 1988; Clandinin, 1986; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Nias, 1989).

Examining these teachers’ stories and juxtaposing them with the increasing literature on Soviet and post-Soviet education might further clarify the problems of Soviet education and its legacy (Dunstan, 1987, 1992; Ekloff, 1993; Gershunski, 1990; Johnes, 1991; Judge, 1975; Long & Long, 1999; Webber, 2000; Zajda, 1993). Such knowledge will help identify the sources of current problems and successes and help identify the roots of the continuities and changes in teachers’ practices and in the larger society. It will also be useful in deciding what these countries may take from the past, modify or deplore, as they move toward creating new post-

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8 Between 1996-1998, the Aga Khan Development Network and the Government of Tajikistan established a Task Force that explored the feasibility of establishing a Regional University in MBAP that will focus on studying the realities of the mountainous environment of Central Asia. For a period of time, I worked as a translator and a resource member of the Task Force.

Tapping into these teachers’ knowledge offers insights into the theory and practice of teaching and curriculum innovation in Tajikistan and other parts of the world. The current literature increasingly beseeches the teachers’ involvement, listening to their voices and acknowledging their knowledge in order to produce successful educational reform (e.g., Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Thiessen, 1998). It also calls for moving away from the imposition of innovations that neglect teachers’ wisdom and turn them into mere implementors of the externally-developed reform packages (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Diamond & Mullen, 2000; Thiessen, 1993b). More voices call for exploring innovations that emerge from teachers as individuals and as groups (Anderson, 1992; Little & McLaughlin, 1993). By representing the voices and wisdom of innovation-oriented teachers, which educational reformers will need to consider, this study stands at the forefront of issues related to research on educational reform (Randi & Corno, 1997; Woods & Jeffrey, 1995). Its information has important significance for those international agencies, government policy makers, researchers, and change agents genuinely engaged with sustainable, relevant and quality educational reform in Tajikistan and elsewhere.

Last, this study contributes to the understanding of how various layers of context, culture, structure, biography and the teacher’s knowledge, beliefs and practices interact and mutually influence each other. The importance of various contextual, systemic and cultural factors for understanding teachers’ practices and how teachers make sense of their culture, system and context has gained increasing importance in the literature on teaching (Artiles, 1996; Avalos, 1985, 1992; Broadfoot et al., 1988; Cohn, 1992; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Cummins, 1998; Fuller & Clarke, 1994; Geerts, 1973; Hargreaves, 1997; Nieto, 1998; Rios, 1996; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1993; Tabulawa, 1997; Vulliamy & Carrier, 1985).

To recap, this study pulls together insights from the interaction of different but interdependent factors, such as (a) teachers’ classroom practices within rural and mountainous contexts, (b) the post-Soviet ideological and economic transformations, (c) the role of traditions, culture, history and community, (d) the literature from the developed, developing, Soviet and rural contexts, and (e) my own experience as teacher, teacher educator and researcher. In so doing, this research develops a contextual framework for understanding and exposing teaching
and teacher knowledge, comparing these insights with existing conceptions and, where warranted, rethinking approaches to teacher development and educational reform.

**The Structure of the Thesis**

In this section I present the organisation of the thesis and underscore the major points of the content of each of the chapters. The thesis consists of this introduction and eight chapters.

In the Introduction, I have discussed the emergence of the study, my own interests, and my position in undertaking the challenge of conducting the study. Next, I portrayed the major research question, elaborated its various aspects and discussed what the study tries to achieve. I followed by elaborating the study's significance for an understanding of the theory and practice of teaching, teacher development and educational reform both conceptually and comparatively.

Chapter 2, An Overview of the Literature, provides a theoretical template through which the reader may better understand the study. Here I take the reader on a journey through selected literature from various perspectives on teacher effectiveness, classrooms, teacher knowledge and images of the teacher. I approach the literature from developed and less developed, rural and urban, and Western and Soviet settings in an integrated way. I divide the literature according to the focus of the study. The first section reviews studies that focus on classroom dynamics and teachers' life in the classroom; the second section is devoted to those studies that emphasise the role of the context and give a broader portrait of teachers. As I examine the various perspectives, I also point out their relevance to my study and identify their limitations. I argue for broadening the basis of understanding teaching, teacher and teacher knowledge and linking classroom studies to their contexts. In other words, like Goodson (1991, 1997), I argue for positioning the stories of teachers' actions within the histories of the context, for exploring the linkages between the teachers' current actions and knowledge inside classroom with the history and forces outside it. A critically positioned life-and-work-approach to researching teaching, teacher and teacher knowledge (Britzman, 1991; Connelly & Clandinin 1995, 1999; Goodson, 1991; Goodson & Cole, 1994; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996) brings the various perspectives on the two strands of literature together and therefore informs this inquiry in a more comprehensive sense.

Contextually, I build upon Thiessen (1993) and Thiessen & Anderson's (1999) notions of classrooms, corridors and communities in the life and work of teachers in their rural context. In these deeply interrelated contexts, teachers live, learn, apply and transfer their knowledge.

Conceptually, I adopt Fullan's (1994) argument that to fulfil their roles in the present and in the future, teachers have to have six domains of knowledge: (a) knowledge and skills
important for daily teaching and learning, (b) knowledge, commitment and skills in working with others, (c) knowledge of context, (d) knowledge of how to learn and inquire continuously, (e) knowledge of change, and (f) knowledge of moral purpose.

In the same manner, I build on Avalos (1992), Bacchus (1996), Habermas (1971) and Freire (1970) to argue that teachers, including those in less-developed countries, need technical, practical and critical competencies. As the world shrinks and various perspectives come into a closer encounters, and as teachers’ work becomes more complex and challenging (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Helsby, 1999; Lieberman & Miller, 1999), the necessity of teachers’ dealing with these various perspectives becomes inevitably crucial. I suggest that teachers need a critical, interpretive framework so they do not simply read the world and word (Freire, 1970), but can critically sort out the similarities, differences and underlying values of various interpretations of their world and the global world (Barnett, 2000; Cochrane-Smith, 1998; Cole & Knowles, 2000).

However, I also suggest the necessity of being critical and reflexive about the critical perspective itself, highlighting the importance of the moral and ethical aspects of teachers’ life and work. Fullan (1993, 1994), Goodlad (1990), Noddings (1992, 1995), Tom (1984) and others have called for re-conceptualizing teaching as an ethical and moral responsibility and questioning the ethical implications of any educational discourse or knowledge acquisition, interpretation and application.

I must mention two other important points. Except for two participants’ cases (Chapters 5 & 6), the literature is woven into this thesis as a whole. Second, the literature is not only woven into the text, but also appears in footnotes. I refer to the literature in terms of wherever it corroborates or backs up my arguments and conclusions. I also bring it in to illustrate that these teachers’ experiences speak both to some of fundamental global issues of teachers’ and educational experiences or challenge existing conceptualisations and my own assumptions.

In Chapter 3, Research Methodology, I justify the relevance of the qualitative/interpretive research paradigm for my inquiry, particularly the qualitative case study as the most appropriate method for exploring my question. I spell out the data collection methods and procedures. I explain the multi-level processes of data analysis, including how I addressed the issues of validity and generalisability, and discuss the ethics of my inquiry. In this section, I also discuss some of the challenges and possibilities of conducting a qualitative study in the rural, mountainous context of Tajikistan.
This study explored the links between the teachers' practices, knowledge, values, beliefs, biographies and contexts (Goodson, 1991; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). I collected the data between April and December 1999 in three sites in MBAP. The sample included a core group of participant teachers (N=5), diverse in subject, school, ethnicity, geography, language, religion and gender. The investigation also pursued the voices of focus groups of teachers in the three sites, the voices of the communities and statements from the larger educational community. The data collection tools included extensive participant observations (Cole, 1987), in-depth interviews (Cole, 1994; Goldstein, 1995), informal interviews, descriptive and reflective field notes, and document analysis (Cole & Knowles, 2000). I recorded the interviews and translated them and other observations from the several languages the participants used. I employed a multi-level data analysis procedure throughout the process of research; that is during the data collection, data analysis and writing of the thesis.

The huge amount of data, its conceptual richness, the limitations on the size of the thesis, and the limited time for the completion of the study meant that only two cases out of five were included in depth in this final version. These two cases (Sino, Chapter 5, and Nigin, Chapter 6) provided enough analytical themes and insights to speak to the rest of the cases and answer my major questions. At the same time, the other three participants appear in the two cases and more so in Chapters 7 and 8, to enrich the arguments and the themes that emerged.

Due to the study's qualitative, life-history character, myself being a local researcher with certain privileges and reputation, and the dramatic nature of participants' experiences, the process of researching became as significant as its outcomes. The study thus integrates the tensions, dilemmas, ethics and politics of the study's process.

In Chapter 4, Mountainous Badakhshan: The More Things Change the More They Remain the Same, I discuss the principal qualities of the physical geography, people, culture, history, economic and political conditions, and education system of the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province of Tajikistan. This chapter spells out the major continuities and changes that have taken place in order to make several arguments in this chapter. Firstly, despite the recent changes and previous Soviet attempts to create a new type of citizen and country, the people who live in these mountains and villages have remained almost the same in their language, religion, practices and outlook. Also, though the Soviet years substantially changed the infrastructure and appearance of the place as compared to its southern neighbors
(e.g., Afghan Badakhshan), due to the unsustainable nature of these changes, MBAP ended up as the poorest zone of the USSR.

In addition, I also point out that the MBAP represents a complex economic, social, ideological, political and religious context, where the harshest challenges of pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity have concentrated. In other words, Badakhshan once again is becoming a marginal zone of the larger geo-political interests within the new world order (cf. Djalili et al., 1998). In this new global order, countries like Tajikistan, despite their independence, start at a disadvantage (Keshavjee, 1998, Rust, 2000). They find their fate and roles harder to control or reshape against the powerful external forces and the internal challenges of reconstruction. If the policy makers want to reshape these forces to the benefit of Tajikistan and its population, they should nurture the role of the teachers and their continuing education as a possible answer to the challenges.

Third, regardless of the emergence, substantial development and diversification of education during the Soviet period, the post-Perestroika decade revealed sorrowful lessons about the Soviet's system's unsustainable development, practical irrelevance, hidden colonial bias, ideological and epistemological dogmatism, and control and manipulation. Nevertheless, the current approaches to educational reform and teacher development, partly due to the political and economic turmoil, and partly due to continuity of policy, have continued to remain top-down, outside-in, bureaucratic, irrelevant and decontextualised; post-Soviet education in Tajikistan in general and MBAP in particular is in crisis and decline. The system is undergoing a painful process of restructuring, reculturing, reconstruction of identity, and redefinition of purposes and values. Despite increasing privatisation, decentralisation and marketisation, the system largely remains public. The material, technical basis of schooling is steadily deteriorating. An alarming number of qualified teachers are leaving the system, due to its increasing demands and complexity and the further impoverishment of their work and lives. In short, the system is simultaneously struggling with the challenges of survival, maintenance, and improvement.

Chapter 5, Sino, A Person and a Teacher of His Time, elaborately narrates the case of Sino, a teacher of Russian language and literature. I approach the case socio-historically: First I describe the unimaginably harsh conditions of the context of teachers' lives and works, conditions that resulted from the unsustainable approach to development in the Soviet times. Then I present how Sino's personal and professional experiences have contributed to his development as a teacher, an individual, and a member of the community. The major quality of
Sino's professional life has been his active interaction with the opportunities and obstacles of the changing contexts. Next, I extensively discuss three major aspects of Sino's professional life. The first, his worldview, includes the evolution of his understanding of teaching, his commitment to education, his belief in the teachers' power to fulfil their visions of a desired society and citizenship, his intentions in life and teaching, and his use of various persisting or emerging value frameworks. Although I develop several arguments, I mainly argue that Sino emerges as a teacher for social change (Cochran-Smith, 1998) with a transformative worldview (Miller, 1988) and a well-developed socio-political awareness (Avalos, 1992; Bascia & Thiessen, in press; Ladson-Billings, 1995). He exhibits a broad societal and educational vision, leadership qualities, and a strategically and spiritually charged commitment to education, intellect, ethics and service.

Second, I talk about Sino's classroom activities and his relations with the students and their parents. I portray Sino's use of diverse methods and activities to engage the students in meaningful learning. I expose the continuities and changes, and the similarities and differences in issues, and approaches across time (pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet) and across space (classroom, school, community and home). Sino's classroom practices and relationships both demonstrate and challenge the viability of his transformative worldview and of his abilities. This part reveals the dialectics between theory and practice, rhetoric and reality in Sino's professional life and in its context. Sino's personal and professional tensions and dilemmas echo the larger societal tensions. As a result of the intrusion of the realities, Sino's pedagogy, in my view, does not live up to his transformative worldview, but is close to transmission and transaction positions (Miller, 1988).

Chapter 6, Nigin, A Cautious and Caring Teacher, presents the second case. It is divided into four inter-related parts. I approach this case socio-historically too. I first present the major continuing and changing features, opportunities and challenges of the immediate context, and their facilitating and impeding effects upon Nigin's life and work. Although the district, the village and the school have a strategic socio-cultural position, it is the school's culture, leadership, and the passion and commitment of its collective that make the school the most successful in whole province and an enjoyable place for Nigin to work.

Next, I narrate Nigin's biography. This includes glimpses of childhood, adulthood, school, family and university, and dramatic experiences related to the collapse of the USSR, independence, civil war, refugees, and visits of the Aga Khan. Nigin's reflection on her
experiences resulted in an increasing awakening and transformation of her personal and professional identity and in the development of her clear position as a teacher, mother, and a member of the community.

Third, Nigin’s Worldview, includes a number of professional challenges that she has faced in her transition from Soviet to post-Soviet times, among them her dramatic, sometimes humiliating experiences with the subject of History, her reconstruction of truth and their impact on her post-Soviet educational mission. This drama of reconstruction, awakening and transformation strongly added to Nigin’s desire to continue teaching and promoting her emerging educational goals and societal vision.

The last part of this case, Nigin in the Classrooms, focuses on Nigin’s relations with her students and their parents, the structures, methods and resources she uses in her teaching, her ways of handling her students’ answers, and her perspectives on how her students learn. Through presenting interview data and observations of her official and extra-curricular activities, I portray Nigin’s various approaches to curriculum making. I make an argument that curriculum making involves the negotiation of agendas between Nigin’s perspective, the prescribed curriculum and the interests of other stakeholders, including primarily the students’. Teaching for her, as for Sino, is a process more of negotiation than of independent decision-making or of dependent compliance.

In addition to Sino and Nigin, the other participants—namely, Lola, a primary colleague of Sino’s, Gormijn, a Math colleague of Nigin’s and Izzat, a biology teacher at the third site—emerge from time to time in case chapters (Chapters 5 and 6) and later on in the cross-case analysis (Chapters 7 and 8). Their views reveal both differences from and similarities with the two participants; they thus enrich the study and illustrate the complexity of the arguments.

The comparative cross-case analysis constitutes two chapters (7 and 8). The two chapters follow the same organisation as in the individual cases. Chapter 7 deals with the teachers’ biographies and worldviews; Chapter 8 discusses their methodologies and relationships. The chapters pull together several strands: the data, discussions and analyses from the cases, my own experience as a teacher, teacher educator and researcher, and insights from the literature on teaching in developed and developing, rural and urban contexts. I synthesize the similarities and differences, the continuities and changes between the cases. I develop a set of arguments, issues and questions, and connect them to the larger contextual forces and to the histories of the contexts and participants’ biographies. I then point out the specific, micro-level implications for
the theory and practice of educational research, teaching, teacher development and educational and societal change. I illustrate that the participants' "private" successes and troubles are public and systemic issues.

In general, Nigin and Sino (and the other participants) emerge as knowledgeable, deeply committed, critical and caring educators. They exhibit qualities of agency and try to reshape some of the contextual forces to serve their worldviews; however, the physical, socio-cultural and personal contextual challenges propel them into adopting transmissive and teacher-centred practices and relationships. The inconsistencies within and between the participants' worldviews, methodologies and relationships are not an issue of teachers' supposed "inadequate mentality." They instead loudly speak to the contradictions in teachers' biographies, and in the context and culture of their work and life.

The final chapter, Endings and Beginnings, reconnects the analytical arguments to the major research questions and moves toward abstracting major findings at a more general conceptual level. Using the arguments and evidence from the rest of the study, I restate my major arguments, such as the necessity of listening to teachers and working with them, and the necessity of avoiding bureaucratic, imposing and arrogant approaches to teachers, local culture, community and context in carrying out educational and societal reforms. I also re-link the conclusions to the existing research. The study thus contributes to the theory and practice of education at comparative and contextual levels.

For example, teaching and teachers are too complex to be portrayed through any single categorisation. Teachers in developing, poor countries and rural, mountainous contexts are as knowledgeable, committed, caring, reflective and responsible as teachers anywhere else. They play expanded and complex roles and are naturally situated in leadership and intellectual positions. They are fundamental partners in the educational and societal changes; their voices and perspectives, particularly their complaints and critique need to be heard and heard loudly.

The current challenges of post-Soviet Tajik society require not a paradigm shift, but a paradigm expansion, with the necessity of the teachers' forming a critical interpretive framework. Unfortunately, the current restructuring and reforms in education and society appear to head toward deskilling teachers, intensifying and impoverishing their life and work, and ultimately turning them into technicians and cogs in the system. Predictably, such approaches will fail, as they are neglecting of the lessons of history.
Simultaneously, the study reveals that, despite having lived in a totalitarian system, the teachers have not been obedient cogs of the system but have tried to reshape its realities and provide educative experiences for their students and their communities. The study revealed that like the teachers' personalities, their practices are deeply influenced by their biographies, the subjects they teach, their homes and the various societal and professional expectations. The degree and quality of these influences depends on the teachers' abilities to reflect upon and reshape these forces. Studying the links between the teachers' life and work, between their actions, biographies and the context, illuminates the rhetoric and reality of social and educational policy, and the kind of system and society. Continuities and changes provide information both about the choices and constraints for educational reform and teachers' work and the dominant trends in the education and society. Any reform effort needs to understand and engage these continuities and changes in the socio-cultural context and to regard teachers as holistic persons.

Last, I point out some critical areas for further research that could extend the boundaries of my inquiry and provide a more comprehensive picture of education in the MBAP and Tajikistan. These include the analysis of policy, the history of educational change and teacher innovations, the critical examination of research and scholarship in the post-Soviet societies, an inquiry into the languages of instruction and the role of the State, NGOs and an examination of the whole teacher development processes.

Summary

In this introductory chapter, I have provided the reader with a general orientation to the study. I presented a summarised portrayal of the context, the history of how this study emerged, and my own position, values and interests in taking up this challenge. Then I elaborated on the major research questions and their various aspects. I next discussed the study's contributions to the theory and practice of education in conceptual and comparative aspects. Last, I provided an elaborate presentation of the content and structure of each chapter. As such, this chapter served as an expanded abstract or a compressed version of the whole thesis.

The site of the study represents a rural, mountainous, post-Soviet context. Transformations here are not only rapid, but also total and radical, embracing economy, ideology, values, culture and socio-educational structures. So far, the changes have been painful; improvement has been little and has benefited few. Teachers are amongst those worst affected by the changes.
Although the educational situation and teachers' quality of life are rapidly deteriorating, education remains the major hope for individual and societal improvement. There is a general agreement about the centrality of teachers' role in this process; however, the reform approaches for improving teaching continue to ignore the teachers' voices, visions and life and work conditions. The approaches to changing teachers and teaching also pay little attention to the socio-historical and contextual realities. To explore their views about their practices and the interaction between their practices and the radically-changing realities, I undertook the challenge of this study. I employed a qualitative, case-study approach. The study starts by describing and analysing the context. Then it moves to the stories of teachers' educational practices in various contexts of their life and work. Next, a cross-comparative analysis repositions the teachers' individual stories within the history and context. This approach allowed me to draw conclusions that have fundamental significance for reconceptualising our approaches to teachers and teaching, realising the importance of contextual forces and developing more realistic, ethical and sustainable approaches to educational and societal reforms and the teacher development.

*Invitation*

I invite my readers to participate in these teachers' dramatic, emotional, and ethically and spiritually charged experiences. They will experience the tensions these teachers undergo, the commitment and passion they exhibit, the visions they endorse, the goals they nurture, the practices they promote, the relations they build, the creativity they demonstrate, the challenges they encounter, and the resolutions they seek. I want my readers to simply feel how different people live and to ponder the power of the human spirit.

I know readers may disagree with some ideas in this story and endorse others. The participants and I would be happy to be wrong in depicting things sometimes so harsh, so critical, or so pessimistic. We would have been happy to be wrong and wish the situation were otherwise, because that would have made life easier for all of us. I know readers may disagree, become angry, feel hurt, and even be agonised. So it was for me, as I undertook the challenge of this study. But I also invite readers to look positively at these teachers and my own critique, because the teachers and I all deeply care about how beautiful Badakhshan and Tajikistan could become a better place to live for all: human beings, animals, and plants. Through these critiques, complaints, tensions and dilemmas, they will find our highest motivation and real possibilities for change and hope.
I hope I have intrigued the readers to indulge in a fascinating and valuable journey into the life and work, and aspirations and actualities of the teachers who live in the mountainous villages of Badakhshan province of post Soviet Tajikistan. I can assure the readers that though these teachers live and work in the isolated contexts, their experiences speak to the fundamental qualities of human experiences across the globe. Their stories are enviably educative.

Perhaps, after reading the cases and the thesis as a whole, you will feel that you too, have experienced an ephemeral encounter with Nigin, Sino and other participants, their varied classrooms, their teaching, their lives in schools, at homes and in the communities. As you move between their stories and my story of their stories you, perhaps recognise them, perhaps see them as strangers, perhaps they will surprise you, and, perhaps you will understand them and myself.  

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*This last paragraph was deeply influenced by Phillion (1999, p. xvi) and used with a little alteration.*
Chapter 2: Overview of the Literature

This chapter provides an overview of the literature relevant to my study. It examines various research perspectives on understanding teaching, classrooms, teacher knowledge and the broader context of teachers’ life and work. This overview’s purpose includes: (a) pointing out how the existing literature informs the present study, and (b) how the present study can be positioned within the broader research, conceptually and comparatively.

I acknowledge that one cannot realistically attempt a complete understanding of any educational phenomenon. Therefore, any exploration of teachers, their practices and educational change in rural, mountainous and transitional Tajikistan has strong limitations, especially if approached simply from either a behavioural (i.e., establishing cause-and-effect relations between teaching and learning) or cognitive approach (i.e., assuming that teaching consists of only what teachers think, plan and know). A better understanding of such a phenomenon requires a dialectical, dialogical approach, embracing a socio-historical exploration of teaching as socially constructed and negotiated reality. Such analysis focuses on the broader and deeper links between teachers, their biographies, and the larger systemic and socio-political forces that interact with their life and work.

This literature review falls into two major sections. The first discusses those research perspectives that focus on teachers’ classroom-related-action and knowledge. These perspectives provide rich insights into the complexity of classroom life and teachers’ actions and knowledge exhibited within it. Some of them neglect teachers’ knowledge and mentality and focus on their impactful behaviours; others celebrate their knowledge, power and ability to make autonomous decisions and sometimes even subvert the prescribed mandates, so as to provide meaningful instruction to their students. This research suffers a major shortcoming: it neglects or downplays how the context, particularly socio-political forces affect teachers’ practices in and outside classroom.

The second section discusses perspectives that have addressed the contextual, cultural, structural and biographical realities that impinge on teachers’ work and life. In their drive to highlight the external forces’ power, some of these viewpoints have become too deterministic, rendering teachers as powerless. More recently, an increasing number of researchers have promoted an interactionist understanding of the relations between the teachers’ work in and outside the classroom, acknowledging the centrality of teachers’ agency and its role in negotiating their identities and values in carrying out their work. This stream has variously
portrayed teachers as dilemma managers, civil servants, rebels, reformers, change agents, caring practitioners and transformative intellectuals. Various critical perspectives within this domain have revealed the increasing complexities, forces, and politics that surround teachers’ work and life. Teachers’ knowledge and practices are not neutral; they reflect the interactions and contradictions of the system, culture, society, rhetoric and reality.

By focusing on the interaction between the classroom dynamic and contexts of teachers’ practices, I make an attempt to bring the two strands into a balanced interaction.

**Approaches to Teacher’s Classroom Knowledge, Life and Work**

**Behaviourist Approach**

Behaviourism dominated studies of teaching in the 1960s and 1970s. It define “good” teaching in terms of objective, effective behaviours and skills that the researchers supposedly could uncontaminatedly observe, measure, model and instil in teachers (Brophy & Good, 1986; Gage, 1984, 1989; Good, 1983; Shavelson, 1983). This approach ignored or denigrated teachers’ personal knowledge as sets of individual opinions that created barriers to change and therefore should be replaced by research findings. This perspective saw teaching as a mechanical process of applying external knowledge in the form of techniques, skills and strategies that would guarantee good results. Such an approach decontextualises and desubjectifies teachers’ behaviours from teachers and the context of their work and life.

This research seeks to identify which teaching processes most influence students’ achievement, as measured on tests of students’ knowledge and skills. It suggests that students achieve their best performance under traditional, i.e., transmission pedagogy. Students’ perform, according to this tradition, best when: (a) they spend maximum time on their learning tasks; (b) they are instructed as a whole class, not in groups or as individuals; (c) teaching is expository or didactic, with clear explanations, demonstrations, repetitions and reviews; (d) they spend a lot of time doing supervised seat-work; (e) learning is organised into incremental, cumulative steps, and (f) they follow classroom rules and procedures without question (Brophy & Good, 1986).

Searching for universal positive laws and propositions, the behaviourist approach reduces the complexity of classroom instruction to direct cause-and-effect relations. It is an outside-in approach, where others determine what teachers know, need to know and do, and how the teachers should think and behave (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992).

In general, this behavioural frame has limited relevance for understanding my inquiry; nevertheless, it partly explains why teachers choose transmission approaches to teaching. This
strand also explains the general educational policy that dominated in the Soviet Union. Soviet educational research, contrary to its guiding philosophy of dialectical materialism (Tabachnik et al., 1981) was dominated by psychological, positivist scientific approaches to researching and developing teaching, teacher knowledge and education (Long & Long, 1999; Suddaby, 1991; Webber, 2000). This line of thinking continues in the post-Soviet emphasis on scientific certainty, the need for the change of teachers' mentality, externally arranged training courses, top-down, and outside-in approaches to educational reform and teacher development (see, for example, World Bank Report, 1999).

Further, on the positive side, this approach emphasised teachers' classroom life and actions, making them the centre of all educational research and development paradigms. It stressed that researchers cannot take what teachers do in the classroom for granted. Teaching requires not only effective strategies and techniques for delivering curricula and managing students' behaviours, but also ethical responsibility about its implications for individuals and their society (Ayers, 1993; Fullan, 1993; Tom & Valli, 1990). Although several studies challenge the value of externally provided knowledge to teachers, most researchers accept that teachers learn from outside sources, including courses and research findings (Gage, 1989; Joyce & Weils, 1998; Showers et al., 1988; see Thiessen & Kilcher, 1991 for a review).

However, the behaviourists' reductionist approach to education separates the context and teachers' knowledge, attitudes, emotions, and values from their behaviours. It also lends itself to manipulative treatment of teachers through curricula innovations and quantitative outcome assessment. Hence, it mostly contradicts my values, purpose and approach to explaining and illuminating the questions of this inquiry.

Interpretative Approaches

Studies of classroom life. Classroom-focused research has informed the present inquiry in several ways. Its various forms (e.g., process-product, classroom ecology, narrative, classroom culture, socio-linguistic and socio-cultural studies) have provided vital insights into what the classroom and the image of the teacher looks like. First, it sees classroom practices as the major sources and scenes where teachers display their personal and professional knowledge (including their beliefs, theories and knowledge). Second, classrooms provide sites for testing and verifying

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10 Dialectical materialism as a set of guiding principles was developed by the Russian Marxist Plekhanov (see Tabachnik et al., 1981, pp. 8-10). Plekhanov built the concept out of the writings of Marx and Engels. Dialectical materialism suggests exploring a phenomenon sociologically and historically, in relation to time and place, historical development and change, and in interaction.
the viability of the externally learned and mandated theories and ideas (e.g., propositions, research-based conclusions and in-service courses). Third, classrooms are the improvement targets of all knowledge-production activities in educational research; the quality of classroom practices constitutes the central indicator of the progress of school improvement, teacher development and successful educational change. As far as educational reform is concerned, the particulars of classroom have become as important as teachers’ knowledge and beliefs. (Anderson, 1997; Brophy & Good, 1986; Fullan et al., 1990; Jackson, 1968; Joyce et al., 1988; Lieberman, 1997; Olson, 1992; Shulman, 1986; 1988, Tabulawa, 1998; Thiessen, 1992; Thiessen & Kilcher, 1991). Classroom practices importantly influence teachers’ and students’ perceptions of teaching and teachers. These perceptions greatly contribute to shaping both the teacher’s and profession’s images and their status and value in the society (Ayers, 1993; Beckner, 1996; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Lortie, 1975; Randi & Corno, 1997; Waller, 1932).

Classroom studies suggest that classrooms make up very complex socio-political settings where teachers face many enormous challenges or dilemmas and make instant decisions. Such research points that teachers, though central, are not the only variables in the classroom; students have a strong influence on teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and actions (Beattie & Thiessen, 1996; Doyle, 1990; Pollard, 1985, Pollard & Tan, 1987; Thiessen, 1992). It further suggests that all students can learn and succeed, regardless of their social, ethnic, gender and linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, this research sees teachers as inherent curricular decision-makers who can make a difference in the students’ learning and life; this power should not be underestimated nor taken for granted (Ayers, 1993; Clandinin, 1986; Doyle, 1986; Hargreaves, 1994; Jackson, 1968, 1990; Lortie, 1975; Nias, 1989; Woods, 1980). Finally, classrooms are becoming increasingly diversified and complex, adding to the complexity of teachers’ work. This complexity requires us to redefine the role of teacher and to develop the new approaches to teaching and learning (Bennett, 1998; Doyle, 1990; Shulman, 1986a; Rios, 1996; Thiessen et al., 1996).

Jackson (1968), amongst the first to qualitatively study classroom life, depicted the enormous complexity of teachers’ life and work in the classroom. This complexity, and the necessity of making a huge number of interpersonal decisions, created the teachers’ feelings of urgency, immediacy and spontaneity about maintaining order, covering curriculum, and

between subjective and objective it assumed Marx’s notion of a dialectical relationships between the material basis of society and the socio-political superstructure, which often worked itself out historically in class struggles.
providing meaningful instruction. Jackson noted that in addressing the immediate, multiple, and quickly-emerging complexities, teachers act appropriately, intuitively and spontaneously, rather than rightly or rationally. Jackson's study also revealed the notion of the "hidden curriculum": He was among the first who hinted at the contextual forces and practices in schooling that make students passive and docile and teachers authoritarian and controlling (see also Giroux, 1988; McLaren, 1989). He also suggested that, while teachers make an enormous amount of decisions they are conceptually ill-equipped to express their practices and the deeper reasons behind these. Jackson found that teachers in fact expressed their classrooms' complexity through an uncomplicated view of causality, an intuitive, rather than rational approach to classroom events, and an opinionated rather than an open-minded stance towards alternatives. As a result of his study, Jackson proposed that further research on teaching should look beyond classroom actions and use more than a single method:

Classroom life, in my judgement, is too complex an affair, to be viewed or talked about from any single perspective. Accordingly, as we try to grasp the meaning of what school is like for students and teachers, we must not hesitate to use all the ways of knowing at our disposal. This means we must read, and look, and count things, and talk to people, and even muse introspectively over the memories of our own childhood (Jackson, 1968, p. vii).

Carter and Doyle made an important contribution to the classroom research (Carter & Doyle, 1987; Doyle, 1990). They founded their studies upon the assumption that classroom academic and social particularities had prominent effects on teaching and learning. Their studies resulted in a conceptualisation of teaching in the classroom for which they coined the term \textit{classroom knowledge} (Carter & Doyle, 1987). This conceptualisation provided a framework for understanding how the classroom works, how curriculum is enacted and how teachers could invent new practices that are grounded in the realities of classroom practice. Given that the teacher was not the only significant "variable" in the classroom and given that students, curricular materials and other commonplaces had strong effects on classroom life, management became an important issue of Carter and Doyle's studies. From a management point of view, classrooms are busy and crowded places wherein groups of students who vary in interests and abilities gather to accomplish a variety of tasks. Teaching in such a complex, unpredictable place requires a highly-developed ability to manage events.

The key to successful classroom life, Carter and Doyle argued (Carter & Doyle, 1987; Doyle, 1990) lay in the concepts of task (i.e., purposeful activity that leads to a certain achievement) and program of action (i.e., distinctive action designed by teachers to pull the
learners along a particular path at a given pace). The task defines the kind of order and life and creates a busy environment in the classroom. Placing task, activity and problem solving at the centre of understanding of classroom life, Carter and Doyle’s perspective removed the notion of effectiveness from resting in the teachers’ decontextualised behaviours and traits and positioned it within the curriculum content and interaction between the variables of teaching and particular learning situation. They saw tasks and activities as a means for making the curriculum a concrete event in the classroom. Doyle (1990) suggested research into teaching focus on classroom structures (e.g., tasks, activities), rather than essentialized teachers’ behaviours, because teacher’s knowledge was event-and task-structured, particularistic in content (i.e., imbued with specifics of the content of teaching), and situational in form.

Similarly, Brown and McIntyre’s (1993) conceptualisation of teachers’ professional craft knowledge, acquired through their practical experience in the classroom, offers valuable insights into how teachers “construe and evaluate their own teaching, how they make judgements, and, why in their own understanding, they choose to act in particular ways in specific circumstances to achieve their successes” (Brown & McIntyre, 1993, p.1). In their framework, they mainly argue that teachers usually judge their teaching by how well they maintain pupils in desirable states of activity. These normal and desirable states of students’ activity aim at various types of progress (e.g., product, process). “Good” teachers’ actions aimed at achieving, maintaining and inter-relating the process and products of learning.

Brown and McIntyre produced several valuable methodological insights, such as immediately conducting conversations about teachers’ lessons and building on the positive aspects of their teaching. They also give a detailed and valid account of how to select participants, and collect and analyse data. Together with Jackson’s (1968) and Doyle and Carter’s (1987), earlier conceptions, Brown and McIntyre’s constructs helped me to focus on the particularities of teachers’ work, contents, situations, concerns and classroom challenges. I could then elicit their knowledge and thinking in a deeper way and explore the depth of their commitment and passions (Cole, 1987).

However, these perspectives narrowly confined themselves to the classrooms, a limitation that prevented addressing the relationships between classroom practices and larger contextual realities and conditions. In fact, Brown and McIntyre (1993) acknowledged this limitation themselves in their recommendations for further research. Further, teachers’ actions and
knowledge are not only situational. They are historically, socially, culturally and politically constructed and negotiated.

**Portrayals of teacher's thinking and knowledge.** My inquiry makes the fundamental assumption that teachers' knowledge and thinking strongly influences their classroom practices. Teaching is a minded act of an adult human being; behind teachers' observable actions lie tacit and personal meanings, values, beliefs and knowledge (Clark, 1995; Cole, 1987).

The interpretive research on the various aspects of teachers' thinking (e.g., teacher planning, interactive thought processes and decision making, teachers' theories and beliefs, novice-expert differences) represents attempts to explore and map the nature and scope of knowledge base of teaching (i.e., a body of understandings, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and skills). In so doing, these researchers have produced diverse conceptualisations and categorisations of teacher knowledge in attempts at precision in conceptualising the phenomenon. In addition to earlier mentioned classroom knowledge (Carter & Doyle, 1987), situational knowledge (Leinhardt, 1988), their characterisations also include personal knowledge (Polyani, 1967), practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1983), personal practical knowledge (Beattie, 1995; Clandinin, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1992; Gudmundsottir, 1990, 1993; Richert, 1992; Shulman, 1987; Wilson et al., 1987), craft knowledge (Grimmet & McKinon, 1992) and process knowledge (Eraut, 1994).

Shulman and associates\(^\text{11}\) developed a prominent conceptualisation within this approach. They highlighted the role of subject matter in teaching,\(^\text{12}\) revealing that teachers need to have a rich knowledge base in order to be effective and distinctive. This base comprised knowledge of the subject matter, pedagogical content, other content, curriculum, learners, educational aims and general pedagogy (see also Fenstermacher, 1994). These researchers divided each of these components into smaller parts, putting a particular emphasis upon the concept of *pedagogical content knowledge*:

> the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organised, represented, and adapted to the diverse interest and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction (Shulman, 1987, p. 8).

This framework emphasis on the role of the subject matter in teaching made me pay more attention to how the subject matter is not only coherently organised and presented but also caused me to examine how subject matter affects teacher's emotions, status, socialisation,

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\(^{12}\) Shulman (1986a) coined the absence of subject matter in the research on teaching as a "missing paradigm" in research.
relationships and even health, particularly when the context challenges the subject matter epistemologically and ideologically and the teachers address these challenges alone.

On the other hand, the pedagogical content knowledge approach to researching teacher knowledge has some limitations for my inquiry. It appears more concerned with research-based knowledge than with the teachers, the owners of the knowledge. As such, it may also provide an excuse for denigrating teachers’ knowledge (Munby et al., in press). This perspective also does not explicitly deal with the ideological, moral, aesthetic, affective and religious dimensions of teachers’ knowledge and actions (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995; Hargreaves, in press; Noddings, 1992); it appears to suggest that teachers’ knowledge is objective, untouched by ideologies and interests (for critique, see Donmoyer, 1996; Sockett, 1987). It also fails to explain questions such as why teachers remain in teaching and try to excel despite humiliating life and work conditions. It falls short of explaining the religious and spiritual aspects of the teachers’ knowledge and the values of the community (Khan, 1997). Moreover, it downplays the role of other disciplines and larger contextual issues:

We argue that teachers are seldom interested in generic issues of school change or school climate (unless that becomes unbearable). What motivates them is the content they teach, the day to day contact with children concerning mathematics, science and language arts (Wideen et al., 1996, p. 200).

The personal practical knowledge tradition, on the other hand, repositions all the knowledge domains (e.g., knowledge of self, milieu, subject matter, curriculum and instruction) in the teacher’s experience. Various writers within this movement (e.g., Beattie, 1995; Clandinin, 1986; Elbaz, 1983, Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, 1995) depict teachers’ knowledge as expressed in a combined and integrated way. Personal practical knowledge forms “a moral, affective, and aesthetic way of knowing life’s educational situation”, state Connelly and Clandinin (1988, p. 59).

These authors further propose that teachers’ knowledge can never be reduced into propositional statements or scientific concepts. It is embodied in and manifested through practices, routines, spatial orderings, and aesthetic dimensions of experience. Clandinin (1986) warns that a full account of the understanding that a given teacher brings into the classroom requires an inquiry into the teacher’s whole life. Therefore, “the appropriate experience for reflection is then, not limited to practicum experience but, rather, to all experience that led to and contributed to the practicum experience” (Clandinin, 1986, p. 174). This insight guided me in my exploration and analysis of the teachers’ practices.
Another strength of this framework, as far as concerns my inquiry, lies in its great belief and confidence in teachers, and its sympathy with them as capable of knowing, creating knowledge and improving their practices. Teachers’ knowledge reveals itself in myriad ways; among them images and metaphors. Clandinin (1986) and Elbaz (1983) elaborated that teachers’ images pull together teachers’ beliefs, values, and feelings about how teaching should be. They mediate between thought and action, express teachers’ purposes, and inspire teachers’ actions; but they do not determine them. However, the majority of the images, metaphors and practices that teachers use are not personal; they are borrowed from culture, traditions, and other forms of propositional knowledge. Researchers often take these constructs’ implications for granted. Therefore Louden (1991) and Schon (1987) suggest reflection as tool for a critical engagement aimed at improving one’s practice.

The personal practical knowledge approach has provided another important insight: the notion of teachers as inevitable curriculum makers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, 1992; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). As they go through the realities, tensions and dilemmas teachers encounter in the classroom, they make decisions based on their values and beliefs about what is appropriate and relevant for their students’ present and future. In order to maintain their identity and carry out the mission of providing meaningful instruction, teachers create various types of stories for various audiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). This perspective helps one acknowledge the “storied” quality of teachers’ life and notice the moments when teachers exhibit agency, subverting prescribed schemas and orders from above through their various stories and shows for the various audiences. Thus, they can maintain their identity and navigate between what they think is important for their students and what is possible within the contextual realities. This approach’s major shortcomings, as to my inquiry, lie in its lack of attention to the larger contextual realities (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996).

Broadening the Basis for the Exploration of Teaching and Teacher Knowledge

Towards Exploring Teachers’ Life and Work

Another of my inquiry’s vital arguments states that the meanings (e.g., beliefs, knowledge) that teachers make of their classroom practices are embedded in, and accumulated over, their years of personal and professional experiences within the context’s geographical, systemic, political and socio-cultural conditions (Liston & Zeichner, 1991). Various approaches examine teaching from this broader perspective.
Professional Knowledge Perspective

This conceptualisation goes beyond what teaching is to what teachers do and who they are in the fuller educational, contextual, cultural and political sense (Goodson & Cole, 1994; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Little, 1987; Little & McLaughlin, 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Thiessen, 1993a; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999). Goodson and Cole (1994), Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) and Bascia and Thiessen (in press) have noticed the importance of studying teachers in the broadest possible sense of the context:

This [teacher’s] professional knowledge moves well beyond the personal, practical and pedagogical. To confine it here is to speak in a voice of empowerment, whilst ultimately disempowering. To define teachers’ knowledge in terms of its location within the confines of the classroom is to set limits on its potential use (Goodson & Cole, 1994. p. 86).

Tracing the importance of out-of-school interests in teachers’ life and work, along with the length of their experience and years of work, Goodson and Cole (1994) suggested “a range of knowledge of great importance that deals with the micro-political and contextual realities of school life” (p. 86).

This broader perspective, however, does not ignore the questions pertinent to classroom, teachers’ practices, voice and knowledge (Goodson, 1991). These authors suggest that an important part of the teacher’s professional knowledge includes a range of practical and pedagogical knowledge geared towards dealing with the complex dilemmas of classroom life. This knowledge stems from the teachers’ biographical, historical, local communal and larger social contexts (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Thiessen & Kilcher, 1991). Taking the notion of professional knowledge to its broadest sense, Eraut (1994) states that professional knowledge includes everything that professionals (in this case teachers) know, even if they are not always aware of it and sometimes can’t even articulate it.

While celebrating teacher, teacher’s knowledge and teacher’s voice, this perspective also suggests that curriculum making and teacher’s knowledge could take on multiple types or qualities and pursue various aims, not necessarily always ethically sound. Therefore, this perspective does not take teacher knowledge for granted (Eisner, 1991):

voices are not only heard but also engaged, reconciled and argued with. It is important to not only attend to the aesthetics of articulating teachers’ voices, but also to the ethics of what these voices articulate (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 62, emphasis mine).

Similarly, this perspective does not disregard the value of research-based or formal knowledge (Thiessen, 2000). However, it does suggest that one should approach research-based knowledge
not from a prescriptive and imposing stance but from one that sees this knowledge as tentative and problematic, and as an alternative and a resource (Thiessen, 2000). In so doing, this tradition suggests that teachers be allowed to play with research-based ideas, examining, challenging and even rejecting them (Anderson, 1997; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1998).

In this case, research-based knowledge can provide an alternative picture of classroom life, transcend the details of specific classrooms, challenge the individual teacher’s assumptions, and detect his or her biases. Research-based knowledge can also help teachers overcome the limits of their individual practice; it may present them with alternative competing voices and visions. It provides examined information for their better practical and pedagogical reasoning. As a result, research-based knowledge improves teaching and learning and enhances the teachers’ professional status (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Eraut, 1994; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Fenstermacher, 1994; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Munby et al., in press; Thiessen, 2000).

Thus, although they acknowledge knowledge’s importance for teaching, an increasing number of researchers argue that it does not suffice merely to see teachers as knowledgeable people, particularly in the sense of teaching confined to the classroom (Acker, 1999; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Helsby, 1999; Liston & Zeichner, 1991). Researchers increasingly understand that the issue of teacher knowledge, skills and competence, though important, may limit the scope of exploration and may even mislead researchers, policy makers, change agents and even teachers insofar as educational change is concerned (Goodson & Cole, 1994; Hargreaves, 1997; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). In fact, given opportunity, teachers put no limit to the sources from which they learn, the scope and domains of knowledge they accumulate, and the solutions they develop for the problems they encounter (Eraut, 1994; Thiessen & Kilcher, 1991).

Similarly, one finds it hard to agree with the assumption that the relation between the teachers’ knowledge and their teaching means that teachers do only what they know and want to do, (cf. see Clark & Peterson, 1986; Shavelson & Stern, 1983). Teachers’ learning and knowledge production occurs constantly as they encounter daily challenges and problems, rendering knowledge use and production deeply integrated (Eraut, 1994). In fact, if the ultimate question of education is about teachers’ and students’ unconfined learning and growth, then educational research should also include in its notion of teaching quality, in addition to their behaviours and knowledge, teachers’ devotion, commitment, care, emotions, hope, passion, relations, context, culture and spirituality (Britzman, 1991; Clark, 1995; Coleman, 1998; Goodson & Cole, 1994; Hargreaves, 1995, 1997; Hargreaves, 1998; Lieberman & Miller, 1999;
Miller, 1988; Noddings, 1992). Putnam and Borko (1993) endorse the idea that knowledge use essentially constitutes not only a mental, but rather a socially-constructed phenomenon: "...rather than viewing knowledge and thinking as existing within the mind of an individual, cognition is considered to be interactively situated in a physical and social context" (p. 68).

Given this, the majority of education researchers increasingly concur in the viewpoint that context is crucial to understanding any educational phenomena, including the practitioners' knowledge (Bacchus, 1996; Britzman, 1991; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Fullan, 1991; Fuller & Burke, 1994; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999). Neither knowledge, nor practice, nor the knower and practitioner can be deeply understood without a context, which in my study implies the biographical, cultural, geographical, political and material backgrounds and reasons. Contexts are crucial for understanding what teachers know and what they do not know, why teachers act the way they do, and why they often contradict what they value and wish to promote. Context is also important to seeing the public, historical and other deeper reasons behind the "private" and personal dilemmas and tensions that teachers experience in their work and life.

Like teachers and their knowledge, contexts also are complex changing social constructions (Geerts, 1973, Nieto, 1998). The education system's and community's cultures and structures, the traditions, as well as the larger societal, geographical and geo-political context within which schools and teachers operate, receive and apply policies, simultaneously assist and constrain their work, life, and actions in and outside the classroom (Blasé, 1997; Hargreaves, 1997; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Helsby, 1999; Louden, 1991; Robertson 1996; Weiler, 1998).

Sikes et al. (1985), found three levels of contextual constraints on teachers' life and work: societal (e.g., large-scale socio-economic conditions, general political and cultural climate), institutional (e.g., the teacher role, the pupils, the subject) and personal (e.g., family, personal biography). Hargreaves (1978) further identified a range of societal factors that impinge upon teachers' work. These include: (a) contradictory goals of the education system in capitalist society (for example, educating children to their maximum potential versus sorting them according to the need of market economy and reproduction of existing social relations; (b) material constraints, such as funding, the kind of school buildings, books and teaching aids, teacher-pupil ratio, and (c) change of education ideologies, for example, moving from
progressivism to "back to basics", or shifting from comprehensive education to streaming. Woods (1977, cited in Pollard, 1982) suggests that these constraints' negative effects:

put at risk...not only [the teacher's] physical, mental and nervous safety and well-being, but also his continuance in professional life, his future prospects, his professional identity, his way of life, his status, his self-esteem (p. 28).

However, these forces do not always have a direct and adversary impact. The school's culture and the teachers' values and abilities mediate, contest, and often reshape their influence. Sikes et al. (1985) concluded that teachers use private and public strategies to reshape the contextual forces' influence:

Teachers do work under a number of given structural constraints, but they perceive them differently, and they react to them differently on the basis of their personality, biography and their work context...individual actors make meaningful action for themselves to deal with the situations in which they find themselves (p. 98).

Sikes et al. further suggest that teachers use private and collective strategies to cope with these constrains so as "to gain their own [personal] ends... and to gain certain advantages for the group [of teachers] or the profession as a whole" (1985, p. 72). Acker (1999), Helsby (1999), Pollard (1982) and Woods (1990) also stress the active and constructive agency of teachers. They state that teachers do not simply play victim to these constraints, but actively re-construct the challenges to promote what they value (see also Britzman, 1991; Pollard et al., 1994). Several researchers have cited three types of teachers' responses to these realities. The first kind is strategic compliance; here teachers accept an order but maintain private reservations. The second, internalised adjustment, occurs when teachers not only accept changes but also view them as right and work to promote them. The third response is strategic redefinition; here, the teachers work individually and collectively in order to transform changes and policies to serve their own vision and goals (Lacey, 1977 cited in Sykes et al., 1985, p. 12). The nature of teachers' interaction depends on their awareness of these forces, the quality of their skills and abilities to deal with problems, the kind of values they have, and the way they are organised (Acker, 1999; Fullan, 1993; Helsby, 1999).

This perspective, focusing on an integrated study of teachers' life and work calls for reconceptualising the nature of the teachers' professional image. Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) spell out several variants of professionalism (classical professionalism, flexible professionalism, practical professionalism, extended professionalism and complex professionalism). An important observation within this account is moving from the notion of
knowledge as the basis of professionalism to *the complexity of the work* as the basis for professional recognition.

Lieberman and Miller (1999), Fullan (1993) and Hargreaves (1994) have argued that the challenges of teachers’ work are gradually becoming more complex in nature, wider in scope and deeper in effect. Therefore, to successfully teach in the new millennium requires the abilities to deal with conflicts intelligently, think systematically, and include several factors and stakeholders’ perspectives in the process of understanding and changing teaching. The new realities of teaching also require the ability to work with others, use their ideas and share one’s own ideas with them, whether they are above or below one. One must also keep one’s perspective and hope amid confusion and uncertainty (cf. Fullan & Hargreaves, 1998). Avalos (1992, building on Habermas, 1968) suggests that teachers in developing countries in particular need to integrate technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge. Gay (2000) and Ladson-Billings (1995) add that, in order to develop a culturally sensitive pedagogy in new times teachers need to have an elaborate critical socio-political knowledge.

Given that we live in post-modern conditions (Hargreaves, 1994), Fullan (1994) suggests a range of knowledge domains necessary for teachers to address the challenges of their increasingly complex roles. Fullan’s framework rests upon two fundamentally important concepts: (a) the teacher as a potential leader or change agent and (b) the moral purpose of teaching (see also Fullan, 1993). His conceptualisation embraces the fundamental qualities of all approaches to understanding teaching and teacher mentioned in this chapter. According to Fullan (1994), to fulfil their roles in an increasingly complex world, teachers need six domains of knowledge: (a) knowledge and skills important for daily teaching and learning, including new pedagogies and new approaches to assessment and technology; (b) knowledge, commitment and skills in working with others; (c) knowledge of context (i.e., society, family, cultures); (d) knowledge of how to learn and inquire continuously; (e) knowledge of change (e.g., initiate, manage, implement an innovation); and (f) knowledge of moral and social purpose. The moral aspect of teachers’ knowledge is an overriding domain related to making a difference in all students’ lives, particularly disadvantaged students. This conceptualisation has value for my study because it inclusively captures the realities inside and outside the classroom and emphasises teaching as an ethical responsibility. Most important, it talks not about a valueless and decadent post-modern “educator”, but about a public-oriented, critical, socially active and

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13 See Thiessen (1993a) and Hargreaves & Hargreaves (1996) for a review of literature on the notion of professionalism.

Conceptualising "teachers for social change", Cochran-Smith (1998) furthers the above argument, suggesting that we need to move beyond viewing teaching merely technical and practical towards regarding "teaching as political activity and embrace social change as part of the job" (Cochran-Smith, 1998, p. 917). Teachers for social change learn and teach their students and community to understand and challenge inequities, confront racism and work for a more democratic society. To actively contribute to social change and make their students become active citizens, teachers need to have a grasp of some fundamental questions about the relations between education and society. These include knowledge questions (e.g., what knowledge and framework guide the work of new and experienced teachers who teach for social change?), politics questions (e.g., what ideologies and political frameworks guide the work of new and experienced teachers?), practice questions (e.g., what are the features of pedagogy and practice of the teachers committed to social change), and training questions (e.g., what are the characteristics of pre-service teacher education programs that enhance teachers' efforts to teach for social change? Cochran-Smith, 1998, p. 921). Together with that developed by Fullan, this framework helps us to see teachers’ expected change agents’ and intellectual capacities in less-developed rural communities (Becker, 1996; Dove, 1986, 1995; Watson, 1983).

Thiessen (1993a) and Thiessen and Anderson (1999) have looked at the notion of the teacher’s professional life from a different perspective. Instead of or besides considering teachers’ knowledge as a process or product, these authors have focused on the sources and contexts of teachers’ learning, life and work. They suggest at least three contexts: “in the classrooms”, “in the corridors” and “as part of the communities”: “In the classrooms” teachers learn with and from the students and focus mainly is on learning from students’ learning; focus of learning centres on professional knowledge. “In the corridors”, teachers work with and learn from adults, primarily inside the schools; here they emphasise organisational learning; “As part of the communities”, teachers, students, administrators and other school personnel interact with groups and organisations outside the school to improve and extend the school’s capacity. Here, they focus on socio-political knowledge. In addition to changing the focus of teacher learning, these various contexts alter the nature of teachers’ roles. Besides becoming expert pedagogues, teachers also become:

...community brokers, organisational learners, change agents, social advocates and policy makers to enhance their possibilities in the classroom. Learning to work across the three
arenas of practice transforms the job of teachers and the nature of their education (Thiessen 1998, p. 21; see also Thiessen, 1993; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999).

Significantly, this approach focuses on connecting learning, knowledge, learner and teacher to the various contextual forces and cultures. These contexts create communities of learning and growth for the teachers (Little & McLaughlin, 1993; Miles & Lieberman, 1999; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999). This framework suggests that the quality and scope of teacher knowledge and teachers' ways of knowing deeply depend upon facilitating and impeding forces in the context. Further, previous research has mainly viewed the contexts such as school or community separately rather than interconnectedly. Yet the notion of where”, the culture and structures of this “where”, and how teachers view, interact and reshape this “where”, are as fundamental to understanding teaching and teachers as is the content of their knowledge (Hargreaves, 1998 and also Hargreaves, in press, Thiessen & Anderson, 1999).

Within this contextual or “geographical” approach, researchers have increasingly emphasised the connection between home and school, an important yet under-researched area (Acker, 1992; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Pajak & Blasé, 1986; Spencer, 1998). Hargreaves (1997) points out that this under-attention has flawed the life-and-work studies; these have tended to “explain the relationship between teacher's lives and work in a one sided way: with life affecting work but not vice versa, while many teachers’ personal problems may be rooted in teachers’ work in the school and classroom” (1996, p. 82). In fact, the majority of what one could call teacher knowledge or life-and-work studies either separate life from work, or pay very little attention to the teachers' life (Elkund, 1993); they pay even less attention to the teachers' own voices about their home and work conditions (Casey, 1992; Nelson, 1992).

Research increasingly reveals that teachers' marital and family commitments have profoundly influenced their teaching (Nelson, 1992). Schooling has created “triple shifts' of work for some teachers, including teaching, childcare and housework (Acker, 1992). In many cases, home and school have intensified teachers' life and health problems, and increased their sense of guilt about being unable to fulfil their jobs adequately. Teachers, particularly women teachers, have sacrificed their homes and children for their schools and work (Acker, 1992; Baird, 1976; Spenser, 1986; Weiler, 1988, 1998).

Critical Perspectives

Further building on Fullan's, Goodson’s, Hargreaves’, Lieberman’s, Thiessen’s and others’ efforts to reconceptualise the image of the teacher as a professional and understand
teaching as a contextual phenomenon, an increasing group of scholars with a critical perspective have gone beyond stating that teachers’ work is complex (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 1999) dilemmatic (Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Lampert, 1984), paradoxical (Nias, 1988; Sizer, 1984), conflictual (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986), uncertain (Huberman, 1998; Jackson, 1968; Lortie, 1975), and gendered (Acker, 1992; Apple, 1988), to emphasise that teachers’ work is inherently political.14 Teaching, and by extension schooling, constitute fundamentally political endeavours, because they epitomise the organisation of experiences that promote the interests and goals of certain segments of the society at the expense of others (Britzman, 1991). As Sultana puts it:

Whatever we do in the classroom, even when we are not conscious of it, reflects a particular theory or set of beliefs about teaching. We are never neutral, but are constantly making choices in favour of presenting and promoting one worldview instead of another (1990, cited in Smyth, 1998, p. 1116).

Britzman subsequently suggested that to understand teaching requires situating it:

in relationship to one’s biography, present circumstances, deep commitments, affective investments, social contexts and conflicting political discourses about what is education and who is a teacher. Within this dialogical understanding, teaching can be reconceptualised as a struggle for voice between the tensions among what has preceded, what is confronted, and what one desires—the contradictory realities, negotiations, and dependency and struggle within teachers’ work and life (1991, p. 8, see also Cole & Knowles, 2000).

Emphasising the larger contextual forces and reconceptualising teaching as work (Acker, 1999; Connell, 1985), critical researchers argue that teachers engage in political actions. They engage in political work though their pedagogical, curricular and evaluative work with the students, through relations with the parents, colleagues, and administration, and through their roles as citizens, persons and workers in the local, national and global communities. Teachers are political workers, regardless of whether they are passive or active, members of a political party or autonomous, aware of being political or not. They are involved in political endeavour, whether they take a conservative or radical position and whether they serve dominant or subordinate interests (Ginsburg & Kamat, 1995; Giroux, 1988; McLaren, 1989; Young & Whitty, 1977). In fact, due to their ambiguous location in the societal power relations, teachers often end up serving the interests of both (Apple, 1990).

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The discourse of critical theorists has evolved into several streams, including the post-modern existentialists (e.g., Greene, 1977, 1988; Diamond & Mullen, 2000), reconceptualists (e.g., Pinar, 1981; Pinar & Bowers, 1992), and care theorists (e.g., Noddings, 1984, 1992, 1995). Yet all continue to unravel the liberal and conservative agendas for perpetuation of racist, capitalist, white, masculine domination (c.f. Robertson, 1996, 1998; Smyth, 1998) and to break the vicious circle of oppression, exclusion and marginalization (Freire, 1970). In so doing, they aim to transform society into a space where the modernist traditions of social justice, equality, reasoning, and freedom become further enriched by post-modernist celebration of particularities and differences (Aronovitz & Giroux, 1991; Elkund, 1993). This critical literature has produced several insights, particular to the nature of teachers’ work.

First, teaching historically has been considered as low status work, because it attracted individuals from the lower middle classes, and as an interim career path for young entrants. That teachers’ income has been steadily decreasing, has augmented this view. Teachers often work in poorly heated, ill equipped and inadequately maintained organisations (schools), with lack of access to teaching materials and laboratory equipment; They also suffer vulnerability to all kinds of attacks and abuses from the stakeholders, often including their students (Carlson, 1987; Denisova, 1990; Dove, 1986; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Goodlad, 1990; Melnikov, 1997; Oliveira & Farrell, 1994; Rust & Dalin, 1990; Sikes et al., 1985; Sprague, 1992).

Second, teaching has been and more and more becoming women’s work, while the administrators continue to be mostly men (Acker, 1992; Apple, 1993; Noddings, 1992; Weiler, 1988). This order assumes that women teachers can do the technical work and follow instructions, but cannot participate in leadership, because they lack the intellectual, physical and emotional strength needed to work as leaders. It views their mothering and caring qualities as signs of their weakness rather than strength.

Third, teaching has become more technologised; teachers, like factory workers on an assembly line, get assigned only a small part of the whole job. The system separates them from the total process of curriculum development and from questions of what to teach and why. It standardises and packages curricula somewhere else and measures the results of the teaching process through standardised tests, leaving teachers the role of implementers of ready-made packages (Apple, 1986; Giroux, 1988; Giroux & McLaren, 1986). This process further turns teachers into managers of information and controllers of behaviours; it makes their relations with students authoritarian, often insulting to the students and humiliating for the teachers (Fuller &
Clarke, 1994; Helsby, 1999; Guthrie, 1990; Lortie, 1975; Sizer, 1984; McLaren, 1989; Robertson, 1998; Tabulawa, 1998; Wells et al., 1998). Training passive, docile and obedient citizens has become more important than developing critical thinkers.

Fourth, the executive and managerial expectations imposed on teachers from above and the fragmentation of their jobs further deskill them. They follow external prescriptions from the teachers' guides and other packaged material. Any rhetoric about adapting curricula to local realities rarely bears fruit, due to the demands of examination, and the intensification and extensification of teachers' life and work. Teachers gradually lose the confidence, skills and mental habits to become creative, make sound decisions, and to organise meaningful learning and experiences; they become dependent on external resources solutions and minds (Apple, 1993; Connell, 1985; Wells, 1992).

Fifth, teachers' work has become furthermore intensified (Apple, 1988, Hargreaves, 1994); "intensification represents one of the most tangible ways in which the work privileges of the educational workers are eroded" (Apple, 1988, p. 105). The concept of "intensification", borrowed from Larson (1980), implies (a) reduced time for relaxation during the working day, (d) reduced time for retooling one's skills and knowledge; (c) chronic and persistent overload, which reduces areas of personal discretion, (d) deprivation of involvement in curriculum planning and conceptualising, thus (e) total dependence on externally-produced materials and expertise, and (f) reduction of the quality of service, as corners are cut to save time (Hargreaves, 1994, pp. 118-119).

Teachers are thus caught in constant dilemmas (Berlak & Berlak, 1981, Lampert, 1984). Nias (1988) concluded that to be a teacher means essentially to live with paradoxes, such as being in control while feeling exhausted and stressed or loving teaching while constantly looking for other jobs. The teachers in Nias' (1988) study faced three major difficulties. They could not become the teachers they wanted to be without first accepting the need also to behave in ways they found disagreeable; They had to encounter children as individuals and care only for them when they were also aware of and valued themselves; and they could not be fulfilled by their work unless they allowed themselves to be depleted by its demands. Similarly, Sizer's (1984) "Horace Smith" compromised his high ideals due to such teaching conditions as inadequate time, too many students and lack of care from those who should care: "No one seems upset. Just let it

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15 Extensification, a construct I borrowed from Hargreaves (in press), implies the increasing enlargement of range of teachers' work.
all continue, a conspiracy, a toleration of a chasm between the necessary and the provided, and acceptance of big rhetoric and little reality” (Sizer, 1984, p. 21).

Sixth, teachers’ work is increasingly isolated and privatised, with less time for professional talk with colleagues. Lortie’s (1975) Schoolteacher revealed how teachers become implementers and servants of outside groups’ pressures; in resistance to the increasing pressures in and outside the classroom, they choose conservatism, present-orientatedness and individualism. Teachers do not use available time for professional talk, while formally contrived “forums” for collaboration, with their culture of competition, jealousy, and intolerance, create ill feeling, discontent and alienation among the teachers (Anderson, 1992; Carlson, 1987; Hargreaves, 1992; Hargreaves, in press; Little, 1987, 1993). All these deleterious pressures on their work led the teachers to:

become so fixed in our daily activities, so detached and objective about our work, so indifferent to the almost routine injustice of our social and economic system that we will fail to recognise moral struggles as they represent themselves to us in and outside the classroom. We are never free of the danger of becoming too narrowly focused on the task at hand, or of assuming that we are value-neutral in our selection and execution of objectives, or of holding a limited view of consequences as more than the finite goals and objectives we set for students, recognising that consequences of our teaching are not student’s outcomes on curriculum performance measures, but outcomes related to the quality of their lives (Bolin, 1987, p. 220-21, in Sprague, 1992, p. 192).

Trying to understand how teachers both contributed to and resisted the socialisation of schoolchildren to the values of the capitalist society, Connell mentioned that the nature of “teachers’ work:

... is difficult to specify. The definition of their task can expand almost without limit, and their work could be intensified indefinitely. But it is governed by strong constraints—such as the nature of the classroom and other settings, class sizes, the timetable, which embody particular social relations and policies (1985, p. 86).

Teachers’ work is influenced by the competitive curriculum developed from university disciplines. The structures of the school, particularly the curriculum demands, further divide students from each other, teachers from students, and teachers from each other across many lines, including subjects, gender and class. This manufactured division weakens the teachers’ power to influence the school reform and to share in decision-making over their work. Connell in response suggests closer relations with the students and a curriculum that reflects the interests of the majority of the students.

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16 Berlak & Berlak (1981) spell out 16 types of dilemmas that the teachers face. They divide them into three sets: (a) control, (b) curriculum, and (c) societal.
Critical research contends that all these downward influences of the qualities of teachers’ work are socially, contextually, politically and culturally manufactured. Sprague (1992), for example, connects disempowering of teachers to the general proletarianisation of work in late capitalism (in my study, this is similar to “peasantisation” and “merchantisation”17). He also links technologising of education with technical rationality, which tries to model the entire social structure in the image of business organisations. Privatisation keeps teachers separated so that they do not find common cause for their misery with other professions and create alliances and unions to fight back (Acker, 1992; Ginsburg, 1995). Given these demoralising conditions and their deleterious effects on teachers’ commitment, relations and emotions (Hargreaves, 1998, also in press), one can hardly imagine that bright people will enter or stay in teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1993).

Several researchers have analysed the political dimensions of teachers’ work through the classroom, workplace culture and micro-politics, professional unions, and community at large (e.g., Acker, 1999; Helsby, 1999; Ginsburg & Kamat, 1995; Sultana, 1991). They have emphasised that each of these arenas affects teachers’ work in different ways and teachers behave differently in each; neither do teachers form a homogenous group nor is each teacher a monolith, as far as politics is concerned. These researchers ask, therefore, “not whether teachers should be political actors, but to what ends, by what means, and in whose interests teachers should engage in political activity”(Ginsburg 1995, p. 71).

The critical researchers have also examined the role of the teachers and schools. The social reproduction analysis viewed schools as culturally replicating their societies and structurally promoting the status quo. Teachers, according to this “correspondence theory” perpetuate unequal and unjust social relations and act as powerless, passive servants of the state, transmitting existing values and socialising their students and their communities into traditional norms (Althusser, 1971; Bernstein, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Bourdeau & Passeron, 1977; see Osborne for a review, 1991, pp. 101-102). This largely deterministic view portrayed the reproduction of injustices as something natural and immutable, because it happened covertly, though hegemony; it took place “democratically” and “consensually”, through existing social forms and structures that work by persuasion (Gramsci, cited in McLaren, 1989, p. 173) and

17 By “peasantisation” and “merchantisation” I mean forcing teachers to become primarily, or even completely farmers and merchants rather than teachers in order to survive.
through the “hidden curriculum”, the undeclared but real outcomes of the schooling process (Apple, 1990; McLaren, 1989).

Giroux (1981) deconstructs the idea of “technical rationality”, a top-down, outside-in approach to curriculum, which isolates teachers from conceiving the curriculum and delegates them to serve as managers and technical executors. Technical rationality produces curriculum that promotes competition, efficiency and adaptability; it monitors and supplies this curriculum through standardised testing, inspection, control, computer technology and TV programming. The state, and increasingly the global corporate forces have employed these strategies to control teachers and ensure the perpetuation of the existing class, gender and ethnic relations across and within generations and nations (Bacchus, 1983; Fuller & Clarke, 1994; Hargreaves, 1998; Robertson, 1996, 1998; Smyth, 1998). Caught in this web, teachers have no opportunity to view education as the site of an ongoing struggle of interests and values; rather they hold a depoliticised, liberal view of education, which sees issues of segregation, streaming, failure, and dropping out either temporary or as a result of the students’ laziness or heredity (Hursh, 1995; McLaren, 1989).

Gradually, the critical theorists reconceptualised schooling and education as sites of struggle over meaning, power and relations (Apple, 1990; Giroux, 1984, 1989; McLaren, 1989; Wexler, 1987; Willis, 1977). They reinterpreted structures, such as schools, curriculum, teachers and students, as contradictory social constructions rather than as given, natural, one-sided and fixed. Likewise, this scholarship revisited these structures’ and the larger community’s culture as socially-constructed, changing and contradictory. These contradictions and paradoxes gave opportunities for change and alternative visions. Further, teachers were not passive victims of the external constraints (Acker, 1999; Hargreaves, 1978; Helsby, 1999, Pollard, 1982); they could promote or challenge the status quo (e.g., racist, sexist and colonialist attitudes) in the classroom or in the process of curriculum development. Teachers have achieved effective ways to mount such challenges through their active individual and collective work (Acker, 1999; Helsby, 1999). In the school, teachers enmeshed themselves in micropolitics, tactically and strategically using power and position to achieve their goals (Blasé, 1997).

Thus, the critical perspectives revisit teachers as agents of resistance, transformation and change. Whether public or private, schools, teachers and students all have a degree of autonomy.

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and freedom; total control of their behaviours and thinking is impossible (Apple, 1988; Connell, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, Ginsburg & Kamat, 1995; Giroux & McLaren, 1989; Ozga, 1988; Smyth, 1998). Teachers are not merely “state functionaries” but have some degree of autonomy. This autonomy:

will not necessarily be used to further the ends of the state apparatus. Rather than those who work there fitting themselves to the requirements of the institutions, there are a number of very important ways in which the institution has to take account of the interests of the employees and fit itself to them. It is here for instance that we may look for the sources of the alleged inertia of educational systems and schools, that is to say what appears as inertia is not some immutable characteristics of bureaucracies but is due to various groups within them having more immediate interests than the pursuit of the organisations goals (Apple, 1988, p. 104).

Within this reconceptualisation, theorists have proposed the notions of “transformative intellectual” (Aronovitz & Giroux, 1986, Giroux, 1988) and “public intellectual” (Aronovitz & Giroux, 1991; Pennycook, 1992) as an image for teachers. Teachers as intellectuals, as change agents, view the reality as socially and politically-constructed; they examine the realities of their life and work and reshape them to contribute to the creation of a democratic, just society. Such an image of teachers becomes more important as we find ourselves in an increasingly globalised and complex world (see Chapter 4; also Cochran-Smith, 1998; Hargreaves, 1994; Fullan, 1994; Robertson, 1998; Wells et al., 1998).

Aronovitz and Giroux (1985, pp. 33-34) and Giroux (1988) emphasised that teachers exhibit the qualities of intellectuals because they ground their work in the quality of mind “characterised as having a creative, critical and contemplative relationship to the world of ideas.” In the classroom and school, the critical perspectives (and, some earlier approaches to professionalism, e.g., personal practical and professional knowledge) go beyond seeing teaching as only transmissional. First, teachers no longer monopolise the front and centre of classroom action; they become less instructors and more facilitators, though never totally one or the other. Second, they reject the image of the students as blank slates or empty vessels; rather, the students actively participate in and construct their learning. Third, classrooms must be open and democratic, characterised by sharing, trust, and mutual respect among students and between students and teacher. Teachers in this tradition regard themselves as helpers of the students to grow and develop in the ways useful for them and the society. The key goal is students’ empowerment in the sense of becoming independent, taking charge of their lives and helping others grow. Fourth, these teachers treat curricula flexibly and not as something that they must impose on the students. These traditions see a good lesson as one that raises problems and

In the community, the teachers' broader social role obligates them to encourage the possibility of inquiry for all kinds of people (Freire, 1983; Giroux, 1988). Their work with their students and communities engages them in a dialogue about the relations between knowledge and power. Their community could include educators, writers, environmental activists, members of groups engaged in alternative development programs, human rights activists, or members of different groups engaged in struggles over gender, ethnic, linguistic and religious politics (Simon, 1992; Smyth, 1998; Zeichner, 1992). Teaching for true democracy requires that teachers make knowledge, culture, context and authorities all open to question, treat students as equal, and work towards a better society (Ayers, 1993; Dewey, 1938, Noddings, 1992). Discussing the nature of authority in critical theory, Giroux (1989) suggests the importance of an emancipatory authority; an authority that is grounded in democratic principles, justice, equity, humanity, hope, and co-operation and which backs the educators struggle against injustices.

However, a teacher as an intellectual, political and cultural worker is neither a dogmatic revolutionary nor a position-seeking politician (Giroux, 1988; Penycook, 1992; Simon, 1992). As an intellectual, this teacher works with both the weak and powerful to enable them to examine the history of their lives, the contexts and the systems that contributed to making them. Such a teacher enables them to realise that there cannot be democracy and peace when one enjoys privileges at the expense of exploitation, manipulation and marginalization of the other. Being an intellectual educator means awareness of the long and short-term implications of one's vulnerabilities and strengths and one's ethics and actions for self, the students and the community.

Several researchers provide cases when teachers and administrators exhibit the qualities of curriculum makers, reformers, and intellectuals (Ayers, 1993; Bascia and Thiessen (in press); Britzman, 1991; Graig, 1999 in Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; McLaren, 1989; Sultana, 1991; Woods, 1995). The teachers in these cases negotiate their agenda across and in between competing forces in order to provide meaningful learning for their students and contribute to the development of their schools and communities.

Critical theorists suggest that until they become aware of the political power of their role, teachers will allow whatever political forces dominate the school hierarchy to co-opt and
domesticate their work. Only when they recognise their distinctive place in the culture and embrace an emancipatory vision can they begin to function as transformative intellectuals.

The critical theorists have made important contributions to identifying the influence of the political, cultural and structural forces that shape teaching, teachers and schooling. Critical post-modern educators (e.g., Diamond & Mullen, 2000; Greene, 1973, 1988; Grumet, 1988); and curriculum reconceptualists (e.g., Bowers, 1987; Pinar, 1981) suggest that examining teachers’ lives has equal importance in understanding teaching and reshaping one’s self, one’s actions and one’s context. Butt et al. put it as follows:

Teachers’ knowledge then is grounded in, and shaped by the stream of experiences that arise out of person/context interactions and existential responses to those experiences. The knowledge and predisposition to act in certain ways in the present moment is grounded as much, if not more so, in life history, than just current contexts and actions; it is autobiographical in character. It follows then that autobiography forms one major mode of inquiry into teachers’ knowledge (1992, p. 68).

This examination is vital for teachers’ coming to terms with their values and beliefs and becoming the subjects and authors of their own lives. Without developing critical subjectivity, reflexivity and authorship over one’s life, one cannot and should not try to empower and liberate others to choose their ways of living. As they examine their past and come to know that the familial and social contexts helped make them who they are, teachers will awaken and begin to reconstruct themselves and the surrounding realities so as to actualise themselves, promote what they value and help others to develop themselves (Diamond & Mullen, 2000, Huberman, 1998, Knowles, 1994). This suggestion of examining one’s life, values and historical past overcomes some of the shortcomings of the critical theory, particularly its preoccupation with empowering the marginalized through “privileged knowledge.” The drive to provide such knowledge often implied treating everyone as equal and offering everyone the same kind of curriculum (Bowers, 1987; Noddings, 1992, 1995; Pinar & Bowers, 1992). Given that the privileged knowledge in a society often confines itself to core subjects, calls for the provision of a privileged knowledge curriculum for everyone raises serious ethical doubts (Noddings, 1992, 1995). The ethics of caring enjoin helping people grow in ways that help them realise their full potential, not in narrow training. Furthermore, providing access to privileged knowledge, devoid of ethics and social responsibility and accompanied by power and position, may in fact extend inequality. It creates
arrogant oppressors and insular intellectuals, rather than contribute to democracy and break the circle of oppression as the critical theorists so avidly desire.

Alternatively, Noddings (1992) articulates an educational vision, according to which education should centre on the tenets of care for oneself and others, including whether intimate or distant. This also includes care for non-human life, for the human-made environment of objects and instruments, and for ideas. Ethics, for Noddings, essentially comprises several interrelated elements. First comes modelling caring; teachers need to show what caring means through their actions. Second, teachers need to engage students in a dialogue about caring, because “dialog is such an essential part of caring that we could not model caring without engaging in it” (Noddings, 1995, p. 190); this dialog includes search for a critique of one’s own actions. Next comes confirmation; teachers must find positive aspects in others’ actions and motives and build up on them.

Critical, caring and constructive post-modern pedagogues and scholars all provide useful ways to understand teaching and teachers as contextually and historically embedded phenomena, so vividly emerged in the present study. The contextual influences include cultural, material, structural, political, geographic, biographical and personal factors. All these constitute enabling and impeding forces for education, teaching, teachers and teachers’ life and work. Contexts, like teachers, are social constructions; as such, they are complex, dynamic and amenable to changes.

Summary

I have attempted to bring together insights from several domains of literature on teaching, teacher knowledge and teacher’s life and work in the context of developed and developing countries. Where possible I have pointed out their value and limitations for my study. In addition, I would like to make several general comments about the above mentioned frameworks.

Voyaging through selected literature about teacher effectiveness, classroom research, teacher knowledge and images of the teacher from various perspectives, I ultimately have suggested that a critical life-and-work approach to teaching, teacher and teacher knowledge best suits my inquiry in general terms. Taken together, the approaches in this review have provided a holistic portrayal, which fundamentally and finally approaches the teacher as a total human being.

19 Empowering or empowerment, according to critical theory, means enabling the silenced to speak, develop a sense of agency, become subjects of their lives and destinies, become active and take initiative. For teachers, it means investing them with the right to participate in school goals and policies (Sprague, 1992, p. 189).
and as both product and producer of social relations. The review also revealed that teaching as a complex activity that includes technical, professional, aesthetic, intellectual and political aspects.

On the one hand, a number of studies have mainly focused on teachers’ impactful behaviours and knowledge pertinent to those classrooms and teachers, little considering realities outside the classroom or the teachers’ life histories and contexts. On the other hand, the growing narrative, sociological and critical literature brings to the forefront the realities and forces that lie outside the classroom and school but have strong (for some writers almost deterministic) effects on teachers’ behaviours and knowledge. Few studies seem to have tried to bring the two aspects, namely the classroom dynamic and the context, into a mutual interaction.

I believe one can get a more comprehensive understanding of teaching and teachers’ professional life by paying more attention to the interaction between the two domains as defined in these various perspectives. This study takes this approach; it explores the links and interactions between the realities inside and outside the classroom, how they influence the teachers, where do these influences come from, how the teachers perceive and mediate them in trying to provide meaningful instruction inside the classroom and in fulfilling their expanded roles in the school and community.

Also important, most of the researchers, particularly the behaviourists and cognitive psychologists, have developed their conclusions in experimental, simulated and decontextualised situations, rather than in actual classrooms. Most on-site studies on teaching have been produced in urban classrooms in Western industrialised countries, leaving our understanding of classroom and teacher knowledge, in the context of rural, mountainous and developing countries, meagre and wanting (Clark, 1986). My study will reveal how well these various Western characterisations of teacher and teachers’ knowledge reflect or distort the practices of the teachers in the classrooms, schools and communities of rural and mountainous Tajikistan. In other words, I shall extend the Western industrial literature by both using it and testing it in a post-Soviet, Central Asian, politically unstable, economically poor, ideologically transitional context of the rural and mountainous Tajikistan.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

I used a qualitative case study, which would focus on the teachers’ practices, life and work. I collected data through extensive classroom and context observations, in-depth interviews, document analysis and reflective field notes. The primary sites of data collection included the districts of Shugnan, Murghab and Wanj\textsuperscript{20} of MBAP in the period between April and December 1999. The sample comprised a core of principal participants, three groups (one on each site) of secondary participants and the wider education community at each site.

I shall first explain the rationale for using the qualitative paradigm, qualitative case studies, and life history, then describe the participants of this study and spell out the data collection methods and procedures. Next, I explain the data analysis, including how I addressed validity and generalisability. Last, I discuss the ethics of my inquiry. Due to the qualitative, life-history character of this inquiry, and to myself being an indigenous researcher with certain privileges and reputation, and to the dramatic nature of the participants’ experiences, the process of research became as significant as its outcomes. The thesis thus integrates the tensions, dilemmas, ethics and politics of the study’s process.

Approach: Qualitative Life History Case Study

I chose the qualitative paradigm because I assume that social reality, including education, is a complex and dynamic human socio-historical construction (Berger & Luckman, 1967). We cannot detach and objectify ourselves from the reality that provides meaning to our actions and thoughts. But we can reflect on it by acknowledging that we (a) both produce and are produced by that socially-constructed reality, dialectically integrated with it, (b) are bounded by personal, contextual, educational, temporal, geographical, ideological and political needs, purposes and interests; and therefore (c) have only subjective and limited understanding (Bogdan & Bicklen, 1992; Eisner, 1993; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Jacob, 1987). These premises mean that we cannot neutrally explore social reality with the aims of finding laws, rules and regulations to provide the solutions to educational problems; we would deceive ourselves in attempting it.

Qualitative research stresses that any phenomenon, including teaching, has meaning only within a context, which illuminates its history, development, main relationships, underlying assumptions, current location and future trends (Hathaway, 1995; Merriam, 1988; Smith, 1983). It attempts to participate in the participants’ lives and work and represent their voices.

\textsuperscript{20} There are seven districts in the Badakhshan province of Tajikistan. The others are Roshan, Ishkashim, Roshtqal’a and Dorvaz.
We cannot provide a comprehensive and contextualized account of any social reality with (a) its complex, multidimensional dynamics, (b) a greater appreciation of alternative ways of knowing, expressing and acting upon reality, and (c) sensitivity to the perspectives of the local participants, without a rich, detailed and thick description of the phenomena (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1994).

Case Study

Case study, is “the most appropriate format” for school-based research and as “the most memorable and meaningful” endeavour to teachers (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Stake, 1994). It explores a phenomenon naturalistically, without experimenting upon it. It tries to retain the meaningful, holistic characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 1984, p. 14). It concentrates upon a particular case or cases and their relations over a defined period of time. The case study approach has these characteristics (cf. 1999; Hammersley, 1989; Merriam, 1988; Schriewer & Holmes, 1990):

1. Concern with rich and vivid description of events;
2. Chronological narrative of events;
3. Internal debate between description and analysis of the events;
4. Focus upon particular actors or actors and their perceptions;
5. Focus on both particular phenomena and cultural contexts that account for their distinctiveness;
6. Researchers' integral involvement in the case;
7. Deep exploration of the phenomenon over time in a clearly-bounded environment,
8. Relatively unstructured data;
9. Presentations methods that discern richness and complexity.

Hitchcock & Hughes (1995) state that case study is most appropriate when the investigator poses how and why questions, has little control over events, and focuses on a contemporary phenomenon with a real-life context. They argue that:

...case study offers most to the teachers because its principal rationale is to reproduce social action in a natural setting, i.e., classrooms and workplaces, and that it can be used either to test existing theory and practice in an everyday environment, or it can be used to develop new theory or practice or improve and evaluate existing professional practice (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 323).

My research is bounded in space (rural, mountainous), time (post-Soviet), population (teachers), focus (interaction of practices, beliefs and context), and scale (general secondary
school). It is also interpretive, because I intensively and continuously involve myself with the participants and their culture, and attend in their daily life and work for a prolonged time (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Merriam, 1988; Shoefield, 1986; Walker, 1983). In addition, it focuses on socio-cultural context, time and space, thus becoming "more than an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a social unit or phenomenon. It is a socio-cultural analysis of the unit of study. Concerns with the cultural context are what set this type of study apart" (Merriam, 1988, p. 23; see also Nieto, 1998). Furthermore, this study does not aim at generalised laws but at valuable stories focused on the cases' complexity, relations, issues and arguments, which I then analyse inductively.

**Life History**

Life history, as a method of exploring human experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994; Smith, 1994), attempts to understand a phenomenon

...influenced by a complex array of historical, political, societal, institutional, and personal circumstances. In a broad sense life history aims at understanding life as lived in the present and as influenced by personal, institutional and social histories (Cole, 1994, p. 3).

As such, life history has provided several advantages for this study. First, it helps to explain the meanings that underlie the participants' actions and behaviours (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991, cited in Sparkes, 1994, p. 178; Woods, 1987). Second, life history places and examines a lived experience within a greater socio-economic, cultural, historical and political sphere. To this point, Goodson and Cole (1994) noted that the whole idea of looking at teachers as change agents, transformative intellectuals and empowerers of themselves and others, as mentioned in the previous chapter, will not yield results if we ignore the micro-political and contextual realities of school life. "In other words, teacher development in its broadest sense depends on teachers having access to professional knowledge beyond just the personal, practical and pedagogical" (Goodson & Cole, 1994, p. 103; see also Blase, 1997; Day, 1999; Sparkes, 1994). Third, life history, aiming at socio-historical, cultural and contextual exploration of human experience (Wexler, 1987), gives prominence to teachers' voices and concerns, which in turn provide insights not only about teachers' classroom practices but also about their roles, positions and status with regards to power-knowledge relations within educational and societal hierarchies.

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21 General secondary schools in Tajikistan, as in other parts of the former Soviet Union, aim to provide a complete, general secondary education. In these schools, the levels of schooling [primary (grades 1-4), lower secondary (grades 5-9) and higher secondary (grades 10-11)]—exists under the same organisational structure (for more on the types of schools, see Popovych & Stankevich, 1992; Webber, 2000).
(Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Hargreaves, 1992; Knowles, 1994; Sparkes, 1994). Casey (1992) challenged those researchers who fail to record teachers' voices:

By systematically failing to record the voices of ordinary teachers, the literature on educators' careers actually silences them. Methodologically, this means that even while investigating an issue where decision making is paramount, researchers speculate on teachers' motivations, or at best, survey them with a set of forced-choice options. Theoretically, what emerges is an instrumental view of teachers, one in which they are reduced to objects, which can be manipulated for particular ends. Politically, the results are educational policies constructed around institutionally convenient systems of rewards and punishment, rather than in congruence with teachers' desires to create significance in their lives (p. 88; see also Elbaz, 1983, 1991; Goodson, 1991).

However, within life history, prioritizing and respecting teachers' voices (Goodson, 1991), does not mean a blind acceptance of what they say (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996); it involves a respectful dialogue:

Voices are not only heard, but also engaged, reconciled and argued with. It is important to not only attend to the aesthetics of articulating teachers' voices but also to the ethics of what those voices articulate (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 62, emphasis mine, see also Richardson, 1990; Sparkes, 1994, p. 165-166).

Fourth, the life history approach, enables one to conceptualise teachers' practices in a much broader sense than just as behaviours and actions exhibited in the classroom. Practice, says Goodson (1996), "is a good deal more than the technical things we do in the classroom--it relates to who we are, to our whole approach to life" (p. 29, see also Carson & Sumara, 1997).

Finally, life history, due to its concern with whole persons and their relationships with their social contexts and histories, counters the ethical and intellectual limitations of one-shot, quick visit research in which the researchers take what they need from their subjects, give nothing in response, and make sweeping generalisations on the basis of thin, superficial data (Diamond & Mullen, 2000; Lather, 1986; Goodson, 1981; 1993). Spending time with the participants, sharing their concerns and struggles, exploring the layers of relationships, and representing their experience requires "thick description" and an interdisciplinary approach (Eisner, 1991; 1993; Geerts, 1973; 1995). This in turn allows us to understand the dialectical relations between the physical, structural, cultural and political constraints or possibilities and the relative autonomy of human agency in reshaping these constraints or exploring the opportunities (Britzman, 1991; Giroux, 1988; Goodson, 1992, 1996, 1997). A collection of such life histories allows one to make statements about the kind of society, education and future available to the members of that society and how those could be transformed for the benefit of all (Goodson, 1997; Woods, 1987).
Participants

I obtained participants through a negotiated process based on their volunteering. However, I also purposefully selected them, because I wished to gain the maximum possible data (Dewey, 1929; Jackson, 1968; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1984). On this basis, there were several categories of participants.

I view myself as a participant because I did qualitative research, interpreted the whole research process from inception to presentation through my values, frame of mind, knowledge and skills (Hunt, 1987; Eisner, 1991). These were certainly extended by my own reflection on my actions and biases and interactions with others, particularly with my supervisor and committee members. I come from a family of teachers. Five out of nine members of my family live in MBAP and work in education. I was in school there since the age of five. I grew up, got my education and worked as a teacher in the region. This helped me particularly understand the socio-historical and political background of the participants' discourse. I know the languages, traditions and habits of the people. At the same time, I did not involve any of my family members in this research.

I am professionally and personally familiar with the majority of the educational and political officials and teachers. All this served to quickly build trust, find participants, build a common language and get into the historical and contextual roots of points made during our discussions. It also enabled me to prepare alternatives for addressing any challenges that emerged during my fieldwork. Some participating teachers felt proud of me and saw in me a medium through which to speak about their deepest concerns and longings. To others, I had to repeat my purpose so as to avoid their possibly perceiving me as an inspector or an evaluator. "Why do you ask us about something that you know as well as we do. Haven't you gone through this same system?" were common questions.

Principal Participants

In order to both explore in depth and keep the project manageable, I wanted a small sample of teachers, who worked and lived in various locations of Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province, as principal participants. My research criteria required that these teachers be:

1. Change-oriented, trying to sustain their good practices and improve upon them;
2. Acknowledged and respected by their students, colleagues and the community as "good" teachers and ones from whom their colleagues acknowledge learning;
3. Articulate about their practices as well as about larger socio-cultural questions and issues surrounding education and the community;
4. Experienced in both the Soviet and post-Soviet periods (a minimum of 10 years of experience);
5. Diverse in gender, level, religions and ethnicity.

I had already begun the negotiation of my entries to the field during my teacher training course in Tajikistan in the summer of 1997. The MBAP authorities welcomed my intentions and promised logistical support. I confirmed my entry to the field with a visit to the Tajikistan Ministry of Education at the end of April, 1999. Following this, I visited the Directorate of Education of the MBAP, who, in addition to confirming the permission for the study, also provided me with valuable advice about possible sites for collecting richer data. Next, I visited the Head of Shugnan District Board of Education. After briefly introducing the purpose, nature and possible outcomes of my study, I asked him to identify three schools in each of which I could find two teachers who would fit the above criteria. Then I visited each of the three schools, where I met with the Heads and informed them about my purposes and criteria for participants. Together we negotiated the terms and duration of my stay in their schools.

My readings on the Soviet educational experiences had made me aware that there were traditions of experimental and leading schools, as well as innovative and progressive teachers (Long & Long, 1999; Suddaby, 1989; Popkewitz, 1982; Shonavruzov & Haidarsho, 1991; Webber, 2000). Therefore, finding core teachers with the above criteria did not pose a major problem. In each school, the Head suggested the names of more than 4 teachers. I informed each teacher about the criteria and selection procedure. In addition, I had to explain to the other teachers why I had chosen these particular participants, in order to avoid jealousy towards and possible isolation of the participants after my departure. Similarly, I had to explain to other schools the reasons for my selection of the particular school so as to avoid similar possible ill-feeling. In the selected schools, I also announced that I would be happy to meet with any other willing teacher.

The initial interview with the teachers centred around revealing how well they matched my research criteria and purposes. I made similar visits to two other schools in Shugnan district. Having completed the interviews, and having ranked the teachers according to their match with my criteria, I sought to negotiate the teachers’ provisional consent to participate and asked them

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22 In summer 1997, I was invited to MBAP to offer teacher-training courses to the schoolteachers. At that time I had exploratory discussions about my possible future research.
23 In Murghab and Wanj the period of work was one and half months. In Shugnan, the work was initially for 35 days; however, because it was very close to the central town, I visited them in the summer and fall too.
to fill the consent forms (see appendices 2 & 3). In so doing, I informed them about the study's purpose, nature, requirements and benefits for myself and them.

I ultimately selected two teachers from each school in the first two districts. To be on the safe side, the Head of the school in Shugnan advised me to work with two teachers instead of one: "Nigin's health is not stable and you'd be safer to work with her and Gorminj. In case one drops out, you can still carry on your work" (FN. 1: 12). I invited the other teachers that I interviewed in that school to participate in the two formal interviews I had designated for the secondary participants. I completed the selection of core participants in each district by having them sign the consent form, which defined the terms of the research process. I followed a similar process during the selection of the core participants from other districts, except in Wanj district, where I selected only one participant in order to allocate more attention to organising the already-massive amount of data, completing the transcription of the audiocassettes, and making a preliminary analysis. Overall, five teachers became core participants.

However, this time was important, because the process fit the overall nature and purpose of my study, which was grounded in being sensitive to teachers, bottom-up in approach, and inductive and consultative in decision making. In one district, I refused the district education officer's offer to order suitable teachers to work with me. I also requested the Provincial Director of Education not to make "phone calls" to the district education boards to make my selection easier and assign teachers to work with me. My Master's research had taught me that forcing teachers to work with an external researcher is unethical and predictably fails as an initiative of change (Niyozov, 1995). At the same time, the procedure of selecting the participants was also politically and ethically sensitive: I let all those closely concerned with my research's nature and purpose become informed and take part in the process. I sought not to determine my selection but to add to and enrich it.

Important was my use of two levels of criteria in selection. The criteria mentioned so far applied to the individual participants. I also had criteria for the group of core participants as a whole. The two sets sometimes conflicted. In all three districts, for example, I did not select the "teachers of the year."24, because they either did not suit my individual criteria or were

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24 "The teacher of the year", an officially arranged teacher contest, comes from the Soviet times. It considers the following criteria: (a) pedagogical skills (classroom teaching observed according to established criteria, such as motivating the students, using teaching aids, presenting new topics, following the lesson format, etc.), (b) knowledge of psychology and pedagogy, (c) extra-curricular activities, and (d) essay on "Creativity as a guarantee of success." The teachers that I worked with, including those who had participated in it, mentioned that the contest was embroiled in fraud.
The group criteria aimed to ensure that the five principal participants represented geographic, ethnicity, age, gender, religious and school-level diversity (Box 1).

**Secondary Participants**

By secondary participants I mean a larger group of teachers, the Head teacher, and a small group of the students from each school where the main participants worked. All these secondary participants belonged to the immediate school context. The number of the teachers differed from school to school: 12 in Shugnan, 16 in Murghab, and 12 in Wanj. I applied no particular criteria in selecting these teachers. At the same time, these groups naturally represented level, age, gender and subject diversity. In Murghab and Wanj the core participants and the Heads of the schools also attended our group discussions.

I invited these secondary groups of teachers to participate in the interviews on a voluntary basis. The interviews aimed to clarify, validate and verify some of the important data from the discussions with the principal participants, gain new insights, reveal new issues and raise important questions. The selection aimed to avoid the shortcomings of those studies that concentrate solely on teachers (more so on specific teachers), and therefore "fail to connect with other realities on the job and other 'voices' of a range of teachers, not to mention the voices of students, parents and administrators" (Hargreaves, cited in Fullan, 1994, p. 7).

I called upon the teachers from the secondary groups twice during the fieldwork at each site. The first meetings, near the beginning of the fieldwork were shorter (30 minutes). I presented them with some of the important questions/issues that had emerged during my already ongoing work with the core participants. I requested them to reflect and comment upon these questions, write down their thoughts, and raise new questions. The second meetings, in the last week of fieldwork, took from one to two hours. I facilitated the discussions around the questions posed earlier, as well as issues emerging during the discussion. I created an open and non-judgmental environment by (a) having already built good relations with the majority of the teachers, (b) talking about my research's purpose, significance, and ethics (e.g., anonymity, confidentiality, feedback), (c) sharing my own concerns, (d) offering help, if needed, (e) asking them what I need to consider and emphasise in the thesis, (f) valuing sensitive or "unpopular" views, and (g) providing opportunities for reticent participants, particularly women and younger teachers to speak up. All these discussions were audio-taped, transcribed and translated; for this, I sought the teachers' consent. Following these meetings, I met with several teachers individually. These encounters illuminated the issues in their own schools and gave a chance for
more trustworthy discussions. In some cases, I arranged such meetings to triangulate questions that had emerged in the previous school and district. In Wanj, for example, I called upon a History teacher who provided insights into the data gathered earlier from the History teacher in Shugnan (Nigin) and confirmed other issues mentioned by teachers in Shugnan.

I had ongoing informal conversations with the Heads of the schools and the students in each of the sites. My probing during these discussions helped me to examine critical contextual issues that surrounded the teachers’ life and work, the value of education, the nature of schooling, the quality of teaching and learning, and the relation of all these to the community and its culture.

**Wider Educational Community**

This group represented those closely related to educational provision in MBAP. These included officials at the Ministry of Education, Provincial and Regional Boards of Education, the Head of the Provincial Teacher Training Institute, the community, and parents. These meetings revealed not only the setting’s complexities and the external forces affecting education, but also the differences between the policy makers’ rhetoric and the reality of the teachers’ life and work (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Stake, 1994). These conversations added insights from various perspectives into the relevance of education for life and work in the mountains, and the desired image and role of the teacher in these rural, mountainous areas. All this fit my study’s socio-historical nature.
| Subject   | Level of Education | School | House | Experience | Religion | Education Level | Religion (sect) | Distance House | Religion House | Distance Education | Religion Education | Name of the Participant |
|-----------|--------------------|--------|-------|------------|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Biology   | Secondary          | 10     | 31/26 | 48/25      | Arabic   | English        | English        | 2000           | 15             | 3000            | 3000                | English             |
| History   | Secondary          | 7      | 38/12 | 52/28      | Persian  | English        | English        | 2000           | 15             | 3000            | 3000                | English             |
| Math      | Primary            | 8      | 52/28 | 48/16      | Arabic   | English        | English        | 2000           | 15             | 3000            | 3000                | English             |
| General   | Secondary          | 5      | 38/12 | 52/28      | Persian  | English        | English        | 2000           | 15             | 3000            | 3000                | English             |
| Russian   | Secondary          | 7      | 52/28 | 48/16      | Arabic   | English        | English        | 2000           | 15             | 3000            | 3000                | English             |
| English   | Secondary          | 10     | 31/26 | 48/25      | Arabic   | English        | English        | 2000           | 15             | 3000            | 3000                | English             |

Box 1: Profiles of the Principal Participants (as correct as possible).
Foreign Consultants

This category refers to the expatriate employees of the Aga Khan Development Network\textsuperscript{26} (e.g., AKDN, Aga Khan Foundation, Ismaili Religious and Education Board, Aga Khan Education Services). AKDN educational consultants have been working in Badakhshan for the last six years and possess substantial information about the educational situation in the field (AKF reports, 1993-1996). These consultants enriched this study by being ‘distant’ insiders and viewing the local realities from a comparative perspective. Their experiences in research and educational development were valuable for helping me select the sites, providing me with feedback, raising questions, and highlighting important issues.

Data Collection Tools

I had two domains for collecting data: First, inside the classroom and school to grasp the teaching dynamics; second, outside the school to capture the micro (classroom/school)-macro (community/country) profile. The tools for collecting data included extensive participant and non-participant observations, semi-structured in-depth interviews, document analysis, informal and formal conversations, and my own journal entries.\textsuperscript{27} I here describe in detail how I used these tools and how they helped me collect rich, triangulated data.

Data Collection: Principal Participants

Participant and non-participant observation. Cole (1987) and Jackson (1986) state that due to the tacit, implicit nature of teacher knowledge as well as their limited technical vocabulary, observing their practice becomes an indispensable complementary tool for more broadly and deeply discerning their knowledge. My observations within the case studies had both specific and general focuses. I concentrated mainly on the teachers’ classroom actions so as to (a) learn firsthand how their actions corresponded with their words; (b) find out patterns of behaviour; (c) note critical incidents (Tripp, 1993); and (d) experience the familiar and strange (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). These teachers’ actions included how they organised their classrooms, how they presented new topics, what methods they used, how they related to the students, how they handled their answers, how they assessed the students, and so on (Appendix

\textsuperscript{26} For more on the AKDN’s role and significance in education in MBAP, see Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{27} I dropped my initial plan for journal writing by the principal participants after seeing how busy they were and noticing their lack of enthusiasm for writing journals. From my experiences as a teacher and teacher educator, I also knew most of the teachers in Tajikistan do not keep the journals. In a few cases, the teachers asked me to provide them with time to think over questions they found difficult to answer promptly. None of the teachers, however, returned with written reflective accounts. Having grown up in an oral cultural tradition, they preferred to talk.
5). I also tried to explore how the teachers' actions matched their thoughts, beliefs, and what they might have planned. In other words, I hoped to reveal the complexity and deeper reasons of the teachers' actions and sayings.

The observations also focused on how the teachers' classroom life reflected and addressed the ruralness, life in the mountains, ideological change, local culture, and material/facility shortages. Further, some observations focused on the themes that had emerged from previous lessons as well as the usual daily challenges of teaching and learning. In Murghab, for example, I focused one of my observations on Sino's questions and another on the concept of task, because of my interest in comparing Sino's practice with insights from the literature (Carter & Doyle, 1987; Doyle, 1990). In Wanj I decided to focus one lesson's observation on how the participant disciplined the students. With Nigin, I devoted two observations to her assessment practice. Depending on the time available and the participants' willingness, I conducted from 11 to 16 classroom observations of each core participant. I observed teachers every second day. The teaching week in Tajikistan is six days. Box 2 gives the sequence of observations.

Except for a few lessons, the majority of the observations lasted not less than 80 minutes. In Murghab, the minimum period of observation was 90 minutes. I also observed the core participants informally in the school, home and community, to illuminate the relationships between the participants' classroom work and their broader roles in the school and community.

Given that the teachers knew my background as a teacher-educator, they wanted the study to change into a mentoring, action research or coaching endeavour. In their classrooms, I had to negotiate between being useful to the teachers and understanding their practices as they usually carried them out. In Murghab, Lola asked me to demonstrate group work. Sino too, asked me to suggest an idea whenever I felt it was appropriate. In Shughnan and Wanj, I was asked to intervene in the class any time I wanted. I explained that my purpose was not to teach and coach them, but to understand how they teach and the reasons for their current practices.

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28 In Shughnan and Wanj, the lesson periods were reduced from the standard 45 minutes to 40, due to cold in the classrooms.
### Box 2: Table of observations of the principal participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Weeks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nigin</td>
<td>Shugnan</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>II</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>V</td>
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<td></td>
<td>School year ended</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gormijn</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sino</td>
<td>Murghab</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2-reduced due to Sino’s participation in the census</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>II</td>
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<td>III</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lola</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Izzat</td>
<td>Wanj</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Semi-structured interviewing** (see Box 3). Drawing on my own experience (Niyozov, 1995), and others' (Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Hargreaves 1995; Jackson, 1968; Louden 1991), I used semi-structured interviewing so as to keep the conversations both focused and flexible. I could pursue research questions, probe deeper into the participants’ remarks, and allow for new themes to emerge. This approach helped me to get at the factors affecting the teachers’ practices in and outside their classrooms, and to familiarise myself with the schools’ context and programs. Furthermore, I could learn about my own questions and underlying assumptions (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Glesne & Peshkin, 1997). All these interviews were audio-taped.

Most of those who research teacher knowledge (e.g., Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Cole, 1987; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Jackson, 1968) have found how difficult it is for teachers to talk about what they spontaneously and habitually do in the classroom. To make this easier, I adapted Brown & McIntyre’s (1993) suggestions to (a) take a constructive perspective on teaching, (b) talk about shared experience, (c) maintain an open approach and avoid imposing a perspective, and (d) help teachers gain access to information the researcher needs.

During the initial feedback sessions (i.e., after the class) I asked the teachers to talk in greater depth about their actions and the reasons behind them. In the follow-up sessions, I began each session by providing the teachers with briefs and comments about the past observations. Then we discussed their new lessons, clarifying the meanings of their actions, exploring their reasons and inquiring into sources and larger forces.

I usually held the post-lesson interviews soon after class sessions so as to take advantage of our fresh memories in explaining events in the classroom. For example, participants may have said that they reprimand their students to make them remain attentive to the lessons. I would ask why they thought reprimanding is useful for that. Next, I would also ask where they learned this idea of reprimanding; then, further, what other things they did to capture the students' attention. My participants had never participated in this type of study, and had rarely been asked to speak up about issues important to them. They sometimes asked for additional time to think over the questions. In some cases, this sequence ended with a sharing of experiences and viewpoints (Cole & Knowles, 2000). In other cases, I used Cole’s (1987) idea of interviewing, based upon the concept of mutual interpretation, where both teacher and researcher jointly deliberate upon the teacher’s actions. Box 3 gives details of the interview sessions.

The approach made the process of research more revealing, created a mutual bond and transformed it into a process of mutual development. In all three sites we ended up as brothers
and sisters. Izzat said: "In you I found the brother that I lost in the civil war" (Int. 5: 78). The joint work, mutual trust, and reciprocity helped to enhance the quality and authenticity of the interview data. Nigin mentioned: "No one has ever asked me these questions though they have always been in my mind and heart. So I am telling you everything I know, I hope it makes a difference" (Int. 1: 103). During the interviews, I paid attention not only to what the teachers said, but also to what images, or poetic expressions they used, and to what they wanted left unsaid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of interviews</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Form and Nature</th>
<th>Number per participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Related to classroom observations.</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>Reasons for, meaning, purpose and sources of verbal and physical actions related to organisation of classroom, presentation of topic, relation with students, strategies, assessment and so forth (see Appendix 6).</td>
<td>Semi-structured conversation, Moving between the interview guides, emerging insights, research questions and literature.</td>
<td>11-15, depending on the number of the lessons observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to life history.</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>Life history, present struggles, achievements, losses, gains, regrets and future intentions.</td>
<td>Asking questions, sharing stories,</td>
<td>4-5, one each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to the research process.</td>
<td>45-60</td>
<td>Process of research, tensions the participants underwent, challenges faced, and learning gleaned from the research process.</td>
<td>Recalling, debate, mind map, discussion, and joint deliberations.</td>
<td>2, middle &amp; end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to socio-political, educational and religious issues.</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Type of society, educational vision for the mountainous and rural community, citizenship, social issues, role of religion. Questions of politics, status and role of teacher and how this affected teachers' classrooms.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3, one each week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection: Secondary Participants and Wider Community

Group and individual interviews with secondary participants. I held two group-interviews with the teachers among the category of the secondary participants in each site. The purpose was to clarify, validate and verify some of the important data emerging from the discussions with the principal participants, and gain new insights, reveal new issues and raise important questions (Lewis, 1992). The first, shorter (30 minutes) meetings took place at the beginning of the third week of fieldwork in each site. I provided the teachers with some of the most important issues relevant to the study’s focus: classroom practices and thoughts behind the practices, issues about teaching and education in the mountains, ideological shift, the role of the teacher, new challenges, and so forth. On-going themes that emerged from my work with the principal participants took an important place in these conversations. Within the following two weeks, I encouraged the teachers to reflect upon the questions, write down their comments and raise other issues. The second meetings, in the last week at each site, were longer (1-2 hours). Here I asked the teachers to present their views. Subsequent to these meetings, I met some of the teachers on an individual basis. For example, following the advice of the History teacher in Shugnan, I met with the history teacher in Wanj. In Shugnan I met with “The teacher of the Year” to get insights about the drive for excellence amongst the teachers in such poor conditions.

In addition, I met with the Heads of the schools on each of the sites daily. Sometimes these meetings took about an hour and provided rich information about the school contexts where the principal participants worked. In all cases, I informed the Heads that our informal chats are a source of information and sought their consents.

Conversations with wider community members. I held formally arranged, focused conversations with senior officers at the Ministry of Education and the Directorate of Education of the province. I also had informal conversations with the Officers of the District Boards of Education, and the Teacher Training Institute, parents and community members on an individual and group basis (Box 4).

These conversations focused on cross-checking some of the important issues emerging from the discussions with the principal and secondary participants and on revealing the larger educational and socio-political issues. I asked what they thought of the educational situation in Badakhshan and how it should be. I wanted to know what they thought of the challenges the teachers faced and whether the Government had plans to improve teachers’ living conditions and upgrade their knowledge.

I also asked what was necessary to provide all Tajik children with quality education and how they compared the present education with Soviet education. I specifically asked about the role of the teacher in the rural, mountainous areas and what these teachers need to know and do. These conversations lasted between 40 and 60 minutes.

The meetings with the parents and the community occurred spontaneously. In Wanj, for example, the teachers used to invite me to their homes on weekends. Initially, I accepted their invitations for research purposes. Later, I could not refuse because of possible perceptions of my refusal as a sign of disrespect. Though I requested the hosts not to kill a turkey\(^{29}\) each time, they continued to do so. In Murghab a representative of the youth invited me to their gathering. In Shugnan, the \textit{khalifa}\(^{30}\) called upon me to visit their gatherings. In all these occasions I informed them about my intent, and the possibility of using the data for the thesis.

**Informal and unstructured observation.** I made informal and unstructured observations around the school, teachers, teachers' homes and community. I noted down incidents important and relevant to the focus of my study as observation memos daily.

**Field notes and journal entries.** My notes were important for collecting the data, conducting preliminary analyses, examining my actions and motives, and tracing the history of my values and beliefs (Hunt, 1987) Agreeing with Cole & Knowles (2000) that a journal is "what you want it to be both in form and function", I jotted in my journal formal and informal notes, impressions and reflections about the schools, staffroom, school, and community, my worries and concerns about my health and my family, thoughts about the research process, my frustrations and tensions, and unexpected changes in the course of the research. Many of these notes revealed deeper meanings, provided contexts to the teachers' actions and beliefs and confirmed or disconfirmed earlier insights. They also served as springboard for illuminating deeper reasons and broader issues.

As I listened to the tapes, went through observation, and attended gatherings, I recorded my reflective and descriptive notes when such behaviour was socially appropriate. In some cases, I recorded the notes later so as to avoid the appearance of formal, intrusive investigations. Most of my field notes I jotted down in a cursory manner, to be expanded with full description and analyses later. Mainly this writing depended on a sense of urgency about the importance of

\(^{29}\) In Wanj, turkey is one of the most popular foods to present to the guests.

\(^{30}\) \textit{Khalifa} is a title for a local Ismaili religious leader, someone like a \textit{mullah} in the Sunni tradition.
the insight. I used drawing, mind mapping, text, and pictures. In some cases, I just kept a mental note and recorded it when time became available.

**Documents**

I gathered and used a limited number of external documents (e.g., brochures on the history of the schools, teacher guides, new edition of the curriculum for Tajik schools, the Law of Education of Tajikistan, plans for reform activities in MBAP, internal reports of the Aga Khan Development Network in Tajikistan, the newsletter *Rahnama*31. Charter of the Institute of Teacher Training), internal documents (memos), teacher files (lesson plans and class register I used these documents to provide political, personal, institutional, and contextual background to the study (Bogdan & Bicklen, 1992; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

**Methods and Procedures of Data Analysis**

The process of analysis included (a) examining the data's internal aspects (i.e., meaning, purpose, value, source, contradictions, accuracy, consistency); (b) organising the data according to themes, concepts, and categories; (c) exploring the relationships between, prioritising and selecting themes, and lastly (d) developing higher-level categories and generative explanations (cf. Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Glasser & Strauss, 1968; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Le Compte & Schensul, 1999; Patton, 1988; Wolcott 1994).

The data management (i.e., collection, storage and retrieval) started already during the fieldwork and continued throughout the process of analysis and writing up. I created separate files for each case. The data analysis included (a) constant interaction between my personal and professional experiences, field data, research questions and literature, (b) comparison of the coded themes and concepts to reveal the common and the particular, and (c) discovery of the patterns, threads and tensions in the relationships (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). The analysis involved several steps and levels (Menlo & Poppleton, 1999).

**Data Analysis during Fieldwork**

Daily, I reviewed my classroom and contextual field notes and journal entries; each day I also listened to the interview audiocassettes, transcribed and translated them. I noted critical, repeated, emphasised, vague or unclear points, expressions, images and metaphors. I also followed up relevant and emerging issues with the other participants, the focus group or the wider education community. For example, if the issue was about parent-teacher relations, I

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31 *Rahnama* is a joint newsletter issued by the Aga Khan Foundation and Department of Education of MBAP. It provided me with useful insights about reforms and innovative movements in MBAP.
sought the views of both teachers and parents. Probing into the meaning, reasons and source of an insight resulted in clarity and deeper understanding of each other’s perspectives. At the beginning and end of my work in each site, I read my proposal to see how completely I had to address the research questions. With small alterations, I managed to follow the initial plan suggested in my thesis proposal. Indeed, I did more in some sense: Instead of four teachers, I worked with five.

Altogether, I recorded and transcribed about 125 audiocassettes of the interviews, and wrote roughly 250 pages of classroom observations and 200 pages of field notes (including observations outside the classroom, reflections and memos). In addition, I collected about 50 pages of documents, which I also managed to review in the field. I completed the transcription and translation of the data from at least four languages—Shugnani, Roshani, Tajik and Russian—by the first week of January 2000. The verbatim transcripts included poetic, linguistic, biological and mathematical terminology, Soviet educational and political concepts, historic, cultural and religious concepts, images and metaphors. My fluency in all four languages and English, my more than 20 years of translation experience, and my background in Arabic, Persian and Islamic studies helped me to overcome the challenge of translating and understating such massive amount of data. In some cases, I referred to encyclopaedias and dictionaries and asked the local specialists for the concepts’ names in Russian, because it was easier to translate them from Russian to English than from Tajik to English.

**Data Analysis after Fieldwork**

The second phase of the analysis began with developing a 5 to 7-page summary about each participant in order to view general parameters, note general similarities and differences between the cases, and plan insightful yet manageable thesis. Next, I developed a strategy for an in-depth analysis. I consulted and synthesised four major resources: my own research background and knowledge (Niyozov, 1995; Niyozov & Dean, 1997), my supervisor’s and committee’s guidance, the data and the existing literature on the research process. This literature included (a) materials on qualitative data analysis; (b) research literature on teaching, teacher knowledge, teacher life and work in the western contexts; (c) theses on teaching and teacher knowledge, and (d) studies on teaching in the former Soviet Union and developing countries. I continued to read the literature on doing and writing research throughout the whole process. I ended up with developing several action plans and choosing the optimal one for defining structures and forms in order to analyse and express the findings while focusing on the major
research questions. As part of this step, I created boxes for each case. Each box included observation notes, interview transcripts, relevant documents, and copies of the computer diskettes. I put the initially-revised versions of the chapter on each case into the assigned box. In addition to the five case boxes, I had two more boxes with information on the context and relevant literature, which I gathered and read during the analysis.

I began reading the raw data from each case, making notes in the margins, underlining, circling, highlighting, using different colours, drawing, mind mapping, and raising questions. Fresh memories, transcribing and preliminary analysis, coupled with my knowledge of the context, helped me to go through the text easily, enjoying the teachers' wisdom, and their moral and spiritual depths. This also made me feel as if I were still there, seeing things alive and also worrying about the well-being of the teachers in the long winter of 1999-2000. In other words, though from a far, I still consciously participated in their lives (Heshusius, 1994). This created a tension between my empathy and the necessity of reflectively and objectively examining everything, including my own emotions (Ely et al., 1991).

I identified passages and units of information and named them according to the themes they revealed. I used codes to define the units and segments. Usually, a code was an abbreviated form of the major idea from the segment. I jotted down the codes on the margin of the text and on a specially created file. For example, a segment might reveal Nigin's view on the purpose of teaching a particular lesson. I marked it as PTL on the margin. Next I wrote PTL on my notebook and put the number of the page on which the passage was situated, as well as the source of the passage (e.g., Int.1: 12, Nigin, i.e., notes from interview 1 on page 12 from Nigin's case). I subsequently went through the interview text, (Int.) observation text (Obs.), field notes (FN), my reflective journal entries (RJ), the documents, and the pictures that I had taken in the field.

My second analytical reading of the data took place through NUD*IST computer program (non-numerical, unstructured data indexing and theorising, Richards, 1998); as I had already done the first coding manually, I constantly revisited it as I went through the text with NUD*IST. As a result, I redefined many of the earlier themes, gaining deeper understanding, of some and eliminating others. The NUD*IST was useful in quickly allocating the data according to the themes, adding reflective memos, definitions, and editions. As a result of NUD*IST, I had not only re-coded my data, but also positioned all the segments belonging to certain themes in their respective files. NUD*IST also helped me to contextualise and de-contextualise each
segment by quickly moving between the source file (i.e., the original text of raw data) and the themes' files, which contained the segments (e.g., purpose of teaching a lesson—PTL). NUD*IST also helped me move a segment from one theme to another, and to merge, add and group themes according to larger categories (e.g., bring together the various levels of teachers' aims: purpose for a lesson, for a subject, and for teaching in general).

I nevertheless felt compartmentalised and disengaged, missing the creative and emotional interaction with the text as whole. I could not create a holistic panorama where I could join all the cases in a connected, integrated whole. I returned to the written texts again. In addition to revisiting the themes, I noticed new things: the details, the participants' language, more vivid segments, and messages between, under, above and beyond the lines. This third reading constituted a conceptually higher level of analysis. To look at the text as whole helped me to locate the overriding metaphors and expressions that could serve to embody each whole case. This allowed me to develop substantial structural and thematic blocks for each case. These major thematic blocks included the study's sites, the participants' biographies, their worldviews, their relations and their classroom practices. I developed each of these as result of developing and linking the various themes and sub-themes.

In the third phase, I pulled together the segments, memos and notes in the NUD*IST, and began to write reports on the themes and create titles for them. Most of the titles derived from the expressions, metaphors and images that the participants used. I borrowed a few from what their colleagues said about them; others resulted from my deliberations and conceptualisations on the data. This process also pushed me to think deeper and go beyond the obvious. I began to see the implications of the participants' narratives, stories, poems, images and expressions in their context and for theory and practice of educational reform. In connecting the various segments, sections and themes I found myself already analysing and synthesising.

**Data Analysis during Writing and Re-Writing**

I worked on each case separately, then did the cross-case analysis and the concluding chapter. This approach was suitable, taking into consideration the magnitude of the data. Analysing and writing each case greatly assisted taking a more sophisticated approach to analysing and writing the next. I grounded the internal structure of each case on keeping a balance between its uniqueness and its general compatibility with other cases. I designed each case to be both self-contained and allow for a later cross-comparative analysis. During the writing, I altered the structure of each case several times through re-writes.
I re-wrote each case several times. Each time I did not simply edit, tighten and decide what to include or leave out, but re-planned, revised and ascended to a new level of conceptualisation. The process of writing and re-writing was challenging, exhilarating, crucial and sometimes painful. This analysis was a rigorous learning opportunity, which applied, challenged and enhanced my organisational, technical, critical, analytical, creative, physical, organisational and emotional capacities (Diamond & Mullen, 2000). I experienced the gaps and strengths of my educational and cultural backgrounds, the differences between the oral and written, the field and research texts, the research and journalism, and the recovery and reconstruction of meaning (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, 1994; Cole & Knowles, 2000).

In all cases, I had to develop criteria for themes and categories. These criteria included: in what ways the passage related to the theme, what qualities of the theme it embraced, and whether the title given to the theme reflected it. Further, I examined whether the theme had relevance to the research questions, and conveyed something worthwhile. At each step I had to question: Does this segment really mean what I have assumed about it? Does it really belong here? Which of these several segments is most compelling to capture the fundamental quality of the participants' experience? How should these segments be prioritised within this theme? Is the language of the participant clear? Why is s/he emphasising this point? Is his/her voice and real desire being heard? What is s/he not saying? Where does this idea come from? What should be the order of the sentences in this segment so that the segment in particular and the theme as whole become internally coherent and logically consistent? How does all this relate to the questions of my research? What is new/particular about his/her saying that I have not come across in the existing literature? How much of this information should I include in my report so as to be just to the participants, and also complete a thesis that will be read?

The several layers of analysis resulted in my rethinking and regrouping themes as well as creating larger categories that subsumed the themes and enabled me to develop a framework to answer my questions. The case-by-case approach proved useful for a qualitatively higher start in analysing, designing and writing with each new chapter. Each cycle of writing, therefore, carried both structural and conceptual innovation. Taking a reflective pause and developing plans for writing each chapter were parts of this rigorous process.

Cross-Case Analysis

The cross-case analysis involved several levels too. Besides each case, I had also created files for the cross-case analysis, the study's implications and the literature review. As with cases,
I started the cross-case analysis by developing a plan based on synthesising ideas from the cross-case analyses, new readings (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 1999; Farell, 2000, personal communication; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Patton, 1988; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999; Yin, 1984), consultations with my supervisor, advice from my committee members, and my own experience. Next, I read the database in each case with a comparative eye (Farrell, 1987; Raivolda, 1984). This database now included not only analysed, written cases but also the raw data (the notes on interviews, observations and documents), to which I returned again. As I re-read, I developed two types of matrix for displaying the data of each case. Box 4 presents examples from each of two major aspects of Sino’s practices, namely his worldview and relationships, (e.g., reason for remaining in teaching for worldview and relations with children for his relationships)

After displaying the major points from each case as above, I created another matrix which focused the data for each case on the major research questions. For example, Box 6 shows how the major themes in Nigin’s professional life related to sub-questions of the major research questions.

Next, I used Venn Diagrams to compare the cases when the analysis moved beyond idiosyncratic descriptions of individual teachers and sought for resonance and dissonance between the cases. In addition, I wanted to evaluate the relationships between and within the concepts and themes. This resulted in a certain characterisation of this group of teachers (based on how they made sense of their practices). I accordingly selected the most important themes. This multi-level process allowed me to make the emerging insights interact with my major research questions and to create a narrative of a series of themes (Yin, 1984).

I first compared the major themes from the cases with each other; then I synthesised them into argument-based discussions and further related them to insights from literature. I derived the major insights from each comparative theme, highlighted its implications and illuminated the issues and questions.

I used footnotes extensively. The context is unfamiliar to most Western readers and readers in English; to sensitively portray the participants, and the vivid characteristics of their culture and context, I mentioned cultural constructs in the text and elaborated their meanings in the footnotes. I used footnotes for contextualisation, explanation of Soviet, Russian, Tajik and local cultural, political, educational and religious constructs and terms, and for corroboration or comments from the literature.
The cross-case chapter, essentially a deeper level analysis, moved back and forth between inductive and deductive methods (Glasser & Straus, 1967). At this stage, I linked my assumptions and the insights from literature with comments on the extent to which such writings did or did not discern the particularities of being a teacher in rural, mountainous, unstable and transitional societies.

In sum, the several stages of analysis finally identified the fundamental qualities of teachers' life and work in the post-Soviet, mountainous, rural Tajikistan, pointing out the major issues, dilemmas, paradoxes and continuities and changes these teachers encounter. At this stage, I linked the stories of educational practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) with the histories of context (Goodson, 1995; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999). Thus I developed frameworks and insights to explicate and understand these teachers' knowledge and practices and making this understanding available to others. Lastly, I pondered the general implications of my findings for the theory and practice of teaching, teacher development, research and educational reform in Tajikistan and elsewhere.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Examples/statements and sub-themes</th>
<th>Possible meaning</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SINO</td>
<td>Worldview</td>
<td>Reason for remaining in teaching</td>
<td>Love for children; I can not imagine myself except as teacher; Teaching and commerce can not go together; Too poor to leave to other place; No connection to get another job; It is not safe to go somewhere else; The Imam says teachers are important;</td>
<td>Teachers remained in teaching for many reasons: Soviet inertia; Geographic; Economic; Inability to redefine their values; Political and financial insecurity; Spiritual source;</td>
<td>How have these reasons influenced their practice? (cf. Jackson, 1968; Epstein &amp; Lasley, 2000; talk about some of the reasons).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relational qualities</td>
<td>Relations with the children</td>
<td>Each child is a human being; I have never been rude, but I may have slapped; I become rude because conditions make me so; I can imagine how a slap would have hurt my personality; I want the children know that I am with them and will be so if they make a small attempt;</td>
<td>Relationships are based on humanistic view, equality, and mutual respect, and taking the perspectives of the students; They are mainly teacher directed; The quality of the relationship is based on Sino's life experience, his knowledge of the students and their background; The relations are affected by the difficult living conditions which make Sino feel guilty; His ideology also affects his relations;</td>
<td>While he cares about everyone, is there any one who cares about him? (Cummins, 1996; Noddings, 1992; Ayers, 1993; Gay, 2000 talk about relationships).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Addressing Validity and Generalisability**

I agree that "any inquiry into the life of the educators, whether set in prairie, inner urban school or a faraway star world, remains a tentative examination" (Diamond & Mullen, 2000, p. 14). Nevertheless, a qualitative study still has validity, quality and generalisability. These criteria, however, take different forms in the literature (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994; Donmoyer, 1990; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Shoefield, 1990; Lather, 1986; Maxwell, 1992; Wolcott, 1990).

A concern for validity was woven throughout the whole process and product of my inquiry (Eisenhart & Borko, 1993). In addressing the validity of my inquiry, I considered how carefully the study was designed, conducted, and presented, how sensitively I treated the subjects, and how well it can contribute to important educational issues, including debates about educational theory and practice. I tried to be sensitive to sampling, use multiple sites, move between the core participants and larger groups, and move between micro and macro contexts (Merriam, 1988). I hoped to speak to a larger audience, reduce possible errors and bias, and make my findings more reliable.

My study: (a) has supporting evidence from various sources and types of participants; (b) talks about normal practice (i.e., what teachers do most of the time rather than rarely); (c) goes beyond one teacher and one occasion; (d) moves beyond describing isolated elements of practice into analysing the relations between them as well as their relations with larger contextual forces; (e) is both selective and inclusive (e.g., rigorously selected core participants, while being open to...
all who wanted to talk to me; focused on classroom practice as the central focus but moved beyond it to the teachers’ outside life and work; and (f) was recognised and accepted by the teachers as sensible and plausible (Brown & McIntyre, 1993). During the whole process, I constantly asked myself about the usefulness, participants’ feedback, adequacy, plausibility, transferability, continuity, persuasiveness, and catalytic validity suggested by the interpretivist researchers (Barth, 1990; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Eisner, 1991; Lather, 1986; Wolcott, 1990) to develop the quality of my research.

My research did not look for generalised laws and rules; nor did it promise to resolve all the problems of education in Tajikistan. Nonetheless, it produced educative messages that I hope may awaken and transform the participants, myself, the research community, the policy makers, the donors, the change agents, and readers in general.

The research fostered the teachers’ commitment to education and reform, their skills, and their willingness to speak up about critical issues. It increased their deepest feelings, and commitment to work for a just, democratic, and pluralist society. Izzat mentioned that after this research he will continue teaching rather than leaving it as he had planned before the study. Nigin said that “if the Aga Khan Foundation has advised such research in Tajikistan, that means there is a deep concern about education and there is hope for improvement.” Lola considered me as “a book to read from, and we should make better use of you while you are here.” Nigin wanted to tell me everything and hoped this could make a difference. On Sino’s request, I taught in the pedagogical school where he was the deputy head. In Shugnan, the teachers felt I was an example for the kids. In Wanj, Izzat’s wife observed that because of me the teachers had begun to attend the school and teach more seriously. The teachers and community members in all sites said I have entered their hearts and minds; they all wished I could stay longer.

This thesis described the fundamentals of the life and educational experiences of normal, ordinary teachers who acted out their deep commitment to teaching and exerted themselves to fulfil their duties in the broadest sense. These teachers have lived at the lowest imaginable socio-economic level; if at that level things became possible, they could be transferred anywhere else. This study did not neglect the issues about which the teachers were most passionate, emotional and critical: justice, equity, gender, ethnic relations, language, corruption, poverty, hunger, and spirituality. The adequacy of this research also shows in deliberate attempt to make these teachers’ voices and visions clearly heard (Goodson, 1991, 1997).
I provided the participants with a brief of the interviews and observations. I also provided them with the audiocassettes, to which they listened according to the availability of light and time. I provided them with a translated brief summary of my findings and conclusions and incorporated their feedback into the final draft. I put myself, the participants and the tools of research on the same critical plane and employed reflexivity. In my journal, I reflected upon the relations between the macro theories, and my own and the participants' assumptions, interests and theories (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Diamond & Mullen, 2000). I constantly questioned the research process and asked others to help me to get better insights: foreign consultants, local educationalists, and especially the teachers with whom I worked. I asked them to tell me what kind of questions I should ask and what else to consider. I conducted two interviews with the teachers in each site to examine the research process that we all underwent. Sino, for example, advised me to pay more attention to the role of the teacher outside the classroom, particularly at home and in the community. Nigin suggested that I talk to History teachers in the other two sites.

The teachers differed from me in their ways of knowing and expressing. They had a much stronger belief in their ideologies. They rarely used words such as "maybe" or "perhaps." They had more of an "either/or" approach. As I probed into their "categorical thinking," I moved back and forth between sensitive questioning, exchange, story telling, and debate so as to make the data collection a truly educative process of awakening, cultivation and transformation for me and the teachers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Dewey, 1938). I carried out this reflexive process during data collection, my relations with the participants, representation of my method, and research text (Diamond & Mullen 2000; Lather 1986; Merriam 1988). As I moved from the preliminary analysis to higher levels, I gradually distanced myself from the participants and focused on the process; the writing in particular helped me to become more critical about the content of the research and subject each datum to a thorough examination. Often this deeply challenged my emotions, assumptions, beliefs and values.

I opened a file to note down the research procedures, trying to accurately and fairly describe the research process in detail, including my tensions, frustrations, and new learning (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Lather, 1986; Wolcott, 1990, 1994). Debates with the core participants, long-term observations, and asking the other teachers and community members about the same issues helped in finding disconfirming evidence and clarifying the inconsistencies, tensions and even contradictions within the cases. This helped me to avoid simplistic judgements. The teachers themselves liked my approach, which went beyond the "monocular preoccupation" with
sole teachers (McIntyre, 1998, in Fullan et al., 1998) and beyond their mere classroom practice (Goodson, 1996). Lola, for example, stressing the importance of more meetings with the other teachers, suggested that I should arrange a workshop in a way beneficial for both the teachers and the research.

Knowing the harsh, unstable conditions of Tajikistan, I had more than one teacher-case in order to avoid possible failure of the study in case of teachers’ withdrawal. The context also required taking more batteries, and more than one tape recorder. I had to be ready for stomach disorders, typhoid, malaria, scabies, diarrhea, absence of electricity, cold and hunger. I had to make tough decisions about what maximum could be done in the field and what out of it. On the good side, the welcoming people helped to find the participants and conduct the research procedures without any hassle and much quicker. The teachers spared more time with me than I expected and provided me with exhilarating insights. The research also confirmed my belief that any research method essentially embodies a socially-constructed tool with inherent potentials and limitations. It was up to me, situated within the context, to make the best use of its potential.

I also employed various types of triangulation; I drew on various points of view and various methods to check the accuracy of certain data (e.g., interview, observation, field notes, document analysis). I collected data over a long time and checked points throughout the time, by constant probing, returning to some of the sites more than once, and following up points in different sites. For example, I followed the issues emerging from the Shugnan History teacher’s case in Wanj where I met with the history teacher after the focus group meeting. I briefed the participants about the previous data and my understanding of it, and asked colleagues (e.g., the Head of the Teacher Training Institute, the AKF education advisor) to comment on my initial hunches and arguments (c.f., Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988). This process of looking for critique and examination continued through the data analysis and writing up also.

Emphasising the essential features of human experience, particularly of teachers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Shulman, 1986a), I leave it to the readers to find what is plausible, transferable and useful for them. I view transfer of learning as a social construct, more dependent on the “receiver” than the “provider.” I also deeply believe that research, like teaching, carries moral and ethical responsibilities (Britzman, 1991; Donmoyer, 1990; Lather, 1986). I did not come to Tajikistan as an empty vessel to be filled with the data from the participants. I have deep personal, professional and political interests in this study. This commitment made me inclusive.
It took me to the furthest places, to seek the most critical voices. I lived there with the teachers in their homes, to share their poverty, cold, and hunger, and to collect data despite sickness and lack of light, power or communication (Clark, 1986). Like the teachers, I too have passions for justice, equity, moral reasoning, and democracy; I see differences as a source of richness. I also already had some degree of professional experience, knowledge and assumptions about the topic of my study, which confirmed, modified, added to, and sometimes even negated them (Britzman, 1991; Lather, 1986; Lincoln, 1996; Merriam, 1988).

**Ethical Considerations**

Any research is essentially an ethical endeavour, involving deep challenges and implications for all the participants, including the researcher (Cole & Knowles 2000, Dockrell, 1987; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Lather, 1986; Soltis, 1992). Research ethics considers some of the most sensitive questions of relationships between the researcher and the participants, including issues of power, responsibility, benefits, harms, representation, ownership, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. At the heart of my study lay the challenge of responsibility towards the principal and secondary participants (teachers), the research and professional educational community, the larger community and the sponsors (Dockrell, 1987).

My research was inherently problematic; it has benefits, but it also has limitations grounded in space, text, context and my own knowledge, bias, skills and attitudes. My case studies were not devoid of deep interventions into personal and political dimensions of the participants' life and work (cf. Cole, 1994; Walker, 1983). I found it hard to listen to the stories of their personal and material losses during the civil war and harder to share the stories of my losses. I found the teachers spontaneous in sharing their intimate feelings, passing judgement and complaints. Their judgement and complaints had no boundaries. I believe these issues were important for their work and visions. At the same time, I knew that pluralism and freedom of expression, so suppressed during the country's totalitarian past, have not yet become realities. Tajikistan remains factionally divided between various clans, religious sects and ideologies (*Tajikistan Country Report*, 1998; see also Chapter 4). This required that I keep a balance between the various participants and stakeholders, not spread sensitive information and nor take sides.

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32 For a discussion on technical, interpersonal, procedural, ethical, political and educational issues of a qualitative and collaborative research see Cole and Knowles (2000, 137-1400. pp.
My study is not without biases: I have tried to represent the teachers' point of view, but the ultimate version of this thesis is my revised and edited representation (Stacey, 1988; Sparkes, 1994). I have tried to be sensitive to the context, to which I also belong, but the final version of this report was produced in Toronto, not in Tajikistan. It is also a conservative, post-facto study; I recognise that things have changed since I left the site. Further, as Hargreaves (1998) remarked, this research, like any other study, could be used not only to improve the teachers' lives and work, professionalise their status, and empower them to provide quality education, but also to further control, manipulate and exploit and even punish them. This study will never be able to cover everything and satisfy everybody. I also worry that my study may be both misunderstood and misused. These concerns, nevertheless, do not make it less useful or less valid (Diamond & Mullen, 1999; Lincoln, 1996; Wolcott, 1990).

I, of course, got the consent of the participants, informed them about the purpose, nature and implications of my study, and asked for their permission in sharing their views. To keep the participants' information private and confidential, I have altered their names.

My position as both an insider and outsider with a certain "reputation/popularity" created a challenge for the power relationships between the participants and myself (Sparkes, 1994). I was well known to the participants as a multilingual native who has worked in several Middle Eastern countries, and has become a teacher educator instructor of the Aga Khan University, a doctoral candidate at University of Toronto and a translator for the Aga Khan. I therefore had to regularly clarify that, despite all this, I was no more than a graduate student at the time of my fieldwork. This reduced the participants' expectations and changed the nature of conversation to become more authentic, critical, and complaining; they became normal in their talk and revealed critical and emotional voices. This was a critical step in gaining their trust and developing ways in which they felt safe, equal and confident to share with me freely. It is this process that made me appreciate the complaints and critiques of the teachers as most important knowledge for understanding them. These complaints revealed how the systemic, geographic and historical conditions have come across the teachers' hopes to become the kind of teachers they have always hoped to be, to live up to the humanistic rhetoric, and to empower their students' growth.

Being open to a participatory and 'fair trade' mode of work, I offered two workshops in each school. One was about child-centred pedagogy and the other about approaches to teacher knowledge. As a result of one of these, Izzat commented that prior to the workshop none of the teachers thought the question of teacher knowledge could be so difficult. At the request of the
Heads of the schools, I talked to the students in each site about my educational career and related it to their aspirations. The teachers appreciated that I was not there to judge their practice against certain schema, as the local inspectors usually did. Further, by asking them to show me their usual practice I did not impose an extra burden on their already tense and busy lives. They enjoyed my help and support with small ideas, my sharing my experiences with them and telling them how things are done in Canada and Pakistan. Sharing my own stories in order to get theirs was absolutely necessary (Cladoptin & Connelly, 1994).

I found the teachers highly vocal and deeply critical about their usual practices and about larger socio-political issues. They usually started with telling me what did not work in their classes and what problems they had. Their defensiveness about their practices was important, because it revealed how these teachers became the way they were, and how they often embodied the teachers they did not want to be. In the context where the teachers were not only ignored, but even used against them, they had no option except to be defensive and complaining. I pointed out their successes and positive aspects, as Nigin mentioned: "You never asked me if I had a lesson plan and you always pointed out good points from my lesson that I did not notice myself." My tolerance for their mistakes and failures and my keeping relationships confidential helped build trust, mutual respect and positive relationships during the whole course of the research (Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Cole, 1994).

I did not include pictures that could expose the participants. However, the majority of them did not want me to change their names. Lola, on the last day asked me to change her name, because of possible repercussions not for her, but for her children. Gorminj said that he was puzzled that I asked him for permission before entering his class every time: "The inspectors never ask. You, though I have signed a consent form, still ask me every time." As a teacher of Mathematics, he used my laptop to teach his students and himself. Regularly I asked the teachers whether they wanted me to change or delete anything from the last conversation. Sino, for example, said that I should not change any thing, even his name. "I am a murid (devoted learner) of the Imam of the Time. What ever I said to you, I shall say to everybody else." Nigin, on the other hand, said that I should modify her previously expressed thoughts about how children learn.

I tried to avoid the "commando" research style, where the researcher usually turns the participants into mere data providers (Deutsher, 1983; Diamond & Mullen, 2000). I stayed with each participant for a prolonged time and not only observed but lived in their houses. I did not
only listen and ask painful and intrusive questions; I also sought their critique of my work, shared their sukha at gham (happiness and sorrow), offered workshops to schools, paid for my hosts, gave them small tokens of appreciation, and acknowledged their wisdom and commitments.

Despite their poverty, these people refused to take money from me, and opened their hearts. Izzat said: “By living in my home, you now see what kind of a tough life I have. Before comparing me with the Canadian teachers and asking me to teach like them, you compare my living conditions with theirs.” I helped Lola to buy medicine when her daughter got Hepatitis B. I offered a workshop for the primary teachers at her request. I took Sino to the local café for lunches and tea to compensate for his generous sharing of his brilliance, and because he did not have his own home. At his request, I also taught his students at the pedagogical school. At the request of the head of the school in Shugnan, I stayed with the students in their hostel and talked to them in English. I brought books in English and bought pens and notebooks for the schools. I helped some of the children buy clothes and shoes to attend school. I carried wood with Izzat and helped his paralysed mother. I cut wood to heat our house rooms during the cold November and December of 1999.

The teachers, for many of whom this might have been the first research encounter, were still surprised to see this kind of research. In Wanj, a local scholar told me that researchers write theses in libraries and universities, not in remote villages. The teachers often laughed when I told them that I have come from the first world to the third world in the search for knowledge. Nigin and Izzat wondered about the mundane nature of my questions. In turn, I asked them to advise me about how to get to their knowledge and understand their professional life. I also asked them to tell me what questions to consider next.

Though I belong to the context, I have been out of Tajikistan for the last four years, with only short visits back. These visits have revealed to me how I have been reconstituted by other discourses and practices how different I have become in thinking and acting, and how much I have forgotten today’s realities of teachers’ life and work in Tajikistan. My exposures to culturally and educationally different experiences have been much more intense than the participants’. Among other things, this brought a blend of outsider’s and insider’s eyes to my inquiry. However, having been exposed to Western educational ideas and so called “privileged knowledge”, I also needed not to fall into the traps of “cultural insularity and intellectual arrogance” (Farrell, 1994). In each of their classes, I learnt about the history of my country, my
culture, the fauna and flora of the Pamirs again and again. I recalled my childhood, youth and educational experiences in Badakhshan. I know about my people’s rich cultural background and utilised and represented its vivid features wherever it emerged in my data. This included experimental textual forms such as poetry, short stories, visual and artistic means of presenting their “truths” (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Diamond & Mullen, 1999; Lather, 1986). The idea was “to link the vastly different worlds of researchers and their readers and those who are written about in a compassionate drama of empathy, understanding, mutuality, caring, responsiveness and sometimes, outrage” (Lincoln, 1996, p. 14). The various genres provided me with an opportunity to illustrate their complexity.

I was aware that the participants might differ in their perspectives not only from me but also among themselves. I, therefore, particularly emphasised on those voices that complained and criticised. I disclosed my feelings, reflected upon my limitations and strengths, thought about the consequences of my research, and about taking responsibility for the participants (Lincoln, 1996). Taking the advice of the school head in Shugnan on the importance of professional “enemies” for one’s growth (Johnson & Johnson, 1992), I encouraged the participants to ask me questions, inasmuch as I asked them.

For me, this study was not an end in itself, but a new step in engagement in educational reform in my country. As such, tensions and dilemmas accompanied each of its stages. I had to decide how to enter and exit the sites, include and exclude possible participants, and select the school levels, the subjects, the cases, the passages and issues. I had to choose between saving batteries by doing analysis on the spot and saving my own health by doing recordings to analyse later. I had to weigh myself and my voice against the participants and their voices, probing the teachers in depth against not hurting their self-esteem and confidence. I tried to empathise, but also without “going native”, or taking sides (Villenas, 1996). I played contradictory roles, particularly those of social activist and cool-minded researcher. Jointly we condemned the corrupt and unjust practices, but became entrapped by them. I had to balance my agenda and the teachers’ agendas in terms of issues of importance. I found myself negotiating between enabling and disempowering, between presenting the teachers’ practices and wondering how to keep them unpolluted by my presence, between describing and analysing, critiquing and judging. I tried to present critical political issues of power, language, gender and culture without endangering the participants’ and my lives. Finally, I had to resolve issues of size, time, energy and money, languages and audience in writing the thesis. This journey of tensions and decisions helped me
realise that research is a process of delicate negotiation. It also rejuvenated the purpose of my life. I hope that the results do the same for others.

Summary

I conducted this study of teachers' practices inside and outside the classrooms in Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province (MBAP), Tajikistan between April and December 1999. I selected a qualitative life history case study as an adequate design for exploring the research questions. The major sample included five experienced, reputable, change-oriented and articulate teachers in three sites of MBAP (Shugnan, Murghab and Wanj). I enriched the core participants' perspectives by gathering views from secondary groups of teachers and the related wider educational community at each site.

The data collection methods included classroom and community participant observations, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and document analysis. I used a tape recorder, field notes, and reflective journals to record, transcribe, and organise the data. I employed a multi-level inductive data analysis procedure to organise, examine, analyse, code and categorise the data. It also included manual and computerised programs. It also included multiple revisiting, re-reading and re-writing.

In this thesis, I extensively report Sino's and Nigin's lives and work and refer to Lola, Gorminj and Izzat only sparingly. I followed this course for several reasons, practical, methodological and conceptual: Practically, having opted for depth, when completed the cases of Sino and Nigin, I realised that the manuscript's size already approached the limits allowed for a doctoral thesis. Methodologically, Sino and Nigin form an optimal sample; their experience solidly captured both the Soviet and the post-Soviet periods. In addition to strong similarities in their life experiences, they also presented differences in terms of gender, geography, ethnic background and subject matters that represented the range of the other participants. Conceptually, Sino and Nigin presented most striking cases. Their experiences spoke to themes, issues, tensions and struggles common to all the participants. Further, their transformative experiences with their subject matters, reconstruction of truth, their status and the meaning of their life made them powerfully appealing.

Having said all this, I reiterate that Lola, Gorminj and Izzat's were valuable and stimulating participants and that their voices are equally rich, powerful and educative. To engage with their data to the extent that I did with Sino and Nigin will be one of my future professional priorities. In this thesis I, brought the insights from them into the cross-case analysis to enrich
my arguments and convey that I have not forgotten about them. The cross-case analysis aimed at representing fundamental qualities of the teachers' life and work and the major factors and issues of their history, context, system and culture. Although I drew micro-conclusions and implications during the cross-case analysis, the logic dictated that, the macro-conclusions, implications and areas of further research constitute a separate, final chapter.

I addressed the issues of validity, reliability, credibility, and usefulness within the parameters of the qualitative study. This quality control included multiple sources and methods of data collection and checking the data between and along times and sites. It also comprised probing, looking for convergence and counter-arguments, and questioning my own biases. Accurate recording, extensively representing the primary data, presenting dense descriptions, seeking feedback from teachers' and others, all were employed during the data collection in order to ensure validity. During the writing-up, I concentrated on writing accurately, editing, developing coherence and tediously recording the steps involved. I believe the conclusions contribute to developing frameworks for understanding practices, knowledge, voice, vision, life and work of teachers in rural, mountainous post-Soviet Tajikistan and hence in similar contexts.

The ethics of the study included anonymity, changing certain parts of the text and leaving out a few others. These ethics also were realised in mutual help and growth, cultural sensitivity, fidelity to portraying the participants' truths and voices, and avoidance of exploitation. They also imbue the study's call for and contribution to creating more just and humane relations, approaches, and conditions of life and work for the majority of the people, primarily the teachers. For that, I raised a number of issues for future research and consideration.

This study, due to its qualitative, ethnographic nature and participatory mode became embroiled in numerous of logistical, professional, personal and political tensions. This made the reporting of the process of the research as important as of its outcomes. The upcoming chapters will further relate the study's process and products.
Chapter 4: Mountainous Badakhshan: The More Things Change, The More They Remain the Same

This chapter spells out the major continuities and recent changes that have taken place in the province in the physical geography, people, culture, history, economic and political conditions, and the education system of the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province of Tajikistan.

The chapter consists of four sections. The section on the place, the people and their culture points out that despite the recent changes and previous Soviet attempts to create a new type of citizen, the people who live on the same mountains and villages have remained almost the same in their language, religion, practices and outlook.

The section on a brief history of political changes and major forces, on the other hand, outlines dramatic socio-political changes in MBAP with various forces developing roots and shifting positions on the landscapes. This section presents some of the socio-economic problems that were under control during Soviet years but have re-emerged as a result of the collapse of the USSR. As these forces and problems shift, so do their influences on the teachers’ life and work and on community values. Regardless of apparent Soviet achievements, Badakhshan ultimately ended up as it began: the most underdeveloped zone of the former Soviet Union.

The section on education in MBAP across time illustrates that regardless of the emergence, development and diversification of education, and despite the sorrowful lessons of history, the approaches to the purpose, management and reform of education, as well as teacher development have continued to be top-down and bureaucratic. Education has largely remained irrelevant and decontextualised; similarly, the image of the teacher as servant of the state and perpetuator of the official ideology and the status quo has also lingered.

The summary pulls together the insights from the other sections, re-emphasises the major continuities and changes and points out their implications for teachers’ life and work. The chapter as a whole is helpful in tracing the roots of the themes and insights that emerge from the cases, analysis and conclusions.

The Place, the People and their Religions

MBAP is a land locked and mountainous province of Tajikistan, dominated by the Pamir Mountains and criss-crossed by deep valleys with swift rivers. Around 80% of MBAP lies at an
elevation of 3000 or more meters. It has some of the highest peaks\textsuperscript{33} and largest glaciers\textsuperscript{34} in the world. Because MBAP lies in a geologically active zone, severe earthquakes are common. Although its largest province, with 45% of the territory, MBAP has only 5% of Tajikistan’s population (200, 000 people out of six million total population, Muhabbatov, 1999; UNDP Report, 1995). The province borders China in the east, Afghanistan in the south and Kyrgyzstan in the north.

MBAP is the home of the several Eastern Iranian ethnic minorities, known as Pamirians\textsuperscript{35}: Shugnanis, the largest ethnicity, reside in Shugnan district, where MBAP’s provincial capital, Khorog, is also located. Roshanis live in the Roshan district and parts of Shugnan district, including Khorog. Bartangis inhabit the Bartang valley of Roshan district. Wakhis reside in the Wakhan corridor and with the Ishkashimis inhabit the district of Ishkashim. The Yazgulamis live in Yazgulam valley of the district of Wanj. Wanj and Darwaz are the only two majority Tajik-speaking\textsuperscript{36} areas of MBAP. The Kyrgyz minority\textsuperscript{37} lives in the eastern district of Murghab. These Pamirian minorities\textsuperscript{38} are often so different from each other that in many cases a mutual understanding is impossible. Tajik, or sometimes Russian, has served as a lingua franca between the various Pamirian linguistic minorities, the Tajik-speaking Tajiks, and the Turkic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. In the post-Soviet period, Shugnani is increasingly taking over this role of an interethnic language in MBAP.\textsuperscript{39}

The Pamirian ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious differences have mainly worked to their disadvantage. The national label “Tajik” has hardly made them equal to the Tajik-speaking citizens of Tajikistan. Sometimes the differences of the Pamirians have been manipulated for political purposes, ranging from calling them “the real Tajiks” to “not- full-Tajiks” or sometimes even “infidels” (Glen, 1999; Jahngiri 1998; Roy, 2000).

Unlike the rest of Tajikistan, where the majority of the population belongs to the Sunni branch of Islam, MBAP is a land where the Ismailis, a minority religious sect in Tajikistan as a

\textsuperscript{33} The highest peaks are Mount Samanid, formerly Mount Communism, at 7495 meters and Mount Tajikistan, formerly Mount Lenin, at 7134 meters.

\textsuperscript{34} Fedchenko Glacier, with 700 square kilometres, is the longest outside the polar regions.

\textsuperscript{35} For detailed information on each of these ethnicities see http://www.anapfire.com/aj/tajikistan_update/culture.html. See also Bashiri (1998).

\textsuperscript{36} It is important to note that Iranian Persian and Tajik are slightly different variants of the same language, known also as Farsi and Dari.

\textsuperscript{37} Unlike Pamirians, who have Iranian ethnic roots, the Kyrgyz belong to Turkic ethnicity.

\textsuperscript{38} Some of these ethnic groups also reside in Afghanistan, Northern Pakistan and Western China.

\textsuperscript{39} Given that almost all the Pamirian ethnic minorities both in and outside MBAP know Shugnani, it constitutes the third major spoken language in Tajikistan, after Tajik and Uzbek.
whole, form the majority (Keshavjee, 1998). The Ismaili interpretation of Islam won adherents in Central Asia\(^40\) in the 9th and 10th centuries and played a prominent role in the intellectual and political life of Central Asia. Some of the Samanid rulers\(^41\), as well as many of the medieval Persian-Tajik scholars allegedly adhered to Ismailism. The Ismailis of MBAP consider themselves as followers of the Aga Khan.

In MBAP the Ismailis constitute an absolute majority of Government employees and have a strong influence over the decision-making. In total, the Ismailis constitute about 80% of the population of MBAP but only 5% of the population of Tajikistan. Within MBAP, Ismailism is dominant in Ishkashim, Roshan, Roshtqal’a and Shugnan districts. A considerable number of Ismailis live in Murghab and Darwaz.

The Sunnis constitute an absolute majority in the districts of Murghab, Darwaz and Wanj of MBAP. Russian Orthodox Christians comprise the senior staff at the military posts and bases across the province.

In general, the Pamirian people’s Ismaili identity has been a source of both fortune and pain for these people of Badakhshan.\(^42\) As Ismailis, the small Pamirian ethnicities have experienced several attempts at conversion by the neighbouring Sunnis.\(^43\) Religious tensions, though strictly monitored, did not disappear even under the Soviet period. Yet the comparatively safe climate of co-existence under the Soviets allowed many Pamirians to settle in the lowlands of Tajikistan, including the capital city, Dushanbe. Following the collapse of the USSR, these tensions re-emerged and culminated in brutal oppressions in 1992-94 by the ultimate victors of the civil war (1992-97), the Kulabi and Leninabadi Tajiks, supported by Russians and Uzbeks (Djalili et al., 1988).

On the other hand, the Ismaili emphasis on tolerance and knowledge helped the population of the province take advantage of the opportunities for education in Soviet times. In

\(^{40}\text{Central Asia in geographic terms denotes the republics east of the Caspian Sea, including northern parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Western China as well as the former Soviet republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan (Kneg, 1984). Russian sources exclude Kazakhstan as part of Central Asia.}\)

\(^{41}\text{For more on the Samanid State, see Borsworth (1967).}\)

\(^{42}\text{There are many different terms for the area and its people. Badakhshan and Pamir, used as synonyms to MBAP in this thesis, are embroiled with controversies. Greater Badakhshan includes northern parts of Pakistan, northeastern Afghanistan, southeastern Tajikistan and western Xinjiang province of China (cf. Djalili et al., 1998). For the purpose of this study, I have confined myself to that part of Badakhshan that fell under Russian influence and is now known as Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province (MBAP) of independent Tajikistan.}\)

\(^{43}\text{On the atrocities of their non-Ismaili neighbours against the Ismaili population of Badakhshan see Bokiev (1994), Iskandarov (1995), Keshavjee (1998), and also available on line: http://www.angelfire.com/sd/tajikistanupdate/culture.html.}\)
the years of the post-Soviet crisis, the people's Ismaili identity was also the crucial factor in them getting aid to save them from a possible humanitarian catastrophe. It also motivated teachers to stay, teach and sometimes even excel.  

**Political Changes**

In this section I present a brief political history of the recent rapid dramatic socio-political changes, which have not only brought in developments but have also served the people's lasting features to maintain.

**Badakhshan as Part of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic**

Despite a long heritage, Tajikistan emerged as a country only as a result of the Socialist revolution in 1917; it became a full Soviet Union Republic in 1929.  

Mountainous Badakhshan was added to Tajikistan in 1925, and since then has shared a common history with it. The socialist revolution brought fundamental changes in MBAP.  

The Soviets built roads, schools, hospitals, and modern housing. They also developed small agricultural industries. By the year 1990, the literacy rate in MBAP reached 99% with a substantial number of the province's population having higher education degrees. The Badakhshani intelligentsia has made formidable contributions to the professional fields in Tajik society, such as teaching, health, engineering and culture (Bokiev, 1994; Masov, 1996; Nazarshoev & Nazarshoev, 1984).

During the Soviet period two major highways were built: a 750 km. Osh-Khorog highway in 1934 and a 525 km. Dushanbe-Khorog highway in 1940. These roads have linked the isolated province to the rest of the Soviet Union. The Osh-Khorog road served as a lifeline during the post-Soviet humanitarian crisis (Aga Khan Foundation Report, 1995).

Within the Soviet Union, MBAP, like the rest of Tajikistan underwent turbulent historical experiences, such as: (a) conflict between the pro-Communist state and the Islamic Basmachi resistance movement, (b) Stalin's collectivisation, industrialisation and cultural revolution, followed by the brutal repression and the hardships of WWII  

(c) Khrushchev's revival of

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44 Examples come in the following chapters.

45 Glen (1999) describes how the process of creation of the nation-states in Central Asia had been a part of the Soviet policy, which, outwardly using the egalitarian principles of equity and freedom of nations and languages, simultaneously fought against the pan-Turkic and Pan-Islamic agendas hatching in the region and constituting serious threats to the Russian interests in the region.

46 Keshovjee (1998, p. 239), comparing Soviet “imperialism” with that of British and French, notes that “Russians differed from the other colonists,... in order to carry out their Marxian-influenced program of restructuring the society, Russian colonialism had to subvert the traditional holders of authority, and in so doing, help people who were traditionally marginalized.”

47 The Basmachi conflict is said to have claimed the lives of 200,000 people (Olcott, 1981, 1991; Rywkin, 1990)

48 WWII is often called the Great Patriotic War in Soviet sources.
agriculture and his forced migration of mountainous populations to the more productive lowlands of Tajikistan, and (d) Brezhnev’s “advanced and stagnated socialism.” (cf. Djalili et al., 1998).

As the flaws of socialism became apparent and Tajikistan remained the poorest zone of the former Soviet Union, Tajiks’ thinking about their identity, heritage and alternative approaches to shaping and expressing their present and future lives, including their education heightened (Curtis, 1996; Fireman, 1991). The inefficiency of the Soviet economy, coupled by Soviet denigration of significant local cultural aspects, such as religion and mystical heritage, furthered the disappointment with the Soviet system, which also failed to instil secular-mindedness in Tajiks (Rashid, 1994; Roy, 2000).

During Gorbachev’s Perestroika and Glasnost, windows opened up to the pluralism of opinions, cultural and political associations and various forms of economic activities. This provided opportunities for the Pamirian minorities of Tajikistan to express themselves culturally and politically. From the late 1980s, an increasing number of Badakhshans joined opposition groups and began to demonstrate against the Communist-led Government. New political organizations, the Party of Islamic Renaissance, the Democratic Party of Tajikistan, the nationalist movement Rastokhaz and La’li Badakhshon emerged as prominent forces (Curtis, 1996; Keshavjee, 1998, Dudoignon, 1998).

Embedded in this struggle were class, ethnic, religious and clan agendas.49 The ruling core of the Communist party, which had led the country for the past 70 years, consisted of Tajiks from the northern province of Leninabad.50 The Islamic party, which aspired to create an Islamo-nationalist Sunni state in Tajikistan, had backing mostly in the eastern Qarategin and southern Qurgonteppa regions. The organisation La’li Badakhshon (Ruby of Badakhshan) mainly comprised professionals of Badakhshani origin; it had democratic aspirations and demanded wider freedom and autonomy for the MBAP.

Part of the Badakhshani population, grouped around La’li Badakhshon and the Democratic Party of Tajikistan51, actively participated in the anti-Communist movement in Tajikistan and MBAP. They argued that MBAP was not given the chance to develop socio-

49 In fact, these elements of identity (e.g., clan, ethnicity, class, religion, language, geo-political and economic interests of the external forces and so on) were used as windows for analysing the civil conflict in Tajikistan (see Djalili et al., 1998; Shoebberlein-Engel, 1994; Roy, 1993, 2000; Tajibaiksh, 1993; Keshavjee, 1998). These sources are external representations of the viewpoints on Tajikistan. For accounts of the civil conflict from various internal perspectives see Kenjaev (1993), Khudonazar (1995), Turajonzoda (1995), Greteley (1995), and Yusuf (1994).
50 Leninabad literally means “Developed by Lenin.” This province was renamed into Soghd in 1998. The other two provinces are MBAP (southeast) and Khatlon (south).
51 The Democratic Party of Tajikistan had a national-democratic and moderate Islamic agenda and had support all over the country.
culturally and economically. The province’s riches were not utilised to its population’s benefits; its languages and culture were not promoted; and its minorities were marginalized. The opposition’s activities led to a highly politicised climate in MBAP, which ended with the unilateral and short-lived proclamation of MBAP as an Autonomous Republic within Tajikistan in 1991 (Curtis, 1996; Rashid, 1994; Yusuf, 1994).

**MBAP in Post-Soviet Tajikistan**

After the fall of the USSR in November 1991, Tajikistan joined the Commonwealth of Independent States. Anti-government and anti-Communist demonstrations, started already during the last Soviet years, continued and sporadically became violent. From May 1992, Tajikistan was engulfed in a protracted civil war. As a result of the war, the opposition forces retreated to Afghanistan, while the pro-Communists, supported by Russians and Uzbeks, took over the country (Curtis, 1996). In the worst years of the civil war, 1992-93, approximately 50,000 people were killed and more than 600,000 internally displaced. Around 100,000 fled to Afghanistan, where the Islamic Party created training camps and subsequently took over the overall resistance against the pro-Russian Tajik Government (Curtis, 1996). With the associated emigration of highly qualified specialists, the economy of the country was ruined; the possibility of national collapse was real (Bashiri, 1993; Keshavjee, 1998).

The majority of the population of MBAP opposed the pro-Communist government of Tajikistan. When Badakhshani groups lost in the elections, the national reconciliation Government fell, and Islamo-Democratic forces were defeated in the initial stage of the civil war, tens of thousands of refugees of Badakhshani origin fled the lowlands of Tajikistan towards MBAP. The status of autonomous republic that the MBAP had claimed in 1991 was annulled by the victors of the civil war. Soon, Soviet supplies vanished and the province’s last reserves ended. The province was cut off from the rest of Tajikistan by clashes between the fighters of the opposition and the government. The climatic conditions of MBAP, isolation from the outside world and the paralysis of the infrastructure made the overall situation in MBAP catastrophic. Conflicts between the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) and the Government forces accelerated and intensified between 1992 and 1997. The opposition's forces, led by the Party of Islamic Renaissance, gained ground to the north of the MBAP and gradually advanced towards the capital, Dushanbe. On their way, they used schools as bases and increased the influence of Islam
over the nature of education in the areas under their control. Simultaneously, conflicts emerged among the various factions within the ruling coalition, the recent victors of the 1992 war\(^3\) (Djalili et al., 1998; Jonson, 1997). The intensity of the internal conflicts, added to external pressures, accelerated the peace process. In 1997, the peace accord between the opposition and the government was signed. Whatever the motives, the shift from the armed conflict into a political dialogue and peace in such a comparatively short period was perceived locally and internationally as a sign of the prevalence of political wisdom on the part of the current administration, the opposition and the other, external forces involved in the inter-Tajik conflict. At the time of my fieldwork, a tense process of implementing the terms of the accord, consisting mainly of the distribution of Government posts, was going on.

My fieldwork also coincided with other significant events in the contemporary history of Tajikistan, such as the Day of Independence, which in turn coincided with the 1100 anniversary celebration of the Samanid State, allegedly the only Tajik state in history previous to the current Tajikistan. Coupled with the culmination of the peace process, this anniversary was celebrated extravagantly. Apart from general appreciation, questions about the necessity of such expensive celebrations on the part of a poor and indebted country were raised at all levels, including people in the official structures. The celebration of the anniversary of the Samanid State, which had contained parts of the present Uzbekistan\(^4\), also triggered territorial disputes between the two counties (Djalili et al., 1998).

Compared to the extravagant celebration of the Samanid and Independence Day, there were several more modest events such as the Day of Victory (May 9\(^{th}\)), the Day of Knowledge (September 1\(^{st}\)), the Day of the Teacher (October 3\(^{rd}\)), the referendum (September 6\(^{th}\)), the census (October 1-6), the presidential election (November 6\(^{th}\)) and the upcoming parliamentary elections (January 2000). The Day of Knowledge coincided with September 1\(^{st}\), the first day of the school academic year. On that day, the school in which I collected data gathered at an assembly, where the Head of District Education congratulated the school personnel on the beginning of the academic year and together with the head of the school sanctioned the opening of a fee-paid program for the students of Grade One.

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\(^3\) The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was created from the remnants of the former Soviet Union and included only 12 states. The three Baltic states refused membership in the CIS. CIS provided some leeway for the former Soviet countries, such as free transit, joint defence and security support for each other.

\(^4\) In the west and southwest of Tajikistan, constant rebellions by pro-Uzbek militias weakened the power of the central government, mainly centred in the hands of the southern Kulabi clan. The economically powerful northern province of Leninabad, another recently with the ruling Kulabis, became a stronghold of the secular opposition.
Similarly to the Soviet past, the Government pulled many teachers out of schools to assist in rehearsing the parade-show of the Samanid anniversary, and in monitoring and conducting the all-country referendum on September 6th 1999, the one-week census in October and the presidential elections on November 6th, 1999. The teachers were the main organisers of the polling stations, enumerators and counters of votes during the presidential elections, overwhelmingly won by the current President. For conducting the census the teachers were promised 12 thousand Tajik Rubles ($12 CDN), a sum still not received by the time I left (December 18, 1999).

**Major Forces on the Post-Soviet Badakhshan Socio-Political Landscape**

Although the notion of an independent, secular, democratic and unitary state has been attached to both Soviet and post-Soviet statehood, the nature of post-Soviet Tajikistan differs from that of Soviet Tajikistan. Soviet Tajikistan was supposedly built according to socialist egalitarian principles of state ownership of the property and modes of production, creating an internationalist and socialist society expressed in a national form (Medlin et al., 1971; Nazarshoev & Nazarshoev, 1984). The current Tajik State is built upon the Western concept of the nation state, principles of market economy, and since 1999, the multi-party system. The religious and ethnic diversity of Tajiks has been pushed to the background in both periods.

According to the Constitution of Tajikistan, MBAP is an indivisible part of the country. Though there is a provincial parliament (majlis), all of the provincial leaders (e.g., Governor and his deputies, head of police and security) are nominated by the higher republican authorities.

The autonomous status of the province has never been clearly defined. Several important forces operate on the current socio-political landscape of MBAP. The future of MBAP, including its education policy and practice, inevitably requires the understanding of the nature and interaction of these forces with each other, with the local contextual realities.

**The local Badakhshani or Pamirian perspective** has raised and will continue to speak to questions of marginalization, freedom of expression for the Pamirian ethnicities, more autonomy for the province, and province’s economic and cultural development. Powerful in the 1980s,

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54 The capital of the Samanid State was Bokhara, currently a historic city of present Uzbekistan.
55 However, Poliakov (1992), Keshavjee (1998), and Glen (1999) suggest that the Soviet state essentially did not eliminate the domination of the ruling classes, tribes and ethnicity to the advantage of those oppressed by them in the full sense, particularly in the rural areas. The Soviets replaced their private property by giving them state property. Poliakov (1992, cited in Glen, 1999, p. 137) mentioned this as "one of the best-kept secrets of Central Asia that pre-revolutionary social position is still the most important determinant of social position today." For more discussion on this, see Glen (1999, pp. 134-141); and Djalili et al. (1998).
when it was led by several organised movements (e.g., La’li Badakhshon, Jam’iyati Nosir Khusraw56, Democratic Party of Tajikistan), this force lost its popularity as a result of its failure in the civil war and the rise of Aga Khan Development Network in MBAP and Tajikistan. It nevertheless still exists in the minds and hearts of the people of Mountainous Badakhshan. This perspective is also fuelled by discriminatory practices of the central and local political, ethnic and religious forces58, as well as by economic and cultural globalisation.

On the central level, former communists continue to be the absolute majority of the current senior officers in the national and provincial Government, and in AKDN offices (Keshavjee, 1998, pp. 80-81). The old Soviet communist ideology exists through the memory of the "more stable and happier" Soviet past. Communism as such has no promising future in Tajikistan. But it may gain some momentum with the road to China, a close neighbour seen as having success with a modified version of the socialist experiment.59 Whether re-emerge popularly, Communist ideas will also depend on how the ethics of the new forces operate at grassroots level.

At the same time, the official circles promote a nationalist ideology of Tajikistan. The promotion of Tajik nationalism needs to be positioned within the rise of ethnic nationalism in all countries of the former Soviet block (Ignatief, 199359), and particularly Pan-Turkism60 in Central Asia (Jahangiri, 1998). For official and even unofficial circles in Tajikistan, therefore, the ethno-nationalist agenda is a factor that serves several agendas: to maintain the status-quo, unify the divided country, provide an alternative to Islamic agenda, and respond to the general ethnic nationalist trend in Central Asia. Within MBAP, however, the idea faces the challenges of ethnic, religious and linguistic differences and recollections of recent unpleasant relations. Development of this nationalist agenda brings Tajikistan closer to Iran and the pro-Tajik forces in Afghanistan.

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56 These are certainly not the only forces that existed on the landscape. Djailili et al. (1998) and Keshavjee (1998) provide an elaborate portrayal of these and other forces in Tajikistan.

57 La’li Badakhshon means “Ruby of Badakhshan”; Jam’iyati Nosir Khusraw stands for “Nosir Khusraw Society” (for more of these and other socio-cultural and political groups, see Keshavjee (1998).

58 Glen (1999) provides indicators by which Pamirian ethnocentrism was distinguished; he highlights these differences as being espoused from the inside. However, he fails to mention that these feelings of “otherness” have also been promoted by external forces that were interested in hindering their merger with the Tajik speaking populations. One such force was the Soviet policy of “divide and rule” (Keshavjee, 1998).

59 Interestingly, the possible increase of Chinese influence in Tajikistan and particularly Badakhshan is not given attention in the analytical literature. While the Chinese may dissociate themselves from the local pro-Communist feelings, the latter may attempt to associate with the success of Chinese communist experiment to revitalise the Communist theory.

60 Ignatief (1993) provides an elaborate discussion on the political and cultural implications of what he calls, the return of “ethnic nationalism” in the former Soviet and Eastern European countries after the fall of the USSR.
It also bring Tajikistan close to Russia in order for the two to withstand the pan-Turkism’s advancement in Central Asia (Bathold, 1977; Landau, 1995; Roy, 2000; Shukurov, et al., 1997). This proximity has implications for relations with (a) the Taliban, who blame Tajikistan for helping the Tajik-based anti-Taliban opposition, and (b) Uzbekistan, annoyed by Tajiks’ claims for Samarqand and Bokhara (Glen, 1999; Roy, 2000).

Meanwhile, an increasing influence of Islam is fostered by Islam’s deep roots inside the country, the deepening of the socio-economic crisis, and the interest of the Islamic countries in Central Asia. Two predominantly Sunni districts of Badakhshan, Darvaz and Wanj, continue to be under the strong influence of the Islamic Party of Renaissance. In general, Islam remains the dominant religion and an integral part of Tajik culture. Soviet efforts to secularise the society and the bid of the pro-Communist Government of an independent Tajikistan to reduce the role of religion have had little success (Greetsky, 1995; Medlin et al., 1971; Rashid, 1994). The role that Islam plays in the life of Tajikistan varies considerably. Some Tajiks are deeply religious. For others Islam is more important as an intrinsic part of their cultural heritage. Some Tajiks are not religious at all (Bennigsen & Broxup, 1983; Medlin et al., 1971; Roy, 2000). In addition, Islam in Badakhshan is as diverse as elsewhere. All this poses a challenge for those who want to push an Islamic agenda in Tajikistan.

Still a major force, Russian influence in Tajikistan and MBAP has historical roots from the middle of the 19th century, when Badakhshan became a zone of colonialist dispute between the British and Russian empires. As a result, Russia annexed parts of the territories of the current MBAP. Several historians and political analysts have considered the Russian annexation of the MBAP as a progressive phenomenon. According to them, Russians neither attempted to change the religious identity of the local Ismaili population nor subjected them to persecution. Russians, and later on, the Soviets introduced comparatively modern education and culture, and created opportunities for the locals, which totally transformed the region (Iskandarov, 1994; Karamshoev & Kharkovchuk, 1996; Medlin et al., 1971; Nazarshoev, 1982).

The Soviet Government used all kinds of incentives to bring in the ethnic Russians and other non-Central Asians into Tajikistan. By the 1980s, the major centres of Tajikistan were

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61 Pan-Turkism is a nationalist trend that aims at uniting the Turkic ethnicities around the world. Some of the extreme Pan-Turkist agendas consider Central Asia as exclusively Turkic region. They claim that the creation of Tajik statehood in Central Asia was a historical mistake. For more see Ghafurov (1977), Landau (1995), Medlin et al. (1971), Shukurov, et al., (1998), Zenkovsky (1960). 62 Keshavjee (1998) suggests that Russian’s protection of the Ismaili population of Badakhshan was not completely philanthropic. Russians took advantage of the religious difference of the Ismailis against the neighbouring Sunnis as well as the British and
“Russianised” in terms of language, dress and architecture. Russians and other non-Central Asians held the major high positions in the local governments and industrial services. Russian language was one of the major criteria for social mobility for Tajiks. Though Tajik was granted the status of national language in 1991, even in 1999 Russian was still widely used in urban and official circles and in the media.

Tajikistan has a strategic position in Russian geo-politics against the advancement of larger competing forces in Central Asia. Russia backed the current Tajik rulers during the civil war (Gareev, 1995; Orr, 1998; Yusuf, 1994), but has also exerted pressure on the current Tajik government to negotiate with the United Tajik Opposition. In 1995, the Governments of Russia and Tajikistan signed a Treaty of Cooperation and Defence, according to which the Russians are allowed to maintain their military bases on the territory of Tajikistan. The southern borders of Tajikistan were declared as borders of Central Asia and Russia. This recognition led to the deployment of 25,000 Russian and Central Asian troops in Tajikistan (Curtis, 1996). These Russian bases have created some opportunities for employment for a number of the Badakhshani population.\(^3\)

Russia is the major creditor of Tajikistan; 60% of Tajikistan’s external debt is owed to the Russian Federation. Many of the current social reforms in Tajikistan including education, are deeply influenced by similar movements in Russia. Russians in Tajikistan have opened up Russian schools in the areas where they are concentrated and have allowed the local Tajik children to attend these schools. Despite all this, Russian influence in Tajik culture has declined in the post-Soviet period. The involvement of Russians in the civil war and their continuous military and economic support for the ruling clan makes them unpopular at the grassroots level.\(^4\)

American advance in the region (Bobrinskoy, 1902). Encouraging the Badakhshanis was also a useful trick in the divide and rule game of the Russians and Communists in Tajikistan.

\(^3\) This Russian’s presence has roots not merely in Russia’s strategic interest and its allegiance with the current Tajik state. Russians continue enjoying respect and favour amongst the majority of the population of MBAP, and in particular its Ismaili parts. Despite the earlier Russian and Soviet disapproval of the relations of the Badakhshanis with their Imam, the Aga Khan III, his missionary Sahezali, who visited the area in the early years of Soviet statehood, considered that Russians were protective of the Ismailis. The Aga Khan III acknowledged that there was no persecution of Ismailis in the Soviet Union. Through his missionaries he conveyed that his Badakhshani followers should pay due respect to their Russian and Soviet protector who “will serve them and disappear, melt like snow when the time comes” (for more, see Keshavjee, 1998; Aaz, 1977).

\(^4\) Roy (2000) suggests an inevitable decline and possible disappearance of the Russian influence in Central Asia and Tajikistan due to economic delinking, the absence of a pro-Russian party, the limits of strategic influence and cultural denaturalisation. He suggests that neither the Russian suzerainty of the pro-Russian government in Tajikistan and nor its false claims of Afghan and Iranian advances can serve as guarantee or justifiable claim for Russians to stay in Tajikistan. “The truth of the matter is that Russian Army is part and parcel of the troubles which it claims to be controlling (civil wars and drug trafficking). Russia is able to maintain its presence thanks to local crises (Nagorno-Karabakh and Tajikistan), and therefore does not seek to resolve them... In all Russians can be seen as adding fuel to the local crises” (Roy, 2000, p. 197).
As a result, the influence of the West is rapidly increasing. More and more Tajikistan is gradually embracing secularism and democracy, a market economy and multi-party pluralism. Globalisation of the economy and information, English language and western forms of economic and educational interventions (Keshavjee, 1998; World Bank Report, 1999).

But the most remarkable feature on the socio-historical landscape of MBAP has been the steady increase of the influence of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). Since 1993, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), an agency of the AKDN, has provided basic food and clothing that saved the population of MBAP from a humanitarian disaster. It has been the major supporter of the local Government in creating grassroots involvement and technical support in all the post-Soviet reforms, including privatising the land, providing agricultural technical assistance, improving health, enhancing communications, hydropower generation and supporting the development of small businesses and industries.

As far as education is concerned, the AKDN, particularly the AKF’s support, has been crucial in the system’s survival through the years of independence (Greenland, 1993; Kruder, 1996). Since 1997, AKF has been involved in the District Education Reform Projects (DISTED), in which the AKF assists the local Department of Education to enhance and upgrade teachers’ knowledge and skills, strengthen education managers, increase the involvement of parents and community in education, establish an education revolving fund, and reconstruct the Institute for Improvement of Teacher Qualifications in Khorog (DISTED report, 1998). The Institute aims at updating and re-training in-service educational personnel on an ongoing basis.

Together with the Aga Khan University, the AKF has been involved in training of MBAP educational personnel through the visiting teachers’, management’s, and Master’s degree courses at the Institute for Educational Development of the Aga Khan University (IED/AKU). Aga Khan Education services opened the first private school in MBAP in 1999 (AKDN, 1997).

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Keshavjee (1998) and Roy (2000) suggest that the increase of the influence of the West, and particularly USA, is inevitable through process of globalisation, English language and the work of the NGOs.

The Aga Khan Development Network is a group of institutions working to improve living conditions and opportunities in specific regions of the developing world. The Network’s institutions have individual mandates that range from the fields of health and education to architecture, rural development and the promotion of private sector enterprise. Together they collaborate in working toward a common goal; building institutions and programs that can respond to the challenges of social, economic and cultural change.

It is hard to imagine what could have happened to the MBAP and even Tajikistan if there were no external assistance (Bomer, 1998; Green, 1999). Since 1993, in MBAP only, several international organizations, such as AKDN, the World Food Organisation of the UN, Medicines sans Frontieres (MSF), Red Cross, Red Crescent, and Save the Children, fought against poverty and health epidemics.

Since 1998, this Institute has been renamed the Teacher Professional Development Institute (TPDI).
In response to requests from a number of Tajik intellectuals, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture has established a humanities project in Central Asia. Its approach rests on consolidating the achievements of the three civilisations that have met in Central Asia—Islam, Soviet Socialism and Western democracy—to fill the vacuum created by the departure of the Communist ideology. In 1997, the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) initiated a major educational project in Tajikistan, which aims at balanced development of citizens through the teaching of ethics and knowledge. The program utilises the existing educational facilities and teachers in implementing its program. The curriculum package includes a textbook, an activity book, and guides for the teachers and parents. In order to avoid possible hostile relations from other political and religious groups in the region, this subject is taught to Ismaili children only.70

The two visits of His Highness the Aga Khan to Tajikistan and MBAP in 1995 and 1998 were moving experiences for the people of the region. For the first time in centuries, the Ismailis of Badakhshan met with their Imam of the Time.71 Prior to this, the connection with the Imams was maintained through their missionaries, amongst whom the most powerful was the 11th century Persian poet and philosopher Nasir Khusraw, who chose Badakhshan as a refuge. The two visits of the Aga Khan took on an even greater significance because of their timing.72 The Imam of the Time (the Aga Khan) arrived when the devastated population of Badakhshan was just recovering from the recent bloodshed and human and material losses. The Aga Khan during both his visits stressed the importance of peaceful co-existence, education and ethics. These visits substantially raised the self-confidence of the people of Badakhshan, provided hope to many people, and contributed to the peace process. In upshot, the spiritual, emotional, financial, educational and material presence of the AKDN helped the Pamirians to rejoin the post-war Tajikistan not as a defeated but as a revitalised and confident community. Any understanding of educational phenomenon in MBAP without considering the Aga Khan and AKDN is incomplete.73

69 The Institute of Ismaili studies is located in London and addresses the historical development of the Ismaili phenomenon as well as the current challenges that this community encounters.
70 This course is offered on an extra-curricular basis. Teachers teach it voluntarily.
71 Imam of the Time is an Ismaili theosophical concept, grounded on the premise that human beings have never been left without a spiritual guide. That guide may have been prophet. However, as all Muslims, Ismailis contend that Mohammad was the last prophet and therefore after him the time of prophecy ends, while the time of the Imam becomes more prominent.
72 The mass meetings of the Aga Khan are called "Didar", which literally means seeing the face of the beloved. In the Ismaili interpretation "Didar" is one of most significant elements of the faith. For more on the visits of the Aga Khan to Tajikistan see a special issue of Ismaili, London 1995 and also Keshavjee (1998).
73 This thesis is not an examination of the AKDN's programs in MBAP. The need for this elaborate section emerged because of the prominence of the AKDN and the Aga Khan in the data provided by the participants.
Major Socio-Economic Challenges of MBAP

Potentially one of the richest zones of Tajikistan, with large deposits of gold, uranium, silver, and precious stones, a wonderful biosphere, high mountains, and large reserves of drinking water, MBAP has remained basically rural, its economy based on farming, cattle breeding and fruit trees. The industrial base of MBAP consists of only a few clothing factories, one plant of construction materials, one marble factory and several bakeries. Due to the lack of electricity, none of these Soviet-built sites operate any longer.

Although recent privatisation, the expansion of agricultural land and the use of modern technology have increased crop production, the harvest is not enough to sustain the life of the people for more than six months out of a year at best. Despite small power stations built during Soviet times, since 1992 there has been a catastrophic shortage of power in MBAP. A renewed hope is connected to the two new highways under construction: Dushanbe-Khorog, which connects MBAP with the economically more developed centres of Tajikistan on a continuous basis\textsuperscript{74}; and Khorog-China, which aims to connect the capital of Tajikistan to the Karakorum Highway linking China and Pakistan.

The major economic problems result from the Soviet overreliance on producing raw materials and the state monopoly over the economy, as well as political turmoil, civil war, slow transition to market economy, sharp price increases, and firm resistance by the power holders to the reforms in the early 1990s (Dobson, 1991; Jones et al., 1991; Voronkov, 1995). According to 1997 estimates, the annual per capita income in Tajikistan was US $ 340, below that of any of the other Central Asian states (World Bank Report, 1999). As a result of these socio-economic conditions, unemployment, corruption, drugs and migration have become the major socio-economic issues.

Unemployment is particularly acute in MBAP due to the lack of land, low mobility, the absence of an industrial base, extremely low salaries and lack of opportunities to pursue higher education. Unemployment in turn is a major reason for other social problems such as drugs, the spread of disease, the destruction of families, guerrilla activities, and the migration of youth.

Major problems spring from drugs in Tajikistan and MBAP: Tajikistan, including MBAP serves as a transit point of drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Europe. There are no exact statistics, but a minimum of 20 to 30\% of Tajikistan’s youth is said to have been involved in

\textsuperscript{74} This is different from the road mentioned earlier. That road was usually closed for winter. This road is still under construction, but when built, will be open throughout the year.
various kinds of drug activities, primarily including drug addiction. Drugs are also said to have often been used as a tool to harass, accuse, jail, and in some cases, eliminate political opponents (Corvin, 1998; Tajikistan Country Report, 1999).

Since 1992, Tajikistan has experienced the reemergence of chronic health epidemics, such as malaria, cholera, typhoid, jaundice, tuberculosis, scabies, and hepatitis. Guerrilla and opposition activities emerged in 1991, when a large number of youth joined various political and military wings. A large number of youth uses guns for the purpose of banditry, kidnapping and extortion and drug enforcement.

Corruption in some form has always existed, but Soviet policies, including the expansion of education and employment opportunities and the total silencing of the population75, reduced the scale and publicity of the problem. Various practices of corruption are now one of the most debilitating factors affecting education and the morality of MBAP and Tajik society in general.

The migration of youth started during the civil war as people fled the conflict. With the further delay of recovery of Tajikistan, more and more people have migrated to the Former Soviet Union, Iran and Pakistan. This emigration of male youth has resulted in a gender misbalance and family crises in Tajikistan. The youth leaving mainly for Russia serve as a cheap labour force, and are exposed to various forms of humiliation and exploitation. Emigrants also include a considerable number of teachers and other professionals. In small ways, the emigrants, by sending some earnings back, have contributed to the improvement of the living conditions of their families left behind in Tajikistan.76

Education and Teachers in MBAP

Regardless of the emergence, development and diversification of education, the approaches to the purpose, management and reform of education in MBAP, its nature, and the role of the teacher, have remained in the service of the ruling ideologies and states.

Pre-Soviet Education

Before the socialist revolution in 1917, there were only a few informal religious schools in MBAP, with only about 60 people in all MBAP who could read and write (Nazarshoev, 1982, p. 55). The literacy rate was around 0.2% in 1913 (Shonavruzov & Haidarsho, 1991). Traditional

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75 Simis (1982) reveals corruption as a fundamental national quality of the former Soviet Union. For experiential discussions on corruption in the Former USSR see Simis (1982). Hargreaves (1985) suggests that understanding the ways previous decisions were made is important for identifying the roots of current problems.

76 For more on the nature, causes and implications of migration, see Fireman (1991) and Kozlov (1995, found in Sedborsgs & De Spieghere, 1995). While Kozlov suggests that a majority of the Muslim population of Central Asia have migrated to Tataristan and Bashkiriya, the Ismaili Muslims, however, have been mainly migrating to Moscow and other parts of non-Muslim Russia.
Muslim schooling perpetuated the religious, intellectual and emotional values of Islam according to its various interpretations. The teacher, almost always male, like the students, was the most learned person in the community. His roles were: to promote Muslim ideology and cultural heritage; to be an authority figure in the absence of the parents; to be a model for the young; to produce good Muslims who were pious, religious, honest, obedient, and docile; and to perform religious duties in the community (Aini, 1958; 1986; Medlin et al., 1971; Shonavruzov & Haidarsho, 1991).

The Russians opened their first school in Khorog in 1909. By 1918, the school had 25 students, who were mainly the children of the affluent. The purpose of Czarist education policy was the acculturation of the Muslim population into Russian values and ways of living. Together with the Jadidiya movement, the Russian-native schools represented a substantial attempt at modernising Central Asian Muslim society and culture (Medlin et al., 1971; Nazarhoiev, 1982).

**Schooling and Teachers during Soviet Years**

Dreaming of “an exemplary republic...an advanced post for revolutionising the Orient” (Medlin et al., 1971), “the spiritual liberation of the people”, and putting an end to “class domination” (Marx, Krupskaya, as cited in Muckle, 1988, p. 13), the Soviets created a modern education system in Tajikistan, where nothing comparable existed before. The State assured totally free access to education virtually at all levels. By the end of the Soviet period, there were about 310 primary and secondary schools with an enrolment of more than 50 thousand students. The literacy rate reached 99% in 1990. The student-teacher ratio was 10:1 (Greenland, 1993; Kruder, 1996). Almost every village of this mountainous region had its own school. A curriculum similar to that in the rest of the USSR was provided.

By the end of Brezhnev’s regime (1982-83), nearly all the teachers in the Soviet Union had considerable professional training and general education background in the subject areas. Among many opportunities for upgrading teachers’ knowledge and skills, more regular courses

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77 The Jadidiya (“new method”) movement was based on a modernist perspective in Muslim world, which started in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey in 19th centuries. Its major purpose was to awaken the people from their backwardness and to search for qualitatively new conceptualisation of their identity, place and role in the modern world. In education, Jadidiya tried to infuse alternative explanation of natural and social phenomena (Medlin et al., 1971). The Jadidiya movement was denounced by the Emir of Bokhara as hostile to Islam and its proponents were severely punished (Aini, 1958, 1986; Medlin et al., 1971; Zenkovsky, 1960). To my knowledge, there was no Jadidiya school in MBAP.

78 It is important to note that there was a limited variety of the schools in the Soviet system: In addition to general educational schools, which often included primary, secondary, and higher secondary together; there were also secondary specialised schools, evening schools, vocational schools, which accepted students only after compulsory schooling until grade 9. In addition, within the general secondary schools there were schools with specialised focus on certain subjects such as Math or English (on the Soviet education system see: Long, 1985; Popovych & Stankevich, 1992).
were offered at the Teacher Training Institutes, which operated at national and provincial levels in each republic, including Tajikistan (Askarov, 1970; Lee, 1988; Long & Long, 1999; Nazarshoev & Nazarshoev, 1984).

Soviet schools and teachers in Central Asia aimed to promote secular values and practices, in particular Marxist-Leninist, materialistic and atheistic propositions and science and technology (Medlin et al., 1971). Schools functioned to match the students' abilities and the needs of the economy, while maintaining those sub-cultural traditions that fit the aims of the Soviet education. In so doing, Soviet schooling preserved those elements from past culture and literature that criticised the kings and religious clerics. Maintaining and developing local languages, dances and musical traditions were also elements of this function. Teachers were seen as mediators between various cultures: Soviet, Russian and local (Medlin et al., 1971).

As part of the USSR, MBAP during the Soviet years saw education changed from the revolutionary zeal of promoting liberatory education with a child-centred pedagogy in the 1920s into authoritarian teacher-centeredness during the Stalin regime, toward the European concept of didactic instruction in the 60s and 70s, and back to a child-centred pedagogy during Perestroika and the re-emergence of the teacher innovators movement in the 1980s (Dunstan, 1992; Ekloff & Dneprov, 1993; Holmes et al., 1995; Long & Long, 1999; Popkewitz, 1985; Suddaby, 1989; Webber 2000). However, these reform initiatives were mainly on paper with largely cosmetic effects (Kerr, 1990; Wilson, 1992), sometimes characterised as "reforms by the bureaucrats for the bureaucrats" (Belle & Ward, 1990). In reality the Soviet schooling system was deeply affected by stagnation, inertia and apathy (Dneprov 1987, cited in Ekloff 1993):

In addition to irrelevance of the curriculum (Ermolaev, 1990; Long & Long, 1999; Muckle, 1988) there were also some discriminatory differences between schooling in Russian as the medium of instruction and schooling in the local languages. Despite the high learning standards and an egalitarian approach (Muckle, 1988; Popkewitz, 1985), success in the Soviet Union was very closely related to speaking Russian and behaving "Russian", which often resulted in neglecting and even disliking the indigenous language, identity and culture. Researchers questioned whether Soviet education catered to the needs and interests of the

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79 In the Soviet education system, the primary and secondary schools often existed within the same general educational school.

80 The movement emerged in the 1980s and called Pedagogy of Cooperation. The main principles were allowing for more creativity of the teachers, relaxing the relations with the students. Teacher domination and lecturing was replaced with cooperation with the students and letting them do more independent work inside the classroom (for more on Pedagogy of Cooperation see Baljenova, 1987; Suddaby, 1989; Sutherland, 1999; Webber, 2000. The idea found little dissemination in Tajikistan and much less in the
USSR's diverse population or was a version of Russian imperialism (DeYoung & Suzhikova, 1997). In addition, regardless of attempts at Russification, Sovietisation, modernisation and secularisation, the ultimate purpose of Soviet education was to produce an obedient, docile, loyal citizen rigid in his behaviour and thinking (Medlin et al., 1971).

Despite the ambitious expectations and expansions, the quality and content of teacher education remained rhetorical, and the teachers' privileges, support, material status and quality rarely corresponded to the high demands placed upon them (Webber, 2000). By the last years of the Soviet Union the major flaws of teacher education were obvious: ideological dogmatism and methodological formalism, a weak material and technical basis for education, the low morale and status of teachers and profession, the miserable conditions of the life and work of the teachers, and poor pedagogy and instructional approaches (Wilson, 1992). Teaching never became a preferred profession for many of the best graduates of high schools. Many graduates of the Pedagogical Institutes either avoided teaching or left the occupation soon after an initial taste of teaching realities (Anisimov, 1992; DeYoung & Suzhikova, 1997; Long & Long, 1999; Melnikov, 1997).

To add to this, Tajik teachers were predominantly brought up in large families, in rural areas, and were caught in the complex interplay of the ideologies of Communism and Islam. They studied and taught in the schools with Tajik as a medium, and were brought up with a consciousness of their own traditions and rich cultural heritage. Tajiks often used this heritage to stand against their denigration by some Russians, as well as by their own communist leaders, who as part of a demonstration of loyalty to Russians and Communism, put down their own culture and teachers.

**Education and Teacher in MBAP in the Post-Soviet Period**

The World Bank (1999) has argued that the major structural and cultural problems of current education are: a deterioration of the quality of education; the need for a change of "mentality" among teachers, students and education administration officials; inequitable access to school; inadequate management capacity; insufficient funding; unsatisfactory school facilities; and a serious shortage of textbooks (see also Kanaev, 2000). In addition in MBAP, the conditions are more severe, locations are more remote, the geography is tougher, the opportunities are more limited, and the prices of commodities and transportation are higher.

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MBAP). The 1980s witnessed a burst of various innovative movements in the Soviet education. Amongst them most popular were Commune Movement, Eureka Clubs, Authors schools, Creative Union of Teachers (for detail see Sutherland, 1999).
Despite this, in MBAP the education system, with the assistance of international organizations, has continued operating and maintaining comparatively stable standards (Greenland, 1993; Kruder, 1996). In 1999, there were 315 schools enrolling 55 thousand students. Out of 315 schools, 89 are primary (grades 1-4), 66 middle school, (grades 1-9), and 160 complete secondary schools (the full 11 grades). Since 1992, almost all schools in MBAP have been streamed into natural-mathematical science, social science and general streams. The general stream accepts the students who cannot meet the criteria for joining either of the other two.

There are around 6500 teachers in the province, the majority of whom obtained their schooling and higher education during the Soviet period, previous to 1992 (Kruder, 1996). Since 1993, however, the number of teachers leaving teaching has been steadily increasing. To compensate, the schools hire their own graduates without any further qualifications. The teachers and students continue using the old Soviet textbooks. There are no laboratory facilities available for the teaching of science in most of the schools in MBAP.

Because almost all schools in Tajikistan continue to be public, the Government approaches to educational reform, including teacher development, remain mainly top-down, bureaucratic and largely rhetorical. One of the major terms used in education circles is “changing the mentality of the teachers so that they can teach according to new realities” (personal communications at the Ministry of Education, also in World Bank, 1999). Changing the mentality of education personnel may be a necessity for building a democratic post-Soviet Tajik society. But emphasizing training and a focus on teachers’ mentality as the prime “object of change” tends to end up demeaning teachers, considering their knowledge as a ‘problem and obstacle to improvement’ and creating a ground for manipulating and controlling them (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Diamond & Mullen, 2000; Farell, 1994; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Thiessen, 1993b).

Similar to other former Soviet states (Ekloff & Dnerpov, 1993; Heynemann, 2000; Lisovskaya, 1999; Zaugmenov, 1993) the reform activities in education of the MBAP have mainly been structural, arising partly from economic reasons as well as from attempts to re-invigorate the system intellectually. Parent-teacher associations (PTA) have been revived to take charge of several school activities, such as renovation, budgeting, and attendance. Fee paying

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8 Both are internal reports for the Aga Khan Foundation (available from the Foundation).
classes have been opened in each school. In addition, additional fundraising possibilities have been initiated, for example, selling of school garden’s agricultural products, opening of a school revolving fund, identifying sponsors, and selling of teaching materials.

On the intellectual side, a transition from one level to another (i.e., from primary to secondary) is no longer taken for granted but mediated through a rigorous examination. Students are streamed into natural-mathematical science, social science and general groups right after the primary classes, i.e., grade 4. In 1992, the Ministry of Education introduced a preparatory year for children of Pamirian origins with the purpose of teaching them basic knowledge of Tajik before they start regular formal schooling. Finally, there has been a program of accreditation of schools and teachers to ensure that they meet certain standards for operating.

**Administration of Schools in MBAP**

The administration of post-Soviet Tajik education, particularly at the school level has changed very little between the Soviet and post-Soviet periods (Ekloff, 1993; DeYoung & Suzhikova, 1997; Heynemann, 1998; Johnson, 2001, Long & Long, 1999; Tomiak, 1986; Zaugmenov, 1993). Schools are administered by directors, who, depending on the size of their schools, may have several deputies. Nominally, the schools continue to have trade unions to protect the teachers’ rights. The three major Soviet youth structures socialising children into Soviet life and communist morality, Octobrists (for grades 1-3), Pioneers (grades 4-8), and Komsomol (9-11) were replaced by new structures such as Akhtaron (Stars) and Somoniyon (Samandis), to fit the new aims of Tajik society in 1999.

At the district level, the director, several methodologists and two inspectors staff the education office. An inspector is responsible for checking all the work of a school, while the methodologists advise on and disseminate teaching methodology only. At the provincial level, there is a Directorate of Education, which has a structure similar to that of the district. In addition, the Directorate of Education is supported by a Teacher Professional Development Institute, which provides training to the school personnel.

The national level Ministry of Education addresses the overall strategic questions of educational provision throughout the country. It is supported by the Institute of Educational Research and several Pedagogical Universities across the republic. These offer 4-5 year pre-

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82 In Soviet times, there was another deputy director in schools, in charge of the upbringing (moral) aspect of education. The school reputation was judged not only on the basis of its academic achievement, but also its socio-ethical and moral record (Long & Long, 1999). This position was abolished in 1990s as part of the onslaught on Communist ideology. From 1991, schools were announced “free from an ideological doctrines.”
service training to the teachers, which combine the subject specialisation and teacher certification. There are also pedagogical colleges that train teachers for primary schools. Institutes of Upgrading Teacher Qualifications offer training to in-service teachers. There is a Committee on Education, Science, and Youth Policy in the Parliament that deals with legal education issues. Lastly, there is a deputy Prime Minister on Ideology and Youth Policy and a chair of Education in the presidents' office.

Commentary

Regardless of changing times, and the Soviet attempts to create a new type of citizen, the people who live among the Pamir mountains have remained almost the same in their language, religion, practices and outlook. The physical geography, languages, religions and major cultural traditions, though enriched, have remained the same.

On the other hand, this world has undergone transformations: MBAP has remained climatically exotic, but has become much tougher, in some cases unbearable for living; it has stayed ecologically safe, but too vulnerable to natural calamities, rural, but limited by mountains, large but empty and narrow, potentially rich, but practically underdeveloped. The exotic high mountains, glaciers, lakes and running rivers have always created challenges for farming, trade, mobility, and indeed survival. People still struggle against natural calamities, such as landslides, earthquakes and snowfalls. However, the generally inhibiting and depressing effects of this geography have often been mediated by the socio-economic and political realities of the time and by the way people looked at these physical and socio-economic realities.

Historically, these mountains have served as a refuge and hideout for rebels and the oppressed. Being a part of Russia and the Soviet Union has been both fortuitous and problematic. Tajiks regained their statehood, but lost some of their major historical and cultural sources of pride. They developed their language and culture, but only in subordination and adaptation to Russian and within the Soviet ideological framework. Life conditions improved, but on indefensible ground; Badakhshan remained overly dependent on external supplies. Although in comparison with some of its southern neighbours, such as Afghan Badakhshan, the MBAP changed, within the former Soviet Union, it remained the poorest zone despite all the Soviet attempts at development.

The relatively calm 1980s were disturbed by the startling revelations of the ills of the Soviet system. The brief moment of hope during Perestroika was soon replaced by many losses: violence broke out, prices went up, old diseases returned and new ones appeared, families broke
up, relatives were lost, homes were burnt and hopes vanished. These years of uncertainty were gradually ameliorated by the arrival of external agencies, humanitarian aid and a reconnection with spiritual roots. Privatisation of land, the introduction of market economy and competition, the signing of peace accord plus the opening of development programs all gave birth to new hope. At the same time, economic monotony, ideological certainty, political stability and security all have vanished. Despite its high mountains and poor communications, MBAP is increasingly involved in the interplay of the global economic and political interests. Several value frameworks subtly complement, contradict and compete with each other in explaining its fast-changing, complex reality. Badakhshan has once more become a zone of several competing geo-political forces.

The waves of globalisation, technological and information expansion and market competition, when embroiled with corruption and deregulated market, seem to cut across the old values of honesty and hard work, merit, educational virtue and teacher’s value, cooperation and collectivism, sharing and caring, religiosity and patriarchy, and community and spiritual bonds that have persisted in the area through earlier transformations. The economic and political upheavals have also resulted in the rebirth of several social problems, the increasing estrangement, alienation and distrust on the part of youth towards the existing structures and their rhetoric of “equality of opportunity” and “freedom of choice.” Socio-economic problems, suppressed during the Soviet years have re-emerged as result of the collapse of the USSR and the civil war. As these social forces shift, so do their roles and influences, leaving an impact on people’s life and work. Although some of these forces and the new economic realities cut across traditional community values, they also create new opportunities and resistance on the part of the local people.

The political and administrative situation exhibits a very tense process of transition from a single party monopoly and single ideology to multi-party and pluralist conditions. Some of these forces have deeper roots and more appeal than others. Some have a military agenda; others have political and economic agendas. Some have a humanistic drive, and others embrace aspects of all the above ideologies together. The dynamics exist not only between the competing forces, but also within each of them. Diversity rules within the religion (traditional, modern and fundamentalist), the nation (clans, political parties, military and Mafia groups) and the global forces (corporate interests, humanitarian interests and geo-political interests). Their growing presence influences education by establishing new forms of schooling and promoting various
curriculum agendas. In filling the post-Soviet vacuum, the various frameworks and ideologies subtly and overtly push progressive and conservative, dogmatic and flexible, particularistic and universalistic, inclusive and exclusive, secular and religious, scientific and spiritual explanations for the current conditions.

This diversity does not mean that Tajikistan has become a democratic state (Tajikistan Country Report, 1998). The official image of Tajikistan as a democratic, secular, law-abiding, independent unified country is constantly contradicted by anarchy, distrust, instability, religious and ethnic tensions, economic dependence and corruption. Youth involvement in drugs, guerrilla, migration and other socially harmful activities have reemerged as a result of the recent transformations. Together with newly emerged social problems, they constitute tremendous stress for teachers' work and life in and out of the classroom, because their consequences are more damaging and far reaching than ever before. Once again, fashionable words cover a persisting, hierarchical, and autocratic bureaucracy, which inhibits freedom of expression, abuses basic human rights, tries to control the people's behaviour and thought and channel the direction of historical development.83

For the majority, change has not necessarily resulted in improvement yet. The people fought for independence, freedom, prosperity and happiness, but very quickly experienced all the opposites: war, loss, depression, hunger and poverty. Badakhshani people thought of helping to create a Tajik State but their efforts were never fully recognised by other Tajiks. They hoped to have freedom to move beyond the closed Soviet Union borders, but ended unable to move beyond their villages and districts. People fought against corruption, nepotism, and hypocrisy, only to find that in independent Tajikistan these are tactics that work best. Independence has had little meaning amidst the economic deprivation and misery. There are riches under the ground, but they are beyond the nation's capacity to extract and use. There is freedom to choose, but there is also more freedom to suppress choice. Privatised land not only cannot feed its owners, but also further subsumes all their time and energy, creating more problems than solutions. People, who wished to speak and write in their own languages, have found them of little use for real improvement of their lives and fulfilment of their aspirations. Even Russian is no longer useful enough. Although English is becoming the language of the day, few have the opportunity to learn it. There are external aid agencies, but only a few powerful groups take advantage of

83 Anderson (1999), based on the study of several Central Asian states, suggests trends that may lead the post-Soviet political development in Central Asia into authoritarian statehood.
them. There is a flow of humanitarian supplies, but it is becoming hard for people with dignity to rely and become dependent on them.

Amidst these depressing conditions, people perceive a “robe of hope”: the Aga Khan, the Imam of the Time for the people of Badakhshan. This powerful hope has deep contextual, cultural and spiritual roots. The hope has charged his network and community with constructive ethical principles. The network has been taking on the responsibilities of a state attempting to maintain the infrastructure and build new institutions of international quality in conditions where ethics and universal values are in a deep crisis and where the state is recovering.

Twenty years ago, Tajik teachers living in the mountains of Badakhshan would get up in the morning and look to the rest of the day with confidence and certainty. The problems of life and work were not too hard to solve. Their salary was enough to get through the month calmly and comfortably, to go to the sanatorium in the summer for vacation and to help their relatives. They had the respect of the community and were supported by the state. Their dignity and reputation were kept high. To promote Soviet ideology and serve the State, the teachers would teach children and work in the community. They would read the newspapers and journals daily, wonder about, and maybe even participate in innovative movements in education and political events during Perestroika and Glasnost. They could afford to stay at the school as long as it took them to prepare and help their students. Once in five years, they attended a professional development course. This list could go on.

Tajik teachers find themselves today in both the same and a different world. The two worlds (i.e., Soviet and post-Soviet) are not entirely disconnected. The continuities and changes exist within the same structures. Though there is a wider variety within the public school system44, and there are now a few private schools, the structure, processes, content, and methods of educational provision have largely remained very similar. Although teachers and students go to the same school buildings, they no longer have access to the same quality of experience. Based on the types of schools and programs, expectations have also altered. There is still a high degree of centralisation, bureaucracy, hierarchy, control, and manipulation.

Problems of maintaining, renovating, and financing the schools have devolved upon the parents, community, teachers. However, the educational demands and expectations derive mainly

44 In fact, the Soviet schooling was never absolutely unified. Small divergences always existed between Russian and Tajik medium schools, between schools with polytechnical and academic emphasis, schools with emphasis on English, or Math. Hence, the diversification of the forms of schools already started during the Soviet period. The spread of this diversification to the rural areas is, however, a completely post-Soviet phenomenon (see Sutherland, 1999).
from the national government. These include the necessity of promoting the official ideology in a time when schools are said to be free from ideology\textsuperscript{15}, creating a nation state at a time when the idea is becoming problematic, perpetuating the current status quo without recognition and support, and providing education comparable to the West in a context of decline, crisis and confusion. Further, within 70 years, the role of the teacher has changed from being in charge of secular and religious aspects of education, through fighting against religion and capitalism, and back to appreciating and promoting religion, capitalism and a market economy.

Teachers, who used to explain the course of events to the people around them in a prophetic manner, are in deep confusion themselves. They are caught in a struggle to understand the tensions between single truth and multiple interpretations, old and new economic and political structures, centralisation and localism, state monopoly and private enterprise, domination of a single ethnicity and an increasing impossibility of controlling the population’s minds and behaviours, and rhetoric of all-round development of children and realities of streaming and marketisation. Teachers’ own economic misery, the magnitude, speed and complexity of change, the increase in expectations, the reduction of resources, time and opportunities, all together have intensified and complicated life work. As a result of this “manufactured uncertainty” (Giddens, 1984), teachers find it more difficult to figure out what is happening, where the country is heading, who has created all this and to what end, how to survive in this new world, and how to provide meaningful instruction on a daily basis.

Regardless of Perestroika’s revelation of innovative and creative ideas among teachers in the Soviet times, their mentality is seen as problematic as ever. Despite witnessing, in fact living out, the obvious failure of the Soviet top-down, bureaucratic and centralised system of education, the present educational bureaucracy has preserved these features, along with ideological and pedagogical inflexibility, authoritarian notions about the teacher, indoctrination and prescription of a predetermined curriculum into the post-Soviet educational realm. Debate about the meaning, purpose and processes of education reform remains limited, shallow, and controlled. The reform mindset is largely based on following and imitating externally-developed projects. The issues of relevance, contextual sensitivity, and the implications of reform processes for the society and citizens linger unresolved.

\textsuperscript{15} Law of Education of Tajikistan (1994).
Summary

This chapter aimed at orienting the reader to the various aspects of context where the participants of the study live and work. I particularly focused on the major continuities and changes in the physical geography, culture, economy and political and educational situations.

Within the last century, the MBAP has lived through transition from a Russian’s “voluntary colony” to being a part of Soviet Union to being a part of the independent Tajik State. Despite these transitions, the region has maintained many of its religious, cultural, and linguistic characteristics, along with its harsh environment and generally poor economy. People in MBAP, as in Tajikistan as a whole, had hopes of a new era of freedom and prosperity when the Soviet Union collapsed. However, their hopes were dashed when civil war erupted and other socio-economic problems suppressed or ameliorated under Soviet rule resurfaced--economic imbalance, ethnic and religious intolerance, corruption, and authoritarianism.

The resulting socio-political milieu represents an extraordinary complex situation, wherein clan, ethnic, religious, geographic, linguistic, health and class challenges have come together acutely. These complexities have deep implications for teachers’ living and working conditions, their understanding of the meaning of teaching, their motivation for remaining in the profession, and their reasons for leaving it. These realities affect the teachers’ purposes of and approaches to instruction, their roles in the new social contexts. In the face of dwindling resources and increasing social and philosophical confusion, they must arrive at some resolution of the complexities and challenges of teaching and learning, and at the same time, deal with the curriculum innovations. The upcoming chapters will illustrate in detail how the main participants of this study have negotiated their life and work amidst these social and professional complexities.
Chapter 5: Sino, "A Person of His Time"

In this chapter I present the first case. The chapter is divided into four parts. Part 1. Murghab, The Roof of the "Roof of the World", describes the geography, demographics and climate of the immediate context of Sino's life and work and its political, economic and educational qualities. This section provides a brief sketch of Sino's school: its history, population, relation to the community, and the local views about broader life issues. The section also emphasises the continuities and changes in the teachers' and community's perceptions of the incredible impoverishment of their living and working conditions.

Part 2, Sino, A Journey to Becoming a Teacher and Person of His Time, presents how Sino's personal and professional experiences have contributed to the development of his understanding of teaching, and to his formation as a teacher, a parent, and a member of the community. I review his recollections of school and University, his initial teaching years, his voluntary service in the Soviet Army and his experiences of Glasnost and Perestroika. In his post-Soviet life, Sino illustrated leadership qualities related to the collapse of the USSR, independence of Tajikistan, civil war, arrival of the Aga Khan and his network, and other recent post-independence events. The major quality of Sino's professional life has been his active interaction with the opportunities and obstacles of the changing contexts.

Part 3, discusses Sino's Worldview. The argument is that Sino exhibits strong qualities of a teacher for social change and a transformative intellectual. This part takes the reader through the evolution of Sino’s understanding of teaching, his commitment to education, his belief in the power of teachers in fulfilling his vision of a desired society and citizenship, his intentions in life and teaching, and his employment of various persisting and emerging value frameworks and authorities on the post-Soviet landscape. This part also reveals the complex nature of his worldview, including its eclectic nature, leadership qualities, strategically and spiritually charged commitment to education, intellect, ethics and service.

Part 4, Sino, An Ethical Practitioner, focuses on two aspects of Sino's professional life. First is Caring, Reaching and Enabling, where I discuss Sino's relationships with students and parents. Second is Sino's Classroom Practices, The Challenge of Making All Students Learn, where I portray his use of diverse methods and activities to engage the students in a meaningful

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learning. Exposing the challenges and dilemmas, continuities and changes and the similarities and differences over time (pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods) and across spaces (classroom, school, community, and home), these two sections are both demonstrations of the viability of Sino's worldview and of the complexity of enacting his worldview. This part reveals the dialectic of theory and practice in Sino's practices, life and work, which are informative of the rhetoric and realities of the system.

Each part of the chapter is followed by a commentary, which pulls together the major points from the sections and subsections, briefly relates them to the focus of the study, and builds a foundation for the later cross-case analysis (Chapter 7 and 8).

**Murghab, the Roof of the "Roof of the World"**

Sino7 lives in a geographically unique context. If MBAP is the "Roof of the World", Murghab can be considered the roof of MBAP. Murghab has an average elevation of 3,700 meters, nearly twice as high as the rest of the province. The district borders China in the East, Afghanistan in the South and Kyrgyzstan in the North.

**A Snapshot of the Place**

Murghab, the largest district of MBAP, covers 60% of the province, and 25% of Tajikistan. The average July temperature is 5 to 10°C; the average January temperature is -15 to -20°C. The season requiring heat is nearly as long as the academic year: 9 months, from mid-September until the end of May. Although sunlight abounds, it does not keep the area warm. There are no trees, grass, or arable land in the whole district, due to the high altitude, lack of water and poor soil. A small river, the Murghab that flows through the district is unpotable because of excess salt. Lake Sarez, created by a landslide dam resulting from a powerful earthquake in 1911, lies at an altitude of 3,800 meters above sea level. It contains 15 billion cubic meters of water and represents a possible ecological danger. If the landslide dam collapses, Sarez’s water would cause a flashflood sweeping over territory belonging to several countries downstream (e.g., Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan), destroying the livelihood of a minimum of 5 million people.8

The history of Murghab is cloudy. It is said to have been a part of the Chinese Han empire, and was later used by the Kushans and Ephthalites in their trade along the Silk Road. The Kyrgyz are said to have arrived in the area in the 16th century (Agaeva, 1964; 1967).  

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7 In addition to Sino, I worked with Lola, a primary teacher in this school. She is mentioned in several relevant instances.  
8 For more on ecology of Tajikistan and MBAP, see Muhabbatov (1999).
Iskandarov, 1995; Kharkovchuk & Karamshoev, 1995). Murghab was already a part of Czarist Russia in 1870s. The town of Murghab, the first permanent settlement in the district, was built by the Russian Cossacks9 as a fortress against possible British and Chinese invasion. From the turn of the 20th century, many displaced Tajiks arrived here to serve in the Russian military. Later the Soviets built new settlements, schools, hospitals and roads, which resulted in a rapid growth of population. Currently, there are 14 villages in the whole district, each more than 50 kilometres apart. Murghab has 15,000 people, about 7% of the population of MBAP. Kyrgyz constitute the majority, but recently many have emigrated to Kyrgyzstan. There are about 4000 Pamirian Tajiks, including the refugees from the 1992 Tajik civil war. There are some Russians, living mainly in the military garrisons. The district, particularly its center, is the most multiethnic region in the province. The local Pamirians speak one or more of five languages: Wakhi, Bartangi, Shugnani, Roshani and Tajik. The majority of the Pamirians know Kyrgyz and Russian. Many Kyrgyz also speak at least one of the Pamirian languages. The Kyrgyz are Sunni Muslims, while the Pamirian Tajiks are Ismaili Muslims90, and the Russians are mainly Orthodox Christians.

**Conditions of Living and Sources of Income in Murghab**

Potentially the richest, Murghab has remained the poorest zone of MBAP, Tajikistan and the former USSR. The locality has more than 200 types of precious metals and stones amongst which gold, silver, rubies and lazurite are prominent. Exploration of all these riches was done during Soviet times, but their extraction is limited and done by hand. The fauna consists of Marco-Polo sheep, mountain goats, hunting hawks, snow leopards, and Apollo butterflies. There is a small powerhouse that could not provide light even to the central town. Electricity was available only for six hours on alternate days.

The major economic activities include animal husbandry. The Soviet-developed yak breeding industry is now diminishing in importance; people have sold their yaks at a very low price either to buy food, or to pay the cost of emigration to Kyrgyzstan. A few cafes sell junk food, vodka and local dishes. There is a small market in the town where almost all the traders are Kyrgyz. Some Tajiks started commerce earlier, but were ridiculed by their community elders, because trade was associated with corruption and a lack of integrity and was not considered part

9 A term used to apply to those Russians who lived on the borders of Russia and served to guard those borders from the various tribes from the South.

90 The absolute majority of the Tajik population of Tajikistan belongs to the Sunni sect of Islam. The term Ismaili applies to a group of Pamirian ethnicities.
of Badakhshani culture. When work is available, the Pamirian Tajiks mainly work in government offices, particularly in the police, customs and national security. They also do manual work for the few rich Kyrgyz and Tajiks.

The wealth of the district is concentrated in the hands of a few. The unemployment rate is above 95%. Many people spend their time sitting around and spreading rumours, roaming in the market, watching videos, playing cards and drinking. The government is composed of former Communist bureaucrats. The majority of government officers are Kyrgyz. Several senior posts are held by Tajiks seconded from the other districts of MBAP.

One of the major sources of income is the Russian military unit, based in Murghab as part of the Tajik-Russian treaty of cooperation and defence. The employees in the unit earn at least 50 times more than teachers and have got many other facilities such as hot water, electricity, warm clothes and shoes. “If you have got a close relative working there, you have got life, because you have access to many facilities”, said Sino. The unit with its three story buildings shines like a city over the dark, half-slum, cold, dusty village. The majority of the Tajik employees of the garrison also send their children to the Russian school.

The other “good” places in the town are the offices of the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and the public and private hunting agencies. Employees in these places earn tens and even perhaps hundreds of times as much as teachers. The AKF is mainly represented by the Mountain Societies Development Support Program (MSDSP91). Of its eight-member staff, there was only one Tajik.

The Red Cross, Red Crescent and Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) have provided coal, medicine and food. Hunting Agencies are companies that organise the hunting and selling of the local “protected” fauna, such as endangered Marco-Polo sheep for as much as $ 45,000 CDN a head.92 There is contradictory speculation as to where the money goes and who benefits. A government official told me that nothing from that income was invested back into social services.

Murghab also presents a number of health challenges. Altitude sickness, caused by the extreme cold weather, lack of oxygen, and the absence of vegetation, is common. Other common diseases are pneumonia, tuberculosis, bronchitis, ulcers, and avitaminosis, all mainly affecting

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91 Mountain Societies Development Support Program, a project of the Aga Khan Foundation established in Badakhshan in 1993 with the goal of relief and development of the area.

92 Tajik scholars Qadamshoev and Bulbulshoev (1996) mention that due to discriminatory hunting of the Marco-Polo sheep their number has reduced from 70-80, 000 heads in 1976 to 8,000 heads in 1992.
the poor segments of the population. All of the teachers suffer from one or two of these cold related illnesses (FN. 2: 1, the head of the school).

As I gathered data I met many people formally and informally, and they expressed their views on the local issues. These comments came from various people some of whom were official and unofficial, Kyrgyz and Tajik, male and female, rich and poor, children and adult. They speak to issues of fundamental importance to the life and work of the people, largely expressing discontent. I portray some of these comments with the current state of affairs in Box 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 8</th>
<th>Local views on local administration and the international organisations</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>On the local Government authorities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>We need Government..., but we have not seen the Government's help.</td>
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<tr>
<td>We Tajiks feel marginalized by the government; the Kyrgyz-dominated local government favors Kyrgyz and finds every reason to hinder us from starting our businesses.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In this place any voice that calls for change is seen as a sign of rebellion...Thy accuse you of instigating interethnic conflict and call you a terrorist. They have put a few people in jail last year because of their criticism of the Government.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The bureaucracy consists of the clan of Berdiev. Its main philosophy of &quot;ma'ishat&quot; (enjoyment) includes the following:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- enjoyment at the expense of others,</td>
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<tr>
<td>- misusing the riches of the place,</td>
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<tr>
<td>- buying houses in other places and furnishing them for a possible departure,</td>
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<tr>
<td>- promoting friends and relatives on the basis of loyalty and kinship.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>On the International organisations, including the AKDN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks to the Imam and Red Cross for helping with food, clothes, coal and textbooks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The survival and running of education is based on the help of the Foundation and Red Cross.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The help of the Imam has been overwhelming, but it is being misused of ten.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have become not much different from the government in its way of working with the people. We never see them talking to us.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is staffed by the old opportunist Komsomols and Communists, who I am worried could delude the Imam's ideas as they did with socialist ideas.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The help should come straight to people, not through Government or any other organizations. It is only the Imam who can bring justice. Only the Imam can remove these corrupt people. Please tell the Imam to take us out of here. We do not see any hope here.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell the Imam to not support these corrupt people who bribe even in his organizations. Tell the Imam that his help is gradually reaching the needy to lesser and lesser degree. The Kyrgyz-led Government has turned the foreign employees of the AKDN against us Tajiks, by calling us lazy (FN. 2: 56).</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

93 It is important to notice that only about 30% of the voices here belong to the Kyrgyz population. In general, these comments were made by people who were official and unofficial, Kyrgyz and Tajik, male and female, rich and poor, children and adult.

94 The participant refers here to the larger context. It was a time when Russian forces invaded Chechnya on the charge of terrorism and Western countries searched for Osama ben Laden, who was hiding in neighbouring Afghanistan. The Russian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek media called Muslim guerrillas terrorists (for more discussion see ICG Asia Report, 2001; Sagdeev & Eisenhower, 1995).
Because Murghab’s people are aware of its riches, because they have hopes for a better life, and because they are constantly promised a good life, they view the current conditions as unsatisfactory. The distrust in authorities is growing fast, increasingly embracing the AKDN institutions and the education system (Box 8). This distrust and apathy stem from people’s high expectations, their past and present recollections about leaders and authorities, the quality of the communication between the various forces and people at the grassroots level, and the conflict between old values and new realities. The general situation is tense, complex, and vulnerable to manipulation, control, misuse and explosion.

Although most of the population is depressed and concerned with survival, a few have managed to become rich by taking advantage of every permitted and unpermitted opportunity. These winners of the new post-Soviet reality are mainly the same people who benefited most under the Soviet system. For the people at grassroots level, this renders the question of social justice mystifying.

**Education and Schooling in Murghab**

The Government uses almost its entire education budget on teachers’ salaries and spends very little on other educational expenses, such as developing the schools’ material and technical basis and purchasing educational facilities. As part of the reform movement, the Government is opening *internats* in the remote villages. This year it also sanctioned the inauguration of fee-paying classes in the Tajik school. The Government also changes the names of schools in exchange for financial support. It has used the teachers for political activities such as census, referendum, presidential elections, and the reception of the Aga Khan. “All these are measures of state importance and teachers are the best ones to do them”, stated a senior Government official (Int. 2: 15). Sino however noticed the implications of his absence upon children's learning during the census: "While I conducted the census, these children have already forgotten the poem and the rule. They have gone backward"(Int. 2: 78). The Government emphasises the role of education and encourages the teachers not to leave school: “We consider that no country has a future without good education. Teachers are paid more than doctors and other cultural employees”, said another senior Government employee. Yet teachers’ salaries remain low compared to the salaries in law enforcement agencies such as National Security, police, and

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92 *Internat* is a Soviet concept, a boarding school for poor and orphan children.
In November 1999, a new presidential decree raising the salary of teachers by 30% from January 2000 and by additional 10% after half a year was issued; however, inflation continues at an even higher rate.

Because of the low salaries, teachers moonlight to earn extra money. Almost all teachers want to leave teaching and the district, given a better job or an opportunity. Many teachers believe that any other place would be better than Murghab. They wonder why their life is not getting any better, after the civil war is over. They feel the salaries they get are incommensurate with the hard work they put in at the school. "You work, endure so many hardships, and by the end of the month you get a salary that is not even enough for a bag of wheat flour" said Sino (Int. 2: 17). Such poverty has affected the teachers' expectations and self-esteem. An English teacher made the following comment:

No serious learning can take place without high demands and expectations. I cannot demand this if the children are hungry and unclothed. I would rather say thanks to these children and even arrange food for them for merely coming to school. In my school years, for 20 kopeks we had pirog, tea and palow. We have this saying "from a hunger you kill a tiger." You can patch your clothes, but you cannot patch your stomach. Here we do not have even grass so that we could eat it and fill our stomachs. I often fight with my dad: why did you come to this hell? So I give the children 4 and 5 merely for coming to school. I am telling you this because I lived in the two periods. I always remember Brezhnev's words: "If there is bread there will be song" (FN. 2: 22).

Three out of 15 schools of the district are Tajik-medium schools. The Kyrgyz-medium schools follow the curriculum of the Ministry of Education of Kyrgyzstan, and the graduates of their high schools leave for Kyrgyzstan for further studies. In 1999, the Kyrgyz schools began offering Tajik as a second language, while the Tajik schools do not offer Kyrgyz. There is no

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96 The average monthly salary in of a teacher in 1999 was about 7000 Tajik rubles, which was equivalent to $7 CDN. The net salary of the head of Education Board was about 20,000 Tajik rubles, while that of the Head of Police was around 70,000 Tajik rubles a month.
97 At the time of data collection, a 50 kg sack of wheat cost 30,000 Tajik rubles in October. The teacher earned on average 7000 Tajik rubles a month.
98 Kopek was the smallest Soviet monetary unit: 100 kopeks made one rouble. 20 kopeks in the seventies would have been equal to CDN 40 cents. The average salary of teachers in Murghab was 75% more than the salary of the teachers who lived on the altitude below 2000 meters. The factor of high altitude was remunerated with a handsome addition to the teachers' salaries, and earlier retirement age.
99 Pirog is a Russian term and stands for a pie-dumpling with meat or potato with onion.
100 Palow is a Tajik term, stands for a type of food that is a combination of rice, carrot and meat. It resembles biryani in Indian cuisine.
101 In Soviet education a five-scale assessment procedure was used. 5 was equal to A an 4 to B, 3 to C and 2 and 1 to F.
teaching of the local Pamirian languages in the Tajik schools. The departure of teachers, particularly in the Kyrgyz schools is a major problem. Almost half of the 350 teachers of the district have left teaching since 1992. Very few have returned. Some feel guilty for having left teaching. A teacher, who is now working in a local café, told me that he had betrayed the profession he loved: "I have been teaching the children not to give up when facing difficulties, and I have given up first. It is much better to teach the young students than to listen to the drunken clients of the café, who make me feel ashamed of having been their teacher for sometime. If there was a salary of at least 40,000 Tajik rubles in the school I would return"(FN.2: 34). In the café he gets 45,000 Tajik rubles per month. The Government is handling the teacher shortage by hiring back the retired teachers and recruiting high school graduates.

Murghab district is not included in the AKF district education reform program, but AKF provided textbooks in selected subjects, clothes and shoes, and invited English teachers to courses organised in the neighbouring districts. The Institute of Ismaili Studies has opened the "Ethics and Knowledge" program for the Ismaili school population only, yet more Kyrgyz wish their children to join the program.

There are three community colleges in Murghab: technical, pedagogical and medical. These were built because of the remoteness of the place and the inability of its youth to go out for further studies. There are concerns about the quality, relevance and practicality of all three colleges. For example, this year the technical college produced around 150 graduates: electricians, television and telephone technicians, with none being employed. The teachers of the Tajik and Kyrgyz secondary schools comprise the instructional staff of these colleges. Murghab schools are provided with several presidential quotas, which guarantee the unconditional admission of their graduate-holders of the quotas to universities in Tajikistan. Box 9 introduces some local voices on education.

102 "If there is bread there will be song" was the opening sentence of Brezhnev's book "Virgin Land." It was compulsory reading for schoolteachers and University students.
103 The departure of the teachers was considered as the major criterion for considering a school as being in crisis.
104 The AKF DISTED Program (District Education Reform Program) included Shugnan, Roshan, Waj and Darvaz, which comprise 60% of the educational force of the MBAP.
105 The Institute of Ismaili Studies is located in London, UK (for more, see Chapter 4 and http://www.iis.ac.uk).
106 Presidential quotas are concessions provided to the graduates of the remote areas of Tajikistan. The distribution of these quotas, however, was said to have been embroiled with bribery, forgery and nepotism.
Murghab schools cannot provide good education. Our children cannot get to Universities. Education and schools are embroiled in bribery and faking of documents. 
The government does not invest in education because that does not pay back the money they have invested. That is why they give the money to the commercial businessmen. 
The law says that education is compulsory up to grade IX, but how can you bring naked, hungry and devastated children to the school. 
There is no empathy and support for teachers life’ conditions. Unlike two years ago, when the teachers won the strike^{107} through solidarity, now they are united no more. 
How can they teach ‘Ethics and Knowledge’ and sell vodka and wine in the bazaar? 
We have not yet “lit the candle”^{108} of any of the teachers, yet my daughter daily complains of wasting her time in the school. 
This is the only Tajik medium school here and we should look after it. We do not work with our children and even do not know how to work with them. The children are in school for 5 hours and at home for 19 hours. They are in school for only five months and with parents for twelve months (FN.2: 39). 

The community’s negative attitude towards schooling seems to be based on: (a) contrasting the education of today with the Soviet period, which is conceived as a wonderful time of happiness and prosperity, particularly for the teachers, (b) comparing the current education situation in Murghab with that in other districts of MBAP, wherein Murghab is perceived as seriously lagging and (c) holding high expectations of impoverished schools, (d) persisting in the beliefs about the value of education, and (e) perceiving teaching as separate from the conditions of teachers’ work and lives. 

At the same time, the school problems, such as teachers’ division, poverty, absence of students, hunger, cold, devaluation and lack of support are indications of the general deterioration of living conditions and the crisis of values caused by the collapse of the Soviet vision. The school has become a battlefield of competing demands and mandates. The rural realities keep the boundaries between the classroom, school and community contexts highly blurred. Teachers play important roles in reshaping the contextual realities and serving other forces to promote their agendas. Many of these services seem to have been taken for granted, particularly on the part of the Government, which has obviously maintained the Soviet-time view of teachers as “public servants who must serve to promote the agenda of the state.” Teachers are handicapped by shocking poverty, lack of facilities, by pressures from the Government, and misunderstanding from the community. Once sufficiently strong to win a strike, the school staff is now divided and weak. 

^{107} The Tajik school’s teachers went on strike in 1997 because their salaries were not paid for several months. They won the strike. 
^{108} “Lighting of a candle” (Charogh-rawshan, Tirow-pilid) is a ceremony that happens on the third day after the death of a person. On this night, people put up candles and recite religious poems. Here the parent means that no teacher has yet died, but they were not
**Tajik School Emerges and Gains Momentum**

Sino teaches Russian in the Tajik medium secondary school. Until 1991, it was a joint Kyrgyz-Tajik-Russian school, with separate classes for each nationality. The collapse of the USSR resulted in a split into two separate schools—Tajik and Kyrgyz; the Russians returned to their military unit and opened their own school. Sino’s attitude towards the splitting of the school echoed the larger disappointment with the break up of the USSR:

We as teachers did not appreciate any of this: the collapse of the USSR, the independence of Tajikistan, and the civil war. Neither did we like the departure of the Russians nor the division of the school into Tajik and Kyrgyz (Int. 2: 35).

The newly established Tajik school was left with very limited facilities. Two out of the four buildings belong to the Tajik medium school. One is an incomplete rectangle shape where the primary section and the school’s sports hall are located. The sports hall was designed for gymnastics, something Russians were strong at and well known for, not the locals: “We local people like volleyball, basketball and wrestling. None of these could be done in this hall”, said the head (FN. 2: 4).

The secondary section mainly uses the other building. Beside it, there is an open sport site with some gymnastic equipment. There is a general outdoor latrine 100 meters from the school divided into two parts by a wooden wall, which is broken in many places, making its use by both sexes impossible. The females usually wait until there are no males in the opposite section. The surrounding community also uses the school latrine. It is filled and dirty and, to my knowledge, no one has cleaned it for years.

This is the only Tajik school in the centre of the district. It is a general secondary school, which provides a year of preparatory course for learning Tajik (with 30 students), four primary years (1-4 with 220 students), five secondary (5-9 with 240) and two higher secondary years (10-11 with 30 students). There are 520 students. Each of the 26 classrooms is multi-ethnic (i.e., various ethnic groups of Tajiks and Kyrgyz) and bi-denominational (i.e., Ismaili and Sunni).

Due to the lack of heating, the usual 45-minute periods shrink to 40 minutes by October and down to 25 minutes by the end of November. From December until March the school

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*in school. The teacher referred to here went to the mountain for two days to get wood for the winter. This teacher’s 6-year-old son nearly died last year of meningitis, and as a result, is unable to hear.*

*109 Unlike Chitral, Pakistan (Khan, 1997), in MBAP the system continues working according to the generally accepted academic year, from September 1 until mid of June, including the annual exams.*
suspends classes. In mid-March classes start for 25 minutes and reach their officially designed 45-minute duration by June. Sino commented:

You came to the site at the right time: we still have a bit of warm weather; the periods are regular; we feel comfortable and can show our best. I had some ideas and wanted you to see them and tell me how they looked and how they could be improved. Otherwise what can you do in 25 minutes when classrooms are freezing, kids are shivering and unable to hold pens? (Int. 2: 83).

**School Population**

Most students are Tajiks but the number of Kyrgyz students is increasing in the Tajik school because knowing Tajik is more useful for living in an independent Tajikistan, stated the head. They will know more than two languages, in addition to the local Pamirian language\(^{10}\), earn some favour in admission to the universities in Tajikistan, and get better jobs here. It is also believed that in the Tajik school there is better education, because:

Almost all the Kyrgyz teachers have left their school. Those who remained, alternate with each other each half a month. Fifteen days one goes to Osh\(^{11}\) to bring goods and sells them in the local market and the next fifteen days the other teacher leaves. In our school, two teachers have gone to the military garrison and one joined the Government. The rest of us are here and we all attend the school and teach (FN. 2: 12).

The majority of those I met in Murghab, including the Kyrgyz population, the Government, and the District Education Board considered the Tajik school as progressive, committed and "the only school that works these days" (FN. 2: 23). Several of its teachers were named as best in the whole district.

Out of 43 teachers, 36 are women. Younger female teachers are dressed as in the West: skirts, blouse, uncovered shoulder-length hair. The older female teachers usually wear the local colourful traditional *kurta* and *tanbon*\(^{12}\) and cover their heads with colourful scarves called *shal* or *titak*. Men dress in the Western manner: pants, suit, jackets, sweater, and hats. Teachers are thin from lack of food and darkened from the sun and wind. Their clothes are worn out; in particular their shoes are torn apart and re-stitched. The director (head teacher) reported that more than 90% of the teachers suffer from one or more chronic diseases. In one of the teacher's homes I saw two empty rooms with a few clothes in a corner of the second room and an oven.

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\(^{10}\) As a result of the mixture of the various Pamirian ethnicities the language of the local Tajiks comprises a blend of their various languages with its core being Shugnani. This is interesting because the Shugnani themselves are the smallest contingent here.

\(^{11}\) Osh is a provincial centre in the South of Kyrgyzstan. It is 400 kilometres to the North of Murghab.

\(^{12}\) A dress similar to *shalwar-qamis* in the Indian and Pakistani traditions. *Kurta* and *tanbon* are warmer due to the local context and are more colourful and highly decorated.
with a kettle on it. She began weeping when we came in. Later on she told me that she wept over her inability to host us with a “spoon of tea.”

Commentary

While MBAP is the largest province of Tajikistan, Murghab is the largest district of MBAP. Like MBAP in Tajikistan, Murghab is the smallest in population for MBAP. Yet in Murghab almost all the ethnicities and religious groups of Tajikistan have come to live and work together. Tensions of culture, power and politics have grown increasing not only between Tajiks and Kyrgyz as nations, but between various ethnic, religious, linguistic and social groups within each nation. These tensions are often incited and manipulated to maintain the status quo and the privilege of the few.

MBAP is potentially richest in minerals; almost all these minerals are located in Murghab. MBAP is the poorest region in terms of availability of agricultural land and per capita income; In Murghab the agricultural land and other sources of income are almost non-existent. This renders the notion of ruralness problematic and leaves the district, despite its riches, as poorest socio-economic zone in MBAP.

Climactically, Murghab has always been cold, remote, isolated, and with harsh challenges for living. Previously, social mores and institutions emphasised community and cooperation, even in the Soviet times. The village and family structures that developed, helped in the few agricultural activities suited to the environment. Now, people who have lived interdependently and together, have to compete severely for the few post-Soviet “places of good income.” When sources of employment and social mobility are reduced dramatically, corruption hits harder and has more alienating effects. Behaviours earlier regarded as cynicism, hypocrisy, bribery and corruption seem to have become the traits that work best. Yet, no one acknowledges this shift in values; at the level of rhetoric, these behaviours are condemned as before.

This gap between rhetoric and reality makes understanding this complexity harder. Judged by their own rhetoric, all promising socio-economic jargons such as Communism, Democracy, Russianism, Islam, Pamirianism and Tajik nationalism have discredited themselves in the eyes of the people. The popular viewpoint remains negative, pessimistic and depressive. There is little hope in life.

The education system has not been able to adapt to the new realities either. Lack of relevance, low salary, weak material and technical basis, old and out-of-date textbooks, cold

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113 “A spoon of tea” is a modest expression of a local cultural practice for offering tea or food.
schools, hungry teachers and children, absenteeism, drop-out and departure of the teachers and students, and lack of clothes and shoes, all post-Soviet realities may become chronic realities on the education landscape of Tajikistan. School-community relations are tense, due to conflicting views on the nature and purpose of schooling, the school's limited capability to the community’s high expectations of the community and the lack of leadership.

Despite all this, the schools function. There are hopes and expectations. Parents manage to provide the basics to their children attending school. Classes go on, programs are conducted, subjects taught, exams held and graduations celebrated. The importance of school and teachers is overwhelmingy acknowledged. Teachers try to improve their practices via various means, while parents continue critiquing their work. The passionate critiques of education and of the socio-economic and political situation by both teachers and community warns of the undesirable slide in society, as much as they inform about the possibilities for change and improvement.

Given such impoverished conditions of life and work, one may wonder why teachers do not leave quit teaching here. More important, however is the questions of why these teachers actually stay in teaching, why they do not give in, why they and their students attend the school and what drives them to excel, speak up and move forward. The rest of the case will discuss these issues in more detail.

Sino: A Journey to Becoming a Teacher and a Person of His Time

Sino’s professional life journey is a testimony of an active interaction between human agency and the opportunities and obstacles of the changing contexts.

The Person

Sino is a secondary teacher of Russian language and literature. He is 40, married and has two sons and two daughters. He belongs to a small Pamirian ethnic group and is an Ismaili. Sino has lived 31 of his 40 years in the Soviet period. Two of his sisters are teachers in the same school. Sino is thin and dark, with blue eyes and wavy hair. Throughout the one and half months of fieldwork, he wore the same black jacket and blue sweater and alternated between two pairs of pants and two shirts. His shoes were already torn: "I will need to wear three pairs of Pamirian socks, to survive this winter. We are not ready to face the cold. We just don't know what is going to happen to us this winter" (FN. 2: 63).

114 Sino's elder sister was a graduate of the pedagogical college. His younger sister is a last year student at Khorog State University.
115 Pamirian socks (locally *Jireeb, Jirab*) are colourful and beautifully decorated woollen socks knitted by hand. They are considered as one of the major elements of the identity of the Pamirian people in Tajikistan.
Sino considered many factors in making a career choice: the status of teachers, the nature of the subject, the personal warmth of his teacher of Russian—Svetlana, an ethnic Russian—his knowledge of Russian, and his awareness of other opportunities:

Svetlana was kind, gentle, and friendly. She was different from the local Pamirian and Kyrgyz teachers, who were mainly strict and sometimes would even punish... The best books, including the classics, were mainly in Russian. With Russian you could speak to all the other nations, including the Kyrgyz around here. I participated in several Olympiads and got good positions. I noticed that all local and national leaders spoke Russian and the better they spoke Russian, the more educated they were considered. By grade 8, I had made my decision. At that time I did not think that Russian was something that could provide people with privileges and status in society. Later on, when I was a student at the Institute, I realised that there were other good specialities I could have applied for, had I known earlier. I was also not sure whether I could get to any other department. Due to the absence of English teachers, my English was very weak. So I studied Russian more to prepare myself for the Russian faculty (Int. 2: 28).

A colleague of Sino maintained that to become a teacher was socially prestigious, financially useful and intellectually stimulating. Like the ideology of Communism, the status of the teacher was also seen as unshaken and stable:

I was an electrician at the local power station. People said that from a teacher's home "oily smoke" comes out. Teachers were cleaner, better dressed, richer than the leaders of the district, seemingly worked shorter days and were always at the centre of attention. Their work was not boring either... However, by the time I finished my studies at the Institute, returned from the Army and settled down (that is 1990), everything had become bad and being a teacher became the worst thing in the area (FN 2: 15).

**Sino at the Tajik Pedagogical Institute**

Sino passed the entrance exams to the faculty of Russian language and literature of the Tajik State Pedagogical Institute in the late 1970s, surprising his examiners with the breadth of his knowledge of Chernishevsky, the “father” of Russian social democracy, and his
understanding of Marx's *Capital* and *Communist Manifesto*. Sino turned down their offer to study in the inner part of Russia, because he was already too far from his hometown and parents. Later he regretted this, when he joined the student construction brigade in inner Russia. "I should have come to a Russian environment to learn Russian" (Int. 2: 28).

From his teacher of "Methods of Teaching Russian and Literature", he learned such methods as role-play, simulation, how to analyse content and grammar (e.g., how to teach and learn the grammatical cases of Russian words). From the teacher of Pedagogy he further developed his understanding of human relations:

She was gold. She would share both her successes and failures with us. With her we got the first place at the University competition on creativity and academic excellence. She would spend as much time as we wished to cover the lessons we missed. Svetlana was there to make us succeed (Int. 2: 28).

Here he also learned about Diderot, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Sukhomlinski, Makarenko and other educationalists, and was introduced to Dewey "as a representative of bourgeois and pragmatic pedagogy; Dewey's ideas have now become "prominent across the former Soviet Union", noted Sino (Int. 2: 30).

Not all of Sino's memories of the Institute, however, were positive. One of his instructors, an ethnic Tajik used to threaten his students:

"I will show your dad and mom in the exams", stupid, and son of a disgraced father." Another teacher got personal with me and nearly fired me from the Institute. He later on hid my marks so that I do not receive the red diploma during the graduation (Int. 2:30).

Here Sino also experienced the identity problem that existed at the Higher Educational Institutions of Tajikistan. Some of the instructors saw his different language, location, religion, outlook and manners as problems. Sino believed that a lot of this comes from the general Tajik culture and its educational traditions, which demand unquestionable respect for elders and

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120 A Soviet practice, creating construction brigades from amongst the students and sending them to a republic other than their own, aimed at developing a love for labour and an internationalist attitude in the Soviet students at the Higher Education Institutions. Throughout this thesis, Higher Educational Institutions will also be referred to by an acronym VUZ.

121 For more on Makarenko, Sukhomlinski and other Russian educators see Long & Long (1999).

122 These are local constructions implying derogatory threat. In the above cases they meant I will fail you or give you hard time during the exams.

123 Red diploma meant distinction/honours diploma.

124 Often students from the Pamirian minorities encountered unfavourable relations during their studies in the Higher Educational Institutions (VUZs) of Tajikistan. In fact clan influence was strong in all the VUZs of Tajikistan; so far no one has studied issues of identity and difference in Tajikistan’s VUZs.
teachers\textsuperscript{124}, and which also could not overcome the old Tajik stereotypes about Pamirians. In addition, Sino speculated that teachers’ oppressive attitudes were connected to their intellectual insecurity:

These teachers used threats, pointed to our mistakes, put us down, and made fun of our accent in Tajik. They demanded obedience. I found many of them also weak in the subjects they taught. If any disagreement with a Russian teacher ended with peace and friendship, a similar experience with some of our own Tajik instructors would end up with bitterness and ill-feeling (Int. 2: 29).

From “Pioneer” practice\textsuperscript{126} and teaching practice\textsuperscript{127}, Sino learnt to understand children and adolescents and how to find ways to a student’s heart and mind. He also developed an understanding of how to make a lesson plan, how to conduct a lesson, and how to teach a particular topic. By reaching his students inside the classroom and involving them in extracurricular activities, he managed to befriend students, some of whom were physically bigger than him. During this school experience he realised the value of making the interests of the students his own and using them to the benefit of both. With the students, he arranged field trips to places such as a film studio. During the pedagogical practicum, Sino also realised the deep challenge of teaching, the challenge of making all students learn, particularly those unwilling to do so:

I got the sense of how difficult teaching is. I met students who did not want to study. Some of them wanted to bully me. I felt that I could not make students work my way, but that it was still possible to work with the bigger students. Here also I realised that teaching was more about teaching the weaker students rather than the already strong ones, because the strong ones are already good even without us (Int. 2: 31).

The other subjects were almost all-boring lectures, with most of the instructors merely reading their papers. These instructors demonstrated to Sino that “you do not have to be strong academically to teach at the Institute. Some of these teachers spoke Russian worse than the students did”(Int. 2: 31). As Sino reflected on his experiences at the Institute and the school, he said that he learnt both from those that created hardship for him and from those that were enjoyable:

\textsuperscript{124} The practices of beating, insulting and punishing the students before the Soviet period are well documented by Aini, a prominent Tajik scholar who joined the Socialist Revolution. Several of his books, such as Bobkhara and Old School, are testimonies of such educational practices.

\textsuperscript{126} A one-month practicum in 3\textsuperscript{rd} year of University, where prospective teachers learned to work with senior elementary and junior secondary students.

\textsuperscript{127} Teaching practicum took one month in year 4 and two months in year 5, and usually took place in nearby urban schools.
You know when Luqman\textsuperscript{128} was asked where he learned to be so good? He said, from those who were bad…by avoiding their bad habits. The things I felt bad about, I do not try to use in my practice now. Those I enjoyed I use in my practice (Int. 2: 32).

**Disappointing Return … Home**

In 1982, after graduating from the Tajik Pedagogical Institute, Sino, at the insistence of his parents, returned to Murghab. Coming back home meant giving up many of his future career aspirations. He had been offered the job of Instructor at the Pedagogical Institute in Qurghan-teppa.\textsuperscript{129} Had Sino joined this Institute, he might have gone onto further studies and could have ended as a Docent, or Professor of Russian. But his parents arranged a “job offer” for him at a school in Murghab.\textsuperscript{130} However, when he looked for a job at home, Sino could not find a job suitable to his qualifications and ended up teaching chemistry and geography in a small village, Bukunkul. Sino nonetheless came to appreciate this experience:

> Despite reaching 50 degrees below zero, for two weeks in June, there are tulips everywhere around in Bulunkul...Teaching chemistry helped me to learn things that I never paid attention to while I was a student in school. You know a lot about one's health, body and vitamins. All this is useful at home with my own children. For a teacher it is good to be knowledgeable in more than one subject. It helps the school because if there is no teacher of Chemistry or Geography, I can teach them. *It is also good to know Tajik literature. You can help the students better learn Tajik and also use the literature in the village* (Int. 2: 31, emphasis mine).

However, Sino was about 150 km away from his parents in Murghab, often unable to teach his favourite subject, Russian, and lonely, living in a small one-story, one-room apartment. Sino convinced his family to allow him to go for further studies. When this decision became public, the local education authorities got worried, because this meant they might lose another native specialist. To persuade him to stay, in 1983 they offered Sino six hours a week teaching Russian\textsuperscript{131} in his hometown school. Here, in Murghab, the school was unified and multicultural: Kyrgyz, Tajik and Russian teachers and students studied and worked side by side. “Russian teachers never looked down at us. It was rather our local leaders who always put us down in

\textsuperscript{128}Luqman is a legendary personification of wisdom and knowledge in medieval Arabic and Persian thought.

\textsuperscript{129}During the Soviet time, the Higher Educational Institutions (VUZs) were responsible for providing jobs to their graduates. The VUZs' offers could have been declined only after graduates could provide evidence that they had found jobs adequate to their qualification. Sino refers here to a practice in which the graduates provide an offer (sometimes faked) from their native district education board about work, and become free in choosing where to go.

\textsuperscript{130}The conditions of Qurghan-teppa are diametrically opposed to those of Murghab: Agriculturally rich and close to the capital-Dushanbe.
front of Russians and asked them to make us human beings" (Int. 1: 50, emphasis mine). Sino enjoyed teaching Russian and working in extra-curricular activities, which included organising intellectual games, celebrations, drama and arts. Visiting the classes of the experienced Russian teachers helped him to sharpen his skills in analysing the content of the topics he taught. In response, he helped those teachers with the non-Russian children in the school.

**Sino in the Army: “The School of Manhood”**

As a rural teacher, Sino was exempted from military service, but he volunteered in 1985 and served in the far North of the USSR. In the Army he learned how to work with and teach culturally diverse adults the various political documents of the party and state. Here Sino also improved his Russian language, and furthered his understanding of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

In 1986, after the military, Sino easily re-entered teaching. One year later, he decided to pursue further studies and applied to the faculty of Journalism of Zhdanov University in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). This university rarely took students from the southern regions of the Soviet Union. Yet Sino impressed the examiners with his answers, journalism and humorous articles written at the University and during his initial teaching years. He was accepted to the correspondence courses. This hope for further studies, however, did not end successfully, because the course of history changed dramatically. The collapse of the USSR made it financially impossible to continue his studies. The beginning of these changes was, however, promising.

**Too Many Changes in Too Little Time: Glasnost and Perestroika**

Until Glasnost and Perestroika (1986-1991), Sino took the Soviet system at face value. He certainly knew about some of the malpractices within the system, but was deeply puzzled to learn how corrupt the leaders were and what problems the system had developed. As criticism of the Communist party grew, he was struck by the overwhelming wave of freedom that emerged in the society and in his teaching:

... my lessons became freer. We could discuss issues of life with great excitement. No one could tell us to teach his or her way. All the teachers were excited about the flow of news. The

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131 The usual workload of a teacher was around 14-16 hours per week for a teacher, 8-10 hours for the deputy head and 6-8 hours for the head of the school (Kruder, 1996).

132 The Soviet Army was popularly referred to as “school of manhood”; Sino also used this image. To serve in the Soviet Army was valuable for many reasons: learn hard work and discipline, develop physically, and improve one's Russian. Military service was also seen as an easy window to get into the Communist Party, which in turn offered opportunities for quick upward mobility.
Democratic Party came to establish its branch here. I did not join them because they were anti-Russian (Int. 2: 33).

Sino welcomed any efforts to get rid of uniformity, provide more freedom in teaching and writing articles, reduce demands from above, or make the programs more relevant to the needs of the students in Murghab. But he never imagined that the attempts at reform, democracy, pluralism and freedom of faith that marked Perestroika and Glasnost would end with the collapse of the entire system. Sino still believes there are no problems with Communism in theory. It talks about justice, a happy future, and equality. He liked the cheap prices, free education, health care, internationalism, and availability of basic goods under Communism. "But as time passed, you started feeling the pressures upon you to do and say things in a certain way, to teach in a certain manner. You feel that you are put in a frame and should not move out of it" (Int. 2: 58). Sino pointed out that "as we grew, we got to know about the party Mafia and that the communists in power were the most corrupt and immoral thieves. They cheated, told lies and created special shops and restaurants for themselves" (Int. 1: 59).

With the demise of the USSR in 1991, Sino's and his colleagues' high excitement soon changed to deep sadness. Not only did his renewed hopes for further studies disappear, but also his entire career as a teacher of Russian became undermined. The status of Russian decreased, teaching hours for Russian were reduced, and all his privileges were extinguished, since Russian was regarded as the language of the colonialists. Everyone hurried to study Persian and Arabic. Other blows followed. Supplies of medicine, fuel, food and education dropped dramatically. As Sino put it, "When trouble arrives you'd better keep the gate open" (Int. 2: 34). The civil war in 1992-93 brought new suffering. Sino hurried to Dushanbe to save his wife and small children who, visiting a relative, were now besieged in the city. Many innocent people, including women and children, were killed. "When I saw thousands of women with their babies walking in the cold December for tens and hundreds of kilometres, I cried and felt something really unforgivable was happening. I realised that those who broke up the Soviet Union were not

133 In the Soviet Army, the servicemen had compulsory courses in Marxist-Leninist ideology. Such courses were offered on weekly basis and called "Day of Political Studies."
134 The Russian teachers were usually provided with several privileges. Their classes were smaller. Russian teachers had more teaching hours (which meant more money) and more access to good literature. For in-service training the Russian teachers would travel to inner Russia, rather than to Khorog or even Dushanbe. They had the opportunity to become a member of the Communist party and promoted to state positions.
135 The proverb means that bad news arrives as a chain and you better get ready for many misfortunes rather than one.
good people if they had allowed all this to happen" (Int. 2: 34). The civil war brought hundreds of refugees to remote Murghab too. Cold’s first blows hit hard. More bad news was that for the first time:

...in my life that school was closed for the winter because of lack of heating. Winter here is more than 7 months. I missed teaching so much...Even during the Great Patriotic War\textsuperscript{137} the schools were not closed. That was a very pessimistic and dark time (Int. 2: 34).

With the collapse of the Soviet Union\textsuperscript{138}, longstanding relationships were severed. The school was divided into Tajik and Russian separate schools. Russians opened their own school at the garrison. Sino was elected as the head of the newly established Tajik school by the request of the 35 teachers in the school.\textsuperscript{139} Despite his frustration with the separation, Sino could not turn down the request of his colleagues and took up the challenge of the principalship from 1992 until 1996. He soon realised that he had to start the school nearly from scratch, sometimes compromising universal principles:

As result of the separation, the Kyrgyz school hid everything from us: the teaching aids, the chairs, the tables, the language headphones, and the science equipment. To establish the school we went to the community, the government and the Russians. We had no option except to steal a few chairs and tables from those the Kyrgyz school hid from us. We managed to provide the school with the minimum to function (Int. 2: 35).

\textbf{The Arrival of the Aga Khan and His Network and the Renewal of Hope}

Sino’s principalship coincided with the beginning of the Aga Khan Foundation’s humanitarian aid program in Badakhshan.\textsuperscript{140} Since 1993, the Ismaili teachers’ respect, their love for and their hope in the Aga Khan has provided a purpose for teaching:

Some people thought we would all die soon or become slaves to others as result of our defeat in the civil war. With the arrival of the Imam we all felt that, though we are a small and very poor people, we have got a strong protector and guide. From 1993 to 1997 there was no major problem with basic foods. The Aga Khan Foundation also provided us with clothes, shoes and some

\textsuperscript{136} Sino refers to the civil war events in 1992-1993, when thousands of the people of the Pamirian and Qarategin origins left their homes in Dushanbe and moved towards the East. The major exodus of the population happened in December 1992 and January 1993. The distance from Dushanbe to Khorg is about 325 kilometers.

\textsuperscript{137} The war in the territories of the USSR lasted for 4 years and claimed the lives of more than 25 million Soviet people. Tajiks fought against Nazi Germany alongside other Soviet citizens.

\textsuperscript{138} It is important to notice that five months before the collapse of the USSR in December 1991 a referendum was conducted where more than 80% of the Soviet people wanted the Union to exist. The USSR was denounced by three leaders: Yeltsin of Russia, Kravchuk of Ukraine and Shushkevich of Belarus, after they gathered at Beloveshensk dacha in Belarus.

\textsuperscript{139} During Perestroika, the Soviet practice of nomination was replaced with election. This practice vanished in 1994.

\textsuperscript{140} The support of the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) began in 1993 and continues to this day. For more on the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) involvement in Tajikistan, see Chapter 4.
textbooks. For us as teachers, some of the most touching words were Hozir Imom’s appeal for education and his saying that for him teaching is the noblest profession. He asked us to carry on our work and seek knowledge. As the head of the school I gained the moral right to ask teachers to come and work so that the help of the Imam becomes *hala*'(Int. 2: 59).

Sino also begged the government for money and support for the teachers as he requested and convinced the teachers to work in the hardest time in the school's history. Once a senior official of the district told him:

Look Sino, no shepherd comes to beg for money. Doctors also do not beg as much as you teachers do...

Sino retorted:

Shepherds eat the milk, butter and meat of the animals; doctors sell the medicine to the patients. We, unlike both, can neither eat the students nor sell them (Int. 2: 60).

The challenges of headship made Sino aware of his higher responsibilities:

In the most difficult times, I tried to be a model and put all my energy into work. Only then can you demand work from others. I never missed any of my 8 teaching hours in a week and learnt to work with both those I liked and disliked. I had to do too many things to ensure the school is working. I also headed the committee for distributing humanitarian aid. I refused to bow to the demands of my relatives to give them extra humanitarian aid and to provide a job to my sister. I was hurt by the gossips in the community and fed up with the demands from those above (Int. 2: 60).

**Close Colleagues: "We Understand Each Other by Half a Word"**

Sino has often helped his colleagues and has learnt from them. He discussed teaching problems with others such as Daler (a teacher of Physics) and Farokh (another Russian teacher):

I told him to simplify his language. Even I do not understand the language of his subject as it is written in the textbook. We need to know that Tajik is also not the mother tongue of our students... Daler, on the other side, provided the school with fuel when I was the head. With Daler and Farokh, I share almost everything, from the classroom problems to family and political issues. We are of the same age. Any time we gather, we come up with solutions to each other's problems. It is a kind of hidden and interesting attachment to each other. We understand each other by half a word. We have not expressed that in words as much as in actions (Int. 2: 61).

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141 *Hala* from Arabic has the meaning of making something deserved and allowed.

142 Mainly consisting of clothes, shoes, notebooks and pencils to enable the students and teachers attend and carry on the schools.
On the political scene, Sino joined his colleagues in the school strike in 1998, which the school still won despite pressures and threats from the higher authorities. Together with Farokh and Daler he decided to vote for the current President, because at this stage "we have to say shukrat" to what we have now: peace and the blessing and help of Hozir Imam. Because of not saying shukrat to the Soviet system, we have lost even the basics. May be someone else who replaces the current president turns everything around again. We have suffered enough", concluded Daler (FN. 1: 16).

Teaching in the Name of the Future... "The Imam of the Time and A Person of His Time"

Sino enjoyed the respect of his students, colleagues, and the superiors. During my meetings with various groups of the population he was unanimously referred to as the best, humblest, most honest, ethical, responsible and capable teacher. Sino claimed that these qualities came from his Soviet upbringing. Unlike many people around, Sino also believed that he has to do a lot with his own mind and hands, to move with the times, be open to changes, seek knowledge and help others: "As we have an Imam of the Time, I have to be a person of my time" (Int. 2: 86, emphasis mine).

At the time of my data collection, he daily got up at 5: 30 a.m. and lit the stove, fuelled by treskan and cow dung. Unlike in Soviet times, few people managed to get coal and even treskan was becoming unaffordable for the teachers. Next, he joined his wife in milking the cow and took the cattle to the hill with his daughter. Next he had shirchoy. Then he taught at school and then at the pedagogical college. After that he worked on the constitutional referendum of 1999. After a lunch of more shirchoy, he returned to the school. In the evening he brought the cattle back. Light permitting, Sino usually watched news and occasionally a serious movie. After supper, usually shirchoy again, in the evening he helped his children with their homework. "You can understand kids more deeply if you have your own kids. One or four hours in a school day are not enough. I became more thoughtful of the purposes of my teaching after I started thinking what I want my own children to become" (Int. 2: 61). After his children went to bed, he

143 Shukrat, another powerful local cultural concept requires one not to complain but be content with the way things are and look on the good, not bad side. Many people believe that they did not engage with the good sides of the Soviet system and were punished as result with the current problems.
144 Treskan is a short bush that grows in the adjacent hills. Due to absence of coal, it has vanished from local hills and its price has gone up.
145 Shirchoy, a kind of tea that is made of water, tea leaves, milk, and salt, with butter and nuts. Butter and nuts have become unaffordable for the majority of population of MBAP.
146 Good movies were, in Sino's view, ones that talked about real life, not the erotic and violent ones that dominated the Moscow television channels and were broadcast all over Tajikistan.
prepared his lessons, often until 1:00 a.m. In addition to working with me on alternate days, he also participated in the referendum, census, and preparation for the upcoming presidential elections. For the referendum, he and the school’s head stayed up overnight in very cold weather to show those supervising it— from comfortable apartments in Khorog and Dushanbe that they were alert. Sino worked despite flu, constant cough or the pains in his stomach from his ulcer: “No one stays in bed because of flu. We usually stay in bed only when we cannot move” (Int. 2: 85).

Sino has made several attempts to improve his material conditions. He worked in construction to get money to buy clothes for his children. He also worked as a salesperson, selling goods on credit to soldiers, but they did not repay him. Sino fell into debt and quit the job, barely covering his debts and having learnt that commerce and teaching may not go together. “If you want to succeed in trade you should be able to say no to people. I realised this is what new times require. I have not been educated to say no” (Int. 2: 69). His monthly income of 15,000 Tajik rubles ($15 CDN), came from the school and the pedagogical college, where he worked as the deputy head. Sino’s salary was completely incommensurate with the amount of his work and the basic requirements of his life. Sino was further embittered by the practice of favouritism in the district:

At the pedagogical school I was cheated. I was told I would be the head of the pedagogical school. Now they have appointed a woman who does not have even a University degree. She is Ahmadsho’s relative. It is already the 15th of September, the classes have been on since September 10, and she is still in Osh. I have been doing everything there so far. She will come and get all the credit (Int. 2: 61).

Further, despite being a native of Murghab and serving for so long, Sino did not have a permanent house. In our one-and-a-half months of fieldwork, he moved twice, carrying with him his formidable library, which included dictionaries, books of Russian, Tajik and Western classics, academic journals and other resources that he used in his teaching. Sino did not have a separate room or office to work in. He lived in his auntie’s home. Due to the lack of fuel and light, Sino’s family did everything in the same room: while Sino chatted with me as his guest, his daughter washed her hair, the son prepared his lesson, and his wife cooked food:

Like myself, my wife is unhealthy too. She has got chronic bronchitis. Life in the Pamirs is always a struggle against various challenges: Zaqakh (worries) about wood, food, and clothes.

Ahmadsho is a pseudonym for a local district bureaucrat.
about cattle, students, about lessons, and our relatives. How to find a place where we could live stably. Most of our deaths here are due to these concerns, not the climate or food. Sometimes too many concerns attack you together and you get overwhelmed and panicked. If I have got wood and food for two weeks I am calm and teach well. But as this time gets shorter I start worrying and my lessons become a burden. People stopped sharing without expecting something in return. Now even relatives do not give an extra piece of bread. In my home we still do support each other, but we are all poor. My dad gave us some buckwheat yesterday as we took the children of my sister-in-law yesterday. If we had someone in the garrison or in the MSDSP, things would have been easier (Int. 2: 70).

As Sino looks ahead he is worried. He is becoming old, his children are still young, and he has no house or savings. His health is weak and prospects are slim. He saw a possibility for improvement in learning English, for which he had no time and no support:

After attending workshops organised by the Aga Khan Foundation, I was told that I could teach English at the primary level...English could help me get a better job, and develop further, because I can read books and articles. I can open courses, teach others and make some money (Int. 2: 61).

Sino gets food from the AKF assistance program and his relatives who live in Ishkashim. He gets clothes and shoes from relatives and friends who live in Dushanbe and Moscow, and from richer friends in Murghab. But his major hopes, his professional aspirations remain unfulfilled. He believes that the disappearance of learning opportunities was the principal disadvantage of Murghab:

We are provincials and have no access to facilities to develop professionally. That makes us feel less confident. What I miss most is good books, newspapers and journals. I also miss talking to outsiders such as Russians and others. Now in Khorog there are so many foreigners and there are lots of opportunities from which you can learn. I have learnt a lot from Sawri and from you in your courses last year and now during this research (Int. 2: 86).

Commentary

The major pattern of Sino’s professional life is his active interactionist approach with the social and physical realities. It is reflected in his saying: “I have to do more with my hands and mind.” The years of schooling, university, army, and initial teaching were years of hope, experimentation and growth within a comparatively certain environment. Sino's career and other

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148 The light and electricity in the village was available for 6 hours on the alternate days.
149 Sawri is the pseudonym of an expatriate Aga Khan Foundation’s teacher educator.
life choices were influenced by his positive image of language, culture and the profession of teaching. At the same time, other factors have limited his choices, such as family and cultural traditions, minority status, and lack of knowledge of or an access to opportunities.

Sino's education further illuminates the complexity of the Soviet and post-Soviet realities. The roots of the major problems and achievements in Sino's life lie in the history of the context. Though the Soviet system provided opportunities and structures, the culture (e.g., processes, relationships and abilities to understand and tolerate diversity) of these structures, created by their inhabitants, strongly affected their practical value and declared missions. For example, boring lectures compromised the provision of the free education. The promotion of local Tajik teachers to positions of power and their access to "privileged knowledge" sometimes resulted in arrogance, insularity and derogatory treatment of their students. The rhetoric of equality and respect for the differences of language, culture and religion turned into treating them as problems and using them as tools for the perpetuation of the status quo.

Sino points out the question of language as an important factor. It is not enough to be able to speak the language; one has to speak it correctly. As a thoughtful teacher, and perhaps as a language teacher, he also understands his colleague Daler's problem as a problem of the language of instruction. The incident also reveals the tensions between the systemic demand for socialising children to the nation state and their understanding of the topics.

As an active re-constructor in the emerging opportunities, Sino navigates between them, shaping his identity, developing his purpose of life, creating a vision for the society and defining his role in contributing to that society. Sino's reasons for and commitment to teaching are part of this vision. They became particularly explicit in the post-Soviet chaos, confusion, and complexity, which forced him to evaluate his values and dispositions against the existing and emerging realities. Here his abilities, developed in one period were challenged by the new realities. Learning is fundamental to Sino's life and work. He is in active search for a place where he could realise himself and contribute to society. While Sino is rarely free to choose, he finds that any experience has a degree of educative quality, whether bad or good, new or old, because he looks for what can be gained from every experience. Sino is open to learn from everyone: his students and colleagues, Russians and Tajiks, westerners and locals; from great leaders and accidental researchers, from the formal courses and his daily teaching and living; from challenges and responsibilities; from his subject and other disciplines, from the University, the Army, classroom, school, home and community. These sources make him aware, develop his
abilities and enrich his perspective. He is sharp, creative and flexible in absorbing and using knowledge to the benefit of his students, himself and his community. Still a student of teaching, he has learned about some of the fundamental questions of teaching: how to find a way to the students' hearts and use their interest for their long-term benefit; how to make all students learn, help the weak ones, and move everyone forward; how to work with students rather than demand that they work for the teacher, and how to follow students' development in and out of the classroom. His initial teaching years helped him realise that genuine learning cannot be based on command. Education is less about teaching the prescribed programs and more about learning on the part of the students. Good teaching is based on moving beyond a single subject and beyond the mere textbook. Despite the many changes and challenges, he believes in the teachers' power in improving students' lives.

In his educational journey, Sino actively interacts with cultural and family traditions too. He tries to deconstruct their inhibiting effects, overcomes the culturally grounded submission to the elderly, and manages to convince his parents to let him go and grow. He realises the necessity of travelling and risk-taking to improve his Russian and actualise himself.

Post-Perestroika, Sino and his colleagues found themselves in a stage of rapid transition, for which they were not ready. So many drastic changes in such a short time have overwhelmed everyone in Murghab. All certainties and clear-cut answers have gone. Inspirations and frustrations, joy and pain, separation and co-existence, humiliation and honour, peace and turbulence, poverty and hope compete with each other. It has been painful to accept the decline of the status of Russian and the loss of the status of teaching. It humiliates Sino and his colleagues to beg and work for others to make ends meet. Corruption, drugs, Mafia, cheating, nepotism and bribery have flourished, while opportunities for growth have diminished. Sino and his colleagues operate with a broken economy, community, school and hope. The geographical remoteness, financial poverty, and political insecurity made things even more difficult.

Yet Sino teaches without expecting recognition or remuneration. Despite many reasons to leave teaching and to become cynical, Sino does not opt for an easy life. He remains in teaching because he shares the love of the students and the respect of parents and colleagues. His own children help him refine his vision of education and society. In the face of existing challenges he is an excellent teacher and a profound person. He is more than a classroom practitioner, he is a community leader. Yet he and his colleagues may have to live a debilitating existence in the name of the future, in which his students and children will have to live.
Sino emerges with strongly renewed energy, abilities and commitment; he takes up many new challenges unwittingly and perhaps desperately, but with dignity and integrity. He founded a Tajik school from scratch and made it the best school in the district. He brought the resources of the school, the government and community together. He has written articles on how to teach Russian more effectively in a Tajik rural school. He has defended his community and its spiritual sources. He has continued his efforts to improve his community and to create a future that is hopeful and is worth fighting for. His major hope has remained in the “Imam of the Time”, who is his ideal for how to become a person of his time. The life story of Sino is a story of unbending human will and spirit. Commitment, passion, mood, feelings, devotion and spirituality define his worldview, his relations and his classroom practices, as we shall see together in the upcoming sections of this case.

_Sino’s Worldview_

This section will follow the evolution of Sino’s understanding of teaching, his commitment to education, his intentions in life and teaching, and his employment of various persisting and emerging value frameworks and authorities on the post-Soviet landscape.

_In the Village Teachers Are Still Indispensable_

Among many reasons why Sino has remained in teaching, his confidence in his capability to make a difference, the emotional bond and relations with the students were crucial:

I love children and feel I am a good teacher. My students have succeeded in getting to the universities in Khorog and Dushanbe. In 1988, a student of mine got second position in the Republican Olympiad and first position in the provincial one. Students love me. You can see them coming and asking when is Russian, though they can all see the timetable (Int. 2: 61).

The post-Soviet reality of remoteness and limited opportunities have made Sino's commitment to teaching persist out of default. Sino's sense of pride is another reason he remained a teacher:

I have no connections to get a job in the military unit, where I could earn a living and also develop my Russian further. The people in the Government have invited me to work there. But they won't give me a good job. They would use me to do the hardest work and clean the mess and dirt after them. In case of a problem, I will become a scapegoat. That's why I have refused to work with them (Int. 2: 61).

In pursuit of understanding the increasing complexity of post-Soviet life, the ordinary citizens of the village have again turned to the teachers. This has made the latter more
indispensable than they ever were. Yet, Sino suggests that, although this all adds to their symbolic value, the teachers still find it hard to explain some of the realities of market economic society:

People ask us to explain the laws, the changes. Why did Socialism fail? Why people have become so greedy? Why some corrupt people are again in the high positions? The government asks us to help with political matters. Now we are involved in the referendum and the census. Hozir Imom has asked us to help with teaching “Ethics and Knowledge.” Even during his arrival we were asked to organise the reception. In a way teachers are still important. The difference is that the status is low. Today we are lower than many other professions. I do not know why. Maybe we teachers are guilty too (Int. 2: 74).

“Teacher Is the Captain of the Ship...”

During the Soviet period, and even more so later, Sino realised that teaching was more a mission than a technical job of delivering the standard program prescribed throughout the country. His teaching was multidimensional and inclusive, and was not limited to the classroom and children. The roots of this understanding were culturally embedded:

My mission is to prepare students for the present and future so that my students lead their lives, feed and educate their children. My other mission is to create something new. I love reading and writing articles. I also hope that this makes a difference. I believe in Nasir Khusraw’s words:

Har ruz ze khud bipurs agar ke mardi,
Imruz che khizmate ba mardum kardi?
(Each day you ask yourself if you think you are a man,
What kind of a service have you provided to the people?) (Int. 2: 73).

Substantially, for him teaching was a multidimensional act, aimed at revitalising values, skills and attitudes that were in crisis in post-Soviet Tajik society, but which he saw as the only worthy traits for a decent life:

Teaching is about upbringing and showing the students a way of living, distinguishing between good and bad. For a teacher it is a duty and responsibility in front of those who have entrusted their children to you. I want my students to be ethical and knowledgeable. To care for others and not be selfish, to respect each other and not only their elders. I also want them to be hard working, because nothing, including grades, comes to one without hard work. I want them to get useful professions. I want my students to avoid bad habits such as smoking, drug addiction, and

150 A prominent Persian poet and Ismaili thinker of the 11th century, who chose Badakhshan as refuge.
drinking. For me these are more important and harder to achieve than teaching Russian (Int. 2: 60, emphasis mine).

Sino contrasted teaching with politics. He viewed politics as manipulation, whereas teaching was about serving and helping students to grow:

Teaching is not a political act. Teaching is against politicians. It is making students aware of the politicians, their sweet words and promises. Unlike politicians, I do not misuse the children, do not manipulate them, and do not cheat them. If I do so, I will harm my own reputation and I will do harm to the profession. I may have done wrong things but it's the conditions that promote such mistakes (Int.1: 1).

Teaching, then, is very much linked to making a valuable contribution to the society and citizenship. Sino's concept of society also emerged from his concerns about the current Tajik society, which is divided ethnically, confused politically and devastated economically. Teaching, thus, "is giving food to society and helping it get up and stand on its feet. Moving it ahead. Lessons are tactical steps in this strategy" (Int. 2: 84). This missionary perspective affected Sino's role in the classroom, home and community. In the classroom, he saw the teacher as a strategist:

A teacher is the springboard of the classroom. Everything moves around him. Like the captain of the ship, he knows where and how it ultimately should go. I organise the lesson and various activities about the lesson. I pay a lot of attention to the upbringing of the students. I don't do each of this in separate way. I am a caregiver to the students, their friend. I think I do more for the students than their parents do (Int. 2: 74, emphasis mine).

Similarly, he felt teachers are responsible for their school's reputation. "The school is going to be judged by the knowledge, behaviours and ethics of the teachers. Teachers are responsible for bad relations with the community and any bad achievement of the students" (Int. 2:74). Hence, teachers have an obligation to know their subjects and to do what is right. Knowledge based on good intentions and ethics makes their positions both a privilege and responsibility:

When we say teacher, we assume knowledge. By teacher, I mean the most knowledgeable person in the village. A teacher is like the coming and going of knowledge, like the collecting and dispensing of knowledge. Like searching for knowledge and excitement about knowledge. Like a technician working for hours behind a machine, teachers work with ideas that way. A teacher should be like an encyclopaedia and knowledgeable about many subjects. Teachers' knowledge
should make them different people: they should say good words, behave in the way that makes people come together rather than separate and fight each other (Int. 2: 85).

Sino tried to meet this challenge through his work in and out of the classroom. In addition to teaching, he wrote serious and humorous pieces on the lives of famous Russian poets and thinkers and famous people of the MBAP. Since 1991 he has moved on to scholarly articles. In 1992, he published an article "A Lesson on Sergei Esenin's Persian motifs in Tajik Medium School." In 1995 his article "Using Games in Teaching Russian Language in Rural School" was published in the same journal. In 1998 he published a sharp defence of the Ismaili interpretation of Islam and its spiritual guide, the Aga Khan in response to an article in a newspaper in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan.

"I know It Takes Longer..."

Sino was critical about his own practices, modest about his achievements and patient about his aspirations: "It is naïve to assume that I have achieved my objectives in one lesson. That takes longer. Teaching is like nurturing a tree, which gives fruit after years" (Int. 2: 81). Sino experienced deep anxiety as he compared accepted "good" behaviours with those that seemed to "really work" in the current, market-based society (e.g., corruption, cheating, stealing and dishonesty). Sino, though aware of the idealistic nature of his own educational vision, was still optimistic. He also worked to make good on this optimism:

I am afraid that the students may ask me one day whether I have prepared them for this world or the other one? I do not know about market economy a lot. What can I see is that there is no regulation. To become rich everyone does what he wants. There is no accountability. But I cannot tell these students to cheat, steal, kill or sell drugs. The values that I talk about never die and never get old. I hope we are going to have a country where there is law and which is also blessed by Mawlo. The key to this is preparing people with ethics and knowledge. That is what the Imam tells us now and that is what the Communists told us before. The issue is to put all this into practice. Not just talk about them. It will take time when the number of these people becomes larger than those corrupted. I believe that good is going to win. The current victory of bad is temporary. Victory may not come in one form only. We may not win materially and physically,

151 Sino wrote short biographical entries about Pushkin, Lermontov, and Gorky on the celebration of their anniversaries. These were usually published in the local newspaper.
152 For the purpose of anonymity, the titles of the articles are slightly changed and they are removed from the list of the references of the thesis.
153 Russian poet who embraced Soviet October Revolution in 1917.
154 In his article, Sino refuted the newspaper's accusations that the Ismaili interpretation of Islam used narcotics and force to spread their cause.
but we can do so morally. We can cause a deep psychological blow to the bad, make it feel ashamed and put down (Int. 2: 62, emphasis mine).

One of Sino's major worries was the flourishing of corrupt practices, which were crippling education. The roots of corruption were deep and their effects on the society negative: "The fish begins to stink from the head, the roots of corruption come right from the top. If Shakarsho156 has gathered all his relatives and friends around him why not Saidov157?" (Int. 2: 60). His doubts in the sincerity of the Government and other bureaucracies were accumulating and echoed many of the viewpoints expressed in the larger community. He also believed that radical change would come only with a different kind of citizen:

If corruption continues like this, things may not improve at all. Despite the peace process and the opening of the road to Dushanbe, our life has not improved. We still live on humanitarian supplies. The change will come only if people with a conscience, with a balance of ethics and knowledge are up there. These are people who could say no to their own desires and think about others (Int. 2: 58).

Sino found it hard to understand the post-Soviet paradoxes. The current leadership was not the kind that Sino envisaged, because they try to apply old and discredited approaches to the new realities:

Griboedov said that Russia is impossible to understand with reason.158 I feel the same about Tajikistan. I do not understand why we did this extravagant celebration of the Samanids when we are so poor. Here in Murghab we have spent three warm days on celebrating the occasion. You know we here count warm days, particularly from September onward. We cannot criticise the Government, the local and provincial leaders. There is no democracy and no rule of law in this society as it was before (Int. 2: 33).

The lack of attention to education by the Government, community and parents was another source of frustration for Sino. "You can't feed a nightingale with mere tales", he said, contrasting the rhetoric of the higher authorities and their real actions. A colleague of his added that:

\[155\] A term refers to the Imams in the Ismaili interpretation of Islam (e.g., Imam Aly, the Aga Khan).

\[156\] Shakarsho is a pseudonym for a national bureaucrat.

\[157\] Saidov is a pseudonym for a local bureaucrat.

\[158\] A famous saying of the Russian thinker Griboedov, the author of the book *Pairs from Reasoning.*
Teachers nowadays are the dervishes of the 20th century. The results of this disrespect to education will be seen after 10 years. No one is interested in the words we say and lessons we teach. There were times you could not find a job in the school. People were jealous of the salary and benefits of the teachers (FN. 2: 88).

"In Human Beings Everything Must be Fine"

The rationale of teaching as a mission, enriched by Sino's vision of society, the role of the teacher, and of Russian as a subject defined his purposes of teaching. Sino has developed a holistic view of teaching, based on a reconceptualisation of the famous saying from Chekhov: "In human beings everything must be fine: the face, clothing, body, mind and soul":

I pay a lot of attention to the duties, attendance, organisation, and cleanliness of the classroom. I want them to know what the date is today, and who is absent. They should know that a filthy classroom is harmful for their health. The school is a decent and noble place. I am upset that other teachers do not pay attention to this. These seeds of sunflower must have been here from much earlier than my class. I am also upset that the class teacher and the head have not provided chairs for all the students. I want the children to speak only Russian for 45 minutes. You know we are not allowed to speak in the mother tongues. Moreover, this is the only chance to speak in Russian. So we try to use it to the maximum (Int. 2: 3).

Keeping broader ends in view, Sino developed incremental, realistic objectives for his lessons. This approach was based on his perception of how the students learn. He built on the previous topics, clarified the present conditions and envisaged a possible window for input in the future:

Today I introduced the students only to the term "verb" to make them aware that such a thing exists in the Russian language. Students cannot take too much at once at this age (Grade 3). This will make it easy for us at the later stage, when we come to define a verb, explain the tenses, and find verbs in the sentences (Int. 2: 83).

This multi-purpose-integrated approach to teaching was one of the major qualities of Sino's lessons. A detailed account of one of his lessons, followed by his brief account and my commentary, illustrates how he translated this strategic approach into practical steps.

159 The local connotation of the term refers to a poor, weak and oppressed person. Dervishes were the ascetics in medieval Islamic culture. They were well known for choosing piety and asceticism over the matters of the real world and usually lived a very poor material life.

160 Several students had no chairs to sit on. I saw some of school chairs in the bazaar, used by the merchants. In the school where I worked, a lot of effort was put into repairing the broken chairs so that all the children could sit.

161 Some of the general observations on the conditions of Sino's classrooms reflected the influences of the rural, mountainous and post-Soviet realities, such as lack of heating, poor attendance, constant coughing on the part of the students and teacher. These were
Sino (S) asked who is on duty, who is absent and who is present. Out of 19 students (Sts., 4 were absent. Sino did not ask why they were absent. Most of the students, Sino and myself constantly coughed all through the lesson].

S. Have you all read the conspectus[162]?  
Sts. [Some say yes, others say no].  
Good. What did we talk about in the last lesson?
Sts: [Some of them murmur to each other ...None responds. Sino waits for a while. Come on... OK. I will tell you... Holidays. Looks at the only Kyrgyz student in the class.  

S. When do we have holidays, Abul-Qisas?
Abul-Qisas: In the summer.  
[To the Kyrgyz student] Is it only in the summer?  
Sts. [Most of the students raise their hands and call:] Me... me....me. [Several lean forward. The others raise their hands up high. Many of those who raise their hands look at me as if wanting to see whether I am happy with their active participation]. 

S. Abu-Qisas, why are you silent... Come on Yusufsho, help him.
Yusufsho: There are holidays in the winter too... Cold holidays. 

S. Jamshed. What did Rustam do in summer? [Rustam is a character in the story/conspectus Sino gave the students yesterday to read at home. Sino looks again at the Kyrgyz boy. He is silent. Sino does not pay attention to the voices and hands of the other students.] 

S. What do we do in the river, Abul-Qisas?  
Abul-Qisas.... [Silent.] 
S. Come on Abul-Qisas.  
Abul-Qisas: Swim  
S. Good. [Looks at a girl] Soro, where was Saida in the summer [Saida is another character in the text.]  
Soro: Saida ...was in the pioneer camp. (Soro mispronounces Russian word byla, as beela).  

S. [Robustly corrects] Not beela, but byla. How many times should I correct you?  
Soro. Saida byla.  

S. Faroukh, come forward. Do you want to speak or answer questions?  
Faroukh. Answer questions.  
S. Who wants to ask questions of Faroukh. [As the students started asking question and answer, Sino corrected their spelling if they made mistakes.]  

St. Where was Saida? 
Faroukh. In the camp.  
S. [Intervenes.] Intizor come on you also ask questions. [Intizor is silent and the other students continue asking questions of Faroukh.]  

St. What did you do in this summer? 
Faroukh. I went to... village.163  
St. What did Rustam find? 
Faroukh. He brought a hedgehog home. 

S. Intizor, why don’t you ask questions? 
[Intizor keeps silent]  
S. Intizor how come you are not ready in front of our guest? [Sino uses the term guest referring to me so as to motivate the student. Then he says the same words in Shugnani]. OK.... Who has done the

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[162] Conspectus is usually a summarised text. In the Soviet times, conspectus was mainly done by the teachers as part of their lesson plans. The detailed lesson plan was called “Plan-Conspectus.” Sino asked whether the students had read the summary that he created and wrote on the board in his last lesson about how students spent their summer holidays. Sino used conspectus to overcome the shortage of textbooks. 

[163] The people of Murghab used the “village” to refer to the villages in upper Shugnan and upper Roshan districts (not to Murghab). Those were villages the Tajik population originally came from.
conspectus? [Moves around the classroom and looks at the students’ notebooks. Returns to the board, writes].

14th September 1999
Classroom work
Task

[Beautifully and clearly writes the summary of a text on the Board. Sino tells the students not to write the text].

Rustam says: Our classroom is big and well lighted. There are things that hang, things that lie and things that stand in the class. [he underlines the verbs: hang, lie and stand]. Chairs, desks and table stand. The portrait, pictures and board hang on the wall. Bags and books lie on the desks, chalk and classroom journal lie on the table.

S. OK. Do not write this yet. Let’s look at our own classroom. What is available here?[Sino leads them to name some of the other things, pointing to them but not naming them].
Sts. Chairs, desks, table, closet… window… students… teacher… commission 164… bulb…
Good. Now tell me what stands in our classroom?
Sts. Chairs…. Desks…. closet… teacher. Zamira and Gulbegum [Here the students referred to two girls who did not have chairs and were half standing in the classroom.]
S. [Smiles]… Good. Davlatmo tell it completely. In our classroom…
Davlatmo: In our class desks, closet… and chairs stand.
Good. [Looks at me and asks.] Good. What lies in our classroom?
St. Chalk…. She tries to say something
S. Tell it completely, say it correctly
St. [With the help of the teacher.] Chalk … lies . The other student picks up and completes: Chalk lies on the table.
S. What else lies?
St. Notebooks…classroom journal, …. bags.
S. What hangs in this classroom?
Sts. In chorus: Placard, bulb, and board (more and more become involved).
S. Shahlo you say this completely. In our classroom bulb, board … Sino joins her and they together… and board hangs.
S. Good. Let’s read the text together. They read following him but read in chorus. [After having read in chorus]... Zarangez, come on you read.[The girl hesitates and does not want to read.] Come on don’t be shy. [The girl comes forward hesitantly. Starts reading with hardship… Sino supports her. The other students shout to come and read. Sino ignores them: Let her read]. She can do that. [Then Sino asked the students to ask her questions.
[While students started asking questions without any order, a boy called the class to order: Let’s raise our hands and do not shout].
S. Very good Iftikhor. [Turns to those who raise their hands. You should raise your hands and do not shout. I am not going to ask those who shout… The girl answered some questions and not the others. He asked the other students to answer the questions put to her and asked her to re- tell what they said. That was not particularly successful. It was more of them responding together rather than letting her do it alone. She returns to her place. The other students ask Sino to let them come to the board and read. He refuses. He asks the students to write the text on their notebooks. Some students ask him whether they should write and he says yes. As the students write, Sino goes and checks if all have written. He helps them correct if they have misspelled].
S. Good. Now listen. Let’s look at our own classroom. Is it beautiful? [He asks as student to respond. The students says she is from Alichul [another village]165. Then he moves to ask another student.

164 At the early stage, the students viewed me as an inspector.
S. Hafez, come on you say. [Hafez keeps silent. Sino asks him in shifts to Tajik to ask Hafez about this. Hafez keeps quiet. Sino asks another student who has been keeping his hand up.

St. No.

S. What is lacking in our classroom?

Sts. Flowers... Pictures.

St. Portrait of Vladimir Illich.

[A student keeps his hand up].

S. Usufsho, what do you want to say?

Usufsho: Our classroom is beautiful.

S. What do you want to say?

Usufsho: Our classroom this year is more beautiful than last year.166

S. Good. [Sino invites a student to write a sentence about their own classroom using the words from the text. The next student is invited to correct the mistakes of the previous ones. Thus he called two students and the next two students corrected the misspelled words klas (the right spelling was klass with double s), the verb stayat (the correct spelling was stoyat.]

As Sino finished this, the bell rings. At home read the story. Also tell me what things hang, lie and stand.... [Ends up the class by putting marks into the classroom journal: Iftikhor I give you a four167... Intizor, try better I am going to mark you next time...Soro four, pay attention to the emphasis...Yusufho five, bravo...Bulbulova Zarangez, four, you tried well today. I shall ask the rest of you next time. [We leave the classroom. Though these were grade 3 students, most of the lesson was conducted in Russian with few use of Shugnani, mainly for the purpose of disciplining] (Obs. 2: 112-116).

The above notes reveal a positive environment, where Sino encouraged all students to actively participate. He valued their input, pulled together various experiences, asked and answered questions, wrote and corrected, and posed problems: "I want them to realise that their thoughts are also good. I wanted them to say something. That is how much they could do, because their language is very weak" (Int. 2:81, emphasis mine).

It is an active scene, where he nevertheless sets the course and guides the class, with letting it relax, but maintaining control. His activities are well organised and clearly connected to each other and to previous and future lessons. The integrated, incremental nature of the above lesson became more explicit during the post-lesson conversation (for the sake of later analysis I have numbered the salient points):

My objectives were to develop their skill of conscious reading (1) and observation (2). They needed to observe their class and note what were standing, hanging and lying. The students were to learn to compare (3) their class with what is in the textbook and say how is it similar and different. Though the active ones wanted to answer first I asked the weaker ones so that they also

165 The fact of the girl saying that she is from Alichul meant that she had not studied Russian prior to arriving in this village. She thus expected to be excused from answering.

166 In the interview, Sino supported the boy's response about his classroom. This boy has not seen any other classroom. The parents renovated the classroom this year. Therefore the classroom was definitely better this year than the previous year.

167 The Soviet assessment practice used the 5-grade scale, where 5 was the highest and 2 unsatisfactory. In this instance, Sino was doing a formative assessment: Teachers would mark students as they ask them on daily routine. The final grade would usually comprise the average of the various marks.
go ahead and say something (4). Then I asked the stronger ones so that they don't feel discouraged (5) and the weaker ones add and modify their own thinking based on what the stronger ones say(6). In the new topic I wanted them to understand the semantic meaning of the words hang, stand and lie (7). I wanted them to understand not to merely parrot them (8). I have not achieved all my objectives and not all the students learnt everything I wanted. There were two students from Alichul[^1] and they have not studied Russian there for the last two years. I wanted to see if they could say anything. This was needed for me to decide how much attention I should pay to them. Today I noticed that Bulbulova (one of them) has answered two questions. I will give her a better grade and encourage her and the other to get engaged (9). The students forgot the words summer and Holidays. See, Russian is not used around any more and they have no opportunities to use it. With Kyrgyz they speak Kyrgyz. The television is mainly off because there is no electricity there in the village. I should have asked them questions instead of telling them myself and they would have recalled that themselves (10)...I corrected the girl because a few others have also spelled these two words (byla and pisem) incorrectly. They should speak the words correctly. I do not like when students spell a word incorrectly (11)... Then I called the girl to the board because it is useful to develop their confidence. To stand in front of their peers also makes them feel more responsible (12). Students are less serious and make fewer contributions when they are asked to speak from their places... I used a few local words but mainly only Russian because these 45 minutes are the only time when we speak Russian and I hope that even if they are unable to speak Russian they will understand the basics and get used to the speech (13).

Connecting Sino's explanation to the observation revealed that Sino not only had multiple and interconnected purposes, but is also mindful, organised and clear in direction. His various activities and topics, previous and future lessons, are interconnected, within a web of short and long-term goals. For example, points 1, 2, and 13 are connected to the long-term development of the students' intellectual abilities. Points 4 and 12 are social and attitudinal objectives. 7 and 10 may be simply objectives pertinent to this particular lesson, while 8 is a broader, desirable developmental goal and 9 is a strategic one. An important issue that emerges again is the language. The students' use of it is limited to short answers or expressions at most. Rarely do they use complete sentences. Yet, Sino does not use the local languages except to

[^1]: Alichul is a village 100 kilometres west of the central town Murghab on the Khorog-Osh highway. Its meaning is "destroyed by Aly." A legend says the village was destroyed because of their constant threat to the followers of Imam Aly.
motivate or manage the students’ behaviours. Furthermore, Sino also corrects the children during the course of events. When I asked him about the possible implications of this for students’ participation, he did not see it as a problem. He apparently took it for granted: “I have been doing this all the time. My teachers had also corrected me right away when I was a student” (Int. 2: 74).

**Integrating the Value Frameworks and Authorities into His Theory and Practice**

Sino’s perspective on teaching integrated the value frameworks that have re-emerged, have newly arrived or have lost their influence in the post-Soviet community\(^{(169)}\), (see Chapter 4). An additional complexity of Murghab is that there is a strong Kyrgyz identity. By overcoming the implicit conflicts and tensions within and among these frameworks and creatively using them, Sino has developed his own worldview. He used these value frameworks to back up his educational purposes, motivate the teachers to teach during his headship, and activate his students to be socially good and academically excellent: “If you study well and behave in an exemplary way, you will be sent to the Imam’s camp”\(^{(170)}\) (Int. 2: 21). He used the words of the Soviet revolutionary writer Ostrovsky\(^{(171)}\) to invite the students not to waste time, not to give in and to work hard: “Life is given once and one should live it so that one does not feel ashamed for aimlessly spent years....” (Obs. 2: 89). Sino connected these words with the sayings of the Imam by saying: “Who else tells us not to waste our time?” extended by “What else does the Imam say?”\(^{(172)}\)

One of his classes always occurred in the classroom specially assigned to teaching “Ethics and Knowledge.” Sino used the facilities of this classroom\(^{(173)}\) to teach his students the vocabulary and grammar of Russian, as well as to promote his vision of good people and good society. He also voluntarily taught “Ethics and Knowledge.” Like his fellow-teachers, Sino perceived this as a service to the Imam for his protection and care of the Badakhshani people (FN. 2: 22). During our conversations about the presence of the Aga Khan’s image and vision in his classes, Sino revealed critical insights, which his colleagues also supported. It seems that

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\(^{(169)}\) These included: (a) the local perspectives of the Pamirian Tajiks, (b) the newly emerging Tajik nationalism, (c) the rising image of the Aga Khan and his institutions, (d) the declining Communist ideology, (e) the Russian influence, and (f) the Western perspectives.

\(^{(170)}\) The Institute of Ismaili Studies has rejuvenated the old Soviet pioneer camps to offer summer courses for their students.

\(^{(171)}\) Ostrovsky is the author of *How the Steel Was Tempered*. His books were compulsory reading for the students.

\(^{(172)}\) Here Sino referred to several occasions when the Aga Khan asked youth not to waste their time and to seek quality education.

\(^{(173)}\) This classroom was equipped with visuals, was cleaner, looked after, and was locked at the end of the day. In 1999, however, due to the school renovation, many of the classroom facilities were damaged. The head of the Ethics and knowledge program in the school considered the destruction of the facilities due to the jealousy and decline of the respect for the AKDN institutions.
various people of Murghab understood the purpose and methods of teaching “Ethics and Knowledge” not only differently, but also sometimes in contradictory ways.

Sino and his colleagues were caught in a dilemma between the Imam’s vision, which they valued and supported, and the behaviour of the people employed in the institutions of the Imam and the Government, which they viewed as contrary to that vision. This made it increasingly hard for teachers to promote the Imam’s vision and directives and teach good ethics to the children. Also, those who had money, cars and beautiful houses, dressed extravagantly and sent their children to good schools and universities often used the Imam’s words while not living by the ethical standards of these words: “We are unable to tell the students and the parents to be good, generous and ethical, when there are those who work for the Imam differ in their talk and walk”, said a teacher of “Ethics and Knowledge” in the community (FN. 2: 23). Sino pointed out that he separates the personality and vision of the Aga Khan from the malpractices that have been and are taking place in his name:

I tend to agree with the khalifa\textsuperscript{174} that only the Imam can resolve the corruption problem, that only he can remove these people and bring justice. What the people in the cafe\textsuperscript{175} said about the government and Masali\textsuperscript{176} makes me worried that these people may do harm to the Imam’s image here (Int. 2: 74).

Sino’s alternative vision of a society emerged from his intense critique of the approaches to teaching the subject “Ethics and Knowledge” and the social malpractice in current Tajik society and the previous Soviet Union. The continuation of these perceived malpractices added by the increasing presence of socio-political and economic forces in his classes presented one of the major challenges to the ethical and upbringing purpose of education:

“Ethics and knowledge” is not working well enough. Students have started tearing apart the books of Ta’lim. The attendance is also dropping. The more we talk about ethics, the less ethical we are becoming. People nowadays help less, share less, have become greedier, and do not want to work. More people sell drugs and more people drink and run only after money. Cherez (nepotism) is everywhere. We as teachers also do not know how to teach this subject. We have been teaching it for the last four years and yet until last year we did not know how to teach it in a

\textsuperscript{174} Khalifa is a religious authority in the Ismaili traditions of Badakhshan. A few days before this interview, the khalifa expressed his disappointment to and in me as one of the representatives of AKDN.

\textsuperscript{175} Sino referred to the café Friendship, where we would have our usual chais over manu (a local flat food) and would often overhear those who could afford vodka gossip about the state of things in the village, province and country.

\textsuperscript{176} Pseudonym for a local senior officer at a NGO who was mentioned to have earlier worked as a senior Komsomol officer.
child-centred way. In the Soviet times we had this “character development” aspect of teaching, which is similar to what this subject suggests. But it was not given enough attention at that time.

Our people are also strange. They jump from one extreme to another. There was time when Kyrgyz said that we Tajiks all drink, do not have faith and are immoral. After the Imams’ help and his visits coupled with community work and “Ethics and Knowledge", things moved to the other extreme. The Kyrgyz said that the Tajiks are the real Muslims. They even asked us to help in curbing the use of alcohol and family scandals. There was no drunk Tajik seen in the village. Then things changed for bad and a debate started in the school between the teachers. Some teachers accused others of a double standard. They said how could you sell vodka and teach ethics to children? How can teachers use the community money for their parties? The head of the school said this is not a religious institution. Some of the teachers left the school and went against it and have contributed to spoiling the school relations with the community.

People also expected miracles from the Imam’s organizations. I think during the humanitarian aid there was a need to have simultaneously built a few plants and services so that people could become busy. Life too has not improved much. What can the unemployed, ambitious youth do when they neither have work to do nor money to leave the country? (Int. 2: 45).

Similarly challenging was Sino’s usage of Soviet concepts such as _Pioneer_177, _kolkhoz_178, _otryad_179, and camp. Sino revealed an interesting tension. Sino's explanations revealed that he may unconsciously have been promoting certain ideologies, although his purpose has been otherwise:

I never thought that my subject and these ideas could promote certain ways of thinking as you say. I had a feeling that I am doing something good for the Russians, but never to the point that the textbooks promoted love for Russia more than for Tajikistan. I used them because they talk about honesty, respect, hard work and love for the motherland, good society and collectivist attitude. I think these are good values. Also we have no other textbooks. Lenin is on each page of these old textbooks, his portrait is in the offices and his statue is in the centre of the city. People still talk about Lenin as much as they do about the Imam. _I do not use these books for promoting politics_. The point that you made about why the Russian textbooks do not present Tajik poets, is something that people at the Ministry of Education have to think about. How long are we going to

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177 A Soviet youth organisation catering to students between 10 and 14. Most pioneers later went on to become members of Komsomol.

178 A socialist form of economic organisation based on collective ownership of land. Also called as collective farm.

179 In this case any kind of organised group with communist leanings.
wait until new textbooks come? I have no other options except to use these torn-apart and worn-out textbooks. In my view it is better to have something than nothing (Int. 2: 66, emphasis mine).

According to Sino, the builders of the new Tajik society should not ignore the strategic interests of the various forces on the landscape, including the Russian factor:

The relations of the Pamirians with the Russians are very deep and old. Our people need not forget that Russians saved us from the tyranny of the Afghan and Bokhara Emirs, who considered us infidels and oppressed us. Russians, on the contrary, did not interfere in our lives.\footnote{This is a commonly held local Ismaili perspective. It is based upon comparing the Russians with the Bokhara Emirate and the Afghans rulers who are said to have interfered in most important aspects of the life of the Pamirians, such as religion and family (Bobrinskoy, 1902; Iskandarov, 1995). Russians, on the contrary, are said to have not touched these aspects (Kharkovchuk & Karamshoev, 1995).} We were a part of Russia before we became a part of Tajikistan. Russian makes it easier to learn English, because it has so many English and international words. The world's classical literature and movies are almost all translated into Russian. This makes it easier to understand the Western way of life and creates a context, which in turn is helpful for learning English. Russians are not going to leave Tajikistan easily. Murghab has always been a strategic place. We should not disregard the Russian at least for the near future\footnote{Sino refers a set of historical issues that range from the time of Great Game (strategic manoeuvring is Asia between Russia and England) at the middle of the 19th century up to the present: For more information, see Bokiev (1994), Iskandarov (1995).} (Int. 2: 75, emphasis mine).

Despite the deepest respect for Tajiks as a very old and culturally rich nation, Sino was not enthusiastic about the new official Tajik ideology and their promotion. He expressed his frustration about the pompous celebration of the 1100th anniversary of the founding of the Samanid State.\footnote{Through his earlier mentioned critique Sino revealed the required qualities of the new Tajik citizen-leader. Humility, realism and responsibility were amongst the traits Sino most valued:}

I would have created a smaller statue, made a modest celebration and spent the money on education, health and road building. I am also afraid the way some people there talk about Samarqand and Bokhara is going to bring us to big trouble with Uzbekistan (Int. 2: 83).

Sino believes this uncritical glorification of the 10th century Samanid state and its “association” with contemporary Tajikistan would exemplify an inability to learn from history. Living with the images of the past won't help today's problems. Sino believed the present and future should be the at the centre of educational and cultural scholarship:

We need to be proud of the Samanids and learn from them. But let's be honest. To say that we are the Samanids, is like fighting with an empty stomach. I wonder if the Samanids would have liked
to be associated with us. I make the children aware that we live today and we are not in glory but in crisis. We need to feed and clothe our country and people. Then we can talk about Samanids, and the Samanids' spirit would also enjoy that association (Int. 2: 77).

Sino's critique illustrated his vision of a desirable Tajik society. His perspective, was grounded in an analysis of the past and current realities, and predicting the future possibilities of Tajik society, pulled the best of all these perspectives together:

I should be pushing a humanistic ideology. You noticed how many nationalities and ethnicities we have got here in Murghab. Murghab is not Darvaz or Shugnan where one ethnicity lives. We should make it a tradition to celebrate the days of each ethnicity here. One day for Wakhan, the other for Roshan and so on. Another day we should have a Kyrgyz cultural event. I should promote education that teaches respect, justice and internationalism. By internationalism I mean the equality of people despite their geographical locations, languages, races, and religions. I like when there is pluralism of thinking, instead of having an ideology of a party or a clan (Int. 2: 68).

Sino's colleague further endorsed his vision of an inclusive, tolerant, multicultural and just society, included in the increasingly globalised world:

... even in our remote Murghab, we can see so many people from all over the world. As the road to China opens, more people are going to come. Murghab is going to be a centre of trade. We have to understand these people, talk to them, gain something from them and make our lives better. We need to learn English and Chinese\(^{182}\) (FN. 2: 35).

**Commentary**

Partly due to his active nature and partly because of the obviously dramatic nature of his experiences, Sino has developed an elaborate worldview, which includes his rationale for teaching, his vision of the society and citizen, his goals of teaching, and his role as a teacher. He also appropriated his Russian to serve his worldview. Sino dreams of and works for a democratic multicultural society based on peace, tolerance, and justice. The fundamental contribution of education to such a society is the development of citizens and leadership with a balance of ethics and knowledge. Though spiritually charged, Sino's worldview has also been affected by the Soviet and Russian perspectives. Further, his balance of ethics and knowledge revives the Soviet principles of child development and education. He has augmented his worldview with Chekhov's philosophy of the all-round development of a child. Sino continues to promote humanistic values

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\(^{182}\) The alleged first Tajik state in history, which existed in the 10–11 centuries. Its main centres, Samarkand and Bokhara, related to disputed territorial claims, are now in Uzbekistan. The celebration triggered tensions between the two countries.

\(^{183}\) Khorog State University runs one experimental, non-credit course in basic spoken Chinese.
and subdues various ideologies to this agenda. He regards pluralism of perspectives as an important feature of the society towards which he is working and in which he would like his students to live. Sino wants the students to think of themselves and also for the society, love their culture, heritage and country, and also respect other cultures and countries, be aware of politics and distinguish between good and bad, work hard and be honest, and avoid harmful habits and harmful people.

Thus, for him teaching is a very serious duty. There is nothing secondary in teaching; there is no superficiality; the whole energy should go into the classroom performance. Each moment is critical in small ways to help all the students succeed. Teaching requires patience and persistence. It is an integrated, strategic and ethical mission where short-term objectives combine with long-term goals, techniques and tactics with strategies and approaches, reason with intuition, faith with intellect, conflicting theories with personal knowledge, schemata with creativity, program demands with children's experiences, past topics with future lessons, teachers' knowledge with knowledge from seminars and workshops. It cannot be an either-or approach; it is an endeavour of making a difference. That's why it requires peace of mind and opportunities to concentrate, and to maintain passion, faith, and commitment. Teaching needs support because it is such a crucial and vulnerable activity.

Sino's worldview is shaped by his reflection upon past and present educational and life experiences, knowledge of the students, community, country and world, and his critique of the pre-Soviet, Soviet and current Tajik societies. In envisaging a new society, Sino illustrates his knowledge of the upcoming possibilities and predicts the obstacles to establishing such a society (e.g., the road to China and Murghab and its trade as a hope, and corruption as a hindrance, the Imam as a hope and unethical leaders as a hindrance). Sino has some insights about the larger issues of where the world is going, why things are happening in a certain way, and who benefits from them. These larger societal forces create both opportunities and obstacles, contradictions and dilemmas for the quality of his intentions, relations and classroom activities.

Already at the level of worldview Sino undergoes tensions and dilemmas. One of them is the eternity of the value of the role of the teacher during the recent transitions. There has been an obvious expansion of the role of the teacher, such as involvement in the religious domain and increase in the complexity of the nature of teachers' work together with the declining status and impoverishment of the conditions. In the face of such intensification of work and life, the teachers' quitting from work may need to be viewed as more than just an issue of salary. Sino
thinks about the children's empowerment, yet he maintains the position of captain of the ship. As captain, he is in control of the course and knows where the class is heading. He knows that the students' participation is reduced due to their struggle with Russian, which is increasingly diminishing in Murghab, yet in the class he continues speaking only Russian and ensuring that the students too speak only Russian.

Further, Sino wonders about whether the values that underline his intentions can really work in a society that is authoritarian, where the market dominates and the consumerist ethic cuts across the community's cultural traditions, such as trust, unity, sharing, cooperation, spirituality and caring. He struggles to maintain his integrity while navigating between sometimes contradictory value frameworks. To overcome the painful acknowledgement that the Russian language, which has defined his identity for years, has to give way to Tajik and English, Sino subordinates Russian to a more general purpose of education, explaining that Russian is still useful culturally and strategically.

Sino faces a situation where rhetoric and reality, practice and theory, vision and implementation, grand theories and personal motives clash and complement each other. The relevance of education is contested. The return of a bureaucratic and authoritarian system has caused a growing tension. Sino sees this as a challenge to his both internationalist and pluralist perspective and to his autonomy in making teaching relevant to students' needs. Sino somehow lives through these dilemmas, which affect his mood, health, commitment, devotion, relations and classroom practices.

Sino, An Ethical Practitioner

This part focuses on two aspects of Sino's professional life: (a) his relationships with the students and parents, and (b) his classroom practices. It reveals the dialectics of theory and practice, rhetoric and reality in Sino's life and work.

Relationships: Caring, Reaching, Enabling and Making All the Students Learn

This section is about caring, morality and justice in teaching. This moral character overrides all the aspects of Sino's life and work. It connects directly to his commitment, which emerged during his pre-service years, to make all students learn. It crosses the borders of the various contexts in which Sino operates: classroom, school, home and community.

"I know my students and they understand me." Knowing his students' histories, interests, and strong and weak points was central to how Sino interacted with each of his students and designed meaningful instruction. He justified almost all his decisions by reference to his
elaborate and multidimensional knowledge of his students. Sino had a sense of what his students were up to individually and collectively, academically and socially, and physically and emotionally. He had elaborate knowledge of their family pride and weaknesses. He enjoyed talking about each of his students:

Daler is mischievous... He was so since the primary classes. This comes from his street, Sovietskaya. But he is not stupid; His father works in the military unit and they have no problem with food and money;

Hafez is a parrot. He never says anything new. I have told his dad and he says he is unable to discipline him;

Azalsho is interested in everything. He looks at my conspectus and asks questions, looks for books; Murodali sort of changes his mind fast. Now he says everywhere he wants to be like you...He has asked his parents to invite you home. Last year he got tonsillitis and his parents got into dept buying medicine for him;

Khairinamoh is a bit lazy. She is not used to hard work and sitting for long time. She barely utters a few words in Russian;

Komilbek does not like working with others. I guess I will have to work with him on an individual basis;

Qodirsho’s dad is a kind of khalifa. They claim descent from sayids, and they say Russian is not important and we should move to English now;

Azima is the only child in her home and I have suggested that her parents take in someone from the abandoned children in the hospital so that she does not get spoiled by too much attention;

Mamadamin is Bartangi, he has got relatives in the villages Pasor and Baghu. They also get potatoes and wheat from there. They are not excused as poor and hungry. His uncle is now in the United States and he sends dollars from there;

Gulon looks incapable of taking any idea. His father was also like this in school;

Qeemat is always ready but she never raises her hand and never shouts to answer;

Sino believed that the younger students loved games, and could play for hours. He took advantage of that natural inclination for their new learning (e.g., using role-play, or pole chudes). He let the students have extra recess at the expense of his own lesson time, because the math teacher took their recess time. He believed that for the students it was harder:

Students cannot take so much pressure continuously. But we have a shortage of Math teachers in the school and have no other ways to organise the timetable...In Soviet times this would have not been allowed in any way. There was a sanitary-epidemological committee. If the timetable created such pressure, the committee would have made a big scandal (Int. 2: 17).

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184 Khalifa is a religious authority in the Ismaili traditions of Badakhshan.
185 A group of related families who claim that they are the descendants of Prophet Mohammed and Imam Aly.
186 Bartangi is an ethnicity that belongs to the valley of Bartang in the district of Roshan.
187 Pole chudes, literally “field of miracles”, is a show on Russian television, similar to a word game.
188 The sanitary-epidemological station is similar to a public health unit in the western context. They would visit schools often to ensure the prevention of various threats to the students, including infectious diseases and psychological pressures.
Comparing his students of Grade SA and SB, Sino changed the structure of a gender-matching problem in Russian grammar without compromising the expectations. The major reason for this was the students’ linguistic ability:

Because in this class (i.e., SB) there are students from Alichul who have not studied Russian for the last two years.¹⁹⁹ So I simplified the structure of the task, but it was still a struggle for them to match the gender of the pronouns and nouns,²₀¹ because they have hardly spoken a sentence in Russian (Int. 2: 77).

In addition to Sino’s insights about students’ interests, his knowledge of their life conditions also affected his approaches to teaching and his expectations. Sino realised that putting unrealistic demands and pressure upon the students without support might do more harm than good:

Ten years ago I was more strict and demanding. Now I let them work according to their interests more than my own and those of the program. In the Soviet times I knew the students were full and clothed. At that time I not only asked the students to study harder but also watched that they do not get spoiled and involved in the various bad things. Now if I am too strict things go worse. A child has not eaten bread and “I twist his ears.”¹⁹¹ The students may kill themselves, if we create too much pressure here and at home.²⁰² That is why my expectations have gone down. Ten years ago my students would speak freely in Russian. There is more freedom in my lessons; I am not picky about each behaviour of the students. Ten years ago that was hard to imagine (Int. 2: 23, emphasis mine).

Sino also compared today’s students with his childhood in the 1960s and 1970s. He related the shift in students’ attitude toward learning to their gender (girls becoming better learners than boys) and material context (e.g., poverty). Education in his village is now seen as a woman’s hobby. Boys cannot wait for something that takes too long, requires too much effort and has ambiguous results:

Unlike our times, now girls are better in studies than boys. At home I always have to monitor my son. My daughters do everything by themselves. In discussions, they are more active and know more than my son, though he is older than they are. This is connected to the decline of the value of education. Men in our place usually do not want to take up things that are seen as unvalued and not well paid. There is also group pressure that studying well is women’s business (Int. 2: 51).

¹⁹⁹ In Tajik schools, Russian is taught from Grade 2.
²₀¹ Unlike Tajik, Russian has sophisticated rules on gender.
¹⁹¹ “Twist one’s ear” (a local proverb) means to demand that students work hard and be good.
¹⁹² In fact, before my arrival, two students, a Kyrgyz and a Tajik, had tried to commit suicide out of despair.
Similarly, Sino used the various stories that existed in the village with care, empathy and a critical eye:

*In the village everyone knows about everyone else.* All kind of stories go around and for many people most of their time passes in *razbor*; that is, cleaning up their images and refuting bad gossip about them. Unlike many teachers, and particularly the women teachers, I don’t like this. Some teachers use that information for bad purposes. They may label students after their parents such as “son of the shepherd”... This subject is not like driving your dad’s car... “This is not like holding the Kalashnikov”¹⁹³, ...I think the students are not guilty for problems their parents may have. They are not guilty for the problems I have got. That is why when I come to the class I try to forget about my problems: forget about wood, food, and salary. *I feel so sorry for them being born in such hard times.* So I teach as if nothing is happening and do the best with what is available. We should not hurt their personalities (Int. 2: 8, emphasis mine).

*"Parents are useless... we should educate them."* For Sino, understanding his students’ families and parents has always been crucial in understanding his students. This understanding of the importance of parents related to his experience of parenting and its effect on his own children's performance. It was also due to his realising the necessity of the parents' help in developing and maintaining the Tajik school, and his personal knowledge of the parents' educational capabilities and their socio-economic conditions and constraints of life. Sino knew almost everything about their parents and talked about them in as much detail as he did about their children. His view about the parents’ role was dichotomous: They were potentially crucial, but practically of little use.

Sino was upset that the parents in Murghab have given up on their children’s education, do not support the teachers, and do not show good examples to their children. After one of his classes, where he stopped the students’ tirade against their classmate Khursand for his poor behaviour, Sino pointed out deeper value problems that lay behind the parents’ lack of cooperation:

Khursand’s dad promises to help yet does nothing...I studied together with him for nine years in this school. He was very weak. Now he is in a big government position, his salary is three times higher than mine is and everyone knows him. If he has become so without good study and hard work, how can I force him to help Khursand to study? (Int. 2: 66).

Another time, he commented:

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¹⁹³ A Soviet assault rifle named after its inventor, Kalashnikov, also commonly known as AK-47.
The parents are useless... Gulbeddin's parents both work in the Russian garrison, a luxury that none has got here. Though he speaks Russian due to having lived there, he cannot read and write. He is in grade 6. His parents said openly: What have you and the other good students achieved by studying? As long as we are alive, we will get him a good certificate, University diploma and even a good job (Int. 2: 40).

At the same time, Sino empathised with the parents, who, due to joblessness and lack of hope, have lost self-esteem and have become impatient. Sino felt that the teachers' and school's potential was larger and their mission broader than just teaching children; teaching children also meant teaching and working with their parents:

Parents are nervous because of the lack of jobs. The government has created so many obstacles that the Tajik parents feel there is no hope of living a better life here. Many parents also do not have pedagogical skills to work with their children. We need to invite the parents to school to attend their children's classes. The Imomat has brought good guides for the parents, but parents do not know how to use them. We could teach the parents to use the guides, if the Imamat supports us for that (Int. 2: 80).

Lola, the second principal participant at this school added that the parents do not want to destroy their relations with the teachers and administration, because "teachers could spoil the graduation certificates of their children, which in turn would prevent them from getting higher education. The school administration could refuse to upgrade certificates and provide quotas for their graduate children" (Int. 4: 65). According to the head of the school, the parents' disengagement from the school also drew fuel from persisting cultural perceptions. Also continuing humanitarian aid made some parents take things for granted. Some of the teachers also spread gossip about their colleagues:

We teachers, too, tell the parents all kinds of bad things about each other. We say do not give your child to this teacher and that teacher. The fathers, despite 95% unemployment, are the ones most indifferent to their children's learning. They have left even this job to the mothers. We do not tell the fathers about their children, because they beat them very hard. Given other problems of life, some children may end their lives out of anger and frustration. These parents' laziness is due to humanitarian supplies too, because now those who do nothing (i.e., are unemployed) get more humanitarian supplies than those who work. Teachers who work so hard get less aid than

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194 By Imomat (also Imamah), the local people refer to the Ismaili Religious Education Board, which, among other things, has been carrying the responsibility for teaching the subject "Ethics and Knowledge." It has supplied the community with a curriculum package, which includes textbooks, books for activities, a guide for the teachers and a guide for the parents.
the parents doing nothing. The MSDSP and Government authorities say teachers get salaries, but forget to notice that our salary is not enough for seven pieces of soap (FN. 2: 52, emphasis mine).

"I have never been rude... but I may have slapped..." In Sino's classes the students were relaxed. They often laughed and openly spoke not only about what they knew but also about what their problems were: "I am not ready. I do not have pens" (Obs.2: 17). "Molim"\textsuperscript{196}, Kholiq has got a stomach ache" (Obs.2: 143). Sino knew that distractions disengage students:

This has been my way of working with the students since the Soviet times. It is better that they say what they haven't got and what problems they have so that we move ahead together and none is left behind. I share what I have got and even talk about some of my problems to them (Int. 2:81, emphasis mine).

At times, he let the students chose their favourite activities. They corrected his mistakes and omissions and he happily accepted this. Sometimes he made these mistakes intentionally (Obs. 2: 98). Manuchehr even came to the board with his hands in pockets:

A commission\textsuperscript{197} would have certainly pointed out that I had not reprimanded the boy for his hands in the pockets. Manuchehr is a very brainy boy. He can do the lessons even without being prepared. For that he needs to feel free. We have all got some habits. I, too, had a habit of pulling my cheek. Teachers always shouted at me and even beat me for that. My parents were also rude with regard to my habit. The habit disappeared when I was in higher secondary (Int. 2: 52-53).

Unlike some teachers, Sino believed that a tense relationship between teachers and students does not work for learning, particularly in the long term. He developed ways to break the wall of tense relations:

These 4th graders were warned by their primary teacher to be wary of the secondary teachers. I was puzzled when I met them. They were nervous, serious, ...shy and passive...scared. I started making jokes, being at ease, letting them be relaxed and ignoring some of their mischief. They slowly became relaxed and casual (Int. 2: 39).

Sino felt that he had to take the students' perspective and model what he expected in order to engage and to develop better relations with his students:

They are open because I am open. I have never been rude. I believe that each student is a human being. We were scared of the teachers' iron discipline during the Soviet times. There were teachers who would beat the students. When I came to teach I might have slapped smaller

\textsuperscript{195} Quota is essentially a leeway provided to students from remote rural areas, according to which the school graduate bypasses all entrance exams and becomes a full-time university student.

\textsuperscript{196} Molim stands for teacher. It is a local version of the Arabic word mu'allim.
students but not the elder ones, because I can imagine how such a slap would hurt my own sense of esteem and personality. I try to be a child with students and an adult with adults. Talk in their language and about their interests. Make their interest mine (Int. 2: 62).

But this did not mean that students get their way and everything was accepted. Sino was sensitive to the continuity between the school and home in treating the children, but he also believed good values should be maintained:

*This is the East. Here we respect the elderly, honour the family, and listen to parents.* If we disregard our good traditions in the classroom, they will disappear in the community. *I also want them to respect those of their age and the smaller ones.* We need to have an agreement with parents so that we are not totally opposite to each other. I want to both laugh and be serious with the students. Those who treat their children one way only, cannot have them ready for life (Int. 2: 62, emphasis mine).

His strictness was also obvious in his anger with the floor of the classroom being dirtied with sunflower seeds (Obs. 2: 14, 65; Int. 2: 12). He became rude when students laughed at each other’s answers (Obs. 2: 15). Sino also acknowledged that some students misinterpret his softness. A student was preparing for the lesson on Tajik literature in his Russian class. Sino angrily took the book from her and declared his disappointment: “You think there is no need for Russian anymore? Don’t ever do this in my classes” (Obs. 2:31, Int. 2: 65).

For Sino, good relations were valuable for creating a flexible framework sensitive to maintaining a good work tempo and creating an enabling atmosphere. Fundamental to the quality of his relationships was the ability to understand the students’ perspective.

*“Good teaching is about the weaker ones.”* Sino’s attempted to engage as many students as possible so that none are left far behind. His approach was constructive and inclusive:

I ask the weaker ones so that they say something and get involved. I take up whatever they say. Then I move to the stronger ones, because I also do not want to discourage them. When they answer, the weaker ones add to what they had said or modify their mistakes (Int. 2: 28).

For Sino the notion “weak” student, however, is not assumed. It was inclusive of not only academically weak ones, but also those weakened by economic poverty and cultural traditions such as gender and language differences. Thus “weak” could include girls “who, unlike in the cities, are not encouraged to speak up and ask questions in the village” (Int. 2: 73). It could result

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197 Inspectors and other visitors to the schools from the higher authority.
from attitudes, expectations and values that dominate in the community and are conveyed to the students. Or it could be due to the combination of all the above forces:

It is not that Daler (a student) is stupid. He has good conditions at home. It is that no one helps him at home, no one demands from him. His parents consider him incapable, lazy and stupid. Students talk about him at their homes and people in the village get to know about him. *His language is weak, and the students may ridicule him for his mistake.* The students do not like to wait for him to answer. No one believes that he can learn. That is how he starts falling behind, receiving less and responding less too. I do not let others laugh at him. I put a paper in front of him so that he tells me something (Int. 2: 3, emphasis mine).

Sino patiently waited for the “weaker ones” to utter something and painstakingly pulled words out of their mouths by using expressions such as “come on speak up, don’t be shy of *Molim;* Let’s say it together, I won’t give you a two for making a mistake, but I will give you a two, if you remain silent.”

But he also used ridicule: “Don’t you feel shy in front of the girls, in front of *Molim*?” The other students, particularly the girls, usually joined him in ridiculing the naughty and weaker ones in order to involve them. They attacked a boy “*Molim,* Khursand never does his homework, he roams in the bazaar...” and so on until Khursand started crying. Here Sino stopped them, saying that Khursand was a good boy and would improve (Obs. 2: 36). Sino mentioned that this culturally accepted practice, though positively intended, might do more harm than good:

Some primary teachers bring the students to the forefront and arrange a public court for them. Students do not separate behaviours from the personality; they mention the friends and parents, the secrets, everything. Some teachers accept all this to show the student that he is alone and without support. A few students become good, but many become disengaged (Int. 2: 45).

Sino’s ridiculing and “putting the kids down” with the hope that they would then rise up was based on cultural and traditional constructs, in which being tough implied “deep care.” Sino saw these as tools to convey that teaching was a serious and hard work:

Usually this technique works, particularly when you say it to a boy like Khursand. He knows that he is bigger, stronger and quite intelligent. Khursand may now make *nomus*[^1] and get ahead. Or he may totally become silent and stop participating. I shall watch. Also, the students know that, though I shout, I myself feel bad about it. They know that my ridiculing is a sign of me wanting

[^1]: *Nomus* is a local cultural construct, which refers to powerful internal motivational force that can drive one to make efforts to excel or win in almost any life situation.
to help them, because there is no anger in my face, nor fire in my eyes. They notice that I say these words with a kind of regret, and a care for them… (Int. 2: 43)

Sino also brought the active and “good” students forwards as examples for the rest of the class, because he believed “Hamsoya as hamsoya rang megirad” (Neighbours usually look at each other and try not to remain behind)(Int. 2:5). However, he was aware of the implications of the traditional practices and sifted them through his personal values: “Unlike many teachers in this school, I am a peaceful person. I do not like the use of force and loud voice. I do not agree with the other teachers’ belief in zuim-obodi (force causes prosperity). I try to avoid that, though it comes from tradition”(Int. 2: 6).

In his class I saw the “troublemaker” Daler become engaged, active and feel valued as he got praise from Sino and smiles from me for his efforts (Obs. 2: 191). In his classes, attendance increased as time went on. In addition, the silent and shy 9th graders, who had disappointed him a few times, started to speak. Making all the students work and learn involved a combination of difficult challenges. The handling of these required concentration, for which Sino did not have time, support, understanding and facilities:

I can’t believe these are in Grade 9. They do not know what a predicate is and what a subject is, let alone how these two are expressed. You saw I openly told them about my frustrations. Usually I do not do that. I had to use Wakhi, Bartangi and Tajik again, though I should not have done that. I also had to explain to them about predicate and subject. How long can you wait for a student. But when a lesson goes like this I get tired and nervous. It becomes a burden. I wonder whether I should go on with the lesson or go out to look for wood. Students at the lower level are very active, but as they come to grade VIII and IX, they become silent and passive. I do not know why. This may be related to some physical changes in their life. But I also feel this is due to their weak command of language and lack of confidence. Both Russian and Tajik are strange to them. So they keep quiet. I become rude because conditions make me get out of control (Int. 2:38)...My wife makes me angrier when, she, instead of appreciating my struggle, also curses me: why do you kill yourself when no one cares about you and your family? I feel she is right. Why, when no one cares about these students and me? (Int. 2: 38, emphasis mine).

Sino did not want to boast of being a good teacher because of a few good students. For him, the success in teaching was being able to help the weak, marginalized and unwilling to stand on their feet. This goal was becoming harder and harder to achieve.

199 This Grade 9 belonged to another teacher who was on maternity leave; Sino had replaced her.
“From you a try and from me a blessing.” For Sino, teaching was a joint process of constructing success. Sino joined the “weaker” students to make them feel they were able to succeed. He alternated words with the students and composed a sentence together, but let the students feel it was their sentence. He praised their efforts and gave a good mark for a good try. At one point, Sino asked the students to select verbs from among other parts of speech written on the board. Almost all the students confused verbs with nouns or adjectives. Sino calmly went to all the desks, called Mehrangez (a girl) to the board and informed the class, “we shall all redo the exercise together.” Asking about the meaning of these words, translating some, drawing others, and telling others, he and the class jointly sorted out the verbs from the other parts of speech (Obs. 2: 175).

I want the students to feel that I am with them and will always help them if they make a small effort. I let them say something, let them try. Do it even incorrectly. You know this saying: Az tu harakat at az mu barakat (From you a try and from me a blessing). Then we redo it on the board with the students who have done the work correctly, because this is what we call in Russian “Na oshibkakh uchimsya” (We learn from our mistakes). So I let them learn it by joint work with me (Int. 2: 72).

Sino encouraged the students: “Look, Qodir is active and talking today, is not this great?,” he exclaimed in front of the 5th graders (Obs. 2: 122). He gave a 5 to a girl right in the middle of the lesson and explained the reason to the whole class: “I gave her 5 for two things: saying the gist of what I wanted you all to say, and secondly, saying it in her own words.”

Sino, however, was not positive and receptive all the time. He angrily corrected a boy in grade IV for merely putting the emphasis on the wrong part of the verb pishem [we write] (Obs. 2: 189):

I have corrected this boy several times and he still pronounced it incorrectly. I get nervous and angry when students do not understand something easily after so many times. Actually this comes from the local language where we have got emphasis at the end of the words. I know he won’t get offended because I also do not let others laugh at him. The students are used to me. I also sometimes intentionally make mistakes and let them correct me. So it is mutual and we are used to it (Int. 2: 76).

**Commentary**

The ethics of Sino’s relations are rooted in his community values, socialist education, and the nature of his profession. All these call for morality and caring for the elderly, weak, poor and
small. These humanistic values and the necessity of caring, sharing and cooperation have become more obvious in post-Soviet times as the challenges of survival loom larger than ever. Ethics, reflected in caring, is an essential feature of Sino’s education and citizenship vision. Given this continuity, caring and morality call for contextualisation and concretisation of his metaphor “making all children learn.” Sino builds his relations on a deep socio-historical understanding of his students and their parents. This helps him to reach the students, encourage, push, pull and even ridicule them so as to make them learn.

Understanding his students in terms of their ethnic and social identities, their interests, weaknesses and strengths, their family backgrounds, and their aspirations helps Sino make decisions about how to approach them strategically, instructionally and personally. In understanding children, Sino has augmented his personal knowledge with what he has also gained from educationists, such as Makarenko, Diderot, and Amonashvili. In general, he is caring, respectful, patient, humble, open and friendly. His students love him, they are open, they enjoy his classes, there is understanding and mutuality, their voices are heard and encouraged, their experiences appreciated. The relationship is easy and humane. He tries to model the balance of ethics and knowledge.

Sino illustrates that teaching and empowering students is a joint venture, that involves working with and not for the students, being together and helping his students to succeed. He realises that students will learn better when relationships are humane. Sino uses his knowledge of the students and their parents with care. Caring is not about letting everything go and being all-permissive. It requires pragmatism, moving between yes and no, softness and rudeness, universals and particulars. A one-sided “either-or” approach in the sense of being always and only either nice or harsh, develops students in just one way, often a way other than that desired. There is also a contextual flavour to Sino’s relations; sometimes they simply depend on when, where and to which child Sino speaks.

Here too, Sino experiences a number of tensions and challenges: (a) how to ensure that no one is left behind, while attending to diversity in levels of understanding, (b) how to involve and educate parents, to jointly improve their children’s progress, (c) how long to wait for a child’s’ response while maintaining the dynamics of a lesson and covering the prescribed program, (d) how to use ridicule without hurting the child’s personality, hindering the child’s participation and, further not labeling the child. Sino also wonders how to bring together the universalistic and particularistic dimensions of human experience while ensuring that the
students do not misuse his softness. He wants to make certain that the students do not lose their good traditions of care and respect, while further spreading these traditions across ages, genders and ethnicities. But Sino also fights those cultural values and traditions that hinder and oppress the growth of his students. He lets the kids be free while avoiding reprimands from the inspector. He develops high but realistic expectations by considering his students' living conditions.

Sino's Methodologies: The Realities of the Challenge of "Making All Children Learn"

Making all students learn also characterised Sino's practical approach to teaching. The Head of the school, his deputy and Lola, all made essentially similar comments about Sino: "Sino makes all the students work and learn in his class." It was this quality that prompted Lola to ask Sino to teach Russian in her primary classes. “Making all students work and learn”, is not simply a technical approach. Basically pragmatic, this motto expresses a complex feature integral to his life and work. The historical roots of this construct go back to the pedagogical challenge of working with difficult children in the urban schools. The rural and mountainous context, augmented with the post-Soviet realities, exacerbated the challenge. But Sino’s drive to enable and at times, to insist that all students learn, remained the same.

In his teaching, Sino displayed numerous approaches, each based on a complex set of skills and a capacity to thoughtfully address problems and make decisions both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, his methodology reveals the intricate dialectics of his worldview and relations, where he struggles to live by the beliefs that undergird his priorities in teaching.

"I have never been a schema teacher", but I have to... A "schema teacher", in Sino's view, follows only and exactly one frame which tightly defines both the what and how of teaching and is rigidly determined from above. According to Sino, such a teacher does not spend time in the school meaningfully, but merely follows the program according to the prescribed time frame: two minutes for this, three minutes for that. A schema teacher does not care whether the students have learned the topic. Schema also implies pleasing outsiders and superiors, and adhering to formalities such as dress and completion of the program rather than to essential issues in teaching.

Sino's resistance to the prescribed schema, glimpsed earlier in his rejection of a single ideology and his rejection of authoritarian relationships, was even more obvious in his
instruction. Though physically small and weak, he demonstrated a powerful will and mind to do things the way he thought was useful for his students: "Schema makes my lessons confused, messed up and boring." (Int. 2: 3)... "I have always tried to ignore schema and teach according to what is good for the students. I certainly take things that come from above if they work" (Int. 2: 98). Sino did little to please superiors' demands to follow mandated programs and lesson plans. Rather, he managed to also stay firm in his caring attitude towards children, his creative thinking and independent style. Good educational experience required creativity rather than a schema. In the situation of poverty, emphasising living schema was doubly disadvantageous:

I always wanted to dress freely. I am not a politician and not a show-off. I am not a strong supporter of the uniformity of clothes and externally oriented behavior. I believe the quality of school and intelligence should be seen in behaviors, talk and relationships, not in the clothes. The emerging demand that we all wear one type of clothing is an extra burden. We should encourage students to come to class in whatever clothes are available rather than asking them to pay for extra clothing and soap, washing and ironing (Int. 2: 86).

Teachers chose schema for several reasons: Some did so due to pressures of the system, because since many people were checking their work. Others used schema for the sake of convenience and as a trick to live through teaching:

Many become schema teachers by the pressures of the inspectors, parents and others: in Soviet times, daily there would be someone from Komsomol, Communist Party, Education Board, the Public Food and Health Boards. Many of them had no idea about what teaching is. They would check us, interrogate us and spread rumours about us. They would come and look at your journal and pick a topic. The evidence of whether and how I taught would be my conspectus laid out according to certain standards, not the students' actual learning and classroom conditions. So they made many teachers formally and externally oriented. We were forced to offer an open lesson and were judged only on the basis of that one lesson (Int. 2: 87, emphasis mine).

Not all the inspectors were bad. But for Sino, more disturbing than the frequency of school visitors was that many of them mistreated the teachers and used the information:

Inspectors are also of different kinds: there are some nice inspectors in Khorog. It is also better when the inspector is a teacher or educator. But the majority of the inspectors would point out what is missing and why I have not taught the way I planned. The inspectors were also concerned

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200 In the primary classes of the Soviet Union, in addition to the generalist “homeroom” teacher who would teach the core subject, such as Tajik language, math, reading and writing, there were also specialist teachers for subjects such as Russian, physical education, creative arts and singing.
with the academic side of the lesson only. It was a nervous process to meet with them after the lessons. Now, no inspector can tell me what to do and how to teach. I am able to convince him in the correctness of what I do. I can justify why I innovate and why I go beyond the program. Moreover, they have no right to demand from me anything for this miserable salary. Out of anger I may leave teaching. They know this well (Int. 2: 98).

Sino questioned not only relationships, but also the ideas from above. He revealed the complexity of implementing of an idea in a particular context. From his earlier experiences, he also knew that as a teacher he is not free to create learning conditions that he favoured:

Not everything from above was bad. It was rather that the ideas might not have worked for this place and these students. Nowadays, there is very little that comes from above. In my lessons, I am freer now. I have not yet seen any directive that tells us to push a certain ideology forward. Yet I know in the back of my head, that this may be short-lived...(Int. 2: 98).

Acknowledging that the current freedom is vulnerable, Sino warned that the broader political context might be becoming authoritarian again: “Now they have got pictures of the new leaders and their sayings replacing Lenin's and the Party's everywhere” (Int. 2: 72). In his response to the demands by an official from Khorog to put up slogans, portraits and other political placards, Sino retorted: “I believe we have to worry about things more important to learning, such as the program, preparing classes and getting furniture”(Int. 2: 72).

Although Sino generally criticised schema and those who demand that teachers follow it, those who demand the compliance to schema had a high regard for Sino. The deputy head of the school said that once a provincial inspector visited Sino's lesson on Tajik, not Russian. The inspector concluded that Sino, instead of the Tajik qualified teacher, should teach Tajik (FN. 2: 31). Sino's mastery of his subject, his confidence in teaching, his capacity to manage the classroom and easily move through classroom uncertainties, and his powerful intuition allowed him the flexibility to avoid strict adherence to the plan of a lesson:

Either the plan does not work or I forget to look at my plans. A plan may be good for those who are unable to keep students busy for 45 minutes. I have many more things that I cannot do because 45 minutes go too fast. I try to imagine my lesson in the sequence of the few activities that the students should engaged in and things they should learn. I usually develop a set of major points or questions and think of their order in my lessons. But there are many things that I do not plan, yet they happen. Sometimes ideas come as if God acknowledges my effort and my attempts. Like saying to me because you already have so many hardships and so many problems, and despite of this you still come and teach, I am also helping you. Like az tu harakat at az mu
"barakat" (from you a try and from me a blessing). Somehow things work well. Even your arrival is a sign of that help (Int. 2: 34).

Though refusing to follow the schema in detail, Sino generally continued to operate within the accepted Soviet framework of a mixed lesson\(^{201}\), which included the following:(a) organising the classroom-(checking attendance, cleanliness, availability of chalk, desks and chairs), (b) reviewing homework(to create a foundation for today's lesson and motivate the students), (c) presenting new topics(usually by exposition; i.e., short presentation, demonstration with explanation and visual aids), (d)reinforcing new topic (e.g., asking questions to check for understanding, assigning problems from the textbook to solve, independent work in the classroom), (e) assessing students(daily marking of the students' work at the end of the lesson, sometimes teachers involving the students themselves), and (f) assigning new homework(including a text to read, an exercise to do, problems to solve).

Thus, for Sino, teaching involved a creative process of negotiation between a frame and creativity, between the official curriculum and what he had in his mind, what he planned, what the particular situation offered, or what happened unexpectedly. Teaching was based on an inclusive and a constructive approach, rather than an "either-or" position. Teaching was a process of negotiating between various interests and forces in and outside classroom.

*Weaving various experiences together.* Sino wove together various perspectives to create a warm learning environment in the cold classrooms of Murghab. These included the students' collective and individual experiences, sometimes including their knowledge from outside school; the demands of the program embodied in the textbook; the purposes of the lesson given in the curriculum guidelines; his own experience; his perspective on society and education; and the various value frameworks that have surfaced in the context. An illustration comes from my observation notes of Sino's lesson on "Domestic Animals" (conducted in grade 6A, October 6, 1999). The "official" purpose of the lesson was to develop both students' vocabulary about domestic animals and their understanding of these animals.

\(^{201}\) There were various types of lessons, such as demonstration lessons, assessment lessons, field trips, and writing lessons; the mixed format was the most popular, because it brought all the others form together in a condensed form. The other types of lessons were used much less.
S: As we came in, the students were already shouting: Ask me... We want to do role play. Let's play roles. Please, Molim... [The students asked him mainly in Shugnani. He interrupted them:]
S: Let's speak correctly. Let's speak in Russian. I won't ask those who shout and do not let me talk. You just raise your hands. He asks two pairs of the students to play the role of Doctor Aibolit\(^{203}\) in a funny scenario from the Russian textbook. He uses this story as a transition to the new topic to be presented in this lesson. The role play contains acting a few animals, such as camel and elephant, being treated by Doctor Aibolit... After letting two groups of the students role play he refuses the demand of the others to continue with the role play... Sino makes a turn:
S: Is elephant a domestic animal?
St: No.
S: Don't you watch Indian movies\(^{201}\)? [Sino uses that to connect to their experiences].
St: Yes I have watched the movie "Elephants are my friends."
S: [smiling]. Rukhshona watches Indian movie everyday. She can sing a song.
St: I can dance like Indians [The children get excited].
S: What people do with elephants?
St: People use elephants to bring wood and grass.
S: Yes in India and Africa elephants are used for domestic purpose too... Good. Our new topic is about domestic animals. [He writes “Domestic Animals” on the board and encircles it].
S: Which domestic animals do we know?
St: Goat, chicken, cat
... yak, dog,
... yak horse,
... cat, donkey,
... horse, cat, dog,
... sheep, cow,
... hen... bull,
... turkey,
... yak,... dog,
... Ovcharka (German Shepherd)
[The students constantly cough one after another. Sino moves to ask the students about the use of some of the animals. In order to help him I take the sole, small piece of chalk from him and write whatever the students say in a condensed way. The chalk scratches over the board, making a sound. He goes on]:
S: What is the use of the cat,
St: To catch mouse, ... to play with,
S: What about sheep,
St: Gives milk ... wool and meat,
S: Donkey?
St: Carries human being, ... luggage, water, sacks of wheat flour etc...
S: Yaks?
St: Carry people, give butter,
St: Gives leather,
S: What about dogs?
St: Play with,
... Look after houses,
... Find drugs hidden in the cars,
S: Oh-oh... Come on, listen to Faridun... Dogs are used to find the drugs in the cars that go to Osh. Very good point... How do you know about this?

\(^{202}\) Doctor Aibolit is a positive character in Russian cartoon movies.

\(^{203}\) Indian movies are amongst the most popular entertainment shows in Tajikistan. They were so even in the Soviet times. Now, they, however, have to compete with erotic, action, violent and horror movies.
Faridun. I know... Every one knows.

[Next Sino asks the students to read a story from the textbook. The story talks about the animals coming to a human being and telling him what they can do and what the use of each of them is. The human being selects them to be with him at home and agrees to look after them as they provide him the goods and services. After reading the story for a while (some of the students read it in pairs, because they have no textbook, and because some are slow), Sino asks:

S. Now let’s act the story ...Let’s decide who is going to be the human being.

Sts. Me ... me ... me

S. Good, Azalsho. Now who is going to be sheep? [He assigns the students the roles of the animals from the text. I noticed that no student refused any of the roles assigned to them. He calls Azalsho to come to board, and asks the students/animals to stand on the queue. They come and tell him about what is the use of them. After that Azalsho decides whether he/human being should take these animals or not. The students smile, are active and listen to what each one says. As they listen they correct each other, laugh and add to the story. It is as stormy as ever. After this Sino, with some difficulty returns the overactive students to their places. Sino does not yield to their insistent requests. One student suggests that I should also participate in the role play/drama. As the class gets calm, Sino goes on]:

S. You have seen how useful domestic animals are. What can we as human beings do for them?

Sts. Cive them food,... Take care of them,... Do not throw stones on them,... Molim, Molim, [Students shout to get Sino' attention... The bell rings].

S. Listen here. At home you complete the drawing and pick one animal and come and tell a story about it.

Sino used the students’ interest in role-play to achieve almost all of his purposes. He was pleased that students named more animals than those available in the textbook. They also said more about their uses than what was written about in the textbook. “For example, yak is not in this book because the textbook is about Russia. Here yaks are the most useful animals. They do not need much care and give so much to people. Also, it was new even for me to hear what the students said about the use of the dogs for catching the Narcomafia dealers” (Int. 2: 79).

The next snapshot is from the observation of a lesson on “How students spent their holidays” in grade 6, where Sino brought the local Tajik-Kyrgyz tensions into the lesson. Sino related the students’ experiences embroiled with cultural and historical assumptions, them to the text and to his own vision of society.
S. Have you played with the Kyrgyz children too?
St. No I do not like Kyrgyz.
... Why?
... They consider us as bad people.
... They do not want to play with us.
... They say we are *kafirs* [this sentence was said in Shugnani]. Sino asked the student to say it in Russian.
S. Are all Kyrgyz bad people?
St. No.
St. Not all.
S. Has any one got a friend from among Kyrgyz?
St. I have got one.
... I have got two friends. We play.
... We have got friends who visit us and we visit them.
S. Yes. I have also got many Kyrgyz friends. We teach in this Kyrgyz School. Ten years ago we even worked together. [A silence dominates the class for a while ... Students look at me, each other, and the teacher].
S. Are all Tajiks good people?
St. No.
S. Good. You see there are good people among both the Kyrgyz and Tajik and there are bad people. You know there are bad people everywhere. Even amongst our own community. You know that five fingers are not equal. Similarly people are different. But that does not mean that we should not have Kyrgyz friends....
St. There are Kyrgyz students who study in our school now.
St. Some work for the Imam.
St. But they do not help the Tajiks...
S. We should not be enemies. We should be friends, because we live together. Good. Now, Let's, read the song in the textbook... Good. Let's look at what is in the textbook. [Sino and the students read a poem that talks about friendship. The poem there ends up with the following]:
Let there always be sun
Let there always be sky
Let there always be songs
Let there always be friendship
[They first jointly read it and then Sino asks the class to sing it ](Obs. 2: 8).

Sino mentioned that the ethnic tension comes right from the students' homes. Some parents tell their children that the local administration is corrupt; it blocks Tajiks from developing businesses and from official posts. They also say that though the Imam helps the Kyrgyz too, they Kyrgyz still do not pay enough respect to his community. In Kyrgyz families, similarly, some families say Murghab is their motherland, that Tajiks are "not so good Muslims", and that there is a possible Tajik threat. Sino has had to personally deal with this:

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205 A term used to refer to infidels, and thus to people to be avoided. In Tajikistan some of the *mullahs* of other non-Islamit branches of Islam stated that their followers are supposed to avoid Ismailis: not to visit them, not eat together with them, not to marry them.
I had Kyrgyz neighbours and noticed that their young child, whenever he saw us, hid himself or ran back inside his home. One day I suddenly turned up right in front of him. I talked to him in Kyrgyz and gave him a candy. He looked with wondering eyes: Look, this man of whom I was scared all the time, speaks Kyrgyz, smiles and even gives me candy. We gradually became friends and visited each other. I told this story at a large meeting in 1995, where I refuted the parents’ accusation of the school causing these tensions. I suggested the school and community work together to resolve these tensions (Int. 2: 19).

Sino was worried when Tajik-Kyrgyz relations deteriorated in 1993. He and his colleagues predicted the harmful consequences of this apparent outside conspiracy. The local elders, teachers and religious leaders got together and resolved the conflict before it was too late:

A senior official of a department of local administration, who himself was from another province, conspired to plant the animosity between the two nations. This would have been a real disaster. Kyrgyz from Alay206 valley would have come here and there would have been bloodshed as there was with the Uzbeks in 1990.207 The road to Osh would have closed. The humanitarian supplies would have been suspended and we would have all died here (Int. 2: 59).

In weaving together experiences, Sino crossed the boundaries of time, disciplines and context. He used the analogies of the young heroes of the siege of Brest208 in the Great Patriotic War, and took his students far back to the times of Alexander the Great, when Sherak209, a young Tajik, is said to have shown similar courage (Obs. 2: 78). Further, he connected the story of Sherak to information from the “Ethics and Knowledge” course about the defenders of the fortress of Alamut210 and the Imams. With disappointment, he reminded students that in his native Ishkashim (the motherland of many of them, too), right on the Wakhan corridor211 stand fortresses that “we all need to know before we know about the history of the others” (Obs. 2: 179).

206 Alay is a valley in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan.
207 Sino refers to the bloody conflict between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in and around Osh in 1990.
208 Brest, a city on the borders of Poland and Belarus, was one of the first Soviet strongholds that fiercely resisted the Nazi occupation of the Soviet Union. It is said to have withstood the assault for several months until almost all of its defenders were killed. The defenders became transformed into a legendary image of heroism and defence of the motherland.
209 A mythical hero from Persian-Tajik history, Sherak is said to have cut off his own nose and ears in order to gain the trust of Alexander’s commander so as to mislead the army into the desert, where many of them perished.
210 One of the fortresses in Northern Iran in the time of the Seljuks, i.e., 11th - 14th centuries AD. The Ismaili Imams and missionaries used it in their resistance against the Seljuks. The Mongols destroyed Alamut in 1257 and massacred the majority of its population. For more on the history of this event see Daftry (1990).
211 The Wakhan corridor provided a road for the Silk Road. The fortresses are said to have been built by the Ephthalites and Kushans in Badakhshan as early as the 6th century AD.
He engaged the 9th graders by connecting the story about the newly established career guidance centre in Dushanbe212 with their future professional aspirations. In so doing, he encouraged them to nurture high dreams, smile and talk publicly about them even though they are from the remote Murghab and far from the urban centres. But he also asked them to seriously think about how these aspirations might become reality:

[Looks at the two girls who wished to become doctors]. What subjects do you need to study most?
St. Chemistry.
... Biology, Russian.213
... Math.
S. Have you visited the hospital and talked to the doctors there?
... Silence...
[Turns to the girl who wanted to learn English]. You need to approach Molim. Don’t be shy. He can help you [He Initially spoke in Russian and also said in Shugnani] (Obs. 2: 162; Grade 9, September 21, 1999).

Sino’s weaving of experiences was accompanied by a variety of instructional strategies. He asked each row of students first to cooperate as a group, then to compete against other rows, then further to compete individually with their own row-mates, in order to boost the emergence and expression of their ideas. Through role-play he asked the students to recall and use welcoming words and respectful terms to develop their social skills. He involved the students in simulating various fruits, not only to speak about their taste and colour but also to learn more about how they grow and what their uses are. To guide their simulation, he posed questions such as “How do I taste (as a type of fruit), how do I smell, where and how do I grow”? (Int. 2:162).

Sino invited his students to think about the consequences of war and the use of weapons by connecting the story from the textbook about the Great Patriotic War to the students’ awareness about current conflicts in Kyrgyzstan, Chechnya and Afghanistan and the earlier war in Tajikistan. He asked: “Where are wars going on these days?” and probed "Are bombs good?" Later on, when the discussion turned to the death of the people during wars, he asked, “Can we bring back the children?” He concluded the lesson by jointly reciting with the class a poem about peace and friendship, and two moral slogans: “Let there be always peace” and “Let there be always friendship” (Obs. 2: 89, 90).

212 Dushanbe is the capital of Tajikistan.
213 Russian, still more than Tajik, remains the medium of instruction in many Tajik Higher Educational Institutions since the collapse of the Soviet Union.
Given the living conditions in Murghab, weaving experiences together was not often a joyful activity. Sino began one lesson (Obs.2: 135-37, Int. 2: 72) by inviting the students to sing a rhythmic Russian poem to develop their vocabulary of fruits and vegetables:

What grows in our garden?
Cucumber and sweet beans,
Tomato and also dill,
For the spices and good taste,
There is radish, there is salad.
Our garden is simply a treasure...

Next, through questions, Sino led the students to learn that fruits and vegetables contain vitamins, which make people "big, tall, strong and wise." The closure of the activity, however left some of the students and Sino and myself frustrated: fruits and vegetables are not easily available, because they do not grow in Murghab, and the imported ones are too expensive for the poor majority of Murghab (Obs. 2:137). Sino acknowledged this disappointing end of the activity. Yet he seemed to have had other reasons for doing it. Sino wanted to question some of the weak and self-deceptive cultural assumptions:

It is obvious. By looking at the eyes of my neighbour’s children I know that they have not eaten since yesterday. Earlier they asked me to give them a piece of bread. Now I just see them and share. We should not be ashamed of our poverty. “Bednost ne porok” (Poverty is not sin). If we acknowledge this, the students in the garrison and those from the well-to-do families can help their fellows. Some students will talk about this lesson at home. My own children steal bread from us and give it to their friends. This makes my wife angry. She says you teach their children for nothing and also give them bread...I also want to fight our tradition of hiding our faults at any cost and being externally oriented people. We are “Khudkushi begona parvar” (killers of ourselves and pleasers of others). If someone comes, people make such a party for him as if we were the richest people in the world. The hosts and their relatives make nomus. They kill their last animal, beg and borrow money. Otherwise, they will be ridiculed by the whole village, if can’t make a feast (Int. 2: 43, emphasis mine).

This cultural practice of hiding the real situation and creating “a triumphant moment” has permeated the field of education. The irony is that the visitors too like the cover story. As result nothing changes:

Similarly, I am sure that despite all the complaints of poverty, if a commission arrives, the head and teachers will make feasts, bring gifts, create several wonderful lessons so that the inspector leaves happily. They will please the guests by showing how well they can follow the schema. The same is everywhere. The inspectors and guests also like that. In Soviet times we had this saying:
"If in Moscow they ask to cut hair, we here cut the whole head', in order to please those who come from somewhere else (Int. 2: 43-44, emphasis mine).

Teaching, for Sino, in addition to covering the curriculum is also an engagement, sometimes critical, with the students’ experiences. It is an endeavour where old and new, far and near, joy and pain, fun and frustration go together. Through these opposites, perspectives are transformed, knowledge is expanded, skills refined and abilities enhanced.

"It is better to ask many questions than tell the students." Sino’s lesson involved very little of exposition and lecturing. He thinks that teaching and learning should much less impart rules, definitions and technical efficiency, and much more pull out the best from the students. He does more asking than telling:

I should tell them less and ask more questions. I want to ask fewer questions and let them think more, but catch myself asking too many questions and sometimes even telling them. But it is better to ask questions, even if there are many, than to tell them everything. I have let the students ask each other questions and have noticed that they respond better to their friends’ questions. Before we would give them a definition, ask them to memorise it and apply it to a number of exercises. Now I try to ask questions and make them understand rather than memorise. The students should be doing active reading instead of memorising... Active reading is to understand the meaning of words or sentences and to be able to use it. According to the program, we have also got technical reading, which is to make students read very fast. In the first years of my work, I paid a lot of attention to it. I even organised competitions. Some of my students would read more than 90-100 words in a minute. Then I realised that the majority of the students were unable to understand the meaning of the texts they were reading. So I stopped that practice(Int. 2: 25-26).

I told Sino about Bloom’s taxonomy of levels of thinking and its connection to types of questions. He initially agreed that most of his questions were of a lower level and said that he would try to ask higher level questions. The next day he challenged me, by revealing that the nature and level of questioning were a deeply contextual phenomenon. He felt the use of different levels and types of questions depended on the child’s age, exposure to the topic, background and linguistic abilities:

What Bloom said might be true to some extent. I also agree with your idea that we should ask both types of questions. But, as I think about these 11-year-old students in Murghab, _who haven’t had exposure to anything, with so many problems of life, and who are also forced to think and speak in Russian_, I feel many of my questions are rather hard to answer even if they may be of a
low level. A question may be simple to one and hard to another student in the same class (Int. 2: 39, emphasis mine).

Sino’s questioning and inductive approach had multiple purposes. Whether pursuing vocabulary learning, or developing students’ understanding of the concepts of fruits and vegetables, or illuminating grammatical features such as compound words, modal verbs, or verb tenses, Sino asked the students to derive the meaning and answers from the contents of textbooks, journals, poems and stories, or cards.

He would first let the students engage with the ideas or at least make a step towards getting the idea. This step gradually opened their minds up to hearing and accepting ideas from each other and from him. For example, in teaching about animate and inanimate nouns, he wrote ten words on the board in a mixed order and drew two columns with the words What on the top of one column, and Who on the top of other. Students tried to sort the nouns into appropriate column, but few were able to determine the right column for each word. Sino moved around the classroom, asked leading and probing questions, and provided hints. In some cases he asked them in Tajik about what items would come under Who and what items under What. Then he would repeat himself in Russian. Then he came back to the board to jointly redo the exercise. First he asked those who did the exercise correctly, and let the “weaker” ones correct themselves. Then he and the class jointly did the rest of the task. Sino brought his students to an understanding of the rule by further questions, by using examples and analogies from Tajik, by moving back and forth between Tajik and Russian (Obs. 2: 47).

However, some lessons were more difficult to teach inductively than others. This extract from a lesson on compound words in grade 9 illustrates the struggle Sino from time to time had in getting across some concepts:
The majority of the students were sitting close to the large window to catch the sunrays in order to keep warm. Students were regularly coughing.

S. What is the name of the thing that we fly on?
Sts. Samolyot (plane).
S. Ok. Samo-lyot [He divides the compound word to emphasise that it consists of two and writes it on the board with dash (-) in between].
S. How do we call the thing in which we boil water?
St. Samovar.
St. Chainik (tea pot).
S. Samo-var.
S. What is the name of the thing that we fly on?
Sts. Samolyot [plane].
S. How do we call the thing in which we boil water?
St. Samovar.
St. Chainik (tea pot).
S. How do we call the thing in which we boil water?
St. Samovar.
St. Chainik (tea pot).
S. What is the name of the thing that we fly on?
Sts. Samolyot [plane].
S. How do we call the thing in which we boil water?
St. Samovar.
St. Chainik (tea pot).
S. How do we call the thing in which we boil water?
St. Samovar.
St. Chainik (tea pot).
S. What is the name of the thing that we fly on?
Sts. Samolyot [plane].
S. How do we call the thing in which we boil water?
St. Samovar.
St. Chainik (tea pot).
S. How do we call the thing in which we boil water?
St. Samovar.
St. Chainik (tea pot).

In another lesson, Sino posed a dilemma about whether it is better to help others or to only get excellent grades. He confessed that he was surprised when Azalsho[a student] concluded: “It would have been good if one is both a kind and distinctive student.” In summing up the lesson, Sino acknowledged this inclusive response and related it to the advice of the Aga Khan that his spiritual children should “be the best students wherever they study” and that human beings need to balance between doing good for themselves and for others. In the interview, he added that Lenin too, asked people to both be nice and to study all the time: “Study, study again and study once more” (Obs. 2: 98. Int. 2: 39).

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214 From Russian samo (self) lyot- (fly), samo (self), var (boil).
215 A very large number of the names of people in Tajikistan consist of compound words, e.g., Sar-faroz (i.e., honoured head), Ali-sher (Ali-lion).
216 This saying of the Aga Khan is displayed in this and many other schools across the province. For more discussion on the Aga Khan’s education vision, see Chapter 7.
217 Sino referred to the Aga Khan’s speeches in MBAP in 1998.
218 Lenin’s words “Study, study again and study once more” were the most famous slogans, posted all school corridors, classroom walls and textbooks.
Often the presentation of new topics in his lessons would start with writing the word “task” (zadanie) on the board, followed by the content of this task. The task could contain a piece of written text, a poem, a story, and a few sentences taken from textbooks or journals. I was intrigued with this concept, as I knew that several researchers (e.g., Doyle & Carter 1987, Carter 1990, Brown & McIntyre 1993) have emphasised the concept of task in their approach to understanding teaching and teacher knowledge. Sino seemed to view tasks as academic structures that engage students in meaningful learning. His lesson was comprised a set of interrelated tasks. The quality of students' engagement with tasks depended on how he used them:

It has always been in my teaching. Indeed it is in the textbooks. Each task is also accompanied by a set of questions. I use it for many purposes. I may use it for introducing the students to new topics, vocabulary or grammar, reinforcing something we have just learnt, or connecting to what the students know. Sometimes I start with it and sometimes I end up with it... It is bigger than a simple exercise in the sense that the exercise is a part of it. An exercise may be just about writing or reading. I give students exercises mostly for working on their own and to reinforce. Tasks are of various types. There could be a class task, a home task (Int. 2: 33).

In another lesson, the activity was about whether some young runners should help an old woman who fell down or keep running to get the prize. The dilemma remained unresolved, because Sino and myself made the dilemma harder and closer to the students’ life. We posited, first, that the prize would be a Snickers bar, and second that it would be a sack of wheat. Sino also let the students use their mother tongue if they had hard time to express themselves. The students found it much easier to sacrifice a piece of chocolate “Snickers” than a sack of wheat to help the old woman stand up (Obs. 2: 147). Some students adamantly wanted to help the old woman from the beginning. Sino later guessed that many of these were from the Russian garrison and have never been hungry. Others supported helping; As Sino said, they wanted to also please us. A third group preferred getting the sack of wheat to feed their small and hungry siblings than helping the old woman, who, “some one else may come and help.” Another group regarded this exercise as a hypothetical scenario and merely watched the heated debate with a smile.

*Using old textbooks...creating and grabbing new resources as they emerge*. Sino has always used various supplementary materials, even in Soviet times. Nowadays he mainly uses
conspicuous, poems, puzzles, crosswords and *pole chudes.* He brought journals, cards and pictures from the Soviet period that he preserved in his "mobile library" to the class. Sino used different editions of the same Russian textbooks, some with pages torn and others with faded pictures. He asked me to join him in teaching and employed photographs of my daughters in Canada to stimulate his students to learn. In using the old textbooks, Sino realised that he teaches through concepts that no longer exist. This made him feel disturbed, anxious, and inadequate:

We sometimes forget that these students live in a different time. Concepts such as *kolkhoz, brigade* have either disappeared or gained new meanings. These old concepts are rather confusing. Because these concepts were clear to me, I forget to change them for the students. *It is like I am preparing students for a time that has already gone...* Instead of *kolkhoz* I can use village. I have already included topics about the Imam and from Ethics and Knowledge. Instead of revolution I put spring, winter, work in school. I also wonder whether it is correct when I replace Lenin with the Imam. I think the Imam is higher than Lenin. That's why I do not use the Imam too much in my lessons and in my talk outside the classroom (Int. 2: 48, emphasis mine).

Sino could manage his lessons without the textbook. But Sino cared about his students' learning. In this case textbooks were to play an important role, when there were no other teaching and learning materials available:

If there were textbooks, I would have not had to prepare a conspectus at home and would have not wasted time writing it on the board here. I do not need these textbooks. I know their contents by heart and can create tasks for the students without the textbooks. But the textbooks provide a useful visual source for the students. We have got this saying in Tajik: "*Shimidan kai buwad monandi didan*" (Who said that listening was equal to seeing?). They are also useful for giving homework to the students. And you know the program [i.e., curriculum] is also based on the textbook and I have to cover it. The students have no any other resource to study at homes. They need not only to listen to it but also to read in Russian. I have noticed that my students take reading the textbook assignments at home seriously. In grade 2, I have got one book for the whole class. The smaller students learn Russian letters and words best by looking at pictures in this textbook (Int. 2:63).

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219 "Snickers", an American chocolate bar, has one of the most popular TV commercials to invade the whole former Soviet Union since 1991.

220 *Pole chudes* literally, "a field of miracles", a Russian television word-guessing show.

221 Russian word stands for a form of collective farm, smaller than *kolkhoz.*

222 Boarding school for the students who either hail from poor families or live in remote villages. The idea of *internat* is reviving in the last three years (see Chapter 6).
Teaching thus meant making any resource an educative experience. Unfortunately, resources were increasingly becoming scarcer, due to the remoteness of the area and the overall poverty. Furthermore, Sino believed that the local environment had nothing particular to offer to replace the textbooks.

"Neither the stick burns nor the meat (kebab)." The pressure of completing the official program has been another continuing challenge in Sino’s practice, because he has always balanced the demands of the program against the needs of the students. While still in Bulunkul223, Sino had encountered students who were in grade 6 yet unable to read Russian. He realised the uselessness of pursuing the official curriculum and began from where the students were rather than where the program required him to be:

I left the program. I said to hell with the “Parts of speech.”224 I will do everything to enable these students to read and write first, if not to speak. As they start reading and writing we can move to grammar. I knew that I was violating the directives. In the journal I would write that I am covering grammar but in reality I was doing the reading intensively (Int. 2: 32).

As Sino became more experienced he mastered not only how to attend to the experiences and needs of the children but also how to complete the mandated program. Although Sino revealed that his students’ ultimate learning success is going to be counted according to exams, he also revealed the challenges that he faced in attending to the needs of the students and the program:

I care about students’ learning, but I also try to not ignore the program. In the exams it is the program that is going to be counted. Therefore I do not want my students to fail. How will their parents look at me afterwards? It is like “na sikh suzad u na kabob” (Neither the stick burns, nor the kebab (meat), a proverb roughly meaning “to satisfy both sides of a dilemma”). Sometimes I cover two topics in a lesson, because I can not keep students after class. There are no extra rooms here in the school. Also it becomes too hard on the students. The classes are cold and the students hungry. In the Soviet period, there was an extended school day where students were provided with food. In the Soviet times we had 150 tons of good coal for the school; now we have 5 tons of rubbish. In the Soviet period I would call students home to my father’s place. Now I am homeless, I have no food, I am a burden imposing myself on my auntie (Int. 2: 15).

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223 Bulunkul is a village to the west of the central town, Murghab.
224 Sino referred to “Parts of Speech” as unit of instructions on grammar.
The extreme climatic conditions of mountainous Murghab has always made the usual dilemma of completing the program or fostering students' understanding even more acute. The post-Soviet "return of cold" and the lack of resources has added to the challenge:

In the second term of the last academic year, which was very short (i.e., from the end of March until June 15\textsuperscript{225}), we studied in a very fast way. In March here it gets down to 20 degrees below zero, and we have no fuel to heat the classes. This created a lot of pressure upon the students. We moved fast to complete the program and avoid possible scandals. Out of 68 hours, I have to cover 64 hours at minimum. During the Soviet period, if you were unable to do that, you would be punished. Even now we have that fear. But even at that time, I could write to show that everything is covered. In reality, I tried to go according to where the students were (Int. 2: 21).

The head of the school, showing the class journals, noted:

Yesterday (September 7, 1999), 29 students missed the school because of hunger and 25 others did not come because they had no clothes and shoes. See, it is just the beginning of September yet the classes are already very cold. 12 students did not come because of pens and pencils. Teachers wonder whether they should prepare for a possible empty classroom. The parents' major question is not whether the children go to school, but rather what will they eat for lunch and dinner and how could they heat one of their rooms? (FN. 2: 13).

\textit{Commentary}

Sino's methodology, like his worldview and relations, is driven by the ethics of "making all the children learn." It reveals the complex interplay amongst his worldview, relations and actions. It illustrates his ability to reflect, learn, make decisions, and solve problems inside and outside classroom. Sino emerges as an experienced teacher who knows his subject matter and uses a wide variety of methods and resources. As "captain of the ship", Sino confidently leads the students and engages them. His lessons go well, without always planning every step in detail. When things go well he almost forgets about all the problems in his own home and community. Sino brings the realities of the society to the classroom. He builds upon what the students know, helps them to bring their ideas forward, employs existing resources and develops new ones.

Sino weaves various experiences, stories, methods and ideologies into a busy but guided course of events. In so doing, he hopes that experiences become enriched, perspectives enlarged, skills refined, abilities enhanced, attitudes humanised and infused with ethics. In bringing the various experiences together, his role becomes that of an organiser and challenger. Questioning

\textsuperscript{225} Unlike the other parts of MBAP, where the academic year ends in the end of May, in Murghab, it ends in the middle of June.
and eliciting from children, more than imparting knowledge, forms the backbone of Sino's teaching. Sino uses all kinds of resources and ideas and tries to transform them into an educative process of awakening, cultivation and transformation.

Sino's worldview and intentions have an idealist flavour, yet the relational and methodological world of Sino's classroom life conveys more of a pragmatic adaptation to the limitations and challenges of the context. The myriad of inherited Soviet problems such as language of the students, coverage of the curriculum, following of the particular schema, the fear from the inspectors are supplemented by post-Soviet problems of broken doors, windows, tables and chairs, poverty, hunger, illness, cold, unemployment, ideological confusion, market economy, ethnic tensions, social division of the community, poor landscape, and unavailability of resources, all have a strong presence in his classroom and community practices.

These realities affect Sino's objectives, methods and techniques, time spent, program covered, resources employed, homework given, and relationships built. The increasing absence of the students, for example, affects the whole process of teaching: While planning, Sino does not know if there is going to be a class. He often repeats topics as new students arrive. Cold truncates the class periods, endangers the students' health and makes the pressure of completing the curriculum acute. The students' weak command of language compels him to use the local language, which he believes he should not be doing. It makes his students' responses very short, actually inhibiting them in expressing themselves, which Sino believes they should be doing. All these go against his belief in making all students learn, create many professional and psychological tensions for Sino and make him not to be the teacher he would have liked to be.

Sino transmits but also wants to let the students learn on their own. He talks about the students' learning, but knows about the program's pressure. He speaks Tajik and Shugnani, while knowing this is not allowed. He also sees that the classroom is the only time to speak Russian. He thinks of leaving the classroom to look for fuel. The students' constant coughing makes him wonder if he, by keeping the students in freezing classes, is not damaging their health. The realities of market economy, competition, corruption and nepotism makes him wonder if he is enabling the students to succeed, when he promotes the values of honesty, sharing and caring. All this affects his mood and health, and erodes and motivation. He feels guilty for being unable to make all his students learn.

In deciding between the increasing diversity of ideological and personal agendas, prescribed frames and his own values, Sino has moved from deciding on behalf of the students
and community interests to a middle ground, where he balances these particular interests with the universal ones and connects the prescribed curriculum with the experiences of the students.

There are other deep tensions that cross the methodological qualities of Sino's teaching. He refuses to be a "schema teacher", yet uses a schema in the broader sense, critiques inspectors yet is well regarded by them. Sino refuses to follow the program yet realises that as a public school teacher he has to do that, worries about all the children and finds himself mainly asking a few of them; and moves between teacher-centred and child-centred pedagogies. Sino uses some cultural constructs (e.g., nomus, ridiculing), deconstructs some of them (e.g., other directedness), supports others (e.g., family values) and develops a few of them (respect should not be only for the elderly but also for the younger). He is concerned about how to teach "good" values and ethics while acknowledging that these values may be currently disempowering, how to adapt textbooks with old concepts to the new realities, and how to handle the cultural diversity of the students.

Sino brings their experiences to the class, allows the students to express themselves, but also ensures that not everything passes. Lastly, Sino is torn between how to expose the narrowness of the ethnic nationalism while continuing as a public teacher and how to learn new methods and make sure they promote his students' learning. All these tensions have often made him a teacher he would have not wished to be; try his worldview, compromising his values and ethics of relations, lowering his expectations, mismanaging his emotions, wondering whether he should leave teaching, looking for alternative jobs, missing classes, feeling guilty, tired and exhausted.

Summary

In this case I have described and discussed the context, life journey, and various qualities of Sino's practice in and out of the classroom supplemented with insights from his colleagues and other members of the community. Each aspect has been followed with commentaries that pointed out the underlining features of his life and work. Some features were particular, others crossed over more than one aspect of his life and work. There were few features that were reflected in every aspect of his life and work and an understanding of them may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding and portrayal of Sino as an ethical practitioner who tries to make all his students learn and tries to be a person of his time.

Sino's worldview belongs to more than just an ordinary language teacher worried about students' linguistic abilities. It reveals a philosopher who has taken the challenges of life on his
shoulders. As a philosopher-educator, Sino is aware of the larger socio-political issues, such as society's inequalities, linguistic complexities and ethnic differences. He is aware of some of the forces that operate on the landscape and of their agendas. As an ethical intellectual, Sino does not want to keep silent, but courageously raises fundamental questions about society, citizenship, leadership and the ethical implications of the role of the teacher and education. He has witnessed that those who claim to know better and more have done more harm than good. Sino, a responsible and humble educator-leader, tries to live and act his worldview, going through tensions and dilemmas. He also knows his limitations. But he neither resigns and no becomes cynical.

The relational aspect of Sino's teaching is as contextual as the other aspects of his practices. His relations with his students and their parents are affected by many factors. He cares about all, but pays more attention to those who are weaker. He helps them by speaking in their mother tongues, although he knows that this is not allowed, nor does he believe that they should use their mother tongue in his Russian language classes. He is aware of the cultural politics and works to foster inter-ethnic and intra-religious friendship. He gives attention to the girls, and is worried about why boys are not participating well. He considers the students' family conditions when assigning homework and developing expectations. He cares as much about the parents as he does about their children, and suggests that teachers can do a lot, not only for the children but also for the parents. Sino cares for the students, the entire community and its traditions with having little reciprocity in care and support in response. His views on his relations suggest that ethics of enabling and reaching all the students should be at the heart of teaching and educational change.

There is also a comparative aspect of Sino's and his colleagues' thinking. This comparative dimension is an extremely valuable quality as it exposes the array of continuities and changes in Sino's life and work and tells us how and why some of the changes worked and others failed. It also highlights the historical roots and the necessity of understanding the relations, tensions, achievements and contradictions in the teachers' practices and their experiences with the forces of change across times and places. Sino, for example, compares teaching Russian and teaching in general. This helps him find that teaching is broader than his subject, which in turn helps him to renew his commitment to education. Sino and his colleagues constantly compare their life and work conditions of present and past, their subjects with other disciplines, themselves and their students with each other and with the outsiders. They compare
the political and education changes, the various theories with each other and with their implementation.

Another fundamental feature deeply affecting Sino's life and work is the spiritual aspect related to his Ismaili beliefs and the spiritual leader of the Ismaili community—the Aga Khan. It blends the metaphysical and real, the secular and religious, the local and global, the hope and despair. Sino relates his happiness and frustrations and successes and shortcomings to his powerlessness and to the Imam. He both acknowledges the services of the Imam's institutions, and is suspicious of and disappointed with some of the people who work in them. He regards his association with the Imam as a total challenge. The "Imam of the Time" is an ideal and a challenge for him to become a person of his time. Sino is a person devoted to the principles outlined by the Imam; he uses his intellectual facilities to solve problems, make decisions, relate to others and make changes work for him. He is someone who works hard, never gives in, actively constructs things by his/her own hands and mind and helps others in whatever way possible. A person who is not dogmatic but has principles and integrity. A person who changes and adapts according to time and context. A person who has a balance of ethics and knowledge. A person with intellectual and moral courage. Understanding this spiritual link is fundamental to why such a profound person like Sino not only lives but also tries to excel in a place such as Murghab.

Sino defines his relation to the Aga Khan on ethical grounds. He regards the Aga Khan as a major source of his renewed rationale for teaching, a guide for his goals of teaching, a hope to improve education and status of teachers. As he serves the Imam, he also responsibly employs him as a resource for teaching. Sino considers himself accountable in front of the Imam. Living according to the standards defined by the Aga Khan is a challenging task for him. He undergoes tensions. First of all, how to be honest in a society where honesty is seen as sign of failure. Although poor and homeless, Sino refused to fake quotas in exchange for bribes.

Second, how to explain to his students and community what they collectively perceive as the misuse of the name, image and institutions of the Imam by some of the people around, including those with power and wealth. Furthermore, how to relate to these people. Sino dichotomises the theory (Ismailism as he did with Marxism) from practice. He distinguishes authority (Imam as he did earlier with Marx and Lenin) from those representatives of whom he, his colleagues and many others are doubtful of. Certainly some, because Sino agrees that there were good Communists and there are good people in the Government and the Imam's
institutions. His and his country fellows’ assumptions are based on their historical knowledge about these people’s talk and actual behaviours. Sino and his colleagues suggest that not all the people in the Imam’s institutions necessarily understand the Imam’s vision, or are necessarily devoted to the cause of the Imam. Some of them may be unaware, others may lack the skills and ethics needed to implement his vision.

Another feature of Sino is his open-mindedness and pragmatism. This flexibility has enabled him to meet the tough challenges, paradoxes, uncertainties and hardships with confidence, integrity, and self-esteem. This flexibility allows him to see the positive sides of dark experiences, to be constructive when everyone is pessimistic. It is reflected in his tolerance of the various ideas and frameworks. He welcomes the arrival of Western ideas, English language, democracy and the Imam, knowing that these diminish the influence of Russian, on which various aspects of his own identity largely depended. Though tolerant, he does not let any of these forces take him over. For example, he enjoys the cultural and professional aspects of the Russian presence, but avoids political association with Russians. He welcomes religiosity, but is not dogmatic. The continuing core of Sino’s life and work remains a humanist perspective based on respect, care, generosity, justice, sharing and service of human being towards each other and the surrounding. This flexibility enables him to enjoy respect from those around him, how to live patiently through the contradictions of rhetoric and reality that are all pervasive in his society.

Sino’s case presents deep questions about how to introduce change, whether educational or socio-political. In other words, Sino’s personal “troubles” speak to the larger issues of the system and society. Sino invites those who come with reform ideas and other demands to listen to the teachers’ voices and visions, dialog and engage with their voices and vision and work with them about what teaching is, who a teacher is, and what kind of education should there be on the mountains of the Pamirs. They invite the change agents, policy makers and politicians to work towards stabilisation rather than deterioration of their life conditions, restoring rather than destroying their dignity, and fighting rather than tolerating and admiring corruption, abuse of power and cynicism. Sino, like many of his colleagues and community members, calls for opportunities to live, teach and learn. They also call for a time and opportunity to reflect and act upon the post-Soviet landscape of Murghab where pre-modern, modern and post-modern contradictions and tensions, challenges and paradoxes, opportunities and chances have come together.
Chapter 6: Nigin, A Teacher of Cautious Voice and Vision

This chapter presents the findings from the second case. It is divided into four inter-related parts, which are further divided into sections and subsections.

The opening part of the case, Shugnan, The Heart of MBAP presents the major features of the immediate context, (i.e., the district, village, school and its head) and their facilitating and impeding effects upon Nigin’s and her colleagues’ life and work.226 An important point in this part is that the traditions of the community, coupled with the devotion, commitment, passion and relationships of the school collective have transformed the school into a centre of excellence within the challenges and limitations of the context. In so becoming, the school represents a favourable context for Nigin’s working life.

The second part, Nigin, A Journey of Becoming and Being a Teacher and Mother, focuses on those life and educational experiences that have made an impact on Nigin’s purposeful decision to become a teacher and a mother. The recent dramatic events surrounding and following the collapse of the USSR have been sources of the deepest tensions and highest aspirations for Nigin. Nigin’s life journey is a journey of interactions with the realities of changing contexts and times. Nigin’s professional life is presented in two major parts.

Nigin’s Worldview includes her perspective on the kind of society and citizenship, her educational goals, her multiple roles in the various contexts of life and work, her dramatic experiences with her subject matter, history, and her critical perspectives on reform and teacher change. I discuss a number of professional challenges that Nigin has faced in her transition from the Soviet to post-Soviet period, and the impact of these challenges on the evolution of her professional identity, and then summarise the important reasons for which she remained in teaching. Nigin’s worldview sees the societal and personal transformations as interacting towards a more humane and just society.

The last part, Nigin’s Life in the Classrooms, focuses on her pedagogy. I describe Nigin’s relations with her students, their parents, and the educational structures. I portray her methods, resources and classroom actions, as well as her extra-curricular activities, and her approaches to curriculum making. The contextual realities powerfully test Nigin’s worldview and her classroom practices.

226 The second principal participant of the study in this site, Gorminj is left out due to the limitations of the size of the study. But he will be referred to in this chapter and in the chapter on the cross-case analysis where deemed relevant. More about Gorminj will come up in the cross-case analysis (Chapters 7 & 8).
Shugnan, The Heart of MBAP

In this opening part, I present the major features of the immediate context, (i.e., the
district, village, school and its head) and their facilitating and impeding effects upon Nigin's and
her colleagues' life and work.

Glimpses of the Site

Shugnan, the largest district of MBAP in terms of population (36,000 people out of 200,000),
leads Badakhshan in its number of political leaders, scholars, artists and poets. Due to its
close geographical location and cultural similarity to the centre of the province, this district has
benefited most from pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet development opportunities. It has the
major airport, hydropower station, and factories. Shugnani constitute the absolute majority of
the staff in the MBAP government, Khorog State University, AKDN, and other international
organisations. This fact has caused dissatisfaction on the part of the other ethnicities, who feel
thus marginalized. The official sources of income of the population, in addition to the above
employers, include farming, animal husbandry and small private businesses such as trade and
retailing.

Shugnan borders Afghanistan alongside the Panj River. The majority of the populations
on the two sides of the Panj River are Shugnani. They were separated as part of the geo-political
game between Russia and Britain in the 19th century. The districts' villages lie at sharply
mounting terrain between 1,800 and 3,000 meters above sea level. Although the climate of the
lower villages is pleasant and conducive to planting a few types of crops and fruit trees, the
higher villages share a cold climate similar to Murghab (Chapter 5).

The district's 56 schools have a total of 10,250 students. Out of the 1,310 teachers, 710
were women (Kruder, 1996). Despite its better environment and its involvement in the post-
Soviet reform activities in MBAP since 1994, the life and work conditions of the teachers in
Shugnan generally do not differ much from those in Murghab. I was informed that in 1998-99
alone, 56 teachers from Shugnan left teaching; more teachers kept leaving both teaching and the
region, some for as close as Dushanbe, others for as far away as Moscow.

The district served as a pilot site for the recent AKF education reform activities, which
involved reviving parent-teacher committees, carrying out field-based English teachers' in-

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227 As in the rest of Badakhshan the official sources of income have radically decreased as result of the Soviet collapse. For many
reasons, including meeting of survival needs and maintaining the honour of the family, many people have become involved in
unofficial and illegal ways of making money, including drug trafficking and guerrilla activities. For more on ways of living and
service training, disseminating textbooks and creating a revolving education fund. In 1999, the District Education Board on its own organised professional development courses for the teachers of Tajik History, Chemistry and primary classes. These were the first professional courses arranged at the district level in the province’s education history.

Porshinev: Village of Contrasts and Heart of the District

Porshinev lies north of the centre of MBAP, on the border with Afghanistan, in the lower part of the Shugnan district. It is the largest village in the whole province housing about 10,000 people, about 30% of the population of the district.

Porshinev has the reputation of a trend-setting village. A beautiful spring in the village is believed to have been created by a prominent Ismaili philosopher and missionary of the 11th century, Nasir Khusraw (Browne, 1967; Hansburger, 2000). Allegedly Nasir Khusraw, after having listened to the villagers’ complaints about the lack of water, hit the ground with his stick: Water gushed from the Earth. In Porshinev, the Aga Khan has twice met tens of thousands of his spiritual followers (murids) during the last five years. The major influential pirs of the Ismaili interpretation of Islam in Badakhshan lived in the village. Almost 100% of the people of the village are Ismailis. The villagers think that the heart of Pamir’s civilisation lies more here, than in the central town, Khorog. Porshinev is home to many scholars and academicians, poets and artists, sportsmen and political leaders.

Porshinev is overpopulated, and there is a severe dearth of fertile land. In addition to land, the village also suffers a lack of wood, water and electricity. The privatisation of land in 1995, left out the teachers, on the excuse that they are not peasants, but teachers.

As with many border villages of MBAP, Porshinev has a reputation as a site of drug trafficking. Even in these times of general poverty, beautiful imported cars move in and out of the village. I personally observed a drug exchange right beside the school’s fence. The students explained to me the cautious encounter between a young Afghan man and his local counterpart. In the later stage of my fieldwork here, four young men were killed in an alleged trafficking

228 Panj, literally “five” (five major tributaries) is the upper tributary of the Amu Darya, or Oxus.
229 I briefly commented on the revolving education fund in Chapter 4. By 1999, Shugnan was the only district that had an independent education revolving fund. The revolving fund in other districts was still controlled by the Director of the Provincial Education Department.
230 Nasir Khusraw (1004-1088) selected Badakhshan as a refuge from the oppression of the theologians of the Seljukid State. Seljukid State existed in the vast territories of Central Asia, Northern Indian subcontinent, Iran and Small Asia (1034-1300 AD).
231 Murid, from Arabic, in this case it meant students or followers. The term was used in Sufism and other esoteric interpretations of Islam, including Ismailism.
232 Pir was local religious leaders, said to have been appointed by the Imam and to originate from the Sayyids, i.e., the prophet Mohammad and Imam Aly.
encounter with the border guards. Two of them were graduates of this school. The incident heightened the already tense relations between the village youth and the Russian border guards, who have set up a checkpoint to control movement between Porshinev and Khorog.

During the civil war, the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) used Porshinev sporadically as a base. The UTO soldiers crossed the Panj River from Afghanistan to the village, used the Soviet-built pioneer camps to regroup, and moved north to fight against the Dushanbe Government. The village youth are allegedly well-armed even now. Just a month before my arrival, a large avalanche swept the upper part of the village and destroyed several houses. A family and their livestock were buried alive. The teachers wanted to build a warning system against possible mud and rock slides in future. Their initiative was, however, frustrated by the absence of electricity.

**Shotemur school: Vanguard of Reform from Within**

Nigin works in a school named after a native revolutionary communist-Shirinscho Shotemur. It is one of the oldest schools of the province, with a tradition of excellence. It is a general secondary educational school containing classes from grades 1 to 11. The Shotemur School comprises a preparatory year, primary and secondary sections, a lyceum-internat with its own hostel and kitchen, and a sports hall with an adjacent playing field.

The primary and secondary sections used the main building, which has large classrooms, with high ceilings and wide windows. These classrooms were assigned to specific subjects, such as physics, history/social sciences, and math. They were suitably designed and equipped. The history/social science classroom, for example, looked like a museum. It had archaeological and cultural artefacts, and large portraits of Marx, Engels and Lenin, with their sayings displayed on the walls. There were many flip charts, maps, journals and a pile of newspapers, remnants teacher’s resources from the Soviet past. There were portraits and files of the heroes of the Great patriotic War, of the Afghanistan war (1978-88), and of Socialist labour, science and arts. The lower shelf of the massive wall-shelf was full of volumes of the classics of Marxism-Leninism, along with several books on history and teaching of history.

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233 There are six other academic schools in Porshinev, of which three are full secondary and three are incomplete secondary (i.e., grades 1 to 9). There are also drawing and musical schools in the village.
234 Shotemur was one of the founders of the Tajik Soviet Socialist republic. He also argued that Samarqand and Bokhara, as major Tajikistan cultural and historic centres, should be part of Tajik republic (Masov, 1996). Shotemur was killed during Stalin’s terror at the age of 38. His home has been transformed into a museum.
235 General secondary educational school, a Soviet concept, resembles comprehensive schools in the West. For more, see Webber (2000).
236 A public boarding school for gifted children.
The sayings of the Aga Khan were displayed only in the office of the head and in the school’s main corridor besides the portrait of the president of the country. The school staff had decided not to hang the portraits of the Aga Khan everywhere, because they did not want to be “show-offs” or misuse the Imam’s image. The school has a garden with poplar, apple, apricot, cherry and mulberry trees. It sells their fruit or wood to add money to the school budget.

The lyceum-internat. Nigin mainly teaches in the lyceum-internat, which is located to the north of the main building, in the hostel of the former boarding school. The classrooms here are older, less well equipped and with lower ceilings. The establishment of the lyceum-internat is a part of the Shotemur school head’s reform initiative. The framework of the national reform strategy allows for the creation of alternative forms of schooling within the Government system. A lyceum-internat is an amalgamation of new and old forms of schooling: lyceum and internat. The lyceum (lycee) as a concept of schooling re-emerged after Perestroika to respond to the needs of the district’s gifted students. Internat, a Soviet-concept boarding school provided opportunities for students from the remote areas and poor families. The Shotemur school’s head and several other teachers of the school grew up in Soviet boarding schools in the 1960s. They recalled that many great renowned scholars, poets and sportsmen of the Pamirs had graduated from the internats:

Internat taught me respect and commitment to the collective, to my fellows, hard work, honesty, discipline, responsibility, sports and good education. If I take 300 Tajik rubles from someone, I cannot rest until I return it. My habit of openly saying things to people also comes from there. But, I never liked when we lined up like the military to eat, go to bed and go to school (Head of the school, M. 1: 8).

Fusing these concepts created the lyceum-internat, a boarding school for the gifted children of Shugnan district. Due to the shortage of transportation and boarding facilities, the school, however, has actually taken students only from Porshinev. The concept of internat required that students live in the school as a collective for the whole week, and the school provided for their lodging, boarding and food. They visited their homes on weekends. The community, higher authorities and external agencies did not easily accept the idea of the lyceum-

\[237\] For more on alternative forms of schooling in the former Soviet republics, see Webber (2000), Zajda (1980).
\[238\] Law of Education of Tajik Republic, Dushanbe, Iran: 1994
\[239\] The head of the school mentioned that lycees were opened during Khrushchev’s rule but quickly closed due to their incongruent with the egalitarian principles of official Soviet ideology.
\[240\] Equal to about 30 cents CDN.
\[241\] The school weekend is Sunday only. The one-day weekend comes from Soviet practice.
internat. Many parents also resisted, the internat’s traditional image was not congruent with their social position. Ali explained the mission of the lyceum-internat as follows:

People believed that those who cannot feed and take care of their own children send them to internat. The head of district education and the rest of the higher authorities laughed at the idea. The foreigners disliked that such a school was going to be free of charge. I, however, believe that here, we can achieve our educational aims; that is, produce students with a high level of discipline, courage, knowledge and caring for the others. These qualities are particularly important for the children of well-to-do families. This will be part of creating a strong reputation for the school. Then money will come as donations, which we can put into other business and make more money (FN. 1: 8, emphasis mine).

Students are accepted to the lyceum-internat after grade 4 on the basis of high achievement in the school’s annual examinations. In addition, they have to pass exams in math and Tajik and succeed during an interview. This is a public school, but the parents made an annual donation of 6, 000 Tajik rubles (about $ 6 CDN), for its maintenance. The lyceum-internat has its own charter and organisation; and its own deputy head. It does not have a special curriculum, but has a higher level of expectations. The students should get no less than 4s and 5s. The Shotemur school head has also assigned his best teachers to the lyceum-internat. Like the rest of the school, the gifted program is divided into two sections: natural-mathematical and social sciences.

**Shotemur school: Profiles and achievements.** In addition to the lyceum-internat, the school has three other streams: natural science and mathematics, social sciences, and general. The general stream takes students unable to pass the tests to get into either two of the other streams. After grade 9, the end of compulsory education in Tajikistan, these children can only continue their education if they pay for their studies. A parent pointed out that, “our children in the general stream have no hopes, except to become farmers, shepherds and drivers” (FN. 1: 45).

Since 1991, forty of the school’s teachers have achieved various titles and categories of teaching. Several of the schoolteachers have won the title Teacher of the Year in the district and have ranked high in similar provincial competitions. Annually, about 50% of the school graduates get admission to the universities of Tajikistan, including Khorog State University. In

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242 According to the Soviet grading system, which persists, 5 is comparable to A, 4 to B, 3 to C, and 2 and 1 are equal to F.
243 A Soviet policy aimed at encouraging teachers’ professional growth. The titles are as follows: first category, higher category, Honoured Teacher and Senior Teacher.
244 Khorog State University is one of the three Higher Education Institutions in MBAP. The two others are Research Institutes of Humanities and Biology.
1999, the school got first position in the sports Spartakiada. This was the first Spartakiada since after 1991, the deputy head noted: “Can you imagine, such great happiness was taken away from the children for the last eight years. Sports are the best way to pull our youth away from drugs and other misbehaviours” (FN. 1: 59). The school also got first position in Zarnitsa, a military game also revived in 1999 for the first time since the collapse of the USSR.

The MBAP and Shugnan educational authorities used Shotemur school as an example of their ability to innovate and succeed, extolling it as a “School of progressive experience.” In December 1999, they organised a provincial seminar with the heads of the district education boards on how to disseminate some of the school’s practices, including the ideas of lyceum and streaming.

Traditionally one of the strongest schools of the province until a decade ago, Shotemur School had then experienced a deep crisis. The students had broken the windows and insulted the teachers. Constant conflicts between the then head and the teachers and amongst the teachers led to anonymous complaints about each other being sent to the higher authorities. The community was angry with the school. In 1991, 55 teachers out of 72 officially requested the head of the school to step down. They urged that Ali, a native of the village, take over as head in order to restore the school’s credibility and reputation.

Like Zhukov during the Great Patriotic War (WWII), Ali had been a troubleshooter for the district schools. He managed to transform several difficult schools into successful ones. His success rested on several factors: First, he emphasised genuine honesty and transparency: “You cannot fool students and teachers for long. Once you lost credibility, it is hard to restore it. Be honest with yourself and those around you. Together with hard work this will bear fruit.” Second, he established humane relations between the students and teachers: “I have openly told the teachers that if they hit or insult the children, they will be hit and insulted in response.” Third, employing the community values and the authoritative sources, he motivated the teachers and school personnel to work and innovate:

245 Spartakiada is an inter-school sports’ competition, instituted by the Soviets. The name comes from the name of famous rebel slave Spartakus. The last previous Spartakiada was held in 1991; for 8 years none was held, for many reasons.
246 Since 1993, all the inter-school and district-wide sports and military competitions were halted, for financial and safety reasons.
247 Various titles like Experimental School, School of Advanced Experience, and School of Progressive Experience, used to distinguish schools’ culture and ethos have existed since Soviet times.
248 This unusual practice of teachers deciding the fate of their school was perhaps possible only during Perestroika. Since 1994, school heads are no longer elected, but rather appointed.
249 Zhukov, Soviet general during WWII, led the Soviet Army in the most difficult fronts. The head mentioned being called Zhukov by higher education authorities.
Prior to the Imam’s arrival, we had not received our salaries for three years. After his visit we decided to work for the sake of Mawlo\(^{250}\) and his steps in Badakhshan. What was the use of the nonsense salary that we got? Mawlo sent us everything, food, clothes, and fuel, his love and care. He said we were always in his thoughts and heart. How could we not reply with something adequate, I asked the teachers. The only thing Mawlo wanted of us is to work hard, seek knowledge and teach the children\(^{251}\) (FN. 1: 12, emphasis mine).

Fourth, jointly defining the vision and role of the school towards children and community, he encouraged the teachers to work with the parents to send their children to the school.

Ali asked his teachers not to work only for a single open lesson or for the sake of inspectors, but “work according to their conscience and be their own judges, not the judges of others.”

You need to distinguish between real and faked willingness to work. You cannot pull the teachers, whatever convincing you are and however good your idea may seem to you. Neither can you force them with sticks. Teachers will always ask in their heart who you are and what have you done for them in practice (FN. 1: 13).

He also daily asked his teachers about their health, or problems at home, and how he and the school could assist. He allowed the teachers to speak up, raise their voice, and offered himself as a transparent forum for critique and release of frustrations (FN. 1: 13).

Ali has also been a dissenter in his thinking and behaviour, strongly committed to education, the school, his teachers and students. He sided with the teachers during the 1997 school strike. He also managed to create a formidable fund for his school within last three years. For these actions, Ali was taken to court by the official authorities as an instigator of the strike and solicitor of money from the parents. Even worse, he was forbidden to visit his only daughter, a medical student who got typhoid and was near death in Dushanbe. Ali was also rejected for the title of “Honoured Teacher of Tajikistan”, and for the award for best school. His monthly salary

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\(^{250}\) Mawlo from Arabic Mawla, is a synonym for Imam in this text. The participants used terms such as Imam, Hozir Imom, and Mawlo interchangeably for the Aga Khan.

\(^{251}\) Ali, the head of the school here refers to the farman of the Aga Khan made during his usually mass meetings with the members of his community. The major source of this information is the Aga Khan’s farman and irshad in Badakhshan. Farman and irshad (literally guidance or order) are major private instruments of the Aga Khan for guiding the Ismailis. They are defined by the 1986 Ismaili Constitution as any “pronouncement, direction, order or ruling given by the Imam [the Aga Khan]” (Aga Khan, 1987, p. 7, quoted in Keshavjee, 1998, p. 47). Farman and irshads can pertain to both the secular and religious concerns of Ismailis. According to the current 1986 Ismaili Constitution, “[b]y virtue of his office and in accordance with the faith and belief of the Ismaili Muslims, the Imam enjoys full authority of governance over and in respect of all religious and Jamati matters of the Ismaili Muslims” (Aga Khan 1987, p. 5). I witnessed several of the farman and irshads as a member of the audience and on some occasions acted as the official translator of the farman and irshads from English to Tajik.
consisted of 15,000 Tajik rubles only (around $15 CDN). Spending all his time at school, he lived without additional sources of income.

**School population.** The school has 705 students: 240 in primary, 360 in secondary and 105 in higher secondary. There are 72 teachers, of whom 50 are women. The support personnel comprise 30 people. The students mainly come from the children of the neighbourhood, with a smaller number of gifted children from the district at the lyceum-internat. The first intake of the internat-lyceum into grade 5 was 56 students in 1998-99.

The teachers' age range between 25 and 70. In their dress and look, the teachers do not differ much from those in Murghab. Nigin, for example, said that most of her clothes were either from Soviet times or from her husband's salary at the NGO. On her own, she could not afford to buy even a good sweater. Gorminj's shoes were torn and re-stitched. His leather jacket was worn out and could not zip up.

**The school and the community.** The community appreciates the teachers' hard work and is proud of the school's successes. The affluent villagers sometimes make donations to the school, in money and in kind, such as a volleyball, a net and a basketball. In 1998, the community bought slate and covered the roof of the school on a voluntary basis. Since 1991, there has been no theft of school property. Right in front of the students, the village youth ruthlessly punished two young men for trying to steal a television set from the school. The villagers saw as a "good educative message."

The school is certainly influenced by the forces and events that take place around it. Among the negative forces are drug trafficking, guerrilla activities and the spread of nepotism. Particularly in admission to universities, nepotism considerably reduces the number of university entrants from this school. Due to hunger and lack of heating, the class periods are shortened. By November, the periods are gradually shortened to 40 and 35 minutes from the standard 45. From December until mid-February the schools are closed. The heating season is about six months here. This creates additional problems for the teachers. Even in May, the classes were still cold in all the premises; the students and teachers constantly coughed during the lessons. The cold has affected the health of the students and teachers. Several teachers, including Nigin and Gorminj had cold-related health problems. In order to cover the curriculum in the shortened winter term, teachers often skip topics in a lesson in the shortened winter term, compromising their students' learning. In addition, there have been cases when students fainted in the class because of hunger.
Like other schools, this school too receives rhetorical encouragement from the local government and material and technical assistance from the Aga Khan Foundation and other NGOs. This assistance might include provision of books and stationery, clothes for the teachers and students, and coal and food for the maintenance of the school and lyceum-internat. It may also include training courses, seminars and provision of professional newsletters.

**Commentary**

The continuing concentration of development opportunities have made and maintained Shugnan district as the most developed district of MBAP. The concentration of these opportunities is related to persistent favourable historical, religious, geographical, demographic and educational characteristics. Whatever the changes, Shugnan was, is and will remain the local “micro-superpower” within MBAP. Historically, the district has been a centre of Ismaili thought, of Russian/Soviet ideology and the post-Soviet blending of Ismaili thought with a local Shugnani-Pamirian perspective. After the collapse of the USSR, and despite the many subsequent changes, an enthusiasm to sustain and improve the quality of education in Shugnan has survived.

Shugnan’s centrality and reputation have been largely due to the village of Porshinev, which in its drive to be the leading village has made Shugnan central to the whole province. Porshinev’s drive to maintain its leadership position and pride has included both positive and iniquitous approaches. In other words, Porshinev is a village of contrasts: It is a centre of religious and secular traditions, of science and superstition, of wealth and poverty, of famous pro-state and opposition figures, of education and drugs, of peace-makers and warriors.

Just as Porshinev’s social capital has made it central to the province, Shotemur school’s social capital has made it central to the village, district and province. Its change from a troubled school into a centre of excellence shows how a courageous, creative, dissenting and visionary head, together with a capable, committed, devoted school collective, successfully took charge of school improvement from within. In the school’s success story, the fundamental role has belonged not to structural changes such as profiling, lyceum and school budget (in fact the two later structures are about a year old only), but to changes in the school’s cultural and emotional ethos. Transparency, confidence, and courageous search for critique by the head of the school set

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252 In the fall of 1999, when I was collecting data at another site in the province, the school celebrated the 100th anniversary of Shotemur and the 70th anniversary of the school. To carry out these celebrations at a national calibre, the school was given a reasonable amount of money by the Government.
the stage for successful start. Under the new head, the school decided to connect its own improvement to community development. It opened up to the voices of the stakeholders, built honest relations between the students, teachers and parents, and sought agreement on the value of education and on serving the children, the community, the Imam and the nation. Building on passion and commitment, the school collective sharply reconceptualised the school-community relations and won the stakeholders’ trust, making them allies.

The school’s image as a centre of excellence should certainly be understood contextually. The school is situated in a context generally disadvantaged technologically, politically, naturally and economically. Its success has arisen from a powerful human spirit, which suggests that new ideas, intellectual insights, creativity and commitment can prosper anywhere, not necessarily only in politically stable and economically developed societies. The school staff has realised that they have to be more efficient, creative, and hard-working than those in places with better conditions in order to be able to maintain the nomus (honour) of the village and district.

Further, one must understand the evolution of the school’s reputation, successes and failures in terms of the larger post-Perestroika and post-Soviet realities. There is a limit to enthusiasm, commitment, and even pride, particularly when these are taken for granted, devalued, misused and manipulated. The teachers’ daily professional and personal needs have begun to speak for themselves, and have diverted the teachers’ energy and power from teaching. The teachers’ strike, complaints, and departures are signs of these limits.

**Nigin: The Journey of a Teacher and Mother**

Here I focus on those childhood, adulthood, school, family and university experiences that have made an impact on Nigin’s purposeful decision to become, and be a teacher and a mother. Nigin’s life journey is a journey of interactions with the realities of changing contexts and times with the purpose of becoming a subject of her life and a critical member of the school and community.

*As if I Was a Born Teacher*

Nigin teaches “History of Tajikistan”, “Human Being and Society” and “Messages on Ethics.” She teaches the lower secondary grades in the lyceum-internat and higher secondary grades in the general school. Originally from Roshan, her parents moved to Shugnan as part of the Soviet migration policy during the 1950s and 1960s (Fireman, 1991; Glen, 1999). Her father started as a primary teacher in a multi-grade school and quickly moved up to become the Secretary of the Communist Party unit in the school. For several years, he was head of the school
and later on was appointed as Secretary of the Communist party of the kolkhoz, which included several villages. Nigin's father taught her some of the most essential skills of becoming a good teacher and respectful person:

My father is a very respected member of the community. He was one of my inspirations to become a teacher, to work hard and to be honest, to match words with acts. He taught me how to plan a conspectus, and to teach the grade 11\(^{253}\) students when I just began to teach. “The senior students are more understanding and make you work harder. My father mentioned that the initial years of hard work in the school will create a reputation of a good teacher, and ensure the respect of the colleagues and the parents.” He asked me to rehearse some of the lessons at home in front of the mirror before I went to the real classroom. My dad also taught me not to be afraid of difficulties in life and teaching and have respect for the students: “It is the easiest thing to hurt a child and it is the hardest thing to gain their heart and trust back. He may openly refuse to study your subject, which will be a big problem. All your attention will go to him. He can also misbehave in a hidden manner (Int. 1: 3).

Like the majority of rural female children of the Pamirs, Nigin together with her two sisters did most of the work at home: cleaning, washing, cooking, sawing wood, looking after the animals, sewing and bringing water from the faraway spring or river.\(^{254}\) She also joined her brothers in carrying wood on her back and head from the surrounding mountains. While so doing, Nigin always carried books with her: “It is hard for me to believe that I could fulfil so many jobs without them affecting my studies and grades negatively”(Int.1: 4). Nigin loved literature; she read many books of prose and poetry and daily borrowed a new book from the village or school library. Her favourite authors were the poets Hafiz\(^{255}\) and Lahuti\(^{256}\) and the novelist Aini\(^{257}\) whose books she has used as references for her courses History, Messages on Ethics and Human Being and Society. Nigin has used several Russian and Western authors, such as Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Balzac, Dreiser, and Reed, from whom she has learnt about important issues of human life.

Teaching was always in her heart, as if she were a born teacher. Even in her early childhood games, Nigin most liked playing a teacher, with her friends and siblings being her

\(^{253}\) Grade 1 is the last year in the Soviet and Tajik high school. Teaching students of the final year was a serious challenge and high responsibility.

\(^{254}\) Keshavjee (1998) acknowledges the hard work of Badakhshani women. He provides an elaborate description of the status of women in Badakhshan (p. 255).

\(^{255}\) Hafiz, a famous Persian poet, lived in 13 century.

\(^{256}\) Lahuti was an Iranian dissident -communist poet who migrated to the USSR in the early 1920s and lived in Tajikistan.
students and with *qush-khonâ*\(^{258}\) being the classroom. In the village school, the Physic's teacher was so good in explaining the lessons that Nigin could memorise words right from his mouth:

His language was very sweet and still rings in my ears. Sometimes he used to speak in Shugnani and request that we not tell any one about it. During the Soviet times, speaking in Shugnani or Roshani in the classroom would have been a big minus. In addition our Physics teacher often conducted an experiment or a demonstration. He never came to class without equipment. He also ensured that more students learn. Unlike other teachers, he would question us every day and sometimes more than once in a lesson. This made us always study and be ready to answer his questions (Int. 1: 4).

Nigin also loved the history teacher, a young lady who had just graduated from the University and who became an ideal and a source of inspiration for Nigin as both teacher and a woman:

Tazarv [the history teacher] was very beautiful, well dressed and very knowledgeable. She was different from the other young women, most of whom did not have higher education degrees. My mother always wanted me to be like her. She never put herself higher than we, her students were. We became friends and told her about our deepest feelings. We shared with her more than with our own sisters and mothers. We often visited her and she spent a lot of time discussing and solving our problems.

In her lessons, she made us feel within historical events, so that we would not notice how time had passed. I never saw her reading the textbook or notes during the lessons. She spoke always literary Tajik and asked us to speak like her. Tazarv told us *Ta'rikh be sol nest wa zabon be misol* (There is no history without years/dates nor language without examples/ analogies\(^{259}\)). Tazarv arranged many extra-curricular activities and involved us in preparing them. She also gave me many books on history and told me about university life and the faculty of history. She is retired now, but she is still full of energy. I think teaching and knowledge seeking keeps her strong (Int. 1: 5).

"*I Got to University Without any Connection...*"

Nigin graduated from high school feeling more confident in history. Her father accompanied her to Dushanbe, where she passed all the University entrance exams with excellent marks and without any special connections:

\(^{258}\) *Aini, a prominent Tajik scholar and writer, sided with the Socialist revolution in 1917. His books are vivid descriptions of the life of the Tajiks before the Socialist revolution.*

\(^{259}\) *Qushkhona* is a western-style room with its own door, added to the traditional Pamirian house. Usually designed for the guests this room was utilised by the children for doing their homework.

\(^{259}\) *That is, that years and dates are the major qualities of the nature of history and examples/analogies of the major qualities of the nature of language.*
For me it is hard to believe, when my students tell me it is absolutely impossible to get into University without a connection. I did that without any connection. In our time anyone who studied hard and well could get to a higher educational institution. I wonder why it has become so difficult and mixed-up now (Int. 1: 25).

However, at moments Nigin compromised the values she espoused. She was asked to sit entrance exams in her cousin’s place. Nigin knew from her friends that such deceptions happened, yet she was scared to death. If caught, she would have been expelled from the University, dishonouring herself, her family and her parents. With a trembling heart, however, she entered the exam and got a high grade for her cousin, which guaranteed the cousin’s admission to the Institute. In this case, Nigin revealed not only some of the "unspoken practices" but also the culturally embedded tensions she underwent:

I couldn’t say no to my uncle’s wife. I stayed at their place for nearly a year and ate their bread and salt. If I had refused to do that, my uncle’s wife would have ridiculed him for the rest of his life.[saying] that his relatives are useless. None of my family members would have been able to visit them after that. My uncle’s head would have been down all the time. You know, I did this for the Arwohen khotir[the sake of the spirit]260 (Int. 1: 26).

From university, Nigin recalled Sharipov, an old docent of Tajik History, for his high demands and questions that went beyond the lessons, probing into the past and related disciplines. One other instructor, Sangov, was good because of his humane relations with the students. The rest were of little worth:

The instructors forced us to take notes of their boring and monotonous lectures. We had a hard time writing down each of their words in our notebooks. As students, we wondered why they read their own lectures and whether these were texts prepared by them. During the exams we just retold the content of their lectures, if we wanted good grades. Even during the seminars261 only a few students would come forward and read their notes to the rest of class. Neither discussion nor questions were encouraged (Int. 1: 26).

Due to their language and culture differences, Nigin and her other Pamirian peers had a hard time orienting themselves to the cultural politics in the higher educational institutions in Dushanbe, particular to how their weak and "improper" Pamirian pronunciation of Tajik affected their marks:

260 "Sake of the spirits" is a cultural-familial concept that means that the living would harm the spirits of the dead members of their family by not helping their relatives.
261 The graduate courses in Tajik Universities were usually divided into lectures and seminars.
I was much better in speaking Tajik. But the instructors constantly made fun of our male coursemates. They were disliked for their hairstyle, for the ways they spoke Tajik. Particularly, the Shugnani students had hard time due to their accent. Instead of their appreciating our efforts, we were usually considered as not being good Tajiks. As we gradually began to speak their accent, we sometimes would get into bigger problems. [Even in Tajik] Khujandi teachers and students would not like us speak in a Kulabi accent. Kulabis would hate us if we spoke like northern Tajiks. Though our Pamirian youth were very strong in knowledge, due to this our grades were usually lowered (Int. 1: 26).

Similarly, Nigin did not enjoy the courses related to the teaching profession. The psychology teacher was too permissive and good at heart, which made Nigin and her peers disregard his subject. Although the pedagogy teacher was very serious, Nigin still remembered "nothing except the names of Sukhomlinski and Ushinski." Her lectures always consisted of points, i.e., 1, 2 or a and b...All that was a mere waste of time" (Int. 1: 26). Nigin found the pedagogical practicum more useful. "Here we realised what it is to be a teacher and what kind of relations we should have with our students" (Int. 1: 27). In the practicum, Nigin learned the basics: planning a lesson, using teaching aids and the need to speak in simple language. Here also she learnt something that defined her approach to the content of history for the rest of her life: "I couldn't teach each detail of any history topic and tell everything I liked to the students. Because history is endless and time runs fast. I realised that I should teach only the major points of any topic" (Int. 1: 26, emphasis mine).

In the first years of teaching in her native village, Nigin stayed late after school and worked hard to prepare visual aids for her next lessons with the graduating class. This was important not only for teaching well, but for creating a reputation of a hard-working, dedicated, honest teacher and person. Some of these visuals she kept with her as she moved to other schools. In 1980, Nigin married Sher, someone she had came to know during her university years in Dushanbe: “I decided to marry someone I would like and my father was happy with my decision. My mother wanted me to marry a relative from Roshan” (Int. 1: 27).

Nigin’s husband, Sher was a teacher in the Porshinev school until 1997. He taught economics and labour training. Sher was also Nigin’s best professional colleague: He helped Nigin create many of the visual aids available in her history/social science classroom. He cooked and looked after the cattle at home when Nigin was busy at school. Their life and work was only

262 Soviet pedagogues whose ideas are taught during the Higher Education Institutes (see Long & Long, 1999).
about teaching, teachers, school and students: "Coming to school was not like going to a different place. Home and school were extensions of each other. "My husband loved teaching more than I do. I helped him to arrange extra-curricular activities" (Int.1: 62). For more than 12 years, Nigin taught in the neighbouring village. It was there that she met the headmaster of Shotemur School. In 1991, Nigin moved to Shotemur after he offered her a teaching position there.

**Ordeals of Perestroika and Glasnost**

Nigin agreed that Perestroika and Glasnost (1986-1991) were a historical necessity, but believed that the way they were carried out was wrong. She felt that the majority of the current problems in Badakhshan, such as drugs, disease, guns, poverty, cold, refugees, hunger and corruption became rampant only after Perestroika and its aftermath. She observed that during Perestroika, the various parties in their struggle for power had manipulated the population and that an excess of freedom had resulted in a chaotic situation. Various narcotics had been used in Badakhshan since the old times, but in secret and by a very few elderly people. In the Soviet times, people chose different paths. Now youth has no alternative opportunities and gets into opium due to lack of other options, Nigin believes.

At the peak of the civil war (1992-94), about twenty-five refugees, each with terrible stories of loss and pain, lived in Nigin's house. In reflecting on this time of strife, Nigin wonders whether it is possible to teach well in a politically disturbed context. Peace of mind was crucial for Nigin's serious engagement with teaching and learning:

Their problems became ours and we all lost rest. I cannot bear mess. You get tired and cannot prepare yourself for the next day. By the midst of 1994 we had nothing except *samotyok*.263 Together with hunger, cold had also returned. Going to school unprepared was another burden. In the classroom, I could not listen to the students' answers properly. My thoughts were dispersed. The students could not leave their hunger and home problems at door either. I felt we were in classroom only in the physical sense. You think: how long will this last and how can we deal with it. The main task was to survive that (Int. 1: 27).

By the end of 1994, the majority of refugees returned home or dispersed and Nigin renewed her focus on school and teaching. In 1995, Nigin won the title of the Best Teacher of the district and got second position in the provincial teacher contest. In 1997, Nigin and Sher joined

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263 *Samotyok* is a Russian word for a type of food that emerged as result of the Post- Soviet hunger. *Samotyok* consists of mixing hot water with wheat flour and oil, if available. In 1999, this type of food still was often eaten in Murghab. I was offered it in several homes.
the school strike, which ended with teachers' victory. The psychological aspect of this strike was
amazingly powerful:

The higher authorities got scared of our unity and wanted to transfer us to various schools so as to
break us. They threatened all kinds of punishments. Our head was taken to court because he
openly took our side. *We all could leave teaching. That would have been much easier for us. It
would have also been a big blow to those who wanted to punish us. But we worked for the sake of
the children and the community, not for the sake of the government officials.* We could not leave
the students to become ignorant and involved in activities harmful for them and the community.
We won the strike, but as the winners we have decided to prove to the higher authorities that we
are human beings; that we care and that they need to think of us and should not ignore us as "non-
existent"; that they cannot rule us anymore the way they had done it before (Int. 1: 65, emphasis
mine).

In 1997, Sher joined an NGO as a logistics officer. The tensions related to Sher's leaving
the school for an NGO revealed that even the most dedicated teachers are vulnerable and cannot
stand constant humiliation:

We were supporting the head and committed to the school. But I forced him[to go], because I
could not bear this poverty any more. Due to cold and other concerns I have developed a kidney
problem and each year I go for treatment to hospital. Unlike the Soviet times, you have to pay for
needles, for medicine, and care. There I realised that the hospital staff has a much better life than
we teachers do, though the government shouts that teachers get more salary than doctors.264Another reason was my son. On the *Roze Noor* (Day of Light)265 in 1997, he refused
to attend the festival, because of not having good clothes in comparison to his peers. *People here
would rather be hungry, but well dressed.* My son said, what is the benefit of my parents for me,
when the children of the businessmen and even unemployed dress better than I do. I cried and felt
if we do not do something for him, he may get into drugs so as to have clothes similar to his
friends. He is a university student, while many of his friends are not. I forced Sher to leave the
school. He cried when he left the school (Int. 1: 62, emphasis mine).

From the experience of her husband and others, Nigin realised how emotionally painful,
hard and humiliating leaving teaching might be for those committed to it. She empathised with
those who left teaching:

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264 Nigin referred to the practices of paying for everything in the hospital, though not legal, which effectively increased doctors’
    incomes higher than teachers’.
265 *Roze Noor*, Day of Light, was the day when the Aga Khan arrived in MBAP for the first time; it is now celebrated as one of the
    holy days across the Ismaili areas of MBAP.
There is a difference between leaving one's job and being forced to leave the job. How long can you work with 6000 Tajik rubles. Even that you do not get for months. Many other good teachers left their job because of their own children. Some have left because there was no support, no appreciation. It is hard to both find a new job and re-adjust to that job. For many teachers, to work like slaves in Russia\textsuperscript{266}, to sell soap and clothes, gum and sunflower seeds in the bazaar is putting themselves down. It is humiliating for both those who have quit and those who remained in teaching (Int. 1: 67).

With Sher's departure to the NGO their life has become easier. His monthly salary was about \$110 CDN, which was indeed more than Nigin's annual salary. Despite this, because their neighbours are hungry, Nigin could not feel good and enjoy the benefit. Life in the village did not allow for privacy and selfishness:

Sher brought two sacks of wheat flour, but I could not cook bread openly. The neighbours all see what we eat and wear and who visits us. I shared the first sack with them. I felt more relaxed this way than cooking bread in secret (Int. 1: 67).

Sher's departure has also changed the content and quality of conversations at home. The home talk has become much less about school and much more about his new work. There are different types of guests, including foreigners. Nigin was impressed with the humility and modesty of an American fellow from the NGO, who lived at their home for the whole month. “As I observed and talked to him via my 14 year old daughter, I felt a kind of guilt. Americans had been represented as arrogant and hostile, but this man was even simpler and kinder than many of us were”(Int. 1: 69).

"Home in the Village is Not for Rest"

Nigin lives in a Pamirian house (\textit{chid})\textsuperscript{267}, built in 1962-63 through karyar.\textsuperscript{268} She has a television and watches stations broadcasting from Moscow, Khorog and sometimes Dushanbe. Like all the teachers here, she has a formidable bookshelf, which comprises Tajik and world classics, journals and professional literature. Since 1992, the additions have been mainly

\textsuperscript{266} Nigin referred to the departure of thousands of people from MBAP and Tajikistan, including teachers to Russia, wherein they worked as cheap labour in Russian factories, firms and stores.

\textsuperscript{267} Pamirian \textit{chid} (also \textit{chood}) is an environmentally adapted house with a long history. Shokhumorov (1997) suggested that the Pamirian house contains the worldview of the Aryan people, which was later appropriated by the Zoroastrian religion (Boyce, 1985) and further by the Ismaili branch of Islam. For more on the Pamirian house, see also Keshavjee (1998).

\textsuperscript{268} \textit{Karyar}, literally “friend in work”, is a cultural concept, like the traditional North American ““be”, where several people in the village, or all the villagers, get together to do some major work for a member of the community. Usually the work is done free, except that the recipient provides food and tea during the day.
religious booklets. Nigin's mother-in-law lives with them. They have a small piece of land, only enough for planting some vegetables.

The recent transformations have intensified both domestic and professional hardships. The eternity of concerns hunted them both at school and home, said Sher and Nigin. The rural and mountainous conditions were part of many constant concerns, said Sher:

You cannot rest when you have so many worries mounting at home. In spring, avalanches, landslides, snowslides, rock slides, planting and ploughing. In summers, heat, mudslides and lack of water. In fall, harvesting, and collecting fuel and paying debts—too much work in a too short time. In winter, cold, darkness and snow. July and August are supposed to be for rest. In fact, they are the busiest seasons: building a house or something added to it, renovation, cutting the fodder, harvesting, and threshing wheat grass. Unlike the cities, no one renovates and does anything here for us. You cannot do that alone. So you need karyar (Int. 1:112).

However, the worries of women teachers were more subtle, introverted, emotionally deeper and more draining. Interestingly, in the conditions of nothingness and powerlessness, the women took charge of maintaining the nomus (honour) of the family:

We spend hours in cleaning up the mess several times a day. We feel ashamed if we cannot offer a tea or food to the guest. The kindergartens have disappeared. It is very hard to raise small babies, look after the cattle and home, and be a good teacher. But one's life becomes easier when children, particularly the girls, grow. Unlike hardworking girls, the sons try to live by easy ways and create additional worries for us. As mothers, we have no time for school. I work until 1:00 at night to prepare for the next day's lesson (Int. 1:112).

Living in the mountains is much harder than living in the lowland areas of Tajikistan. Mountains add to the severity of challenges of a rural place. Opportunities become less while anxieties mount, added Gorminj:

Unlike rural places, teachers in the mountains have no land. Here we are vulnerable to landslides and other disasters. Unlike the rural area in Leninabad and Khatlon, we are locked in for months. Mountains surround us from all sides. When there are clouds for a long time, we are like in a box or a saucepan, closed from all sides. The roads are not safe and you get exposed to too much humiliations. There is no gas and fuel, no electricity, no radio and television, no papers

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269 Nigin referred to the absence of electricity. In the village, beginning from November and until May there was electricity.
270 Leninabad (renamed into Soghd in 1999) and Khatlon are the two other provinces of Tajikistan.
271 Gorminj refers to the new roads between Dushanbe, Khorog and Khorog Osh, where paramilitarys harass the drivers' and passengers' money and property and harass them physically and verbally.
and journals and no wood. Imagine you getting up in the cold morning to make tea. What kind of a person does one have to be to survive? (Int. 1: 71, emphasis mine).

Another colleague of Nigin’s added that being a woman makes all this worse:

Female teachers in the mountains are *beilof*272 (deprived of solutions and choices, disempowered). We have no time for ourselves. All our life goes in serving others: my six children, husband, old parents, guests and cattle. When we watch the lives of the women in the West we feel guilty for being born and living here. It is as if we are punished by God to be born here. What have we been punished for? We cannot move out of here. The only way to end all this is to die. Even doing a small job, such as preparing tea makes you go through hell, because every thing is in short supply and very expensive. We get panicked every time we have to do even a small thing (Int. 1: 71, emphasis mine).

Not only teachers, but also the students in the village were very busy. Nigin’s only daughter, who is in grade 9, did 50% of the work at home. Like his mother, Nigin’s younger son has developed a kidney problem. Nigin believes that she and her son have become sick due to the rapid changes in the society: "Just 10 years ago, I was a fully healthy person. I believe my body was not used to too many pressures, one coming after another" (Int. 1: 66).

She wanted to send her son to Dushanbe where the warmer climate might help him heal. But news about bullying, beating and mistreatment of Pamirian youths in the lowlands of Tajikistan put her decision off. In June 1999, the bodies of two local conscripts, one tortured to death, were brought to the village. It was said that they were beaten to death only because they were Pamirians (FN. 1: 14). People remain only too well aware of ethnic and linguistic prejudice and discrimination against Pamirians in the wider Tajik society.

Nigin’s children (two sons and one daughter) made her aware of some of the critical issues in teacher-student relations, teacher’s reputations, understanding teaching and most importantly the language of instruction:

As I hear from my sons that some of the teachers have beaten them and their peers, I do not want other children to speak badly about Sher and me. Many of my students are close friends of my children. They come home and stay for a while and we sometimes talk. I learnt how much the children could love or hate teachers, how much they know about us and how scared they are of us. It is the students who can make you and your school famous or unpopular in front of their parents and community (Int. 1: 67)… Two years ago my elder son [who is now at university] told me that they get bored because they do not understand many things when we speak in Tajik.

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272 *Beilof* literally means “powerless”, a person who is desperate and has no solution at hand.
is why I ask students if they understood my language and me. But what about the more difficult subjects such as chemistry and biology (Int. 1: 89).

Also due to her sickness, since 1996 Nigin had given up the position of grade tutor, which she had held for many years. In 1999, she participated in a conference on the 1100th anniversary of the Samanid State in Khorog. To that occasion, she wrote a paper, which was to be sent to Dushanbe for possible publication.

Commentary

This brief sketch of Nigin’s life provides powerful insights into the role of Nigin’s biography and family on the formation of her identity as a teacher, mother and critical member of her community. Nigin appears to have actively directed her growth as woman in a Soviet-Muslim context and her gradual increase of social activism. Her active nature emerges as a response to the challenges of integrity, honour, being a wife and mother, and representing a minority. In other words, Nigin has had to be active to not only succeed, but even to survive.

Nigin has always been a purposeful person. During school, university and teaching, her using good language and literature, coming to class well-prepared (each time with something new), and extending personal and professional relations beyond the classroom have become the hallmarks of her work. She recognises the importance of knowing many subjects, learning from the members of her families, working hard, having a sense of honesty and justice, confronting professional challenges, and relating to her students. All these have added significantly to her becoming the teacher and person she wanted to become. During her pedagogical practicum, she gained confidence in herself as a teacher and learned how to handle the challenge of teaching of the huge amount of historical information.

Not all her experiences have been pleasant. Humiliations related to her language and cultural differences outweighed others’ appreciation of the differences. Nigin had also to endure a lot of boring lectures, mistreatment, wasted time and value dilemmas. Nigin's private dilemma of her cousin’s exams reveals that some of the “not so ethical and honest practices” are larger public issues. Thy have roots are in the family, community and society values. Nigin’s fear, tensions, and feelings of guilt call for an understanding of these practices in a dialectical manner; that is through considering the context and history of their emergence, development and implications in the community and society.

Nigin’s critique of how Perestroika was carried out raises questions about the implications of change for people’s life and work in society. Reflecting on her frustrations in
classrooms, schools, community and home during Perestroika and the subsequent years of independence in Tajikistan, Nigin suggests that change despite its promise, may not always lead to improvement. Her anger with dishonest politicians, who, for their own personal interests have broken a whole country and have made people’s lives miserable, shows the concern of a caring and responsible mother, teacher and citizen. This concern signals that change is not an adventure, but a moral responsibility that carries implications for human beings and society, including the change agents. Like many of her colleagues, she finds it hard to redefine her values towards a market economy, where money, clothes, consumerism, corruption and pretentiousness have apparently overshadowed the values of knowledge and honesty.

The post-Perestroika experiences not only have affected Nigin’s life, health and work adversely, but also have prompted her to an awakening and transformative reconstruction of her identity, her work, her professional relations and practices. She tries to be who she really wants to be—a caring teacher and an involved person in the societal and educational reforms. Nigin’s life and work experiences in the post-Soviet times (e.g., civil war, strike) call for deep reflection about the ethics of leadership, governance, tradition, continuity and change in the society in which she lives and for the betterment of which she works.

Nigin's home and work have always been deeply intertwined physically, emotionally and professionally. Like her school, Nigin's home operates as a safe place where she could share and feel comfortable discussing the issues of teaching and society. She not only releases her tensions and recreates herself but also continues teaching and learning at home. Having developed pedagogical acumen, she learns from her father, her husband, her own children, their friends-students, and her guests and employs her knowledge in home, school, classroom and community. She learns that responsible teaching requires going beyond knowing the subject to relating to and working with children and parents in the community. Good teaching is not only about being more experienced. Neither is it simply about possessing a diploma and knowing more, say her own children. It is about taking and meeting of perspectives. Similarly, Nigin realises that children are the best messengers of teachers and potential supporters of their cause in the rural community.

There are not only political and professional challenges, but also natural ones. Teachers use images of their environment, such as cold, hell, saucepan, dead end, box, and share feelings such as guilt and helplessness, to describe the physical context and their relations with it in the post-Soviet times. These images and feelings are particularly striking on the part of the women
teachers. Mothering and teaching have become more of a burden on each other than something mutually helpful. With this post-Soviet return to ecological realities, the differences between the rural and mountainous contexts have become sharper. Farming, the mainstay of rural life, seems not particularly useful here, say the teachers. Besides, they have little or nor land. Mountain conditions have intensified the never-ending survival challenges of life at home, in the school and classroom. Added by professional concerns it is no wonder how stressed the teachers of the villages are, how patient they must be, or why they all have chronic illnesses.

_Nigin's Worldview_

Nigin's worldview includes her perspectives on society and citizenship, her educational goals, her multiple roles in life and work, her experiences with her subject, history, and her critical perspectives on reform and teacher change. Nigin’s worldview has evolved particularly through a number of professional challenges that she has faced in the transition from the Soviet to post-Soviet period. Given the contextual realities, one can suggest that Nigin perceives societal and personal transformations as interconnected steps towards a more humane and just society.

"**Teachers of History Are in Hell**"

Teaching history has been a double-edged sword for Nigin. It has provided her with opportunities to develop herself, educate her students and her own children, help her colleagues, and serve the community. History has been at the heart of her identity. But teaching and history have also been sources of frustrations, anger, denigration, and loss of self-esteem. Nigin's expression, "Teachers of history are in hell in this and the other world" reflects some of the major challenges and tensions that she has undergone as she moved between the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Because Nigin was asked to manage huge topics as part of the required program, she was also worried about her students' readiness and ability to understand them properly. This dilemma was exacerbated by time limits. Nigin wondered how much justice was done to the program and to the children:

History was always harder to teach than many other subjects. In Math you can show a formula and let the students do the work by themselves. In Language, you tell them a definition or rule, show an example, and let them do the exercises to apply and learn the rule. In history, however, the topic is always new, and the new topic is totally different from the previous one. There are no special formulae like in Math. Each time you have to start from scratch. There is a lot of information in history. Too many details. You tell and ask and conclude in a hurry so that you can
tell more. You feel there is this information and that information left to be told. There is no rest for the teachers of history in the classroom (Int. 1: 52).

In explaining her resolution of the dilemma, she revealed several tensions: First, lack of time: "In the program there is only one hour given to this topic", which makes her "give priority to the program, because the deputy head checks whether I have completed the program and have covered the topics." Second, cold, which cuts the academic year by around 30% and makes it more tense. "I do my best to help the kids learn more from the topic within the given time. I cannot waste any minute in the classroom. I have to explain everything that is important for them in the exams." This makes her often "hurry the children and move fast from one student to another." At the same time, Nigin felt that during rapid-developing events in the classroom she often forgets about covering the curriculum: "At that moment I do not think of the program. I would rather think of the students' understanding of the topic. I pull all my power together for that time and I nearly forget about home problems, even my kidney problems" (Int. 1: 45).

The students-program-time dilemma has been further complicated by the program developers' and policy makers' lack of understanding of what classroom life is like, and by the silence of the local inspectors, who know the problem but force teachers to comply with the program demands anyway. Nigin found herself unable to achieve her objectives and fulfil her duty. She felt no one listened to her concerns about whether the students learned something and whether the program made an impact:

Yesterday I taught two topics in one hour. That is useless, taking into consideration the age of the students. The program has remained the same while the hours are decreased considerably. More time is given to other subjects such as English and subjects newly introduced into the school program. The higher authorities, when they send the program, don't care that we close school due to cold weather. Even more, the Ministry has developed a program for the grades 10 and 11 that we teachers are not ready to teach. For example, I do not know where the Sumerian state is located. How can I teach that to the students? The program demands that, by grade 9, students should finish the topics including Perestroika, because compulsory schooling ends. Children can learn all this only kur karona (blindly blind, i.e., by rote memorisation). These people have not given us textbooks and have not considered the psychological state of the children. Neither do they care that we here study in a second language. They came here and told us to do mushf-jam (to pull the five fingers together, to make a feast)--to put several topics together and also
teach them well. If that person was in a classroom, he would have understood what it means to teach too much in such a short time. By not supplying the textbooks, they have also left the job of developing programs also to the teachers. When I do not have any material for the topic and I come to class unprepared, I feel guilty and lose sleep at night. You can't do so that all the time. The representatives from the Institute of Upgrading Teacher Qualifications and Education Board say they do agree with us that it is impossible to fulfill the program. But they do not convey this message to the higher authorities. I have thought many times to write to Ministry about this, yet I do not have the time. I also do not write because I think they won't listen to me (Int. 1: 34-35, emphasis mine).

Teaching history has become more difficult, because a new subject, History of Tajikistan, has replaced the previous major subject, History of the USSR. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the history of Tajikistan was nearly ignored in the program. Now it has become central. This change took place without adequate support and materials. Nigin was thrown into deep waters of uncertainty without knowing how and where to swim. In her criticism of the educational authorities, she is concerned about the implications for the students:

During Soviet times I had many opportunities to study and teach any subject I was supposed to. I knew all that I was to teach by heart. Sometimes I would teach even without a conspectus. Nowadays, I have to look, read and search for everything new, but I cannot find material and information to teach properly. I do not know whether what we teach is right and whether this will be enough for the students to pass the history entrance exams to the University. Last year we fought with the examiners at the Khorog State University. I told them they should know what we teach and develop exam tickets273 on this basis, instead of asking students about things they have never studied and subsequently failing them (Int. 1: 35, emphasis mine).

Nigin was cautious in expressing her happiness with regards to the change in title of the subject of history. She already had experience that the title “History of the USSR” had little connection with its real content and little relevance to the needs of the nations living in the USSR. Revealing the political dimensions of teaching and the hidden curriculum, Nigin warned that policy-makers not repeat the same mistakes:

During Soviet times History of Tajikistan was a small section within History of the USSR. In fact, we studied the History of Russia from the primitive time until the present. Soviet we said.

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273 In an education seminar I conducted in Dushanbe, teachers considered the idea of introducing too many subjects as confusing for the students and creating overload for the teachers. One senior education officer expressed this as follows: “The head of a child is like balloon. If you blow too much it will burst.”
but Russia’s history we taught. Even at VUZ\textsuperscript{27} there was not enough attention paid to teaching History of Tajikistan. I learnt this topic in a hurry, 25 years ago, but never taught this topic in school. In schools the History of Tajikistan was something like two to four hours within the History of the USSR. In selecting the topics from Tajik history more attention was paid to the history of Tajikistan in the Soviet period. Topics that dealt with ancient and medieval Tajik history were rushed or left out from the course...It was perhaps acceptable, because we were united within the Soviet Union. But it was not right to ignore our own history, the history of a whole nation, even at that time. I think our Tajik scholars did not pay enough attention to it. The Soviet system was based upon commands and “you must do it” approach. Everything was decided centrally at the USSR level. The history curriculum was always published in the journal: *Teaching History in Schools and* we merely copied and translated it. Tajik scholars have always relied upon the Russians. They did not do anything significant by themselves\textsuperscript{275}...They were not particularly strong as far as the interests and concerns of their nation were concerned (Int. 1: 14, emphasis mine).

**Reconstructing Truth**

As part of the ideological changes from Soviet to independent Tajikistan, history underwent deep transformations. Interpretations of history, generalisations and even facts all turned upside down. It was devastating for someone who had both "received the truths" and tried to convince others of them. Reconstructing truth in history has created ideological and epistemological crises for her. The denunciation of Marxism-Leninism has been both a devastating challenge and an awakening experience for Nigin. The bad has become good, while the good was totally confused:

We had books and guides, which criticised America, England, Japan, West Germany and other capitalist states. We said that capitalism is in its last phase and is going to be replaced by socialism, which was said to be inevitable; competition is bad, because it turns people into enemies. Because our ideology was anti-American, the television, radio, and papers showed that America wants war and is an enemy of socialism and developing countries. That capitalist oppressed the workers and black people. They nearly killed all the Indians in America. We had developed hatred of them. We even had the sense that the failures of the Communist ideology were due to America and other capitalist societies. Now we have learnt that America did not

\textsuperscript{274}...Ticket was an assessment tool in Soviet education. It consists of a piece of paper, usually containing three questions on a subject. Students are asked to select tickets at random and answer the questions written on it. The questions differ from one ticket to another.

\textsuperscript{275}...VUZ is a Russian acronym that stands for higher educational institution.
always want wars. It also has ideologies of cooperation and brotherhood. It is now helping us (Int. 1: 48).

Her feeling of inadequacy in the face of the new expectations and realities has created a sense of guilt before students and anger towards the higher education authorities:

The time and the program have changed, but there are no new textbooks. The books in the libraries are not only insufficient, but also contradictory to the way we are supposed to teach now. Physical and mental work and pressure on teachers have increased several times. Two days before the classes start I get worried about how am I going to teach Human Being and Society, what am I going to teach and whether am I not misleading the students. How could I use words and concepts that are not shallow but useful and connected to the topic? They have taken care of the programs but not about whether teachers are prepared to teach them: courses, no books (Int. 1: 48-49).

Nigin certainly had doubts about the system and the content of her subject with regard to its defense of the Soviet system. To resolve this, she dichotomised the "good theory" from the bad practice:

I had a bit of doubt in many things that I learnt and taught. We talked about the problems particularly in the University hostel. Some of the instructors, such as our professor of History of the Communist Party of the USSR, would start: "I want to tell you something, but make sure it is just between us." He would praise Stalin and put down Brezhnev. Despite this, in the class and my lectures\textsuperscript{277} in the village, I promoted the strength of the Soviet ideology and theory, not its practice. I continue to believe that there was nothing wrong with the theory of socialism. I knew it was people who destroyed the theory because they misused it for their own benefit (Int. 1: 49, emphasis mine).

Nigin's trust in Marxism-Leninism was shaken, but not destroyed as she observed the difference between the "talk and walk" of the new ideologies, and as she compared people who operated in the name of various theories across time. She found that those who denounced Marxism-Leninism have rarely shown a better alternative. She warned of people rather than of theories:

Not all the communists were bad. The old communists were really devoted to the idea. My father was a secretary of Communist party of the kolkhoz (collective farm) in the 1960s. I remember

\textsuperscript{276} Many scholars, particularly historians, would disagree with Nigin's comment, because some of the most important histories of the Tajik people were published exactly in Soviet times (e.g., Ghafurov, 1972; Masov, 1996; Ne'matov, 1989). What Nigin might be right that, whether there were books or not, the subject was denigrated in the school and university curricula.

\textsuperscript{277} Like the majority of the teachers, Nigin was a "lecturer propagandist", whose job was to educate the community through Marxist explanations of events.
Shakarsho, Shonazar\textsuperscript{278} and others. When they arrived in our village, they sowed grass/fodder with the students, sat with the farmers and worked with them, to thresh the wheat. My mother and I would cook for them, waiting till late night. They would come dusty and tired, but still have time to joke. They would always bring us some gifts.

In 1980s people used communism for convenience, position and power seeking. The new leaders would come, give orders and a sheep would be killed for them. They are like in the old saying: "Omadand, shishtand, guftand, khurdand, khestand wa raftand" (they arrived, sat, talked, ate, got up and left). They never visited the farmers, never asked about their problems. They came to the schools to order the teachers to go and work with the farmers. These democrats also have no principles. I think they should not be called democrats\textsuperscript{279}(Int. 1: 45).

During Glasnost, history was denounced on the ground that its content was totally deluded. In the late 1980s and early 1990s history was excluded from the exams for reconsideration (Davies, 1989; Karlsson 1993; Mehlinger, 1993). This was another blow to Nigin's sense of self-esteem. History and its teachers were criticised for telling lies to people and confusing them. Nigin seems to have gone through an emotional tumult:

As we read articles about how history was taught incorrectly, I became disturbed and angry. The scholars had fooled us. How could they be liars for so many years? People pointed at us as teachers of history. I had not enough information to believe that things were wrong. I did not see any thing wrong with the communist theory. Lenin, for example, never said you abandon your religion or your traditions. He said that an educated person is one who learns everything of the past and present including knowledge of religion. We had our faith alive during the Soviet times. So I taught theory to people. During Glasnost, everybody looked at only negative points and bad sides. These people blame Stalin for the repression and that he knew everything about the German attack but did not prevent the war (WWII) from happening. Why don't these people acknowledge that he also did not leave Moscow when the Fascists came close? That Stalin did not exchange his own son for a German general.\textsuperscript{280} As a mother, I know that children are closest to the parents. These scholars hid from us many things, told us lies and made us tell lies. Now they all have moved to another side. How could everything from that time be wrong, as they claim? I have lost trust in them (Int. 1: 50, emphasis mine).

The question of the epistemology of history was another challenge Nigin faced in the last decade. Nigin believed that the content of History consisted of a set of scientifically proven facts,

\textsuperscript{278} Pseudonyms for the leaders of the district Communist Party Committee in the 1970s.

\textsuperscript{279} For more on corruption in Soviet times, see Rose-Ackerman (1999); Simis (1982).
events and explanations. Truth, she said was "whatever event is said correctly, without colouring, without any fantasy." When I reminded her of the recent classification of the Basmachi movement from enemies to freedom fighters, Nigin revealed the continuity of her Soviet-nurtured beliefs. Although she admitted that someone from the Party of Islamic Renaissance would justify Ibrahim Bek (a head of the Basmachi movement), she would firmly hold to her values:

The Basmachis tried to destroy the Soviet system, killed the respectable people, did not let the women be free. They wanted to stop the new way of living. Basmachis were concerned only about themselves. They were against the masses, the poor population. They owned the lands and factories and had the poor to work for them like slaves. We cannot put these Basmachis in the same line with Shotemur and Saifulloev who fought for freedom and against exploitation (Int. 1: 45).

Still Too Many Good Reasons to Remain in Teaching...

Socio-geographical realities, such as remoteness, lack of money, unemployment, political instability and civil unrest, all have kept Nigin in the profession by default: "In Badakhshan nowadays there are only two fields that are operating: education and health. There are no plants and no factories around to work. If we leave teaching where else can we go and work?" (FN. 1: 23). The affection and attachment of her students continued to serve as a powerful intrinsic impetus for Nigin's choice:

When I look at children my heart breaks. They had nothing to do with the collapse of the USSR. Like the teachers, they too were innocent victims of the events. Their childhood was even more disturbed. Unlike our times, many of these children have not seen sweets and toys. What sort of a heart one should have to not attend the school? (Int. 1: 67, emphasis mine).

Nigin's care, love and respect for her students were reciprocated by the students' enthusiasm for learning and their care for the teachers. The students' increasing motivation was a valuable opportunity to seize for making a greater difference, added the head of the school:

In the Soviet era we could hardly motivate the children, despite the good conditions available for teaching and learning. At the end of the Soviet times, very few students wanted to continue their studies after school. The majority liked to become drivers and salespersons. Now we have a hard time to catch up with their motivation and expectations. I wish we had those conditions and this

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280 Nigin refers to the case when Stalin is said to have refused to exchange his captive son for a German general captured by the Soviets during WWII.
281 The Islamic guerrillas who fought against the newly established Soviet system in the 1920s.
282 Revolutionary communists; both were born in Shugnan and fought for the establishment of Socialist Tajikistan.
motivation. Before, children hated many of their teachers. Today they care for their teachers. They say teachers are bechora (powerless). They are ready to help them at home, provide them with wood, and give them clothes as gifts on official occasions, so that the teachers come and teach. Children visit their teachers, in case where these miss their lessons, ask about their health and when they will come to the next class (FN. 1:13, emphasis mine).

Like her experience with Tazav (her own history teacher), Nigin found her students talking to her about things other than just their lessons. They asked her to be a bridge between them, other teachers and their peers. Nigin made them feel that she wouldn't laugh at or gossip about their feelings and secrets. Sometimes they trusted her more than their parents, and even used her to defend their positions against their parents. Nigin summed up her various roles:

In the classroom I am an educator, caretaker, friend, sister, mother and father. I am hard on them in their studies and soft in their personal relations. As a mother I love these children, worry about their physical state, about their clothes. I demand a lot from them, and a bit of cursing is not bad too. I work with them as I work with my own kids. I worry a lot when they get involved with bad boys. I believe that Bo moh shini moh shawi, bo deg shini siyoh shawi (You sit with the moon, you become like the moon; you sit with a boiler you become dark). I defend my good students as much as I can, even against their own parents (Int. 1: 74).

Teaching children was not just a question of here and now. It included assisting the students to choose their future path in life. Nigin believes that she knows her students well enough to play the role of guide:

I want to help my students know where they are going after grade 11. Where a child goes is not a decision of a day. It is the parents who suddenly decide where their children should go. But we know what the child is best at. I work with them for two years and three years. We talk with the students about all these things. We know it not only through his answers in our lessons, but through his heart, his talents and his wishes. So you help him to reach his purpose (Int. 1: 35).

The humane, collegial, relaxed, open, innovative, busy and successful culture of the school added to Nigin's decision to continue teaching:

In our school, students and teachers have no fear to tell each other any thing they want. There is this feeling of being and working together... We achieved this through hard work and search. With the head we felt that the time has come when we can treat each other and our students as equal human beings. I really like this mutual understanding between the teachers themselves and with the students. My grade 11 students, for example, are adults, who will soon have independent
lives. They openly talk to me about their feelings, consult with me about their life issues. They tell me more than their mothers. We are like friends. I tell them what to do and solve some of their problems. They help me with preparing conferences. This is how they will like me more and how we respect each other. This is how students stay at school and won't leave. Before, some students demonstratively left the classes, and argued with their teachers over small things (Int. 1: 15-16, emphasis mine).

Teaching has made Nigin an “educated, expert mom.” She has prepared her son to become a student of Khorog State University (KSU) without any cherez (connection): “I would not change my profession if I were to start all over again. Unlike some of my colleagues, I cannot imagine myself selling in the market. But I would have changed my subject, history” (Int. 1: 66).

Being an educated woman has been a crucial reason for her remaining in school and in teaching. Teaching has kept her status high, enabled her to earn a salary, and provide her with power, usefulness and the ability to serve the larger community. This has expanded her perspective on her role and vision:

To be a teacher in the village was an honour. We were in the centre of the society, and led other women. They came to us for everything, from consultation on women’s health to borrowing money. As a woman teacher we got good money and a higher education compared with the majority of women who were housewives and sovkhoz28 workers here. Unlike them, we can argue and talk openly with men other than our husbands. It is still more or less like this. The teacher is the first in sukh at gham (sorrow and happiness) of the village. People ask us what to do, even if we do not know. This is due to the teacher being more educated. She is the intelligentsia of the village. She knows more than any other woman does and that's the main source of her respect (Int. 1: 71, emphasis mine).

For Nigin and her colleagues, too many things were at stake to leave teaching. The foundation of their success comes from honour and reputation of teaching profession and community that teachers wish to maintain:

In 1995 Hozir Imom (the Aga Khan) expressed happiness with the level of education in Badakhshan. We had the first position in the Soviet Union in terms of higher education. We will be the first in Tajikistan and probably in the Commonwealth of Independent States again, because that is our name and nomus. In Dushanbe people bring their children to the Pamirian teachers. The graduates of Khorog University get jobs in international organisations ahead of everybody.

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283 Ironic statement, meaning that she is too demanding in the academic sense and too soft in personal relations.
Soon we will have a new International University of the Imam.\textsuperscript{285} It would be a shame, if our Pamirian students were not the majority there (Int. 1: 80).

Given this, Nigin believed that leaving teaching in the time of post-Soviet confusion and chaos would leave children to become victims of someone else's manipulation. This will in turn create more pain for her. For Nigin teaching was a calling:

These students are our children. Their requests make us believe that they need us, they trust in us. How can we leave them without a guide, when we have to do that? He is going to be lost, if we do not care for him. He will find a bad guide. He can easily get into drugs and guns. Leaving them on their own is not humane (Int. 1: 67).

\textit{"Society Rests on the Teachers' Shoulders"}

There are deep cultural and communal ties in being a teacher in the villages of Badakhshan. Being a teacher means not just sharing the parenting of the students. The school, and with it teaching, have become a force for change with a mission for the whole community:

We are connected by blood, faith, and language. We see our students and their parents two or three times a day. \textit{We actually see their parents more than them}. Therefore, when you see students and parents hide and avoid you, something is going wrong. In the village, if relations are wrong, they go bad for a long time and include families for generations. I ask the parents immediately and sort out the misunderstanding. Parents think that we teachers can do everything and their kids' future is only in our hands. We have to tell them that is not true. We visit their homes and they come to school and enter their children's classes. In the pedagogical council\textsuperscript{286} we agreed that \textit{we have been teaching not only students but also the whole village, even in the Soviet times}. But, at that time we did it for the state. Now we do it for ourselves, the school, parents and their children (Int. 1: 75, emphasis mine).

One of the hardest challenges that Nigin and her school faced were corrupt practices, especially for students seeking places in the universities. She says universities have frequently failed strong students in admission exams and passed weak ones for a bribe or through connections:

One of my students shamelessly told me to give him a 5 undeservedly to get to university. If you refuse, his parents will hate you and never say to you \textit{Salom}\textsuperscript{287} (literally peace = hello). We feel

\textsuperscript{284} \textit{Soviets} a Soviet form of state farm. Unlike \textit{kolkhoz}, its members were considered state employees.

\textsuperscript{285} Nigin referred to the envisaged University of Central Asia to be established in MBAP/Tajikistan. The University will specialise in studying problems of mountain societies. The medium of instruction is going to be English.

\textsuperscript{286} Each school has pedagogical soviet-council that addresses pertinent questions of schooling.

\textsuperscript{287} This is an important cultural construct. Thus greeting a person is considered a duty in front of God. Therefore, not greeting would be a sign of deep disrespect and animosity.
slapped in the face, when the university instructors pass our weak students and fail the best students in the entrance exams. I have developed hatred towards those who do such injustice. It is much harder to look our good students in the eye after they have failed in admission. I feel guilty, as if I have not prepared them well enough, as if we missed teaching them something important. The parents know about these practices, but pour their anger out on us. They ask what is the use of the school, if it does not ensure success (Int. 1: 66).

Gorninj said that consequently even the best graduates of the school and their parents are forced to search for connections prior to University exams. This inherited Soviet practice has become a discreet source of income for some impoverished instructors288: “They do not want their many benefits such as sheep, gifts, and money to go away289” (Int. 3: 43).

Drugs, guerrilla activities, videos and other street activities have been additional influences from which the teachers guard their students. Nigin said:

It is hard to explain to children that drugs and guns are temporary. The boys reply that these activities provide food, clothes, jobs, cars and even better education than the school. With dollars in hand, they can hire tutors, buy diplomas of whatever specialty you want. There are homes with five to seven cars, and some of them are foreign-made. Students also reject our assertions that the success of the Narcomafia and guerrillas are short-lived. The guerrillas are receiving high positions in the current government290 (Int. 1: 71).

Gorninj pointed out that the school has achieved some success in its struggle against students’ involvement in harmful activities through extra-curricular work. The teachers have used real cases or the sayings of spiritual authorities, and have sought the involvement of the parents:

We used all the ways, including last week’s case291, to keep our students out of drugs business. When we use the Imam’s words, the boys keep silent, yet we do not know if they agree with us. Parents have agreed that if their child is involved in drugs he is lost forever. We have pulled the school children out of drugs and guns. But as the children grow, do not find jobs, cannot go for further studies, they get involved in them again (Int. 3: 42).

288 The salary of an instructor at the University in Tajikistan is not much different from that of a school teacher. At the time of my fieldwork a full professor at Khorog State University with the degree of Doctor of Science earned less than $30 CDN in a month. Simis (1982) brings vivid examples of how the university entrance exams have become sources of income for corrupt networking at the Higher Education Institutions. See also DeYoung and Suzhikova (1999) and Rose-Ackerman (1999).
289 Nigin refers to the peace treaty between the United Tajik Opposition and the Government in 1997, according to which a great share of the position went to the Opposition and were occupied by guerrilla commanders (see Chapter 4).
290 Nigin refers here to the case when four young men from the village were killed in an alleged trafficking encounter with the Russian border guards. All four men were from this village.
In their combat against the harmful influences of the street, the teachers have realised that mere talk about the harm of drugs and guns is not enough: "We can also sell narcotics and improve our lives. But we know if we go for it, all the students will follow us", said Gorminj (Int. 3: 34).

"We Need to Raise Our Status by Ourselves"

The indefinite and diffused status of the profession was another disturbing force for Nigin. She noted that the high Soviet rhetoric about teachers' status and role continued through post-Soviet times; the actual care provided to teachers has, however, radically diminished. Not only has the Government reduced support for teachers, but even the community has done so. Teachers, once at the centre of attention, and major players in the villages, are no longer invited to social gatherings. People are now afraid to speak in front of them. Those who have become rich do not even say hello. They have forgotten about the teacher's contribution to their growth:

I get angry when a rich person in the village fails to notice that there has been a teacher who helped him to become so. Even Rumi\(^{292}\) had realised that teaching is the mother of the other professions:

\[
\begin{align*}
Hej\text{ kas az peshi khud cheze nashud}, \\
Hej\text{ ohan khanjari teze hashud}. \\
Hej\text{ Mawilono nashud mulloe Rum,} \\
To\text{ muridi Shamsi tabrezni nashud.}
\end{align*}
\]

(No one has become someone just by himself, 
No iron has become a sharp sword by itself. 
No Mawilana\(^{293}\) has become the Mullah\(^{294}\) of Rumi\(^{295}\), 
Unless he has not become a student of Shams of Tabriz\(^{296}\)) (Int. 1: 66).

The head of Shotemur school reinforced that the question was not the increase in the demands, but the decrease in support that devalued teachers' status as they moved into the post-Soviet environment. In Soviet times, teachers were lecturers in "Knowledge Societies" and "People's Universities" to teach the villagers about the politics of the party and state. They were responsible for the agricultural harvest, busy in summer and autumn harvesting the fodder for kolkhoz cattle, responsible if a cow did not give the required litres of milk, or if the ground under

\(^{292}\) The famous mystic Jalal ed-din Rumi (13rd century).

\(^{293}\) Mawilano (from Arabic Mawilana) is a title in the religious hierarchy. In this case, it refers to Jalal-ud-din Rumi, the most influential Sufi in Islam of 13th century.

\(^{294}\) Mullah is a knowledgeable person in Islam. The mullahs served as sources of reference in worldly and religious matters.

\(^{295}\) Rum refers to the Byzantine Empire; i.e., the eastern part of the Roman Empire, later occupied by the Seljuk Turks.

\(^{296}\) Shams of Tabriz, a mythical personality, is said to have been the teacher of the famous Jalal-ud-din Rumi to have had a transformative impact upon him.
the cows in the stable was not dry enough. Teachers were to build toilets, libraries and even schools:

We did dozens of other unpaid jobs. But we did not complain much: when a state feeds you and provides you with honour and status, why don’t you work for it? Because our life conditions have worsened, we are busier now than ever before. We do not know what will await us tomorrow. We work day and night yet we are totally dependent on others (FN. 1: 14).

With the collapse of the one-party monopoly over education, the increasing numbers of stakeholders with often contradicting demands and pressures have added to the confusion:

During the Soviet times, we had a clearly defined direction: to serve what the party and state said. Now anyone who is not lazy shouts at us:297 the state authorities demand of us to follow what they say; parents criticise us and tell us how to teach; international organisations ask us all kinds of questions, listen to us, nod and go. We, as naïve people, tell them everything we know in the hope that they will help. But we don’t see any of our ideas considered and any concrete steps taken; we do not know if they disagree with what we say. Students ask us why we are not in school if we miss; but a very few care about how we live. If someone demands something from us, we ask what have you done for us since your last promises? (Int. 1: 15).

The authorities do not care enough, truth has been deconstructed, subjects have changed, textbooks have vanished, poverty, and cold have become the realities. In fact, the weather has not changed its severity, yet its influence was moderated by Soviet unsustainable supplies, which vanished soon after its collapse. Although expectations from teaching remain high, being a teacher has become less valuable in many ways. Regardless of this feeling, Nigin has never thought of becoming cynical. Nigin believed that to regain the respect teachers possessed during Soviet times now depended on the teachers themselves. She and her colleagues did not wait for the state to improve their status. According to her, teachers possessed some essential qualities, keeping people and society from losing the balance between the self and society:

Teachers are the most honest, most educated and most important people in the society. They cannot bribe, cannot cheat and cannot make extra money at the expense of the students. If there is a force that could really promote knowledge and ethics in the society, this force is the teacher (Int. 1: 68, emphasis mine).

The real status of teacher depended on the quality of relations and service:

297 Russian expression meaning that every one who passes by tells us what to do.
Before, the state raised our status. Now, it mainly talks about teachers as important beings. Now, we have to raise our names by ourselves. I work hard, love my students, try to be a friend to them, do not hurt their self-esteem. My students ask me about my health and visit me when I am in the hospital. They send me gifts and cards on my birthday. In the market they always sell me things at a cheaper price. They say: "This is 400 rubles, but for you we give it for 250 rubles." Teachers ask me about various things, particularly how to organise conferences and field trips. The head respects me. The parents come for advice and offer help in working at my home (Int. 67, emphasis mine).

She believed that the teachers, as always, needed to model critical and ethical leadership qualities and teach similar qualities to their students:

Khurram has been teaching for 50 years, he is a Honoured Teacher of Tajikistan and one can surely learn a lot from him. Make sure that your walk and talk go together. You should not make false promises. If you say we are going to visit the museum of Shotemur, take the students there. You have to get to the heart of the children.... How do you achieve this? Live their lives think like a child. Seriously argue with them as if you are one of them. Ask them about their wants, hopes, and feelings, but act with your mind. Ask yourself what have you given the children today? (Int. 1: 69, emphasis mine).

According to Nigin, for teachers to define the quality of their work and relationships inside and outside of school was possible through open and honest self-scrutiny:

To know whether I am doing a good job will be seen from the kind of relationship and attitude I face with those I work with. I have given to children today. If children come closer to me, are not afraid of me, if parents respect me, and if colleagues and administration respect me...If that kind of attitude is missing you should ask yourself about whether you need to stay in or leave teaching (Int. 1: 67).

According to the Best Teacher of the district298, the essence of a teacher is selflessness not selfishness. Unlike others who try to misuse youngsters, teachers simply care for them, demanding nothing in return. Teachers view themselves as an integral part of the community's successes and problems. They felt that they have to keep the community from falling into darkness:

Teachers are a source of spirituality, culture, education and the future of the society. We work so that the children live better than we do and our community does not fall back to the level of

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298 The Best Teacher of Shugnan in 1999 was a biology teacher from this school. The contest of the best teacher is a multi-level competition. It starts at the level of school moves to the district, next to province. Many teachers whom I encountered expressed that the whole process was just for show off, filled with fraud and bribery.
Afghanistan. In 70 years we have moved so much ahead and we do not want our people to become ignorant again. Both the prosperity of the society and its backwardness are our concerns (FN. 1: 13).

Further, Nigin and her colleagues considered that the key to Badakhshan’s prosperity is knowledge and education. A veteran teacher stated that the current preoccupation with farming should never replace the traditional value of education in the community. He challenged the new assumptions and claims:

Knowledge is the only wealth and way out for the people of the Pamirs. You can plant seeds on the top of the mountains; you can privatise the land, but none of this is going to rescue us from insecurity. The people who put farming over education are socialist utopians. Their ideas are based on good wishes and theory. This theory does not consider the unproductivity of our land; here nature is stronger than human beings and it shows that strength all the time. Our grandparents had private land and planted all over the mountains. Our population was many times smaller, yet we had always suffered from hunger, cold and lack of food. The Soviets also realised this and emphasised education. Education enabled us to live anywhere we wanted. Today some people claim they have increased land productivity by two and three times. They fail to understand that the Soviets did not find that useful as compared to educating us. If they sent a rocket into orbit, how could they not increase the productivity of land? (FN. 1: 98).

The necessary involvement of the teachers with farming for the purpose of making ends meet has affected their bodies and minds, their personalities and outlooks, all important tools for teaching. Good teaching requires time, respect, dignity and decency, added another of Nigin’s colleagues:

Farming here is hell. It is taking all our time. We run after water, the bulls to plough, and fertiliser. Our land is stony and very hard to work on. At the end we hardly cover the loans we get from MSDSP.299 We are torn between two jobs and we do not fulfil any of them properly. Teaching has become the least work we do. Our work in school is left to the end of our daily concerns. This makes us feel guilty and nervous. We need time to prepare a good lesson. We do not ask that our salary should be 1000 dollars. But with the salaries that we get now, we feel that if we leave farming we are going to be the poorest people in the village. We want to live a normal life and do what we are supposed to do. We come to classes dusty, tired and unprepared. Look at my hands. They look like the hands of a slave rather than the hands of a teacher. Children do not

299 Loans given by the Mountain Societies Development Support Program. According to the agreement between the loaner and the MSDSP, the loaners are to pay back the loan plus 10%.
only listen to what we tell them. They also learn from how we look and live. They compare us with others, with the Mafia and with business people (commercants) (FN. 1: 97, emphasis mine).

**Nigin as an Ethical Reformer**

Teaching history, possessing of societal and educational visions, and being an active woman of the school and community have developed Nigin’s critical perspective on the Soviet and post-Soviet approaches to educational and social reform. But Nigin was not only an educational but also a social reformer. In other words, she connected her educational goals to the kind of society she had in mind. The ethics of caring lay at the basis of her perspective on reform, whether social or educational. Similar to social reform, Nigin believed that educational reform in Tajikistan also lagged far behind the fast changing realities. Similarly, Nigin contended that education reform also had pitfalls in its ethics, purpose, processes, and how her own province and school in particular have been benefiting from the reform processes.

**Can Impoverished Teachers Develop Professionally?**

Nigin headed the inter-school Method Unit on History. This Method Unit is a subject-based professional association. All history teachers from the nearby schools gather on History day (each Wednesday) to discuss questions related to their subject and teaching, develop a plan of action for the whole year, select topics to teach, and prepare tickets\(^\text{300}\) and exams. On this day the teachers could do individual work with students, organise a conference, or offer an open lesson. But more importantly, they could:

...discuss the teaching programs. These discussions are different from those during the Soviet times. Before it was "you must do it" attitude. The program was like an order. We could only discuss how best to teach what came down to us. Now we can even develop our own programs. If we find enough materials for a topic and see how important the topic is for the students in future exams, we will include it in the program. If we cannot prepare the lesson, we should not teach it. So we remove it. We talk about this with the university teachers. We also develop lesson plans, organise and assess open lessons (Int.1: 67).

Given the deterioration of life and work conditions, Nigin found that teachers have become reluctant to attend the work of the Method Unit. She found that the established Soviet structure for professional development has become unwanted:

\(^{300}\) Soviet assessment tool. Each ticket has three questions. Tickets are laid on the teacher’s table upside down on the day of exams. Students take the ticket and spend 30 minutes to prepare their answers without using anything except their minds and a blank sheet of paper. In fact, the Soviet assessment heavily relied on oral approaches to assessment.
The teachers want to use the day\textsuperscript{301} [method PD] for working at home. Some have no materials to prepare for the open lessons, such as no paints to do the visuals. Others think they have to prepare tea, as was done in the Soviet times. They have no money and no time for that. \textit{I wish the teachers would shout: "We want to come to the unit"}. Forcing them to attend is useless. The open lesson has been like a burden. Teachers are scared of it, because a teacher's entire reputation is dependent on a single open lesson. No one is sure that the lesson will go well, however prepared you are. I warn the participants and observers not to talk about these lessons out of the school, but you can't stop people from doing so. Schools too are now jealous of each other. I say that open lesson should not be special lessons and teachers should not kill themselves for the its sake, but this does not work (Int. 1: 67, emphasis mine).

\textit{"We Need to Know about Ourselves"}

During her more than 20 years of experience, Nigin has thought not only about how she could better teach the programs sent from above, but also about the gaps in the curriculum and how she could rectify these gaps in order to make her teaching and her subject more relevant and meaningful for her students. Her perspective on what content history should include was grounded in her reflections about the experiences that she, her community and the Tajik society had undergone, why they occurred, and in what ways these experiences were related to history. Her insights also related to her years at university and to the potential and limitations of the History Method Unit, which she led. Through Nigin's critique of the previous and current History curricula, as well as her proposal for what history should also include, a deep and broad goal of teaching history emerges: to know one's own self and identity from all aspects: historical, cultural, religious and ethnic.

During the Soviet times we learnt about USA, Russia and the Roman Empire, which were too far and too old. But we knew nearly nothing about our neighbour Afghanistan. Ultimately, we came to teach our Tajik history. But, because our scholars did not care, we have so many problems with teaching it now. \textit{Maybe they were not allowed to do this}. The current programs are being developed in Dushanbe and sent down to us. There should be someone in charge of looking at the school programs here. Many important themes are not in the program. We have got so many problems, the origins of which go deep down in history. Students won’t read and pay attention to these things on their own, even if there were books available. The local education board and some good teachers could develop a program that includes topics from our history. I would include the view of mountains, the traditions of the people of Badakhshan, the needs of Badakhshan and the

\textsuperscript{301} Open lesson was seen as a professional development structure. Once in a semester each teacher was to offer an open lesson that
problems we face today. We have several small ethnic groups and languages here in Badakhshan, which have little respect for and understanding of each other. We need to know about ourselves before knowing others. Why are there so many languages here? There are debates about the meaning of the words Badakhshan and Pamirs and we do not know enough about them. I would talk about our economic and political life. Why are we despite our high level of education so poor? Why did we follow blindly our populist leaders? This helps us to have a better life here. I have nothing against the Soghdians and the Bactrians, but I want to know about ourselves first and how are we connected to them. The peoples of this place are registered in the Red Book. So many countries wanted to occupy our land, so many people want to come here and we know very little about it. Many people do not even know about how our people are divided between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

Here, we should start the history of Tajik people from the history of Badakhshan. We should have a special topic on famous Pamirian people and their contribution to Tajik history. Everyone talks about Shotemur as one of the founders of current Tajikistan. He is from this village. This school carries his name. In the program of Grade 9 and 11 Shotemur is briefly mentioned as one of those who founded the revolutionary government in Tajikistan. We in the school conduct extra-curricular activities to teach more about him, take the children to the spring of Nosir Khusraw, bring in a veteran of the war and work, or a local scholar. We arrange a visit to Shotemur Museum here and to the Ethnographic Museum in Khorog. On our own efforts, time, energy and expenses. No one pays us for that. No one thanks us. But we have been doing this since Soviet times and we believe it is important for the children learning.

Similarly, the Kulabis and Khujandis need to learn and write about their traditions and history. From my University friends who were Kulabis, I learnt that we had much in common, particularly our dances, music and sports, yet our youth were fighting each other. It was a shame for us university peers. If we knew more about each other’s history, we would not have had the animosity in 1990s.

I am going to raise these questions at the provincial professional development courses. I blame our provincial Education Board. Why do the responsible people there not inform the

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302 Soghdians and Bactrians: peoples of the area in the days of classical era Persian Empire. Soghdians and Bactrians are seen as predecessors of the current Tajiks.
303 Red Book, in the Former Soviet Union, was a book that contained the names of endangered species.
304 Khujandis and Kulabis are the other larger ethnicities of Tajikistan.
305 Nigin refers to the street clashes between groups of Pamirian and Kulabi youth in the 1970s and 1980s.
306 Nigin mentions the civil war in which the majority of the Kulabi and Pamirian youth stood on opposing sides of the line and fought against each other. But this time, as part of political and civil war, results were much more severe than in earlier street clashes.
Ministry of Education about this? Is it not their job to care about our joint history? (Int. 1: 102-103, emphasis mine).

Nigin’s voice about these and other issues has never been addressed: “No one has ever asked me about all these issues, though I have had these questions in my mind for many years. That’s why I am telling you as much as I know. I hope your work makes some difference” (Int. 1: 103).

“Is Reform Making Our Society any Better?”

Nigin taught in the lyceum-internat for the gifted children. But, unlike the head and Gorminj, she was worried about the dividing and sorting out of the students that has occurred as result of the lyceum and streaming. She voiced questions about the purpose of schooling and the role of the teacher:

I agree that the lyceum and profiling help the gifted students get ahead. But why are we worried about the gifted ones and not worried about the weaker ones? I get more worried about those students that are left behind. There are parents who told me similar things. I myself ended regular school with excellent marks in all the subjects. I have talked about this, but no one listens to me (Int. 1:132).

A parent pointed out that the public schools are becoming useless. Parents don’t believe that their children can ever compete with the students of the lyceum. Those whose children are in the general stream have got a fear and a sense of inferiority: “The children of the lyceum are going to be our masters and our poor children are going to be their servants”, concluded another parent (FN. 1: 21). Nigin added that streaming, though aiming at providing a high level of knowledge, has in fact promoted one-sidedness, disrespect for other subjects, and devaluation of the students’ talents and natural inclinations. It has also created problems for further studies:

Many of our students do not understand biology, their own body, let alone history. They do not pay attention to the other subjects, though these are on the timetable. When a student tells me we do not need history and you better just give me a five, it is like a knife in my heart. Everyone wants to study English. But as they reach grade 11, they ask for consultations on history. I openly say that now I cannot guarantee their strong knowledge of history. Some study one stream here and join another stream at university. They create problems for the instructors, for themselves and their own parents.

Our students choose what is fashionable and what provides them with money and a job, not according to their talents. Hozir Imom has said we should learn English. This is not only for students but even for me if I want to improve my own teaching. But here people understood it in
their own ways and everyone rushed to become an English teacher. The girls saw Robiya** and all wanted to be like her. I don't think Hozir Imom said that you should all be English teachers and leave other subjects. When we question the students and their parents, they say I am jealous due to the students' lack of interest in my subject. They charge that with studying history our children "won't go further than the airport"\footnote{A local proverb, meaning that you won’t go far and won’t achieve much.} (Int.1: 5, emphasis mine).

Revealing the politics of the rhetoric of reform, Nigin does not see the reform activities as clearly connected to the current realities. She asks whether developing a market economy means giving education to a fewer number of students, or selecting and sorting the students into good and bad ones. Nigin wanted the heads of the schools to question the idea of reform rather than:

speak like Brezhnev, as if they are in a session of the Congress of the Communist party. \textit{Everyone supports the idea because it is fashionable.} Some heads said streaming is the demand of the time and market economy. I honestly do not know how streaming is connected to the demands of the time, democracy and a market economy (Int. 1: 132, emphasis mine).

\textit{"Teachers are Cleverer than You Think!"}

Nigin suggested that reformers have to consider that changing teachers' practices implies changing their lives:

The reform has come on us and moved ahead and we are running after it. But, why should we imitate others? We need to look at what we have here. Don't you think that the reform should consider our lives too? What have you done for us? How long can we sacrifice our lives for the good of the others? \textit{The reformers are concerned about showing that they are making many changes, not how and what the students learn.} Like the Soviet times, they want to report that they have changed this and that. That this has become more and that has increased. The students have become like experimental mice As a result the students complete grade XI and are confused. \textit{Next, how can we reform history with no salaries, no textbooks, cold classes and hungry kids?} Our reform is again coming from the top, "you must do it". \textit{No one listens to teachers. In our school we have so many reform ideas but we have no support and resources to put them into practice} (Int.1: 21, emphasis mine).

Nigin has seen how teachers react to reform and how they can make the reformers happy with the mirage of reform. Real reform implementation requires honesty, realism and reflexivity, she argues:

\footnote{A woman translator, who was amongst the first translators for the Aga Khan during his visits to Tajikistan.}
In the school you work with teachers. They are as knowledgeable and clever as the reformers. As you ask me these questions, I too assess you. I, for example, could have talked to my students, developed materials and visuals and you would have witnessed wonderful classes and would have written all the lies. But I am not a boasting person and agree that we need to demonstrate our usual practices. *But we do show unreal things to the inspectors; they take our show as true.* The next day we return to our own ways. We can show that we are with reform, but in reality we will keep searching for the basic needs. Many teachers will leave in the case of any employment opportunity (Int. 1: 53, emphasis mine).

Nigin believed that real reform is personal and contextual. It is not based on a populist imitation and impressing others with famous names and highflying words, but on a humble assessment of what facilities does one have, where one lives and what the needs of the people in the context are. Reform needs support not just words:

This is Pamir and a blind imitation of Amonashvili and Shatalov\(^{209}\) won't work. When I try to follow them I find my lessons boring. We need to look at what we have. As teachers we do not need to be told what to do and how to do it. *Teachers have got special conscience. You improve our living conditions and we will work and create new ideas by ourselves* (Int. 1: 28, emphasis mine).

Interestingly, the idea of teachers being able to innovate was confirmed by a senior education officer at the Ministry:

I have travelled Tajikistan back and forth and have visited some of the best schools in many other countries and compared their teachers with ours. I believe our Tajik teachers are the poorest teachers in the world. Yet they are as good as those with better living and teaching facilities. They have wonderful ideas, are very dedicated, and can be very creative (FN. 1: 142).

Nigin and her colleagues questioned the approach of the local authorities, the outside reformers and their translators who do not pay enough attention to the views of local teachers and fall into making uninformed assumptions. They suggested that the reformers:

*Look at the availability and quality of the material and technical basis: the classes, teaching aids, technical facilities, heating, whatever a teacher needs for teaching well. You ask us about our lives and do something for us before asking to change. You should ask about my life before my classroom. Not like that education officer who went to Buni\(^{310}\) and ridiculed the poor teacher and*

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\(^{209}\) Shatalov and Amonashvili were amongst the innovative educators who lead the trend of "Pedagogy of Cooperation" during Perestroika. For more on Pedagogy of Cooperation, see Long & Long (1999) and Suddaby (1992).

\(^{310}\) Buni is a village in the district. Nigin referred to a case where an official from the Ministry of Education is allegedly said to have publicly ridiculed a teacher as not knowing English.
talked about this teacher in all the conferences and meetings. The poor teacher stopped teaching and was nearly ready to kill herself. I would as someone from above first ask about the teacher’s situation and then about her English. We have this saying: Rang binu hol purs (see the colour of my face and ask my business). I do not consider this kind of person as an educator at all (Int. 1:66).

A veteran teacher suggested that any reform should start with asking whether a similar idea has existed and comparing it with what the reformers suggest. He suggested that external reformers should avoid making wrong assumptions and employing unwarranted generalisations. They also need to check their translators’ abilities in understanding educational concepts:

Some of the foreigners with their translators assume that their ideas are absolutely new and make conclusions about the existing system. Last year in a workshop, we were told that the Soviet system was scholastic, abstract and did not develop the students’ thinking. I wonder which book they have taken this from and who has told them this. I also feel as if some of the translators either do not understand what we say, or do not convey our ideas well. I have been doing so-called problem-posing teaching for the last 30 years. Years ago I told an inspector: let me teach it this way and you ask the students at the end of the lesson. I wrote the following poem of Rudaki\textsuperscript{3} on the board:

If you are the ruler of your own desires, you are a man.
If you don’t look down at the blind and deaf, you are a man.
Being a man is not kicking the fallen and disadvantaged.
But if you take the hand of the fallen, you are a man!

Then I asked the students to tell the meaning of each word, the meaning of the poem and what they learnt from the poem. The inspector was puzzled with how well the students expressed their thoughts and understood the topic and its purpose. He talked about this everywhere (Int. 1:67).

"Method Is a Part of the Teacher and Teachers Are Different."

One of the issues that emerged from Nigin’s perspective on educational change and from her leadership of the Method Unit was improving teachers’ practices, in particular teaching methods. Nigin revealed not only her own wider methodological repertoire, but also why she uses a limited set of methods and what, in general, changing one’s method requires on the part of the teacher.

For her, changing a teaching method requires a set of other changes in teachers, some related to their style of teaching, personality and confidence, others connected to redefining their
existing relationships with their students and the availability of facilities and working conditions.

In sum, changing a teacher's method required changing the teacher as a person:

I would like to say that I had a kind of dialogic method even in the Soviet times. This method is not something totally new. But at that time I wanted to be very different from the kids, either in knowledge or something else. I thought that the kids should be a bit afraid of me. For that I would use Tajik rather than Shugnani even outside the classroom. Now I see them as equal even in knowledge they have. Now I use Tajik only in the classroom and official meetings. Despite the absence of textbooks, they know something about the topics. But I have always been friendly and open with them. History has changed. Materials have disappeared. The structure of the society has changed. But my love for and eagerness to see the children remained the same. Yet as a teacher, I should be different from the students. I should not be all-permissive (Int. 1: 93, emphasis mine).

Nigin believed that experienced teachers have their own methods of teaching. Their effectiveness resides in teacher's ability to impart knowledge in such a way that students could take it in. This challenge required more than a teaching technique. Among many things, it also included relations. In fact, good relations formed the core of Nigin's major method of teaching:

By method, I mean the way and style of teaching that enable students to take something from the topic and find it useful. I have my own methods. Sometimes a whole lesson could be done by one method. For example, a lesson-conference or a lesson-debate. As I use any new method, I ask my students if they liked it. There is the teacher who knows a lot but cannot teach and involve the kids. He will have little respect from the students. There are teachers, who do not know much but can engage the kids and make them active. Method may not be enough to motivate the students to learn. For me the relation between the teachers and students is important. If students like you they will learn from you. A good teacher is the one who can develop the child's love for himself. You can not force kids to love you (Int. 1: 93-94, emphasis mine).

Nigin revealed that improving one's method was a complex, long-term process that involved considering the dialectics of many factors: life and learning, teachers and students, training and conceptualisation, practicality and congruence, and most importantly transfer and context.

First of all, their conditions should get better, so that a teacher can learn by himself or attend courses. This year I attended courses at the Institute for Upgrading Teacher Qualifications.312

311 A Persian-Tajik poet who lived and worked in the court of the Samanids in the 10th century. He was blinded and expelled as result of a coup d'etat. One of the major allegations against him was his affiliation with Ismailism (see Dasturi, 1990).
312 This institute was renamed into Teacher Professional Development Institute in 1998.
They were as useless as in the Soviet times: theoretical and lectures... I wanted them to be practical. I also need to know it scientifically and practically. Let them show us how it is done in practice, not just talk about it. I need to know whether it is good and workable. Talk about this to my husband and children, what they think about it. I need to know its theory, know more about it, see how others did that. Maybe I need to visit Canada [she laughs] to see any Canadian teacher try this there and if it works in Canada. Also I feel in Canada you do it right from grade 1 and your students can do that. Our students are not used to it (Int. 1: 114, emphasis mine).

*Nigin's Education Goals*

"I Want My Students to be Knowledgeable, Creative and Ethical"

Nigin's broader education purpose included "*ta'lim*" (academic dimension) and "*tarbiya*" (upbringing-social dimension). These two Soviet educational constructs matched the post-Soviet idea of knowledge and ethics. Within this unity, Nigin believed that upbringing was harder to achieve and more challenging to promote. It has become harder because the outside competing forces have multiplied, at a time when the structures related to this aspect of education have almost disappeared. Therefore, Nigin suggested that all teachers should have consensus in the upbringing of the students.

You cannot announce upbringing and have it achieved. It comes through how you are dressed, what you say, how you treat the students, how you are groomed. *Our work for three years without salary is an example of upbringing.* Upbringing comes first. We say, "*Olim shudan oson odam shudan muskil*" (It is easier to become a scholar/learned person than a human being). The Imam's advice is similar to what we have been telling the students: study hard, respect their fellows and elderly, and keep away from bad habits. Teachers should be exemplary to their students. In the Soviet period, the academic aspect was done more through the classroom work. That was appropriate, because the whole school paid attention to the upbringing side. We had various organisations, such as Pioneer or Komsomol\(^{13}\), which had an upbringing purpose. We also had a deputy director for the upbringing aspect of education\(^{14}\). All of these were abolished as result of Perestroika. But their job has not vanished. It has all come onto the teachers' shoulders. Now, they say there should be no ideology in school. We cannot pull each into different sides to confuse the student. Unlike the academic side, which is in the teachers' hands, the upbringing has strong effects from the street and the parents. That's why teachers should agree on upbringing (Int. 1: 15-16, emphasis mine).

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\(^{13}\) Pioneer and Komsomol were Soviet educational organisations that had the purpose of socialising young people in communist morality (for more, see Medlin et al., 1971).
For Nigin, the social and academic purposes of teaching history are intertwined, affecting the present and future of child development. Within this developing creativity and the ability to use an idea in other contexts constituted the most important qualities:

I become happy when they understand the topics, respect each other and myself, use their knowledge in subjects like in writing essay for literature. We feel good that we have helped thousands of people grow and become someone important. If students create something, that makes me happy (Int. 1: 74).

"I Want My Students to Love Tajikistan…"

Nigin tried to integrate the academic and upbringing aspects in her lessons developing students' love for their motherland. Before it was love for the USSR and Tajik SSR. Now it is love for an independent Tajikistan only. Promotion of nation-statehood dominated the decoration and culture of Nigin's classroom, and the way she reshaped the old structures to serve new purposes. The walls continued displaying the pictures of the Tajik-Persian, Russian and Soviet poets and thinkers such as Avicenna, Rudaki, Nasir Khusraw, Aini, Lahuti, Pushkin and Gorky with a short advice from each. But all the portraits of the Russian and Soviet thinkers have now shifted to the background. As in Soviet times, there was a “posted newspaper” on the wall. However, now it presented the post-Soviet ideology of Tajik nationalism reflected in articles, poems, and pictures about the Samanid. Beside the chalkboard, there was now a saying: "Our Imam loves us and will always take care of us." Lastly, above the chalkboard there was the flag, anthem and crest of Tajikistan. Similar to the lessons on the History of USSR, nowadays each lesson on the History of Tajikistan begins with students standing and singing the anthem of Tajikistan:

Our beloved country, for our happiness,
May you be highly honoured.
May your happiness be eternal.
For our honour and fame,

You are the only seed of the hope that was implanted by our ancestors.
You are the only world for their descendants,

May your spring never be touched by fall.
Because your width and length are both a field of care.
Long live my motherland, my free Tajikistan! (Obs. 1: 7).

314 In Soviet educational practice, there was a deputy head specialised in upbringing matters. This deputy's major task was to promote the communist character in the child. In 1990, this position was abolished on the ground that it was too ideological.
According to Nigin, the students should know the symbols of Tajik statehood because they live in Tajikistan and these are important symbols of their identity. Besides, the students also needed to know all these for the sake of inspection, because the inspectors, continuing their Soviet practice, usually ask these questions in any case. Right responses from the students were important to ensure the high reputation of the school. A senior official from the Ministry of Education visited the school during my fieldwork. She asked the children about their lives and studies, but mainly commended how good they were on knowing answers to these political questions (FN. 1: 91). However, Nigin also criticised those who limit themselves to mere boasting of the glorious past.

I also ask: Does it matter that we got such a rich past? Our present showed that we did not learn from them. I agree with the saying:

To chand tu bo guzashtagon menozi?
Bo Rudakivu Sa’diwu bo Hofizi Sherozi?
(How much pride can you take from our ancestors?
From Rudaki, Sa’di and Hafiz of Shiraz?315) (Int. 1: 39).

"I Want Them to be Wary and Aware…"

Nigin stayed in teaching not merely to pass her days until retirement comes. She viewed it as a chance to convey all the educative insights that she had gleaned; she wanted to convey them without fear, in order to recover what she may have not conveyed openly earlier, and to calm her soul and mind for the years of passive obedience. In so doing, she was still undergoing turbulent emotional upheavals:

Unlike some teachers, I cannot sleep comfortably when I make a mistake; when I do not tell the students and parents about the wrong-doings around. I was a propagandist during Soviet times and people still ask me about many things. We request children to listen to the Imam’s good words. They hear in the street all other talk about how modesty, humility, generosity and knowledge do not work. I am a friend with my students and they ask questions about all this out of class. Sometimes I am afraid to say something, because I don’t know everything. I just say that Mawlo knows all this and will punish them if they are wrong. But, the more I try to keep quiet, the more I want to speak up about all this so that our children are more aware of these people than we were. I am very worried about where our society is going. You have to be a teacher of history to understand how scared I am to say something now. Once I talked about Tajikistan being socialist; now we criticise that past. Once we talked against religion, capitalism, and private

315 Medieval poets and thinkers. Interestingly, Rudaki lived most of his life in Samarqand, which is now in Uzbekistan, while Sa’adi and Hafiz were both from Shiraz, which is in Southern Iran.
ownership; now we are in favour of all of them. Once I said Uzbeks were our brothers; now people talk of them as occupiers of Samarkand and Bokhara. If I talk today about Russians as brothers and friends, the youth of the village and my students do not like it. I do not want to be a liar again, because of someone else’s mistakes. How can I talk about Samarkand and Bokhara so as to avoid a conflict between Tajiks and Uzbeks? Our scholars think only about their interests and not the children and society. How can I state that we have a law-abiding, democratic and secular society, when there is drugs, corruption and nepotism? When one leader claims that it is he who has brought the humanitarian supplies here? When another leader is not afraid to talk as if he were the Aga Khan? When a third one tried to force us to pray? After all these, I have no trust in all these new ideas (Int. 1: 90, emphasis mine).

Regardless of subject, age and topic, Nigin also wanted to make the students wary of selfish politicians and cognisant of the need for peace and unity. She constantly pointed out the negative consequences of disunity, internal feuds, selfishness, lack of consensus, and pulling to different sides in almost all of her lessons, right from classical times until Perestroika, and across the subjects she taught. She highlighted these points through various techniques, such as guided questions and leading answers: “Look, even such a great country like the Sassanid empire disappeared. Why? Because there were deep internal feuds” (Obs.1: 22); and through explanations, such as: “In the first years of independence of Tajikistan different groups pulled to different sides. No one thought beyond his personal interests. No one cared for the people” (Obs. 1: 142). These purposes of teaching varied according to the context, age, subject and topic. In the higher grades, for example, she stated:

History in this grade [11] is from the time of the Revolution [1917] until nowadays. I would like the students to understand the meaning of those days and take some lessons from them. I would also like them to compare this life with that in Soviet times and make decisions about what they do next (Int. 1: 34).

“I Want My Students to Recall and Remember…”

Recalling and building foundational knowledge was Nigin’s primary priority for the lower grades:

316 This view is based on the clashes between the Russian military and the youth of the village. While the military justifies its positions and posts by curbing the cross-border trafficking, the youth blame them for unsubstantiated harassment, restricting on freedom and killings. For example, many of the villagers, not only the youth, alleged that Russians border guards were involved in the death of the four young men from the village during my field work.

317 I know of no policy that encourages teachers to instigate conflict between Tajiks and Uzbeks. Nigin’s concerns rather arise from popular media viewpoints particularly as expressed at the time of the Samanid celebrations.
In grade 5 we teach Ancient Tajik History. Here the children are not yet ready to apply their knowledge. Their language is too weak. They have not even developed their vocabulary enough. So I make them recall and remember. In grade 11 they can apply their knowledge. So in grade 11, I ask them about their ideas first and then add what I know or correct them, if they make mistakes. In grade 11 I also let the students express their opinions, because I know they have created a basis of knowledge from which they can speak out (Int. 1: 21, emphasis mine).

She used recall as the main method in reviewing previous topics.  

It included years and dates, places and events, countries, locations, and kings. Recalling was not only the "mother of knowledge" but also a way of developing students' thinking and curiosity. To promote recalling, Nigin used questions about definitions, (What is history? What is culture? What is pottery?), about the people and places of the past, (Who were Soghdians, Bactrians, Kharezmians... Taherids... Samanids; Where was Kiropol, Samarqand?), and locations of these places on the map, (Who can show me Kushan state?) (Obs. 1: 125).

Nigin also used the years-dates-names approach where she usually invited a student to come and write various dates on the board (such as 323 BC, 10th century AD) and later asked the students to say what happened in those dates, years and centuries (Obs. 1:37). Recalling served to develop students' imagination: "If a student is asked about Alexander the Great, he becomes curious to ask his fellows and his parents. Who is Alexander? What did he do in India? How was he wounded? If a child sees that Uroteppa was once named Kiropol, he will be curious as to why this happened. Who changed this name?" It also aimed to foster students thinking: "I asked them several other questions about the same word, I connected it to other subjects such as geography. By asking about a year during the emirate of the Samanid, the students will remember the whole period of Samanid emirate" (Int. 1:4).

For Nigin, there were, however, deeper reasons behind using recalling. She hoped to help her students to learn from the past, compare the times and develop a new, inclusive perspective:

The students need to know what our ancestors did, what rich and good things they had and what kind of a life they had, what our people had gone through. It is not important that they memorise everything, though in reality this is what exactly is happening, because we do not have textbooks and additional literature. And because they basically speak in a foreign language, they usually can not compose more than a sentence or two on their own. In the Soviet times there were plenty of books and newspapers in Tajik. Now there is almost nothing. Neither they have time for that.

318 Like Sino, Nigin followed the same general Soviet framework for her lesson: (a) organising the lesson, (b) revisiting past topics, (c) presenting new topics, (d) reinforcing, (e) concluding, assessing and assigning homework.
Every day they go to collect *tsushtm* (bush) from the mountains. They already think of the cold right now. By the end of the day they get exhausted. When can they than read books and improve their Tajik?

So they look for something coming out of my mouth. I would like them to learn things more consciously. *I hope kids could explain the past so as to imagine a future. They have to create something new.* The students can achieve it if they are able to use the ideas and learn things with conscience. Let's say, in learning about the Achameneids, they need to compare this time with that time and conclude how Tajiks had lived in that time within the various states and how they live independently now. What are the differences of the times? (Int. 1: 4, emphasis mine).

Nigin pointed out that history, in addition to their personal interests, should also enable the students to consider societal interests. She related the lack of such insights to the way history was taught:

*Look, despite learning and teaching history, we repeat the same mistakes again and again. It is due to how we teach history. We read, read and read but we do not think consciously upon it. By consciously I mean that we should not repeat the same mistakes. Then people start to think about themselves and the society at the same time, think about what will be the bad outcomes of their actions for themselves and for others; not think about their own lives only. What is a society? It is me, you and others. The leaders in 1992, for instance, thought only of themselves and their interests (Int. 1: 47).*

Nigin did not openly announce her purposes to the students. They unfolded during our conversations, which often moved from polite asking and listening sessions to deeper exchanges, involving some disagreement and collaborative probing. Nigin was also aware of the idealistic character of her purposes of teaching. She realised that the values she espoused were not in harmony with the current realities of life:

*By talking about these values, I put the students in a deep puzzlement. Although many students are silent, I believe they are aware of how life goes outside the classroom. For me, they are the future generation that will make decisions about the life and work of the people around. I hope these children will teach honesty to their parents and the street (Int. 1: 102).*

**Commentary**

Nigin is torn between the recent image of "history as a subject of lies", the official announcement of school being free of ideology, and the attempts of the new authorities to use history for promoting "new truths" with a clear nationalist agenda. She is torn between the
students' and community's lack of attention to history, the necessity of passing history at the university entrance exams, and her own perception of the subject as valuable to the development of a stable society and good citizens, and the avoidance of the mistakes of the past.

Nigin finds it hard to accept a plurality of interpretations, because she has been domesticated to the singularity of historical truths in the forms of facts and lessons that have proved themselves useful at all times. She believes she must convey these “truths” to her students. They include the harmfulness of the lust for power, internal feuds, selfishness, lack of ethics and ignoring the implications of one’s actions. Her resolve is to educate human beings balanced by thinking about one’s self, the society, and the people. These students should have ethical and socio-political awareness, an ability to balance the love for one’s motherland with a care for the global society. Nigin opposes personal and national egoism, but she equally opposes lack of stability and integrity in a person.

Nigin’s hold of truth has been shaken. She has moved to see things as having both good and bad sides, but she remains unsure whether to teach the students this, particularly when their success is measured in the school and university exams that continue asking for right answers and facts. Nigin has little trust in the school inspectors and scholars. The scholars hid the truths and the inspectors kept silent, not conveying the voices of the teachers to those above. They continue to ignore the dilemmas the teachers face, such as curriculum irrelevance, language issues and life problems. In Nigin’s view, inspectors should help, not punish. Inspectors, with their evaluative agenda and bias toward higher authorities, have mostly harmed teachers’ professional growth. Teachers, Nigin suggests, are not stupid; they know how to manipulate the inspectors and change agents. As a result, there is no authenticity in relations.

Nigin believes that the teachers’ attempts to serve and improve society are blocked by the current bureaucracy’s approach to carrying out reforms. As a result, she has dramatically increased caution and a more proactive stance in her approach to teaching, to frameworks, changes and reforms, as well as to the people who implement them. She now trusts her own judgements more. She has developed her own position in teaching and life, a position based on critique, doubt, complaint and caution, a position deeply influenced by her subject, history.

Nigin believes in a constancy of the significance of the subject of history; history remains a hard subject, filled with details. This requires that she continue looking at historical material with pedagogical acumen in order to transform the huge mass of material into something
teachable and understandable for the students. As in Soviet times, the struggle between completion of the program and the promotion of students’ understanding persist.

Nigin’s multiple roles suggest three important insights. First, is that the role of the teacher has remained important across Soviet and post-Soviet times, and across the various contexts of classroom, home, school and community. As the realities have become more complex and uncertain, Nigin’s roles have also enlarged and expanded. Second, Nigin has awakened. She has realised that, though her teacher’s role has remained important, she needs to reconceptualise her role in the light of her experiences. She has realised that her role has important implications for the students and society. She has acknowledged that history as subject and education in general failed to prevent civil war or improve the quality of people’s life. Her recent experiences, though painful, have increased her knowledge and have made her aware of the hidden and negative aspects of things that she may have earlier taken for granted. Third, Nigin has transformed herself. She does not want to follow anyone blindly any more, nor does she want her students to do that. She wants to be the person and the teacher she is. She does not want to force her colleagues in the Method Unit to meet. She does not want her students and community fooled by the sweet words of the politicians. She wants the history curriculum to be relevant to the long- and short-term needs of the students, community and nation. She sees the issue of relevance as part of the question of sustainable development of her community. She wants her students to love Tajikistan and be proud of their culture, but not become fanatical about their ethnicity, religion and culture. She endorses reform, but warns of its implications in dividing her community along class and ethnic lines. In doing so, Nigin suggests that justice be at the centre of reform activities.

Together with her school, Nigin fights for her students and the school in the community and for the community in the larger context. She wants Tajikistan to be a peaceful, united, busy and prosperous society. She knows that leaders are important, but she has lost trust in the current leaders. At a time when it is again fashionable to praise leaders and authorities, Nigin has moved to the other extreme, to criticising those in authority. Her critique embodies courage, deep emotions and concerns. As such, it provides some of the powerful messages about educational relevance and change.

Nigin has stayed in teaching for a number of pedagogical and social reasons, which reflect a number of continuities that link Soviet and Post-Soviet periods. The reciprocity of respect, love, trust and usefulness among Nigin and her students, her colleagues and her community has persisted. Nigin tries to balance the various aspects of her expanded role in the
various contexts, between being a mother and a teacher; being a guide and needing a guide; between wondering about issues and being expected to explain them to the community; between making students aware and indoctrinating them as in Soviet times; between preparing students for future society and knowing they need to survive the present ones; between caring for the Imam and being disappointed with some people in his institutions; between complaining, believing that the Imam sees and knows everything, and wondering why these people persist in his institutions; between serving the state and being frustrated with its bureaucracy and lack of care and support. Despite all this, Nigin does not become cynical and give in. She tries to achieve her goals by keeping up to date, complaining, criticising, modelling courage, fairness, openness and care, and participating in the achievements of her students and her community.

Although the teachers' roles and obligations have enlarged, their status and facilities have diminished. Nigin and her colleagues are asked to do much more than in the past while receiving less pay, less appreciation, and less support professionally and morally. As a result, teachers find themselves unprepared to fulfil their obligations intellectually, pedagogically and emotionally. They find it difficult and even undesirable to intellectualise in a society with a crisis of values, lack of basic living requirements, and no safety.

The shift of societal values towards consumerism and material wealth, the growth of corruption and the spread of guns and drugs constantly diminish the teachers' attempts to improve, to innovate and to work hard solely on enthusiasm. They are reaching the limits of their patience and honesty. Teachers' steady slide into becoming peasants and merchants tells a lot about how teachers are valued in post-Soviet Tajik society, a society, that according to teachers, has confused its priorities: The future of Badakhshan, according to Nigin and her colleagues lies in knowledge, intellect and education, not consumerism. These enduring values become more important as people enter the age of globalisation, an age when iron curtain of the Soviet past has come down and the community is entering the larger world of global market and information. Ironically, Nigin and her colleagues find themselves starved for information in a time when much of the rest of the world suffers from information overload.

Nigin's leadership of the Method Unit suggests several valuable messages. First, regardless of the level of freedom that teachers have gained in post-Soviet times in making curricular decisions and regardless of the potential of this "collaborative" structure for overcoming educational and social challenges, the mere creation of the Unit is at best unwanted and at worst threatening, if the basic needs of the teachers' life and work remain unprovided.
There cannot be teacher development when teachers’ lives and work are separated and opposed to each other. If the conditions of teachers' lives do not improve, creating reform structures and forcing teachers to “develop” through them has no meaning. If no one helps them to improve their lives, they cannot help improve the lives of their students.

Second, the opinions of the teachers and of the higher authorities differ with regard to structures for professional development. Although both agree on the potential of structures such as open lessons and the Method Unit, teachers feel that these structures’ unhealthy competitive culture and lack of support can impede rather than assist teachers’ professional growth. In other words, what one might see as a structure for growth, others could experience as an impediment to it.

Nigin offers interesting insights into teachers’ understanding of the concept of method. First, she understands method in a wider and integrated sense, which includes relations, knowledge, personality and technique. Second, method as a professional attribute distinguishes teachers from scholars in the field. At this level a teacher embodies method and the method is the message. Third, Nigin’s conceives method as multi-layered: Some methods are more generic and others are very situational. A teacher’s use of a method, as a complex endeavour, requires consideration of many factors, such as the teacher’s creative abilities, the students’ ways of learning, languages, and relations, and the resources available. The teacher needs an opportunity and ability to concentrate and conceptualise, to understand the theory of an idea and enact it practically through demonstration and attempts in the classroom. The teacher also needs honest feedback not so much from a coach, but from the students about whether they liked it and whether they learnt from it. More important, however, teachers have more methods and pedagogical ideas than they usually exhibit. What change agents may think is a new idea, the teachers in fact may have heard about it, have tried it earlier and put into reserve.

Nigin’s and her colleagues’ views on reform also yield similar insights. Together with Nigin’s ideas on teacher method and the history syllabus, they suggest that teachers hold strong values and knowledge about reform. Nigin suggests that teachers should not simply implement the prescribed curriculum but act as serious partners in reform design and implementation. Nigin’s critical stance towards the history’s existing program, her identification of gaps in the curriculum and her practical rectification of these gaps in order to make the curriculum more relevant to her students have always existed. Yet the system never regarded these views as assets, but rather as part of the “problematic mentality” to be wiped out with ideas coming from
outside. Nigin's vision suggests a new approach to curriculum development and teaching for the new Tajikistan. The self and the present, according to Nigin, have to form the central focus of the historical narrative. From the present, the study of the self should go inward and outward, backward and forward.

As a teacher, Nigin finds the existing program too abstract and difficult for the students' interests and abilities, including their linguistic ones. Her questions are grounded in her experience as a concerned mother, teacher and member of a minority group. She urges that her voice be heard; her real voice will come out after she develops genuine trust and authentic relations.

Due to Perestroika and Glasnost, Nigin has become very cautious of reforms. She believes teachers are not against reform. But they oppose reforms that are done in a way that brings people misery and destroys their country. She has deep questions about the current reform's meaning, purpose, and implications for the children and the society. Although reformers and administrators look at reform politically, Nigin and her colleagues view it on the basis of their concerns for all children and the whole society. For them reform does not mean jumping into or associating with something fashionable. These teachers consider factors that the outside reformers may take for granted. They suggest that reform should not be done for its own sake, not in the mentality of "just because every one else is reforming, let us also reform." Contrary to blind imitation of somebody's idea, the teachers call for considering as many factors as possible, including, primarily, the contextual realities of their own life and work. To consider these factors does not mean to reduce the expectations, but rather to develop a more realistic and creative approach, to become more effective, efficient and ethical.

Nigin questions the morality of participating in reform structures that divide, sort out and privilege the few. She asks whether the market economy should be taken at face value. For her, the market economy and streaming means enabling the motivated and advantaged while ignoring others, teaching and education should serve everyone, including the weaker students. Similarly, she points out that the recent reduction of compulsory schooling from 11 years to 9^319, although perhaps useful financially, has had a negative effect ethically: "The reduction of compulsory education to grade 9 has been harmful to many children. When they (children) are out of school,

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^319 Until the 1980s there was 11-year compulsory education—i.e., complete secondary school; after the collapse of the USSR, this was reduced to nine years.
we cannot work with and control them. This is an age when they easily get involved in drugs and other harmful activities (Int. 1: 71).

Educational reform needs to consider teachers’ voices and visions, lives and works in an integrated way. Bureaucrats and change agents ultimately depend on teachers. Teachers can ultimately subvert the reformers if they are left uninvolved. They can create false stories and appearances of reform, as a result of which things pretty much remain the same despite the appearance of change. Therefore reformers must listen to teachers’ voices, particularly those of resistance, complaint and critique, not to those that praise and flatter. Teachers do not oppose external ideas, but they also suggest that under proper conditions, they can come up with useful ideas themselves. The reformers need to tap and critically engage these ideas. That is where any talk about change should begin. Nigin and her colleagues suggest that reformers should neither take things for granted nor suffer from intellectual arrogance and cultural insularity. They should heed to the saying in Tajik: “Har besha gumon mabar ki kholist, Shoyad ke palange khufia boshad” (Do not ever assume that the jungle is empty. There may be a tiger sleeping behind the bush). Reformers, therefore, need to consider existing ideas and practices before claiming that what they suggest is something new, even though the reforms may be taking place in the remote mountain areas. The reformers should also think critically about their own innovations, the kind of response they expect and their relations on the ground in order not to fall into the traps of self-deception and false consciousness.

**Nigin in the Classrooms**

Here I focus on Nigin’s pedagogy, on how her worldview, including her educational and societal vision, her rationale for teaching, intentions, role perception, her views on History, and her perspectives on change have been enacted in her classroom activities. I describe Nigin’s relations with her students, their parents, and the structures. I portray the methods and resources that Nigin uses, the ways she handles her students’ answers and her perspectives on how her students learn. Through presenting the observations of her official and extra-curricula activities and interviews, I discuss Nigin’s various approaches to curriculum making. Nigin’s classroom practices, affected by the contextual realities, are fundamental to further exposing the tensions and dilemmas she encountered as she tried to put her worldview into practice. The tensions are informative of not only classroom complexity but also the societal and systemic contradictions. As such they disclose not only constraints, but also possibilities for change.
"Simple, Short and Concrete"

Though Nigin stated that there were no formulae in teaching history, from her lessons one could infer a pattern (see previous parts), which she had developed in her pedagogical practice: "Soda, kutoh, wa konkret" (Simple, short and concrete).

By "short and concrete" I mean reducing and organising the information to explain it briefly, shortly and connect it to their life. The program is too large. If I tell the students everything, they will be confused. So, I select the major points from the textbook and summarise them. I divided the last lesson's topic, "Rise and Fall of the Kushans", into the following major parts: (i) economic life in Kushan state; (ii) Silk Road and trade as major source of income; and (iii) the reasons for the fall of Kushans, which included internal feuds in Kushan state and attacks of the Sassanids, Eptalites and other enemies...These are major points because they represent the structure and the reputation of the Kushan state. Kushan coins were very well-known for that. Trade was related to the Silk Road. The reasons for the fall are important. We can learn a lot from them...

By "simple" I mean to teach the material in a language that is easily understandable to the children. Tajik is not our mother tongue. When I was a student, some students could not make any sense of what the teacher was telling in Tajik. They just kept quiet all the time or spoke like parrots. I try to make the language simple, because the history by Ghafurov⁴⁰ is hard even for me to understand (Int.1: 17).

This approach required the further prioritisation of the major parts of the lesson into primary and secondary significance. This she based on her students' ability to perceive and understand the topic.

If they can understand the point by themselves, I do not need to talk about it. For example, the emergence and development of the Kushans' economy and culture could be of primary importance, because students may have never heard about them. I will tell them these things. The importance of the Kushans could be of secondary importance, because as I talk about their emergence, development and fall, the students should be able to make conclusions about the importance of the topic by themselves (Int. 1:17, emphasis mine).

Telling as Warning and Advising

Her lecturing (telling) did not simply impart knowledge; it warned and reminded. In essence, she was telling the students more about what not to trust and get engaged in, rather than letting them think about and figure out the worst implications of these things by themselves. Nigin used this approach to teaching about the civil war in Tajikistan:
I would open the topic: How did it start? What were the reasons? I would tell them that the reasons were thirst for power. They used the slogans of democracy, communism and Islam for their own interests. How the new parties and groups emerged and their mistakes. These parties should have had dialogue and consensus. They went in different directions to capture power. None of these parties had a sense of responsibility. The outcomes were harmful for the poor people, and for those whose languages and religions differed. Because of this, I have a problem with this idea of independence and democracy. I would tell this to the students. I don't care if the commission does not like it. I lived all this and I know that the position-seekers do not care about people. It should not be like that. Not who they are and what position they hold, but what have they achieved and what have they done for us, for the people and the society? My students should know all this so that they are not cheated.

These comments divulge Nigin's rationale and goals for teaching. They also signal that she can teach what she wants regardless of any control. Nigin asks formidable questions about the purpose, methods and ethical implications of the actions of the political reformers during the civil war in Tajikistan. She deconstructs the claims of excellence of Soviet education and suggests criteria for establishing quality education in post-Soviet Tajikistan. These criteria suggest that the issue lies not only in the availability of education and educated people. In fact, limiting education to pure facts, without ethics, responsibility and critical consciousness about the implications of people's actions (particularly those of power-holders), would bring negative consequences to the country. To avoid this, Nigin offers an approach that looks at both good and bad; she makes the students aware of the larger forces and political agendas of those who call for change. This approach extends beyond technical literacy to socio-political consciousness.

Though warning and advising were qualities embedded throughout her whole practice, they became most obvious in Nigin's telling-lectures:

I use the advice and moralistic expressions because they are the essence and purpose of the course Messages of Ethics, which teaches about good behaviours and ethics. But they are useful in

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320 Nigin refers to a scholarly monograph written by the Tajik Academician Gafurov in 1972, called Tajiks. It is used as a reference book for university students.

321 Nigin refers to the post-Soviet stand-off between the pro and anti-Communist forces in Dushanbe in 1992.

322 Nigin refers to unofficial statements about MBAP having the highest number of higher-education degree holders per 1000 people in Tajikistan.
Human Being and Society and also History. They define the purpose of the lessons in Message on Ethics, which is teaching good behaviours and ethics. When there are no textbooks and materials, moralistic prose, poems and verses are a good resource. Listening to what wise people say always gets you to the right place. I have a topic in the program called: “Listening to wise people” (Int. 1: 96).

At the same time, Nigin acknowledged that despite the frequency of citing moralistic poetry, the ethical practices of her students and the community are not improving. She wondered whether education by itself was enough to create a new society:

Each year one more subject about good behaviours is added: Messages on Ethics, Human Being and Society, History, Tajik language and literature, Russian language and literature, Ethics and Knowledge323, Human Being and Book of Peace-Making. I often repeat the same thing in all the subjects I teach. Despite this, our ethics, our society are getting worse, because our actions go one way and our talk in the opposite way (Int. 1: 96).

Despite her personal critical consciousness, Nigin, in her teaching, remained faithful to her “telling” method, which in some ways undermined her enabling agenda. Her approach suggests a continuity that simultaneously embodies change: Telling has continued as a method but its nature has become critical telling, coloured with warnings, where the emphasis is on revealing the negative implications of a statement. Observations of Nigin's lessons exemplify the prominence of telling, through the short, simple and concrete approach (e.g., Box 15).

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**Box 15: Human Being and Society, Grade 11, May 12, 1999**

The lesson was in the History/social science classroom. Ten students were present and all were girls. The only male student was missing. The desks were arranged in square configuration. The girls were sitting far from each other. I sat on a chair that did not have one leg.

N. Today we talk about things related to our lives. I want you to know that I am interested in your opinions. Writes on Board.

**Family**

N. Can anyone tell me what is a family? Let's close our books. Do not worry. Tell me what you think.

St. Man, woman, and children living together.

N. Good. Also love and care among the family members... What is love and care? Sit down. Take it easy do not stand up. Talk the way you wish. How does love and care emerge?

St. Good intention

... Loving each other.

N. Also liking each other, respecting each other, and looking at each other ethically and with human feelings. Good. So what do we consider before creating a family?

[The deputy head opens the door] OH: Sorry... is everyone available?

N. Only Said Musallamov is absent. [Turns to class. Moves around. Students cough regularly. Many of them have hats].

N. It is mid May and still cold around. We all are sick. ... Ok, What are the conditions necessary for creating a family?

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323 Ethics and Knowledge is not an official subject but is taught on an extra-curricular, voluntary basis.
St. Voluntarism
St. Age relevance...
N. What do you mean?
St. Reaching the age of puberty.
N. Yes, also mutual understanding. How do you know all this? We know it from life, from our families. Why, for example, the marriage age in Ukraine is 16, in Belarus 17, and here it is 18?
St. Depends on nature, food.
N. [Takes up] ...and economic life. Now, you tell me what is reaching the age of maturity? Is it getting the certificate of maturity? [Everyone laughs and smiles]. Or is it a biological term?
St. We are not studying biology. [The students said this in Shugnani. Nigin interrupts them]:
N. Speak like me, in literary Tajik. [Nigin looks at me]. These are from the social science stream. They do not study science. They pay little attention to language. What does voluntarism mean?
St. It is not giving in to the pressures of parents and relatives.
N. What is parents’ pressure?
[Silence].
N. It is when you are forced to marry according to what your parents want and tell you do. Not the way you yourself want. When your voice is not heard...Good, Can anyone tell me what is nikah?
St. The basis of the family.
N. Why? There are people who go and live together without being nikahed.
St. But they are not married.
N. How do people know they are in love?
St. Love feeling.
N. What does it mean?
Sts....[smile... some feel shy, look down].
N. Good... Now listen to me. I will tell you everything. First how they look at each other, second, how honest they are with each other and third how consistent they are in their relations... [She uses the board for teaching all this, where she briefly writes each of these points. She looks at the class and says]: Look, if I am wrong you correct me. I think students find it hard to talk about this openly in front of all their peers. [Moves forward]. Good, the partners also need to think of each other, for their relations everything is important....[Next, she wrote “maturity”] Soon you get the certificate of maturity, can create families, go for further studies, go and work in any field you want.... Goes further: Reaching maturity means physically, spiritually, and ethically. [She makes some hand moves to show that one becomes tall and develops bodily, points to her brain in the sense of becoming mature]. Why is the age of maturity in Ukraine 16 years old and in Belarus 17 years old and here 18. What influences this? [She goes further and names the factors]. Economic, what does this include: food... what happens when kids get married before they reach 17?
N. Nature also affects the growth of the kids and their ability to produce children [she uses Shugnani language]. Shirchoy, our main food, is very poor in nutrition.
   Cultural life. They have more opportunities for knowing about each other.
   Nikah. What types of nikah do we have: Religious and civic. Which is better?
St. We are Ismailis so we do religious nikah.
N. Can you tell me about the details of nikah.
St. There is special water to be drunk.
N. What does the water mean?
Sts. Joining together. [Nigin takes over]...
N. Purity. Indeed we may need to invite a khalifa to the class. [Nigin shows a civil “certificate of marriage”]. What is the difference between religious and civil marriages?
St. In one you drink water, in the other you get a document.
N. Which one is better?

324 Attestat зрелости, from Russian, is a Soviet certificate of maturity, i.e., high school graduation certificate.
325 Nikah from Arabic, stands for religious legislation of marriage.
326 KHALIFA is a religious leader in the Ismaili community in Badakhshan.
St. The state one, because it has got a document.
N. Do we need to have religious nikah then?
St. Yes.
N. Why... In the constitution, [she takes it up] there is a saying: Family is under protection of the state and state guarantees the rights of the members of family as it does guarantee the rights of the whole family.
St. Are there people ready to have family?
N: Good. Let me put the question back. When does one get ready to have family? When do you think you will be ready?
St. Get higher education.
St. Get profession.
N. Why?...
St. To know how to live and educate the children. [Mostly, two to three girls answer her questions].
N. Be able to look after the children and be able to feed the family... So what else do we need to consider? [She goes on]. Education: Am I educated enough to help my family and look after my kids?
Economic: Can I feed the family? Can I educate my husband ethically, culturally and economically? To be able to tell my husband: Look khujain327, look this is good and this is bad for the family. These clothes are better. Can we go and visit our kids? [Here bell rings. Nigin goes on] I want you to think at home about the principle of independence in decision-making and selecting life partners. We know that a lot of us are being forced to marry. The next question for you to think about is, how do I imagine my future spouse? [She repeats the question in Shugnani].

Over the course of this lesson, the students' participation decreased and Nigin moved to advise and tell all the "truth." When I later pointed out that Nigin, contrary to her own statement on letting students think, had done all the speaking for the students even in the higher grades, she justified it on the grounds that (a) these were students not interested in the social science stream; (b) they were shy to talk about such life issues as in my presence; (c) their Tajik language was too weak and they did not want to look stupid in front of me; (d) there was a need to speak in Shugnani, their mother tongue328, rather than Tajik; and (e) students do not talk freely in Tajik in order to avoid making mistakes and being ridiculed by their peers. Nigin also admitted that she may have not organised the lesson properly and that she should have encouraged the students to speak up more (Int. 1: 53).

Nigin often justified her 'telling' as due to the constant demands, students' language difficulties, the inspections from above, and the lack of resources such as textbooks. Nigin does her best, but is aware of the implications of her lecturing for the students' learning:

I recommend Ghafurov's history for them, though it is hard even for me to understand. We should use Shugnani, but we are not allowed. Even the parents would oppose this. Because there are no other sources, I have made these children parrots. They look at my mouth and take in whatever I say. I prepare my lecture from what I have gathered in the last 20 years. I bring books and maps, though some of them are not fully relevant. Children could still find some of the cities there. I ask

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327 Khujain, from Tajik, literally means lord, chief, head of a field. The term khujain is used for husband as the master of the house.
328 This is an important factor. Essentially, the majority of the students in MBAP do not use Tajik anywhere except school. Due to their weakness in the language, they keep silent to avoid ridicule from their peers.
them to take notes of the important points. Mostly, they are just telling me back what I said earlier. I still plan daily. In history when you are not prepared you do not know what to talk about. Students quickly notice it. I also prepare because of these new subjects (Int. 1: 57).

The next observation, from a history lesson in grade 9 about Perestroika, both confirms and contradicts her statements about preparing herself and doing most of the telling. This lesson illustrates of her warning, criticising and advising, which in turn reveal her angry and frustrated voice (Box 16).

[This lesson took place in the history classroom, which I have already described in the section on the school. With two absent, there were only 11 students in the classroom. Out of these, 10 were girls. The students' coughing constantly interrupted the lesson].

N. At the time of Perestroika you were in grade 6 or 7. [In fact, Nigin got confused here. These students at the time of Perestroika were rather 6 or 7 years old. They were silent...She went on]...This is an open session and I would like you to speak and express your opinions. We are going to talk about the following major points. She writes on the board:

- Reasons for Perestroika
- Purposes of Perestroika
- Results of Perestroika

[Then turns to the class]:
N. What is Perestroika?
St. Change of the society
N. Why was it needed?
St. Wrong doing...
N. Speak fully. Speak like this: There was wrong-doing in the state administration of affairs.
St. There was wrong-doing in the state administration of affairs.
N. What was that wrong-doing about?
[Silence]
N. What is another reason?
St. People were not provided with the necessary things.
N. When did the Perestroika start?
St. 1985.
N. Were you hungry at that time? Were you unclothed?
St. No, there were enough clothes in the shops.
...[Silence]
N. I see your knowledge is limited. Maybe you are shy to speak Tajik. You need to speak Tajik, because otherwise your grades are going to be lowered. When you go to Dushanbe to university, you will have a hard time, if your language is weak. People there will make fun of you. Let me tell you all about the topic [Here she started her lecture, which took almost 20 minutes].

N. In 1985-86, the leaders wanted to change...[she went on breaking the reasons for Perestroika into three parts: economic, social, and political. As she talked about the topics, she asked the students immediately after each point (e.g., economic reason) if they understood what she had said. For example: The quality of life went down. What is meant by quality? Listen to me, because I am going to ask you. Yes, there were goods, but most of that was external. The local production was of a very low quality. Certainly there was bread. Brezhnev said: "If there is bread there will be song."[She went on.] Every one was giving orders. Orders became so many that no one cared for their implementation. No one cared whether they were fulfilled, both at the top and more so at the bottom. Then, misuse of position and corruption was another factor. The Party leadership had its own restaurants and special shops. If any good
clothes came, the first people to get them were the leaders of the Party and Government. Their children were better dressed than many others. They had all imported clothes for themselves. Cheating and paperwork became too much. For example, Uzbekistan would always add about 50,000 tons of cotton to its real annual production of cotton... Corruption and nepotism was another factor. Everyone was thinking only about his or her own pocket and about their own relatives. If there were a leader from Shugnan or Roshan, he would not care about the others. In Tajikistan, most of the positions were in the hands of the Khujandis. Encouragement and recognition both disappeared. Hard work was not encouraged. Thus the production went down year by year. The quality went down too. [Here Nigin paused and asked some questions like]: What were the reasons, Soiba? What were some of the malpractices in the economy? She pointed to another girl, sitting beside me. After the girls re-told what she had said and she joined them in responding to her questions, Nigin provided her own version of the results: Results were destructive. The main principles of governance were not clear. For example, democracy and Glasnost were misunderstood. I think it should have been done more slowly and with one field first... As with every country, there were external forces. Countries such as America and England further deepened the internal feuds between the leaders. All this ended our state.

St. Unfortunately.

N. [agreeably]: Sorry about that. [Nigin ended her lecture and turned to asking questions such as]: Have you understood something? Is there any question? So what were the outcomes? What were the reasons? [Here the bell rang. She went on]: For the next session, please ask your elder relatives and get ready for the session about Perestroika. You should talk more about this topic, because you know a lot about it. Dress warmer; look, you are all coughing. Wear jireebs under your shoes.

Nigin seems to have made some assumptions about how the lesson should proceed. Though acknowledging her failure to notice that these children, even at the end of Perestroika, were only 10--too small to have noticed what was going on then--Nigin reiterated: “This is an actual lesson and these children know a lot about Perestroika from the conversation in their homes” (Int.1: 40). Nigin originally had a different plan for the lesson. She wanted the students to teach it and she would have just added comments if they got stuck. "I ended up lecturing, because they did not speak and the time was passing" (Int.1: 40). Later, Nigin further explained why and how lecturing was essentially affected by the challenges of home, school and classroom:

I confused Monday with Tuesday. Yesterday I stayed till 9 30 p.m. to plant potatoes with my children, because time is running out. Sher has been too busy with the NGO. He is in Osh and we can’t wait for him. It is also the end of the year. We need to prepare better tickets for exams. For that, we need to talk to the historians at the University. They may fail many of our graduates due to history exams. My paper for the conference on the Samanids is not prepared either and the deadline is coming. The students also do not speak in a concrete way. Instead of saying the point, they move around it. They may not know the right words in Tajik and move around the idea. When the students did not take over the lesson, I told them and did not waste the time (Int. 1:40).
“Children Can Take Knowledge”

One of Nigin's reasons for using lectures was her assumption about how children learn. Nigin believed that students' learning was directly connected to her teaching. Therefore, her organising of good teaching was crucial to her students' successful learning. She believed that it was possible to cover the program and ensure that:

100% of the students learn the topic...When the topic is small and I have enough time. If I explain it well they will learn it well. Explaining well means to understand it very well by myself, be well prepared, and use simple language. If I use Shugnani in explaining the difficult words and ideas and break the text into parts. Use teaching aids, get students' attention and relate my thinking to the students' ideas (Int. 1: 45).

Further, Nigin believed that teachers and students have also got used to telling: "I have taught this way for so many years. I have learned so much by this way. Our children can learn in many ways, including lecturing"(Int.1: 45). Several deeply-seated cultural and linguistic assumptions in Shugnani, Roshani and Tajik related to teaching, such as darsum nawjid (I passed on the lesson), and donishum dakchu (I gave knowledge, dispensed knowledge), and donishum zukht (I took knowledge), reinforced Nigin's choice of telling and lecturing:

Students can take if they are ready for that, have curiosity about the topic, have been looking for information. When it comes, they can take it. In this case, I can say I gave knowledge.... Honestly I never thought about these words. Maybe a better word is what new things they have learnt, what they have added and what they have increased further, rather than saying that I gave knowledge. I have not created it myself. We just use these words and do not think if they really make any difference as far as our teaching is concerned (Int.1: 74).

Nigin's understanding of how children learn moved between social, psychological and linguistic assumptions.

Students' learning is dependent on their ability to perceive (qobiliyati dark kuni), biological growth and development of their thinking. How much a child can learn from and understand what I say? Depending on their consciousness, the students are not the same as five fingers. It is the biological aspect of the students, their ability to think and ability to perceive. That is how students are different from each other. We can still add economic dimension too. That would not be wrong too. Also I have mentioned to you the language. If I use Shugnani, they learn better. You know
some of our students never master Tajik. But Shugnani is also not useful. It does not work beyond the airport" (Int. 1: 110, emphasis mine).

Sometimes Nigin considered a city child, or a child of a well-to-do family, smarter, because of the exposure to more diverse experiences or their parents’ ability to provide learning materials. In other times, she acknowledged that great people in Badakhshan have emerged from the villages, that there are good people from poor families and spoiled children from rich families. Further she also added another cultural assumption—zot, a belief that some families are genetically gifted in certain fields of knowledge or craft. It may be perceived as given by God or by nature. It becomes a traditional nomus (pride) for the family; thus anyone from that family is perceived to be good in that activity. A whole family could have zot in math, languages, wrestling, or drawing, for example. Though admitting this as “not easily explainable” factor, Nigin still saw a place for the teacher: “The teacher shows the way for the gifted too. The child is quick to think about a problem, to understand and to perceive. But before this, he has to be guided by the teacher. A teacher throws a problem to them” (Int. 1: 96).

Handling Student's Answers

Nigin’s beliefs about the existence of truth in history, about what the students know and how students learn strongly influenced how she handled her students’ responses. The students’ linguistic ability, time pressures and the need to cover the curriculum also influenced her approach to teaching. Nigin allowed for some variety in how the students expressed their answers, but she firmly controlled the substance of the “truth.” She agreed that students might say something that is in the books in a different way:

I mean, in language that is a bit different. He may use words that are simpler, and sentences that are shorter. Because he tries to speak in Tajik, he has a hard time to express himself. This has to be considered by the authorities. Many students’ grades are lowered due to this. No one even wants to listen to when we speak about the students’ language problems. They blame us that we have not taught the children good Tajik. But that is not my job. I am a history teacher. So, I help him to become a bit closer to the path. I need to provide more explanation to the student, to correct him. I would not ridicule him, if he expresses his opinion, if his views are right (Int. 1: 62, emphasis mine).

The “right” answer was, however, confined to “Whatever we have studied, I know the truth of it. And the student may say it closely to what I know the truth of it. Then it is fine. For

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332 “Not useful beyond the airport” a local proverb, means not useful except within the immediate region.
example, if a student say that the May 9th is Victory Day, I agree with him” (Int. 1: 62). And if
the student says that the May 9th is not Victory Day, Nigin “would not agree with him, because it
is the internationally-recognised day when the Soviets installed their flag of victory over
Reichstag. And I can explain and justify this point to my students and anyone else” (Int. 1: 62).

Expecting truth in the form of the right answer, Nigin made decisions about interrupting
her students or letting them go ahead. At the same time, she consciously and carefully ensured
that the students did not get offended. To have a good relationship with students was essential. A
good relationship helped Nigin convince the students to “take knowledge” from her; that her
intentions were good and that they could trust her. Therefore, the knowledge she imparted
would be useful. Relations served as a means to an end for her. Making the students accept knowledge
became an acute issue, given the post-Soviet poverty of learning materials, and the abundance of
contradictory interpretations that might confuse the students:

Sometimes I ask a student and do not give her a chance to speak fully because she moves around,
but never says exactly what is required. Due to the shortage of time, I interrupt her. I sense when
she says something too far from the point. I have talked with her. See, when I talk to them on an
individual basis I use Shugnani now. That makes it less formal and students also tell me what
their real problems are. I usually use Shugnani to encourage them. So the girl realises why I
interrupted her. She does not get upset. I do not put her personality down... I agree if she
expresses her opinion. I wish my students to be fast thinkers and speak good Tajik (Int. 1: 37,
emphasis mine).

Nigin's reflexive account of several incidents of handling students' responses revealed her
awareness of the roots, limitations and implications of her actions. Yet just being aware did not
suffice to change them. Despite the fact Nigin admitted this, she does not appear to see it as a
problem:

This is a habit of mine, my personal quality. I want the students to be ready to answer quickly and
tell me fast, fast so that I can tell them something more. I am always worried that the bell is going
to ring soon and I have not yet said what I needed to say. See due to cold we have about two to
there months of vacation in winter. Then periods are also shortened This talk gets left and that
talk gets left. Certainly, that is from the most important talks, not the secondary thoughts.333
Secondly, the student may get far from my question. In this case I do not waste time. I tell him:
Now you listen to what the question is about. This is a mistake of mine to jump to an answer on
his behalf. He is a child and his language is not like mine and he needs time to speak it. We all

333 On prioritising the text into primary and secondary, see the section "Short, simple and concrete" above.
speak in a second language. The student may feel that I did not like his answer. I need to eliminate this mistake, but am unable. I have got used to it (Int. 1: 63).

"I have no Problem with Theories and Authorities..."

Despite the de-ideologization of schools in the former USSR (Ekloff, 1993; Long & Long, 1999; Webber, 2000) several ideologies surfaced in Nigin’s lessons, Marxism–Leninism being the most prominent. Nigin used Marxist terms and concepts, such as class, state, feudalism, imperialism, masses, and ownership of the means of production to explain her lessons. Her lesson on the Mazdakite Movement334 began with a question: What is feudalism? Nigin talked about feudalism, serfs and exploitation, and pointed out that the class struggle against feudalism and the creation of a society based on equity and shared property constituted the main motivation behind the Mazdakite movement. Talking about the movement’s defeat, Nigin wanted the children "to know why a king supported the Mazdakite movement at the beginning and why he rejected it at the end." She then connected it to a more general question of why people are one way today and the other way tomorrow. During the interview, Nigin stated that she does not believe in people who change so quickly from one side to that of its extreme: "We had communists who became democrats and now have become Muslims" (Int. 1: 56).

Nigin’s nostalgia for the Soviet Union was expressed in the words “unfortunately” and “sorry”, in the conclusion of a lesson. She reasoned as follows:

In the Soviet Union we had food, clothes. We did not spend days looking for food. The queues were after posh clothes and goods, not the basics. Here in the village, there were no queues. I feel sorry about the Soviet collapse. Because we were not grateful, we even lost the basics. I think this democracy has so far been no match to that. Neither are we free to express what we want (Int. 1: 40, emphasis mine).

Islam had a minimal influence on Nigin. A faithful person, in her view, was one of good deeds, not boastfully performing prayers. Her lesson "Family", for example, hinted that she prioritised the secular marriage contract over the religious (Box 15). Nigin avoided discussing the tensions between the various manifestations of Communist and Islamic ideologies.

During Perestroika and Independence I was a bit worried about the excess of talk about Islam, but then I realised that the major principles of the "code of the constructor of communism"335 are

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334 Mazdakite movement, a "proto-socialist" movement in the 4th century AD, which took place in Iran and gained adherents not only amongst the populace but also among the rulers, including king Qubad.

335 Code of ethics of the constructor of communism was a document regulating the principles upon which the ethics and behaviours of the Soviet citizen communist were to be grounded (see Long & Long, 1999).
similar to those of "javonmardi" (chivalry) in Islam. The problem is how to apply them in practice. I don't see that happening with either of them (Int. 1: 103).

Nigin rarely used the Imam's name and image in her classroom. Though a social science teacher, she--unexpectedly for the school--did not volunteer to teach Ethics and Knowledge. She referred to herself as not feeling well enough physically and prepared enough intellectually to teach this "very serious subject." Further, unlike many people, who viewed the AKDN as a body that had replaced the old Soviet sources of supplies, Nigin felt disturbed at being a receiver of free supplies for such a long time. Powerlessness deeply hurt her self-esteem and honour. Nigin was cautious and caring about her society, as usual.

I eat this humanitarian food, wear these clothes and am worried. Why is it all so free? Is this really without any conditions? How are we going to pay it back? What is going to happen to our country? What is wrong with us that we do nothing and every thing is brought to us freely? I do not enjoy all this for such long time. I feel pity for the people around eating all this without a feeling of shame (Int. 1: 67).

Similarly, despite her anger and frustration with Tajik and Soviet scholars for providing a "distorted version of reality" during Soviet times, Nigin promoted the new and officially-endorsed interpretation of the term "Tajik" (i.e., "crown holders"). She ensured that the students recited the national anthem, and knew the symbols of the Tajikistan crest. At the same time, she hoped that this official ideological interpretation would be challenged later in the higher grades as well as on the street:

They will face new possibilities and explanations as they grow. The good thing about this new era is that we cannot stop information and people from coming and going. If the powerful Soviet Union could not do that, how can poor Tajikistan do so? (Int. 1: 55).

Rectifying Gaps in the Program

Previously, I discussed Nigin's views on the question of curriculum relevance, including her identification of the gaps in the history curriculum. During her formal lessons, Nigin managed to accommodate the program to her students' and her society's needs, incidentally including events from local history. To do so in a full sense, she arranged extra-curricular activities devoted to filling in the missing parts of the curriculum. For example, at the end of May, 1999, Nigin arranged a meeting between the children of the lyceum-internat and myself, where the children asked what my children do, how they learned English, how I got to Canada,

336 Nigin referred to parts of the book Pandiyati Jawonmardi (Messages of Chivalry), (Ivanov, 1953).
what a Canadian school looks like, and whether there are Pamirian and Ismaili people in Canada. The discussion was mainly in Shugnani. A teacher commented on the activity:

You have lit a spark in the hearts of these children and created motivation for the rest of their life. They know what to do and how to go about it. Your example of one who hails from here and has reached that far, showed that people can do many things through hard work and without connections (FN. 1:76).

On May 12, 1999, Nigin with the help of another teacher arranged an activity on "Respecting bread and the work of the farmers." The show was an extension of her lesson from "Messages on Ethics." In this emotional session, several adults, including Nigin, had tears in their eyes, when a grade 5 student said that from December 28, 1994 until March 3, 1995 there had been no bread in the whole village. Bread was equated with mother, motherland and the sacred. In the Pamirs, people never throw away bread. If people find a crust of bread thrown on ground, they take it up, kiss it, rub it to their forehead, and put it on a high place so that no foot steps over it. Among many poems, two particularly illustrate this attitude. The first is by Nasir Khusraw:

_Mardi dehqon dasti tu hargiz nabinad dardro,
Misli tu kam dida olam bo sakhwat mardro._

(O farmer man, may your hands never feel any pain,
This world has rarely seen someone compete with you in generosity).

The second poem by Tursunzoda, a famous Soviet-Tajik poet:

_Az zamin non rezahoro chida memolam ba chashm,
Noni garmi mehnatiro dida memolam ba chashm._

(From the ground I gather pieces of bread and rub at my eyes,
When I notice warm, honestly deserved bread, I take it and rub at my eyes).

On May 8, 1999 Nigin arranged a meeting between more than 100 students of the school and a 78-year-old veteran of WWII. I observed the event notes (Box 17).
[This lesson was devoted to May 9th, the Day of Soviet Victory over Nazi Germany. The veteran-Bakhtali (B), was an old, clean-shaved man, dressed in a green suit over a white shirt and tie, and a Stalinist cap, with his chest displaying dozens of orders and medals. A stereo was playing a Russian song, which I had heard through watching Soviet movies devoted to WWII: Voina narodnaya, svyashchennaya voina (The people’s war is going on, the sacred war...). A group of musicians sat at the other side of the hall and played local music during the meetings’ breaks, mainly about the motherland and the Aga Khan in Shugnani and Tajik. The tables of the dining hall were re-arranged into rows for this session. There were a few teachers and the school personnel in addition to the students. The participants spoke in Shugnani and Tajik. Nigin opened the lesson-discussion.]

N. What day are we going to celebrate tomorrow? Sts.[In chorus]. Day of Victory.

N. What does war mean?

St. Brother-killing,

... Hunger,

....Bloodshed

N. Poverty, Right. Thank you...[She moved on to talk about WWII, particularly about the years from 1941-45. After 5-7 minutes about WWII, Nigin moved to talk about the recent war in Tajikistan. She made a three-minute talk about how politicians misled the populace, caused the war to happen and the negative effects emerging from it. The head of the school smiled at Nigin’s brevity in explaining the civil war in Tajikistan. All her critique about the politicians and the government is going to be conveyed to those above and we are going to have additional problems; that is how she thinks. She is a straightforward person. Nigin asked all to stand in silence in the memory of those who died in WWII and the Tajikistan civil war. Next, she requested Bakhtali to talk. Bakhtali’s talk was rich and lively. The veteran talked less about his fighting and more about current realities. He spoke in Shugnani, inserting Russian and Tajik phrases in between. He joined the war in 1943, at the age of 18 went to training and was sent to the Ukrainian front in 1943. Once he was ordered to leave the site where he was fighting with his Pamirian fellows. He tried to refuse the order by saying that it was hard for him to leave his Pamirian-Tajik brothers, many of whom had already been killed. In response, he was told that in the Soviet Union, particularly in war, all were brothers and sisters, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Russians, Tatars and Jews. He connected that with current realities where all these people are divided:]

B. For me it is so bad to know that it is unsafe to move out of Badakhshan, when I fought for Ukraine and Russia as for my motherland.[He told stories about the war until the victory, which he celebrated in Berlin. He asked the students]:

B. Why did we fight Japan?

Sts. Because Japan assisted Germany.

B. Grace of God on your fathers. [He picked up their word and went on]. Let me tell you that Japanese were better fighters than Germans, but they were too small in number.[Then he asked]:

B. Do you know what was my sole wish during the whole war?

Sts. To remain alive

B. Maybe.... But for me the main wish was to get a good and long sleep. Do you know how I remained alive and how I coped with the hardships of war for nearly three years? I was used to hard work and a hard life. As a child I climbed the mountains, collected wood, cut fodder, broke stones and carried things on my back. Do any of you do this? A few students put up their hands. Bakhtali used a Russian proverb: Tyajelo v uchenie, lekgo v boyu (hardships of training make it easy in the real war). Those who were spoiled children had very hard time. They cried, some killed themselves, because they were not used to the hardships of life. Nothing comes easy. [He showed his medals] Be hard working, listen to your teachers and learn your lessons. Teachers are ahead of your parents. If you take care of your teachers and

327 Orders are awards of a higher value than medals. There were various orders, such as the Order of Lenin, the Friendship order etc.
A proverb, 

A day of a wild dog, he is not a man; the men should listen to them, they will work days and nights for you. They will treat you better than their own children. [Several of his medals had Lenin and some had Stalin inscribed on them].

B. Stalin worked like a prophet. He did not let the youth of Badakhshan go to the war until 1943, because he was keeping us ready to stand against a possible invasion here. We live on the borders and no one knew who was going to declare war next at that time. Stalin also knew that we were going to win: "Our cause is right and we will win" [Bakhtali read Stalin's saying from one of his medals. Then he switched to preaching good habits and behaviours to the kids]. Play but do not mix it with misbehaviours. Do not mix it with soil, sleep less and do not whistle: Har zamone ke bepadar boshad, To ba piri rasad magar boshad. [He recited this local proverb "It will be a surprise to see a boy, who does not obey his father reach an old age alive and with fame." He continued]: Those who do not listen to their teachers will have the life of a wild dog. I have heard kids saying: He who reads, learns and helps his parents at home is like a girl, he is not a man; the men should rather fight, smoke opium and hashish. Do not listen to this talk. You should tell them to come and join classes.

[Bakhtali recalled that in 1936 he met the Communist revolutionary Shotemur in this village just a year before he was killed in Stalin's purges. He recalled Shotemur's words: “Guard the cause of this socialist state strongly. It will provide you with food, clothes and good education.” That is why, said Bakhtali, I went to fight voluntarily, though I was still underage for military service. But I tell you that fighting is the worst thing. My other wish is there should never be war any more. Nothing is worse than war. [He suggested an alternative]: Tawono buwad har ki dono buwad, ba donish dili pir barno buwad [The powerful is the one who is knowledgeable, Even an old man's heart is young when he keeps gaining knowledge]. Get the best education and be a good person. The best fight is to fight with one's desires, said Imam Aly.

[The children recited and sang poems about the Imam, peace and the defence of the motherland. A boy sang: Mother I am leaving you to defend the motherland. A girl equated peace with smiles, happiness, and work in her song and concluded: Long live peace. Death to war! Bakhtali was presented with books and hugs. Bakhtali gave jolly advice to his nephew, a student of the lyceum-internat]: Study, man, otherwise I shall take out your skin. [To the rest of the hall]: If you want to be popular you study hard and listen to your teachers: Qamchini okhun gul ast, waqti zadan bulbul ast (the whip of the teacher is a flower and in the time of beating it sounds like the nightingale’s song). [Each time Bakhtali used a proverb, we all laughed].

Nigin stated that the meeting was multi-purposed. It was about bravery, hard work, listening to the teacher, loving one's country, being proud of ancestors' contributions, friendship, usage of local history, good behaviour, and ethics. “That was a moment of truth, brotherhood and unity. See, here we let the children choose the language to speak, both Tajik and Shugnani, and they enjoyed the class. This is a better way of teaching than if I told them about WWII” (Int. 1: 24).

**Assessment: Teaching Strikes Back**

In her daily assessment routines, Nigin assigned marks at the end of the lesson in the class journal and in the students' diaries, such as “Zainura, your mark is a 5; Zainura knows a lot of proverbs and explained their meanings well. Abdul Ali Shoeva, a 3; you need to listen to what others say. Ifikhor, 4; try harder next time. The rest I am going to mark tomorrow (Messages on Ethics, Grade 5, May 15, 1999. Obs. 1: 87). I also observed two important assessment occasions in Nigin's practice. These were the annual assessment of the students at the lyceum and Nigin's lesson on self-assessment through getting feedback from the students.
The annual assessment: Adding to frustration. Nigin spent a full lesson on assessing the students. It was a delicate procedure with a number of difficulties. Perhaps due to its emotional nature, Nigin used both Shugnani and Tajik. This was a critical incident in the sense that the results determined whether the children should remain in the prestigious gifted program or should leave for the general stream. Nigin wanted to upgrade the students’ annual marks so that they all could continue to study at the lycée-internat. Thus, no one in the village would point at them as losers and they would maintain their self-esteem as bright students, ahead of many of their peers. I observed this lesson (Box 18).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malika</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Are you happy? [Malika smiles, and looks at me in a sign of happiness, nods in agreement to the teacher].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslimshoeva</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>Why was Bactria called Greco-Bactrian State? When was the state of Parthia established? As the child answered, Nigin interrupted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Hilolov</td>
<td>4,4,4,5</td>
<td>What should I give him? [Looks at the class].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azima</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>Azima has been having a headache for the last few weeks. His mother asked him to slow down and not try so hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fazila</td>
<td>5,4</td>
<td>Fazila got two 5s and one 4. She is also very helpful to the others. Good, let me ask you one question. What did princess Tomarisk tell the King Cyrus? Fazila. She said he would drink his own blood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logonazarova</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mavlonazarova, 5; You need to learn how to speak more. You need to read more and speak more in Tajik. (Obs. 1: 123).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nigin was disturbed and frustrated by the assessment. She viewed herself as responsible for not only the good results but also the failures. Painfully, teaching had backfired, affecting her mood, personal well-being and her relations at home:

I am worried about Azima. When I gave her a 3 and saw her tears, my heart was squeezed. If I give her a 4, that is injustice towards other students. She could not answer the additional questions to improve her mark. I compare kids against each other and that affects me deeply. I need to do extra work with the students on an individual basis. This year Azima missed the classes for about two weeks. She got a cold and did not look after herself. As result, she spent two weeks in the hospital. I knew she was going to end up this way. Teachers know much earlier how their students will end up. Now, if she gets 4 in Math she will stay in the lyceum, because she is in Math stream. I feel bad when my students get low grades. I feel I have not helped enough. Moreover, I am already upset with the annual grades. Not all the students did as well as I expected. I may, over nothing, fight with my own daughter or son or even husband. Due to the frustrations related to assessments, I have been unable to sleep well for the last week. To avoid such frustrations requires more time and conditions to work with the weaker students (Int.1:69, emphasis mine).

During the assessment lesson and the subsequent interview, it also surfaced that Nigin considered students' social skills in addition to their academic achievements, though not in all cases. The academic achievement had a higher value, though she spoke about upbringing as the more important aspect of education. In addition to marking the students' specific answers to her questions, she also compared them with each other. The social aspects were implicit. Nigin also mentioned as criteria for assessment the students' participation in the classes, their previous marks and attention, and their ability to think and conclude. Her students did not know all the criteria for assessment (e.g., the social skills):

I gave Fazila a 5 for caring about others. She wants everybody know and she helps the others. That's why. The same I would say about the first girl, Malika, too...I have that in my mind but do not know why I did not say that (Int. 1: 69-70, emphasis mine).

Nigin's concerns about the value and quality of her relationships with the stakeholders in and out of the classroom increased her responsibility, carefulness and consideration of a number of factors in assessing Gholib:

I gave Gholib a 4 and his mother has agreed, too. She asked me about his progress and told me that from hard work he has been having headaches for the last few days. She has told him not to
kill himself for grades. She is a teacher in our school. But I used good words, so that he continues studying well (Int. 1: 71).

Getting feedback: “Let’s look for a critique, not praise!” The students’ feedback was important for Nigin’s relations with them and their parents and for her own professional growth. A students’ feedback lesson (Box 19) illuminated Nigin’s attempts to use group work and other methods, her care for and relationship with the students, and some of the differences between teaching in the lyceum and in the ordinary stream.

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**Box 19: Students' feedback lesson.**

**N.** Today is an open talk. [She divides the class into four groups and gave them the following questions]:
1) Why do I learn history?
2) Do I like history?
3) The importance of learning history.

N. You have 5 minutes. [Then she wrote on the board]. Who should be your history teacher for the next year? Shakarbek, Nigin, Asalmo and Zarina [Then she came to each group to see what they were doing and also hurrying them to ensure the questions are answered. After a bit more than four minutes, Nigin calls upon Malika to answer the 1st question]. Malika: So that we know about the lives of our predecessors. So that we know about their culture and we need to compare that with what we know about the Tajiks. [I asked the kids why they need to compare that with what they know. Nigin re-framed my question]: Is it a simple comparison?

[The girl Azima, who received a 3 in the annual assessment was the most practical]: We need to learn history so as to pass the exams.

N. [Concludes]: We need to learn why things happened and what was good and what was bad. [As far as the question of what kind of teacher was needed, Nigin explained that all the teachers are good here. The students, however, said they wanted her to be their teacher. She asked them why]

Azima: Your heart burns for us.

N. What do you mean?

St. You teach well, your heart cares. [Students moved to name some of her methods such as question and answer, explaining many times, giving consultation, games and play]...

N. Are you telling me this because I am here? [laughs]. What is it that you do not like in me?

St. Molima, we like everything.

St. We like your teaching, Molima.

N. How should history be taught? [The students repeated the same methods mentioned above except]:

St. Parents should come more often to classes.

N. Why should parents come to the class?

St. So that we become more courageous.

St. And learn more.

St. So that they know what we learn and how we are taught.

N. Good. I will consider what you say [Shifts to Shugan]. Are you happy? Have we learnt something here? [Switches back to Tajik]: What were the differences between what you learnt here [i.e., in the lyceum-internat] and in the general school? [Students named that in the lyceum-internat, the study is more serious, not rote memorising, but understanding, demands are higher and grades are harder to get, the work is more and harder].

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338 My pseudonyms for other history teachers in the school.
339 Your heart burns is a literal translation of an expression in Shugni and Tajik languages “Tu zorh thurd” or “Dillaton mensezd.”
Nigin did not find the lesson helpful enough in terms of the quality of students' understanding of history and the authenticity of their assessment of her teaching. Like the head of the school, Nigin looked for critique not praise:

I wanted them to say: We do not want you to hurry us, we do not want you to interrupt us. We want you to listen to us. They did not say this. I learn from my own children more than from my students about my teaching...I should have given some of the questions, particularly Who should be their teacher and whether they liked my teaching to their class teacher. They said all the good things because of me. But I liked and will consider their suggestions about more consultations and parents' visits. In the Soviet times I would offer consultations daily. Students would even visit me at home. Now I cannot do that. There is no time. One has to run after life's worries (Int.1: 133).

Moreover, Nigin acknowledged that her questions were not well prepared (questions 1 and 2 were nearly the same), and that her group work strategy did not work well enough either. Nigin has been conducting assessment lessons for the last seven years. "Until this time, I never thought deeply about them", said Nigin (Int. 1: 133).

Commentary

This commentary draws together the major points from Nigin's classroom life and highlights several fundamental qualities of her teaching. In so doing, it links all the previous parts of this study together.

Nigin's teaching largely relies on telling and lecturing, particularly in her presentation of new topics. Telling constitutes her response to the layers of challenges that she faces: time pressure, ideological correctness, coverage of program, lack of resources, huge and often detached topics, annual examinations, possible inspections, students' weak language, students' passivity, and the general post-Soviet uncertainty and crises of values.

Nigin emphasises telling because she believes that the students are too young and immature to understand the surrounding complexity. They can assimilate what she tells them because they admit that she knows more and cares for them as much as for her own children. They have come to believe that what she knows is useful for their daily lives and for passing the exams. Although all the students can take in the knowledge that she imparts, not all of them do it equally. How well students' assimilate the imparted information depends on their families' economic background and traditions, and on the community's social conditions, language, and cultural and religious values. One such familial-cultural concept is the notion of family ownership and mastery of certain skills and abilities, zot. This notion becomes a tradition in a
family and touches upon its *nomus*, thus becoming a matter of honour, particularly in rural communities. Nigin’s assumptions that she knows the truth support her telling. Her claim for truth rests on her experience, age, level of education, access to scientific and scholarly books, journals and resources, and being a mother.

Although telling has persisted in Nigin’s practice, its warning, advising and critical aspects are new. These new qualities derive from her experience as a mother, a teacher and a person who has witnessed dramatic transformations. She feels the most worthwhile things that the students could take from her lessons are that leaders and politicians have to be approached with doubt, that talk and walk do not necessarily go together, and that feuds, personal greed, lack of understanding of one's history and subjection of societal interests to individualistic ones harms the whole society, as does involvement in activities such as drugs and violence. Her critical telling, thus, unleashes the positive and negative aspects of a topic, but also makes suggestions, provides alternatives and exhibits doubts.

Shortening, simplifying and concretising historical information constitute other continuing qualities of Nigin’s pedagogy of telling. They embody her resolution of the program-student-time dilemma. Nigin disregards history’s complexity, controversy, tentativeness and mutability, not because she does not know them, but because they can confuse the students, who then miss the point. She feels the students would do better to be clear rather than confused, to have one perspective rather than get lost in many, at least at this young stage. Thus, Nigin conveys a simplified version of the information in the history books.

Like telling, concretising, shortening and simplifying arose partly in response to her students’ weak command of Tajik. This required medium of instruction is not the students’ mother tongue. Nigin uses Tajik because she knows its importance for students’ success in life, for their success in exams, and for avoiding clashes with the inspectors. On the other hand, having to use Tajik weakens the students’ participation in her lessons, and thus impedes their learning. If they make a mistake in using Tajik, their peers, and sometimes their teachers, even including Nigin, ridicule and label them. In addition, proficiency in English and Russian is becoming more important to success than skill in Tajik. These factors discourage students from speaking Tajik and disengage them from active participation in the learning process, compelling Nigin to do more telling. For Nigin, it is a challenge to enact her transformative perspective when she cannot use the children’s first language.
Nigin’s telling is further exacerbated by her controlling tendency, which has deep roots in the Soviet times, when the whole system worked to control one’s thinking to justify the Soviet system, perpetuate existing social relations and enforce Communist party’s rule. For Nigin, controlling serves to guard the youngsters from the post-Soviet confusion, and to ensure the conveyance of the “new truths”, in order to both change and maintain the social order. Further, Nigin believes in the existence of an objective historical truth, which she deduces from the facts in history books and from the lessons of history itself. Nigin’s talks about freedom of expression, creativity, letting children speak, building good relations, and winning the children’s hearts, but in practice controls and channels the children’s thinking and expressions and turns the children into receivers of “truths.”

Fundamental to Nigin’s success are her relationships both in and outside the classroom. Relationships guarantee the success of her telling, controlling, advising, warning and even assessment procedures. Relations are more important than methods and knowledge and constitute the major element of her approach. For Nigin, teaching is grounded in mutual care and love; getting students’ love and trust constitutes the major challenge of both good teaching and peaceful living in the community. For Nigin, it is not how much you know, but how much you care that matters. Once children believe that Nigin cares for them, their minds and hearts open up to accept knowledge and to forgive her even if she becomes angry or rude.

Both her official and extra-curricular activities show Nigin as an active curriculum maker. But they also show curriculum making as a social construct that could comprise different types and qualities. In her official lessons, Nigin apparently acts as an implementor of the prescribed curriculum. However, although transmitting in a teacher-centred way, she filters the prescribed curriculum through her own values. Nigin’s extra-curricular activities, on the other hand, give explicit proof of Nigin’s attempts to design experiences closer to her own vision of society, education and citizenship. In her extra-curricular activities, Nigin shows a broader methodological repertoire. In the extra-curricular sessions the relations are more relaxed and she employs a variety of methods.

The meeting with the war veteran exemplifies Nigin’s implementation of her larger vision about what history should also consider (i.e., local history, culture and language), history’s purposes (i.e., learning about and from the past). She matches these with what children need to develop as individuals and members of the community (i.e., self-knowledge, character
development, patriotism, pride in one's contribution to whatever cause), and then uses alternative ways to teach history (i.e., guest speakers, singing local songs, joining fun with serious lectures).

One could also see the value of the session with the war veteran for promoting the cause of education and the status of the teachers. The lesson exemplifies Nigin's channelling the discussion towards her vision. It also illustrates how Nigin both uses insights from various ideologies and authorities and also serves these ideologies and authorities. The session had strong content of local culture, Communism (including Stalinism) and Islam (including Ismailism). The amalgamation of these makes such extra-curricular activities authentic, interdisciplinary, and engaging of her students' thoughts and emotions. They encompass humour, proverbs, and multiple languages, the main medium being the students' mother tongue, rather than the official language, Tajik. At the same time, she directs the discussions.

Similarly, in her lesson on respecting bread, although Nigin provided a framework for the lesson, she still did not monopolise the discussion. Other people than Nigin (e.g., teachers, students, musicians, and guests) participated in the extra-curricular sessions. Here, more than in the classroom, Nigin actively expands her identity and enlarges her vision. In extra-curricular sessions, Nigin does not face the burdens of the imposed curriculum, of time limits, of official language (she used Shugnani widely), and of formalistic and structural constraints. There is a relaxed atmosphere. Nigin uses multi-media and combines fun and sadness, structure and creativity, emotion and reason. The students participate more and find the experiences more relevant. This relevance made Nigin's lessons on respecting bread highly emotional and authentic experiences. These activities are more varied and suggest Nigin's potential for transactive and transformative teaching.

Nigin had a high opinion of extra-curricular activities. She felt they could not only recall the past, develop love for the motherland, and create respect for peace and hard work, but also rejuvenate the role of education and the status of the teacher. She points out that educative experiences come from the locality, not only from the textbooks and programs suggested by officials inside and outside the province. In these extra-curricular contexts, Nigin becomes more vocal and articulate about her vision, and the cause she serves. She works for the reputation of the school, belongs to teaching collective, reaches out to the parents, and voices her discontent with the higher education authorities. With the support of the head and her colleagues, and with the freedom from the practical constraints of the official classroom, Nigin finds school extra-
curricular activities as a safe place where, more than in her classroom, she can creatively design a curriculum.

Nigin's assessment practices are embroiled with personal, professional and political tensions. Despite so many years of assessing so many children and despite the larger community's declining care for the children and teachers, Nigin has not become cynical and mechanical. For her, assessment remains a deeply emotional and ethical encounter, in which she consciously participates in her students' failures and successes, concerns and worries. She faces the dilemma of being fair to each student while still being fair to the whole class and the established standards. For example, she was torn between giving Azima special help, thus allowing the girl to remain in the gifted program, and being fair with the grades she has given to others. Further more, she will have to explain this concession to parents who know how well each student studies. Nigin realises that Azima had the potential to do better, if helped with consultations.

Nigin's assessment discloses other tensions in her teaching, for example, between rhetorically prioritising the social aspects yet practically grading academic aspects. She asks students to assess her directly and expects their critique, considering them as the best judges of her practices and believing that she has a relation of trust with them, yet realises that they won't tell her the whole truth. The emotional intensity during the assessment lesson subtly discloses that in post-Soviet times equal access to a good education no longer exists and the schools have openly become mechanisms for sorting the children and, perhaps dividing the community. Nigin painfully reveals that now, if students get a low grade or fall sick that is their problem, more than that of the teachers and schools. Though Nigin does not agree with this reality, she grudgingly accepts it.

Several other important qualities/aspects define Nigin's life and work. They are rooted in the various contexts of her experience: biography, community, and classroom, home and school. First is the use of the local culture. For example, she brings in a guest speaker, employs stories, poetry, metaphors, images, proverbs, and examples from classical literature and present realities. She switches to speaking Shugnani, uses familiar cultural-linguistic and educational expressions and metaphors, and, lastly, employs local music, religion and history in her lessons. Even more than in her formal teaching, local culture obviously highlights her extra-curricular activities. The particular quality of the local culture also surfaces in Nigin's use of gender in her language. Nigin always uses the male pronoun when referring to a teacher as an illustrative generality. Although
the profession has become feminised, the traditional image of teachers as male has persisted. In addition, Nigin usually uses the male pronoun when referring to any abstract example of a person, be it student, official or whatever.

The second overriding feature of Nigin's professional life is the inevitable ideological presence. It is reflected in Nigin's views on the nature of her subject, in her classroom actions, and in her statements about the increasing diversity of the ideological landscape in MBAP. Nigin struggles between actively reconstructing her own ideological position from the various frameworks and theories and finding herself entrapped by some of them. Thus, she promotes neo-Tajik nationalist ideology through the textbooks, anthem, language, crest and wall decorations in her classroom; socialism through old textbooks, her dispositions to class-based explanations of topics, and the portraits of the classics of Marxism–Leninism in her history office; Islam (particularly Ismailism) through her ethics, critique of the leaders, belonging to the Ismaili community, usage of Nasir Khusraw's poetry and service to, devotion and care for the Aga Khan; and a local ethnic agenda though her extra-curricular activities, the usage of the locality and its language.

The preference for socialist and communist ideologies and theories has continued in Nigin's practice. It rests not only on her personal experiences of previous good times and good communists, but also on her observation that the new frameworks have not in fact differed much in their theoretical claims from the earlier one. Similarly, having found all the old and new theories difficult to apply in practice, Nigin sees all theories as convincingly plausible. The problem becomes practice, and how to apply these theories. Nigin does not bother about the various frameworks' ontology and epistemology; she is worried about the ethics of their application. Witnessing the manipulation and misuse of the newly emerging narratives, she resorts to dichotomising between democracy and “so-called democrats”, Communism and “so-called communists” and, between Islam and newly minted “real Muslim leaders.”

The third major quality of Nigin's teaching is her comparative thinking. Nigin compares the Soviet with post-Soviet, socialism with Islam, Tajik nationalism with democracy, leaders' "talk with their walk", the history of Tajikistan with the history of the USSR, the past with the present, the program (curriculum) with the instructional realities, the students with each other, and the students and teachers with those in urban contexts and foreign countries. She contrasts her method with her students' learning, her own childhood with those of her students. This
constant comparison reveals the elements of continuity and change in her perspective and practice.

But, each change has embodied continuity; nothing disappears in a complete sense. Ideas and forces shift; some become prominent and others secondary. In her approach to teaching history, her assessment practices, and her lessons in general, Nigin has changed the nature, content or intensity since the Soviet times, while leaving the Soviet lesson structure intact. The presentation of new topics remains, but the lack of textbooks has driven Nigin to do additional research, summarise the information herself, concretise the content, and simplify the language. On top of this hard work lies the complication of several interpretative frameworks. Curriculum has openly become a battlefield of the various forces and stakeholders, each of which blames teachers for not only their personal shortcomings, but also for the faults of the educational system. Teaching has become a navigation and negotiation between various challenges, which make both Nigin’s already tense life and work and her students’ learning harder.

Summary

Nigin teaches in Shotemur school, situated in Porshinev, the largest village in Shugnan district of MBAP. Shugnan, though the most developed district of MBAP, has suffered major economic collapse since the end of the USSR. In addition, it was involved in the civil war. Now in addition to economic hardships, there are problems of civil violence, drug-running, and corruption.

Shared rules and expectations, with a renewed and spiritually charged commitment to excellence, have allowed Shotemur’s school to succeed despite diminish of facilities, rampant corruption, penetrating cold, striking hunger, poverty, and jealousy. The encouragement of the Aga Khan Foundation has lit the teacher’ spark and renewed their enthusiasm for their work, permitting them to overcome or sometimes even ignore their personal and professional problems.

The structures of the school and classroom have remained the same, but the conditions and the messages they convey have altered. But some cases, such as the gifted program or new curricula have introduced new structures, while changing the content only a little. Ideologies have come and gone, but the physical environment has remained the same. Teachers remained central but have to be more flexible and accommodating to the students, more sensitive to demands.

The teachers’ life in the village is possibly best understood through their concerns and struggles. Nigin’s concerns and worries about herself as a teacher, mother, and educated woman
in the village, about her school, students and the society sometimes stimulate her to create, keep updated, and excel. More often, however, these concerns overwhelm her and her colleagues, affecting their health, mood and relations. At the same time, Nigin’s and her colleagues’ concerns call one to examine the bureaucratic rhetoric about education and teachers, not to take it at face value. They invite one to come down to grassroots realities. These new realities raise serious questions about whether despite the official rhetoric, teachers, and by extension education for all, are really valued, appreciated, supported or even desired in the new, post-Soviet Tajikistan.

Psychologically, Nigin and her colleagues are depressed, angry and burnt out. They suffer from misunderstanding, lack of support, and insularity on the part of those whom they serve. Teaching has become a confusing endeavour, where opposites—honour and humiliation, truth and lie, hope and frustration, value and uselessness, rhetoric and reality, and optimism and pessimism—go side by side. Amidst these paradoxes, Nigin negotiates her vision and navigates her practices.

Nigin has gone a long way in the recent few years, undergoing a deep awakening and transformation. She has come to doubt deeper, to consider more factors, to ask for critique and feedback. She has become more courageous in expressing her views about weaknesses; her own, the program’s, the leaders’, the society’s and the reforms’. She has revisited her purpose of teaching and her mission of life.

Given the challenges of the context, Nigin has evolved into a profound teacher with a caring, critical and transformative outlook. Nigin’s experiences and her perspective on her experiences are dramatic and deeply educative. They show how a one-sided and politicised interpretation of truth, an indoctrination of the teachers and students into dogma, a control of information and teachers’ naïveté and passivity in taking things and not following their doubts have resulted in Nigin and her colleagues’ occurrence falling into organisational, intellectual, ideological, moral, psychological and ethical crisis. Nigin feels guilty for having misguided her students and community. She puts the blame on herself, the scholars and politicians. She considers the latter as having lacked the ethics and intellectual courage to think about the implications of their writings, especially textbooks, and for turning the teachers into liars and the students into the recipients of false stories.

Nigin’s preference for Socialist ideology remains but is “squeezed” by other ideologies; she has become more cautious about using or promoting anyone interpretation. As a result of the
failure of Communist ideology and the ensuing ideological turmoil, Nigin has come to doubt new interpretive frames. She realises that she lives in the context of new realities, yet finds it too hard to comprehend these changes, because they have been too many, too complex, too dramatic and too rapid. In addition, she had no support in her attempts to analyse the resulting perceived and real differences between the two times periods and between the interests of the various forces in the region.

As a thoughtful and responsible person, Nigin had found gaps in the history curriculum since the Soviet times. She suggests that the recent civil war in Tajikistan partly arose from these gaps in historical knowledge, with history curriculum having little relevance to the Tajiks' life and concerns. Nigin suggests that an appropriate curriculum of history should involve studying one's self, relations with others, and discussion of the current social issues, not only an ambiguous past.

The contradictory realities of life and work embroil Nigin's practices in paradoxes. Nigin loves teaching, cannot imagine herself as anyone except a teacher, yet does what she hates and serves those she criticises. She is caught between: hating lectures and doing lectures; interrupting and ridiculing students and saying that she lets them say what they want; caring for students and giving priority to the program; cursing the scholars and promoting their views; prioritising social and character development and promoting and evaluating her students' academically; criticising one-sided representations of history and not allowing a variety of perspectives to emerge. In addition, similar paradoxes play out in her personal and social life. For example, she has to navigate between: feeling strongly about principles and ethics yet getting a false grade for her cousin; loving and caring for the school and asking her husband to leave it; stating that children in the city are brighter and admitting that the majority of the famous people of Badakhshan come from villages.

Many things about her intensify these conflicts. She has strongly-held values about right wrong, an extreme devotion to education, great love for children, and a deeply caring nature. She has highly idealistic expectations of herself, her students and the leaders of the society, and a perfectionist attitude. She struggles to make sense of new realities, and of the increasingly complex challenges of post-Soviet confusion and crises, attempting to use old methods to explain new realities. She searches stability and peace, and worries about everything from cold and language problems to the future of the society. Her anger and frustrations with increasing
demands and decreasing facilities, which make her lower her expectations, compromise with the failure to achieve her objectives.

Nigin and her colleagues provide rich perspectives on reform. They suggest the need for a forum on the implications of reform and on how reform connects to the type of society in question. The lack of dialogue and debate about reform persists as a result of the Soviet inertia of a silencing, control-and-command approach. The current reforms, not well prepared, pay not enough attention to the relevance, or ethics of reform. A reform should integratedly consider the human, material, technical and other kinds of resources. To be able to comprehend all these changes and their challenges depends on Nigin's growing critical abilities. Her critical knowledge often focuses more on the negative than positive side. But this critical quality of her voice and vision also suggests alternatives and possibilities, and unravels contradictions in teaching practices, educational systems and policies. Her critique contains a warning, based on ethical caring, about the kind of society that may lie down the road. Nigin's critical, even negative, stance perhaps makes up the most valuable quality of her knowledge in terms of change and improvement; it is this quality of Nigin's knowledge that needs to be looked for.

Nigin is a profoundly thoughtful teacher. She is a formidable learner, courageous woman, confident and transparent person with a deep sense of nomus (honour) and integrity. She is not ashamed of her self as a teacher of History, a person, a mother and a member of the community, whatever these might be.
Chapter 7: Comparative Cross-Case Analysis

Worldviews: Transformational Teaching

This chapter begins a comparative analysis of the two cases. To elaborate the arguments, I sparingly include relevant insights from the three other participants, Gorminj, Lola and Izzat. I analyse the participants’ life histories and worldviews and their visions of the overall purpose of teaching. I also discuss the various tasks the teachers performed in the contexts of classroom, school, home and community, the role of their subject matter and their rationale for remaining in teaching.

Just like teachers in Western societies, the teachers in MBAP have formed elaborate educational and societal visions. Regardless of the tight ideological and political control of the Soviet state apparatus, and despite the increasing intensification and impoverishment of their life and work conditions in post-Soviet times, the teachers have actively developed their worldviews and applied them in the various contexts of their practices: classroom, school, home and community. These teachers’ worldviews reflect their increasing consciousness, deepest commitment and evolving abilities to not only care for but also transform their students, colleagues, community, and even the larger world. They hope to achieve a more just, egalitarian and co-operative society. Their approach is holistic. Their role as agents of change results from their specific position in their isolated, rural, mountainous communities. Because their worldviews are at odds with society’s current operating values, the teachers suffer multiple tensions in both developing and promoting their worldviews.

The fact that teachers possess elaborate perspectives, worldviews, moral purpose, and visions has constituted a major argument for designing forms of research and development that both listens to and critically engages their voices and visions, as well as cares about their lives (e.g., Aronovitz & Giroux, 1986; Cochran-Smith 1998; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1992; Greene, 1988; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Fullan, 1997; Kilbourn, 1999; Miller, 1988; Osborne, 1991; Thiessen, 1993b).

Although the development of these teachers’ worldviews has been hindered by constant social and natural obstacles, it has never stopped. The teachers developed their worldviews during times when they were “required” not to do so themselves, when the Communist state and party provided teachers with “vision”, assigned their roles and monopolised the goals of education (Davis, 1989; Karlsson, 1993; Mehlinger, 1993). Further, the teachers have developed their visions on a continuing basis, regardless of changing times, socio-economic conditions,
ideologies, and increasing intensification of their living and working conditions\(^{340}\)\(^{341}\) (Apple, 1986; Ayers, 1993; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 1999). As a result, they have to adopt a "transformational position" (Miller, 1988) becoming in effect "teachers for social change" (Cochran-Smith, 1998).

Teachers’ Views on the Society

In Democracy and Education, Dewey suggested that "[t]he concept of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind" (1916, p.112). The literature often subsumes teachers’ societal vision under such terms as teachers’ conceptions (De Vries & Beijaard, 2000), curriculum orientation (Eisner, 1986), and educational ideology (Edwards, cited in DeVries & Beijaard, 2000). This approach, despite its broad connotation, still implies teachers merely as people whose vision applies to the pedagogical realm and school territory. However, when researchers explore teacher’s life and work in an integrated way and also see the teacher as a total person (Wasley, 1991; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998), the teachers’ societal perspective becomes important in itself (Cochran-Smith, 1998). Ultimately Sino and Nigin are not only teachers but also active and responsible citizens of their communities (Osborne, 1991; Wasley, 1991).

Through their many years of experience, Sino and Nigin have developed formidable societal perspectives, which have more similarities than differences. The role in their developing these visions belonged to their dramatic personal and societal experiences during the transition from the USSR to the independent Tajikistan.

A Cooperative, Educated, Internationalist Society

Both Sino and Nigin held egalitarian visions of the desired post-Soviet Tajik society. Both teachers wanted a society based on cooperation, sharing, caring, togetherness and collectivity. Nigin could not enjoy the benefits of her husband’s new work with the NGO unless she shared them with their neighbours. Nigin believed it was better to share happiness and sorrow in the village, rather than to eat in hiding. She wondered why every one cares only about

\(^{340}\) Intensification is a concept drawn from theories of labour process (Larson, 1980). Hargreaves (1994) describes some of its components: a sharp reduction of time for relaxation and recreation during the working day, and retooling, relearning new skills, and keeping updated. It also creates chronic overload, which reduces the possibility for reflection, inhibits control and involvement over long-term planning, and fosters dependency on externally produced materials and expertise. Apple (1986), Sprague (1992) see intensification as politically constructed and aimed at eroding teacher’s working conditions and expertise, ultimately leading to deprofessionalisation, reduction of the quality of teaching and erosion of status (see also Hargreaves, 1994).

\(^{341}\) Transformational teaching for social change, according to Miller (1988) concentrates on an integrated, holistic transformation of individuals and society. It rests on a humanistic stance for social change. “In this position the student is not just viewed in a cognitive mode, but in terms of his or her aesthetic, moral, physical and spiritual needs” (Miller, 1988, p. 6).
gifted students when more and more people become poorer. She was upset to see the newly wealthy become arrogant towards those less fortunate, including their teachers. She argued that the recent social, political and educational reforms did not result in improvement, at least for the majority of the population (Ginsburg, 1991; Tayler, 2001).

Sino also believed that teaching was more about helping the weak students, patiently waiting for them to speak, and encouraging them to come to school. He gave cigarettes to the “poor” soldiers, knowing they would probably not pay him back. He refused to take up the job of selling, because he was not educated to say no to sharing with people. He could not refuse to participate in state-run activities, such as the referendum and census, though he disliked the bureaucracy. He hoped and believed the rich should share with the poor. He taught his students about sharing and caring. Together with his school, Sino shared the benefits of their win during the strike with the neighbouring school. He believed poverty was not a sin and taught his students to acknowledge that they were hungry or did not have clothes.342

The teachers’ egalitarian and cooperative values were grounded not merely in the socialist propositions to which they were educated (Hursh, 1995; Keshavjee, 1998; Mintrop, 1999; Muckle, 1988). The community’s classical poetry and religious values have promoted these values as good for ages. They constituted the ethical norms of the community. The Imam has endorsed the righteousness of the values of justice, sharing, caring, cooperation and helping the needy:

It would be traumatic if those pillars of the Islamic way of life, social justice, equality, humility and generosity, enjoined upon us all, were to lose their force or wide application in our young society. It must never be said generations hence that in our greed for the material good of the rich West we have forsaken our responsibilities to the poor, to the orphans, to the traveller, to the single woman (Aga Khan IV, 1967).

The realities of the rural context also required these values, because no one was secure from poverty. Sino and Nigin knew almost every person in their villages and everyone else knew them. People needed each other to stand against the blows of the powerful mountains, such as earthquakes and snow slides. Nigin mentioned this:

If I eat and do not worry about the life of my neighbours, what is the use of my life. If my neighbour is in hardship, that is my hardship. We need each other, because there is no sound from one hand. “There has to be two hands to produce the sound343” [i.e., clapping] (Int. 1: 18-19).

342 Bacchus (1983) pointed out that one aim of the Socialist educational systems was to instil a proletarian outlook in the teachers, and to develop a disposition toward poverty, humility, sharing, and a hatred of wealth, competition and selfishness.

343 Translation of a Tajik proverb “Az yek dost sado nambaroyad”, meaning that there is no good result when something is done individually without someone else’s intellectual or other cooperation.
Having enjoyed the privileges and certainty of the socialist system, they found the ways of making money in the market economy ambiguous. Having experienced the painful beginning of the capitalist advance, the teachers shared certain resentment toward the market economy. People around are not only poor, but they are also relatives. Sino and Nigin found it hard to commercialise their subjects and knowledge. Yet living in the post-Soviet deregulated and dehumanised market economy pushed them to go against their socialist, cultural and spiritual values (Lisovskaya, 1999; Keshavjee, 1998; Voronkov, 1995), not to become rich, but just to survive. Sino’s inability to overcome this value incompatibility resulted in his further impoverishment. Nigin, through pain, forced her husband to leave teaching.

Sino and Nigin preferred internationalism and respectful co-existence of the various nations and ethnicities. They suggested that the current Tajik society is as multicultural as anywhere else in Central Asia (Roy, 2000). They promoted internationalism in their practices in the classroom and out of it. Sino brought Tajik-Kyrgyz relations into his lesson and participated in resolving the conflict between the Tajiks and Kyrgyz. He built friendship with the Kyrgyz neighbours. He suggested that in Murghab, education has to serve the realities of the multicultural society and celebrate its diversities. He predicted that in future, as the road to China opens, Murghab is going to be more multicultural than ever before. Thus, Sino and his colleagues prepared the students to meet the increasing number of foreigners as equals in the intellectual and cultural sense. Nigin’s meeting with the war veteran and her discussions about the curriculum relevance also aimed at promoting friendship, peace and tolerance between the various peoples. Sino and Nigin believed that deterioration of the inter-ethnic relations in Central Asia, in particular Tajikistan, resulted from the politicians’ power-lust and greed. The teachers openly criticised those who broke up the USSR and those who caused the civil war in Tajikistan.

For them, Soviet times were not just a period of oppression. The brutality of dictators like Stalin, the corruption of the Communist party’s leadership, the unsustainable development projects, and the hidden Russian biases were, at the same time ameliorated by the Marxist-Leninist propositions of caring for the poor and oppressed (Keshavjee, 1998). Poor people like Sino and Nigin had actual opportunities to have decent living conditions and get free and good education.

According to Nigin, Sino and their colleagues, Tajikistan cannot afford to be a nationalist, arrogant country. It is too diverse and too vulnerable, too poor economically and too small in area and population. Despite acknowledging and respecting Tajiks as the oldest nation
in Central Asia, the participants expressed deep caution about the excess of Tajik nationalism, the creation of an ethnically-based nation state and the deterioration of relations with the neighbours. Even Nigin, whose subject, History was replacing the old Soviet orthodoxy with a new Tajik one, did not exhibit enthusiasm beyond what she felt necessary in teaching history. Sino wondered why a poor country like Tajikistan arranged such an extravagant, costly celebration of the Samanids at a time when schools are in disarray, people are impoverished and the remaining warm days are spent on holidays. Like Russia, Tajikistan too is hard to understand with reason, he said, using the words of Griboedov, a Russian 19th century classical author. Like Ignatief (1993) and Jahangiri (1998), both Sino and Nigin worried about how the promotion of neo-nationalism could effect relations with the neighbouring states Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan.

The teachers’ internationalist perspective arose from their memories of the past and their fears for the future. Sino and Nigin were educated under Soviet internationalist philosophy; as teachers in the Soviet times, they had actively promoted it. Apart from Russification, the Russian language also helped Sovietise and internationalise the citizens of the Soviet Union (Medlin et al., 1971; Muckle, 1990). Russian brought all the people of the Soviet Union and Socialist block together. Internationalism, at least in theory, was put above nationalist and ethnic identities (Muckle, 1990; Roy, 2000; Tabachnik, et al., 1981). For a small ethnic minority, like the Pamirians, which, prior to Russian annexation (i.e., 1895) had always suffered from repression by its neighbours, the internationalist perspective was a window on freedom. The notion of minority here is total. It is about being minor in the natural and social senses: small in number, size, language, religion, and ethnicity. In other words, Nigin and Sino were born into several layers of “disadvantage.” As Badakhshani, they come from the poorest and least populated region in Tajikistan. As Ismailis, they are a minority in predominantly Sunni Tajikistan. As speakers of Pamirian languages, they are regarded as not quite completely Tajik by the majority in Tajikistan. As mountains’ villagers, they are regarded by people in the lowland cities as narrow minded, rough and uncultured.

Within Badakhshan too, Sino and Nigin have experienced minority status. Sino is a Wakhi and Nigin is a Roshani; but both live in ethnic communities other than their original one.

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344 While this may be true historically, some authors have attached a political notion to it too. Glen (1999) and Roy (2000) suggest that Soviet orientalist scholarship tried to make other Central Asians feel indebted to Tajiks genetically and culturally (Barthold, 1977).
In addition, Nigin, though educated, is still a woman in a society that is increasingly reviving its patriarchal qualities.\textsuperscript{346}

However, both Sino and Nigin have had historical knowledge about their differences and how these qualities have been mistreated. They accepted the position as minority-group member by default, but also with a sense of pride. They believed that they belonged to a progressive, intelligent minority. They believed that some of the most prominent thinkers of the Tajik and Islamic heritage were associated with their Ismaili identity. They knew that people from their community had made a great contribution to Socialist Tajikistan (Masov, 1996; Kharkovchuk & Karamshoev, 1995; See also Chapter 4). They believed that the Imam was always there to help them when necessary:

The nature of the religious office, which I hold neither requires nor is expected by the members of the Community to be an Institution whose existence is restricted to spiritual leadership. On the contrary, history and the correct interpretation of the Imamah\textsuperscript{347} require that the Imam, while caring first of all for the spiritual well-being of his people, should also be continuously concerned with their safety and their material well-being (Aga Khan IV 1976, p. 3, found in Keshavjee, 1998, p. 48).

Accepting their minority status, they developed strategies to cope with the constraints and succeed to certain extent. Amongst many things, these strategies meant tolerating humiliations, working harder, keeping a low profile, being astute politically, mastering the majorities' languages, being loyal, making friends, joining alliances, and being more efficient. They also included *nomus*, a powerful cultural force in these teachers' lives. In Sino's case, for example, the *nomus* of being the eldest son, the *nomus* of being an Ismaili, a Wakhi, a teacher, and a father propelled him. For Nigin, the *nomus* of being an educated woman-teacher, a mother, an Ismaili, and a Roshani provided the deepest determination to bear, struggle and overcome the waves of obstacles and expectations that they all faced. It is these experiences, not only the demands of the curriculum, that Sino and Nigin relied on, when they asked their students to work hard, learn Tajik and Russian, know about their differences and respect other cultures. These experiences

\textsuperscript{346} Mintrop (1999) depicts a similar occurrence (i.e., shift from one monistic explanation to opposite) in "ideological" subjects such as history during the curricular change in the former East Germany.

\textsuperscript{347} The fact that Nigin considered herself as a privileged, educated woman who gave not only advice but also money to other women should not be perceived as a generalisation about the so-called Soviet emancipation of women. Medlin et al (1971) and Poliakov (1992), Tadjibakh (1998) and Touhidii (1995) point out that the Soviet woman endured multifaceted life styles, such as state, familial and communal. The quality of participation in each of these was often contradictory. Despite the state reification, Tajik women remained in deeply subordinate roles to men; often women's improvement was a tool used to promote the male agenda. Insights from Nigin, Lola and their women colleagues corroborate how the Badakhshani women's work and life represent deep tensions between being a change agent and purveyors and repositories of traditions, language, "honour" and identity (for more discussion on the status of women in Badakhshan see Keshavjee 1998).

\textsuperscript{347} The concept of Imamate.
affected not only Sino and Nigin’ worldviews, but also their pedagogy (i.e., practices and relations).

Their minority identity thus contributed to these teachers’ respect for equality of groups, classes, ethnicities and cultures. That was the only way for them to survive and grow. They enjoyed living as equal amongst the bigger nations of the Soviet Union; in the huge Soviet Union there seemed to be room enough for everyone. The teachers took all the possible advantages from that system. Sino did not like the break up of the USSR, the school and the teachers. The veteran in Nigin’s class could not face the dangers of moving out of Badakhshan after having fought for four years for the whole Soviet Union.

The return of the “nationalist beast” (Ignatieff, 1993) and the increasing tensions between the nations as a result of the Soviet collapse deeply hurt Sino and Nigin. It hurt them to have the recent Soviet brotherly nations fighting each other; it hurt them to have Tajiks killing each other in the civil war and upset them to realise that they were still not considered as equal members of the Tajik family. Sino and Nigin certainly felt puzzled that the 70 years of the Soviet rule had not sufficed to eradicate the old ethnic and religious enmities (Glen, 1999; Keshavjee, 1998). They wonder whether in future, they, as teachers and leaders of the community, can guarantee that the past ethnic, religious and cultural enmities do not return. If they do, the Pamirians may, as minority be losers, as they had been before the Russian and Soviet times (Bokiev, 1994; Iskandarov, 1995; Nazarshoev & Nazarshoev, 1984).

The teachers believed that Badakhshan and Tajikistan should be a society of knowledge. They considered knowledge and learning as the major ways to improve Tajikistan and its Badakhshan, and pull it out of its current miserable situation. Nigin and her colleagues suggested that the current leadership should reconsider its priorities and put education above farming. For a place like Murghab, farming was almost meaningless. The teachers believed that the provision of educational opportunities was one thing that the Soviets did right. Nigin and her colleagues persisted in this belief, regardless of the fact that the Soviet neglect of farming nearly cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Badakhshans during the civil war, had the Aga Khan Foundation and other international agencies not provided humanitarian aid.348 They believed that Badakhshan had never truly been able to feed its population; Badakhshan has not enough arable

348 Ermolaev (1990), discussing the dreary situation of Soviet rural schools, suggested that “there cannot be truly strong schools everywhere, schools consistent with today’s norms, as long as the whole nation’s agriculture is imperfect” (p. 11).
land. Rural, agricultural solutions do not work for the mountains, suggested the teachers in both Shugnan and Murghab.

This viewpoint again arose from history and teachers' biographies as well as from the society's cultural values. All the participants considered their education as the most valuable event of their lives. Seeking knowledge, the enduring quality of a good teacher, and the continuing value of the community have helped them become subjects of their own lives and active citizens. Knowledge, according to Sino and Nigin, has made the teachers special in their villages: able to fulfil their roles, accept the challenges, and improve their lives. The new lack of access to external knowledge and information was one of the few things they all regretted. "Live a lifetime and study a lifetime", said Sino. Education gave Sino the opportunity not to repeat his father's fate and gave Nigin the chance to fulfil her mother's dream. The search for knowledge had cultural and religious roots. Izzat connected the idea of continuing education and the learning society in North America with the similar values in his community:

From what you say, there people work according to the prophet Mohammad: "search for knowledge from cradle to grave", and Lenin's saying "study, study once more and study again."

It is them who should be called good Muslims and good Communists (Int. 5: 112).

_Freedom from Drugs, Guns and Corruption_

Sino, Nigin and their colleagues voted and worked for a Badakhshan and Tajikistan free from guns and drugs. They believed that the drugs, guns and unemployment have become prominent as a result of the Soviet collapse. They connected this spread to the market economy and lack of concern on the part of those responsible. The teachers not only discussed and criticised guns and drugs, but also fought against them. Nigin joined her school's fight for each child, talked with parents, and used the living examples of those who ended up badly with drugs and guns. In their fight with drugs and guns, the teachers employed the warnings of the Aga Khan, who suggested that the ethics of faith have no room for socially harmful activities. Indeed the Aga Khan during his 1995 visit to Tajikistan emphasised that the continuance and even tolerance of such activities as drug dealing would only hurt Tajikistan's chances of development in a world increasingly tending to becoming meritocratic social forms (cf. Aga Khan IV, Roshan, Tajikistan, May, 1995).  

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349 The major source of this information is the Aga Khan's _farmanes_ in Badakhshan. _Farmanes_ are major private instruments of the Aga Khan for guiding the Ismailis. They are defined by the 1986 Ismaili Constitution as any "pronouncement, direction, order or ruling given by the Imam [the Aga Khan]" (Aga Khan, 1987, p. 7, quoted in Keshavjee, 1998, p. 47). Farmanes can pertain to both the secular and religious concerns of Ismailis. According to the current 1986 Ismaili Constitution, "by virtue of his office and in
The teachers considered peace an important necessity of the new society in Tajikistan. Compared with Soviet society, the current Tajikistan was troubled and engulfed in wars and conflicts. The new, post-Soviet Tajikistan was a context somewhere in transition between control and anarchy, stagnation and vibrancy, political order and confusion, national security and insecurity, scientific uncertainty and nationalist and religious claims for new certainties, single party reality and multi-party rhetoric, feudalism, socialism and capitalism, underdevelopment and development, and Soviet and post-Soviet.

Sino and Nigin had personally experienced the damages of the post-Soviet conflicts. They used loss of relatives, influx of refugees, poverty and hunger, the events in Afghanistan and Chechnya, and the collapse of great countries across history as educative moments in their classes. Clearly, peace was important for the development and sustenance of the state, said Nigin. For the teachers peace was crucial for building roads to China, opening job opportunities, and purifying the society from drugs, corruption, and guns. Peace was important for the continuation of the Imam’s visits and the continuity of his care for Badakhshan. Nigin’s sessions with the war veteran about Perestroika, her emphasis on consensus in the classroom, her warnings about the politicians, her suggestions for reprioritising the curriculum and making it relevant, all reveal the value of peace in her socio-educational vision. Sino’s class about peace, his peace-making in the community, his voting for the current president, and his multicultural agenda, come from the same view.

One major disease of the current society was cherez (nepotism, corruption). This metaphor included everything related to the participants’ perception that someone used a position to do something unjust and unethical. It included things such as favouring some students and

according to the faith and belief of the Ismaili Muslims, the Imam enjoys full authority of governance over and in respect of all religious and Jammati matters of the Ismaili Muslims” (Aga Khan 1987, p. 5). I witnessed several of the farmers as a member of the audience and on some occasions acted as the official translator of the farmers from English to Tajik. Given the sensitivity, and private nature of the farmers, I avoided their direct quotation, allowing myself to mention the content of some of the directly relevant farmers in this cross-case analysis.

350 The participants used the Russian word cherez (“via, through”) to refer to corruption. Corruption, a complex social phenomenon, has a global nature, with particularly damaging effects on the developing countries and marginalized population (Heynemann, 1998, 2000; Hope & Chikulo, 2000; The World Bank, 1997). Hope (2000) defines it as: the utilisation of the official positions or titles for personal or private gain, either on an individual or collective basis, at the expense of the public good, in violation of established rules and ethical considerations, and through the direct or indirect participation of one or more public officials whether they be politicians or bureaucrats (Hope & Chikulo, 2000, p. 18).

Among others, Simis (1982) and Fish (1994) revealed the systemic nature of corruption in the Soviet Union and its leadership. The new post-Soviet times have brought the cancerous advancement of corruption and its increasing hold on all spheres of life, including education, a field that is fundamentally ethical and anti-corruptive by its nature, purposes and means. Although corruption is spreading across all of the ex-Soviet Union, researchers have not paid it due attention (De Young & Suzhikova, 1996; Keshavjee, 1998; Lisovskaya, 1999; Simis, 1982).
teachers over others, giving an undeserved grade, abusing public and non-governmental institutions for personal benefit, promoting one's close relatives, ethnic group, friends or supporters, bribing, stealing, cheating, telling lies, and misusing authority. Practices such as using connections during university exams, forging graduation certificates, bribing an instructor, buying a diploma or position, the success of "Mafias, drug dealers, and dishonest people" have deep effects on the society, teachers and students. Nigin suggested that nepotism was a slap in the face:

It is terrible. Imagine a poor child prepares himself all life, works day and night. Then someone else who had enjoyed all life gets to the university by giving a bribe or using a connection. I have developed hatred for those who do all this. I feel humiliated and slapped in face. I just wonder how patient people we are. I know which of my students is capable of what. When you see your good student has failed you curse the Earth and the sky. I pray that the Imam saves us from this at the new university (Int.: 58-59).

Corruption, an old Soviet legacy (Simis, 1982), has not only survived but has become so deeply rooted in the local culture that it is seen as a synonym of terms such as "service" or "gift." It has embroiled the fabric of people's life and work and has become a norm rather than an exception. Today, people ask for cherez as if they ask for a service. To refuse to do a cherez requires the courage and ability to bear ill feelings on the part of relatives and friends, as became clear from Nigin's fearful experience in getting a grade for her cousin: "My uncle's head would have gone down." The problem also emerged in her frustration about the implications for her life in the community of her refusing to give an undeserved grade: "The students ignore History until grade 11, and then ask me for a grade. If you refuse, their parents won't talk to you anymore." Likewise Sino refused to fake certificates despite his community's expectations: "I was hurt by the demands of relatives to give them jobs in the school and the demands of the authorities to fake certificates."

Corruption has created a deep distrust of the educational infrastructure (Rose-Ackerman 1999; Simis, 1982). No one seems to believe in the possibility of getting an admission to a university or getting a good job without cherez. Teachers have conceded that their efforts and merits are only secondary to cherez. Gormijn, the Math teacher participant, put it this way:

351 Phillips (1989, in Poppleton & Menko, 1999) pointed out that in studying foreign systems of education one should not forget that things outside the school matter more than things inside.
Nowadays the best students also look for cherez. The parents and students tell us that our education is useless. But we tell them that even if you get to university with cherez, in order to stay there for four to five years, you still need to be a good student (Int. 3. 76).

Living in the context where corruption is a norm, the participants could not avoid being entrapped by these practices. Nigin was unable to refuse her uncle’s wife’s request that she get a grade for her cousin. Sino had no other option to get the furniture for his newly-founded school. Nigin and Sino seem to have done what they do to serve others, not themselves. However, Izzat used cherez to get his son and daughter accepted at university. He used expressions like “we arranged”, “we contacted”, “we gave so much nuts, fruit and money”, “we invited the professors home.” Corruption was also the favourite topic at community gatherings (see Box 8).

Like in many other societies, corruption has rendered the teachers’ vision of a good, civil society and citizenship useless (Fish, 19943; Hope & Chikulo, 2000). Corruption has contributed to Sino’s, Nigin’s and their colleagues’ acknowledging the impossibility of their educational goals and values. When they talk about ethics, justice, honesty and the value of schooling, teachers appear variously as utopian, naïve, cynical, idealistic, hypocrite and irritating in front of the students and community. “People are not inviting us, they do not talk in front of us”, said Nigin. Sino believed, that if corruption continues, living conditions in Tajikistan may never improve. How much money one has, what connections one has, what gang one belongs to, who are one’s parents, what ethnicity, religion and tribe one belongs to, and what party one is a member of, now constitute the dominant values. Merit, cooperation, democracy and justice have become mere words used to cover corrupt practices. As one parent replied to Sino when he asked them to help their child to study: “What have you and those who studied achieved? As long as we are alive we shall get our child a certificate, a university diploma and a good job.”

Corruption has eroded the hope the teachers nurtured when they accepted Perestroika. Like Simis (1982) they believed that opportunities would be taken away from the domain of the so-called Communist corrupt elite and redistributed to the marginalized. However, infuriatingly, not only did the Communist elite remain at the top, but the teachers, together with the other poor people, lost even those small opportunities that had existed in Soviet times. Conspicuously, the teachers’ material and professional status have deteriorated and Badakhshani society has become increasingly polarised along class, ethnic, religious and language lines. The teachers continue to
have a hard time comprehending these changes and explaining them to their students and community (Keshavjee, 1998). Seeing the persistence of corruption, the teachers blamed themselves for believing in and serving corrupt politicians. Rumours about misuse of quotas in the districts abound. The community members accused the teachers of being corrupt, resulting in the deterioration of relations with the community. Sino, Nigin and their colleagues became demoralised and wondered why they should work hard, or be honest, or care and share, or improve, or change their methods, or spare extra time. These important questions challenge the ethics of the socio-economic changes Badakhshan, and reveal fundamental contradictions in the education system.

Despite its deep entrenchment in the fabric of life, the teachers and the community still considered corruption as wrong ethically, pedagogically and professionally. Corruption affected the teachers’ relationships. Nigin faced the students’ and the parents’ frustration with her refusal to give the required grades. Sino faced ill-feelings from his community and the higher authorities about not faking certificates. Izzat acknowledged that what he did for his own children was wrong. But he also revealed that had he not done cherez, his own children would have been left without higher education and he would have cursed himself for the rest of his life. Had not he done that, his own children would have not looked in his face anymore, and would have called him as uncaring father, Izzat confessed. He revealed, that for some people, corruption might be the only way to make ends meet and to get out of poverty. The teachers and others described the humiliating experiences of making cherez. They suggested that, in a corrupt system, to be an honest person means to fail.

Further, living in a system where cherez has become a cultural expectation, the teachers nevertheless tried to fight it. Sino refused to bow to his relatives’ and the Government’s demands to fake certificates. He turned down the invitation to work in the local administration on the same ground. Nigin refused to ask for cherez when her son went to the university entrance exams. She also tried to persuade the university teachers to develop agreed standards for the exams. Sino and Nigin condemned corrupt practices. Their critique included official authorities and members of the NGOs as well as individual persons. It also embraced the existing structures, such as examination and promotion systems, teacher contests, and accountability structures. They

352 Fish (1994) saw engrained corruption and Mafia’s presence as the major problems facing the creators of the new, post-Soviet civil society. Keshavjee (1998) suggests that the roots of corruption rather lie in the new capitalist system, with its streaming, tracking, sorting and favouring some groups, classes, colours, genders and religions over others.
discussed a few instances of corrupt practices in their classroom, such as criticising crooked politicians, greed and selfishness, Perestroika and the Mafia. The teachers have consciously developed visions and goals opposed to corruption; they joined any initiative against corruption. They taught Ethics and Knowledge and modelled ethical behaviour in their communities and homes. They believed that good would win over the evil of corruption. As Sino passionately and powerfully argued: “We can give a psychological blow to the bad and put it down.”

The teachers also provided some important suggestions about how to fight against corruption. Sino dreamed of producing leaders with ethics and knowledge; Nigin wished to produce students who care for themselves, the society, the country and the poor. These educational responses to evil resemble those suggested by many researchers (Hope & Chikulo, 2000; Rose-Ackerman, 1999).

These teachers are unselfish leaders, unconcerned about advantage to their own pockets, their own relatives, their own ethnicities and clans. Sino and Nigin suggested the need for educating citizens and leaders having a balance of ethics and knowledge, who live the life of the people, talk to them, work with them, take care of them, look at the wrinkles of their faces and scratches of their hands, and ask about their life conditions before asking them to change. They envisaged leaders whose actions counted for more than their words, not leaders who “arrive, sit, eat, talk, stand up and leave”, as Nigin put it.

A Society of Multiple Perspectives

The teachers’ societal vision embodied a synthesis of the achievements of the various forces and ideological frameworks, which currently existed in Badakhshan. In so doing, Nigin and Sino challenged the happiness of many in the West and East about the collapse of the USSR. Their voices suggest that the collapse of the communist ideology does not mean an automatic success of the anti-totalitarian or other authoritarian frameworks. As the teachers compared the Soviet certainty and relative security with the post-Soviet chaos and conflict, as they related the Soviet opportunities with the pre-Soviet and post-Soviet obstacles, and as they related the history of their ethnic and religious minority, they suggested that not everything was

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353 The kind of society these teachers envision resembles the kind suggested for post-apartheid South Africa, a society “based on the commitment to norms of civility, fairness, sharing, trust, collaborative engagement and managing differences and conflicts” (Fullan, 1997, p. 8).

354 In a US political TV show in 2000, the collapse of the USSR was considered as the most important event of the 20th century. Those who try to voice the insiders’ views have increasingly challenged this western-oriented viewpoint. Without supporting oppressive and totalitarian structures, these voices suggest that the implications of the collapse of the USSR have been more complex politically, economically and socially. They also warn against seeing the Soviet system in entirely negative terms (Darvaz & Nagy, 1995; Ignatieff, 1993; Keshavjee, 1998; Niyozov, 1996).
so bad in the former Soviet Union. The teachers in all the sites believed that Soviet times were generally better times; they also inculcated these feelings in their students.

They argued that so far, the collapse of the USSR has resulted in misery and tragedy for the ordinary citizens. They saw that the collapse of the USSR has given birth to a number of problems—corruption, disease, drugs, guns, unemployment, ethnic tensions, and poverty—that may become chronic features of post-Soviet life. They believe that the Soviet collapse has made people less tolerant, greedier and less caring (Jones, 1991; Keshavjee, 1998).

During Soviet times, Nigin and Sino compared their life and work realities with those of teachers in the Western countries, because the purpose of the Soviet Union was to reach and surpass the conditions of the USA (Dneprov & Ekloff, 1993; Muckle, 1990; Webber, 2000). People in Tajikistan now compare their life conditions with their pre-Soviet past and with countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. The majority of Tajiks do not hope any more to live like people in the West; they simply hope not to fall to the level of those in Afghanistan. The Soviet past, in their view, held major benefits: equality of education and job opportunities, security, access to facilities and good conditions for teachers' life and work. Nigin and Sino refuted not only some of the allegations about poverty and suppression of religion in the Soviet Union; Building on Lenin, Nigin also revealed that being a good Soviet citizen required a deep knowledge of the past, including religious knowledge. Sino, Nigin and their colleagues felt particularly happy with their status as teachers in Soviet times. In sum, unless a better alternative emerges, they and their students regret the passing of the Soviet State, as one of Nigin's classes illustrated. For many, Soviet times will become a kind of Utopia that they once lived in and will continue to long for.

At the same time, neither Nigin nor Sino seems to want to return to the Soviet past. Glasnost has made them aware of system's faults, such as lack of freedom, lack of motivation, a control-and-command system, stagnation, and economic decline. They do not want to be forced to do things according to the wish of "superiors", to be led by hypocritical and corrupt leaders and be fenced in a closed country. They do not want to promote a one-sided interpretation of reality anymore. They did not like the constant visitations of the inspectors and the "you must do it" approach.
The teachers envisaged the presence of the Aga Khan\textsuperscript{355} as another important feature of their post-Soviet society. The teachers’ negotiation of their identity and practices has always been connected to hope. In addition to their belief in their minds and hands and all those who supported them, they have hoped for an ultimate authority who could listen to their silenced voices, take care of their impoverished lives and be their ally in their struggle for the good cause. In Soviet times, the theory of Lenin and the humble opportunities of the Soviet State filled this role. The post-Soviet realities initially promised too many hopes: Perestroika, independence, Tajik statehood, democracy, the market economy, and the new road to Dushanbe; all these hopes have faded. One hope, however, has remained constant; their hope in the Aga Khan (the Imam of the Time).

The Aga Khan served as an important figure in Sino and Nigin’s post-Soviet work and life. The Aga Khan for them has replaced the authority of Lenin, Marx or other authorities in MBAP. In fact, the direct connection with this authority was impossible to sever even in Soviet times (Keshavjee, 1998). Sino put the Aga Khan higher than Lenin. Nigin considered that Lenin was a holy being too, because like the Imam, he also cared for the poor. The Aga Khan’s pictures and sayings are displayed together with those the president of Tajikistan, Lenin and Marx in various offices. The Imam has worked as a peacemaker and a provider of relief to the people during the post-Soviet hardships. He also launched development programs. “Whatever the Imam says, will happen” was the population’s general attitude toward his authority. The teachers were overwhelmed by the Aga Khan’s humanitarian assistance and restoration of the credibility of Pamirians in the larger Tajikistan. They regained a pride in their minority again. Even Izzat, a Sunni, described Ismailism as a progressive trend of Islam:

The mullahs in our district were totally mystified to see trucks with goods coming and coming endlessly... bringing the basic necessities right from America and Canada on a free basis. This changed their attitude towards the Ismailis. They stopped considering you as kafrs. They stopped telling us to not marry women from Roshan and Shugnan. They accepted that the Aga Khan is a holy person (Int. 5: 67).

\textsuperscript{355} Within the frame of the Ismaili interpretation of Islam, the spiritual connection with the Imams can never be severed. One of the fundamental differences of Ismaili from Sunni interpretation of Islam is the former’s belief in the eternity of the concept of the Imam (spiritual guide of human beings). There was no doubt on this principle among the Ismailis of Badakhshan, despite the Soviet restrictions.
The Imam emerged as a major force in teachers’ rationale for teaching and their attempts to persist and excel. Sino and Nigin’s contextually responsive vision closely echoed the approach suggested by the Aga Khan:

Tajikistan has become the focus of one of the most interesting encounters of the day. It is here, and in the other Central Asian Republics, that three great cultures encounter one another: the ex-Communist world, the Muslim world, and the Western world. It is here that those three cultures could forge a success that would contrast starkly with the brutal failure in Bosnia. The result of the encounter in Tajikistan may determine much about the way history unfolds over the coming decades, so it is worth thinking a bit about the stance that each of these cultures might take in preparing for this, or any, encounter to be constructive. I suggest that there are four prerequisites for success. For each of the cultures, the result should, first, draw on its strengths and, second, be consistent with its goals. Third, the result should be a substantial improvement in the current situation. And fourth, the transition should be humane.

Each of these three cultures has something to bring to the solution of the problems of Tajikistan. The West has many strengths, but prominent among them are science and democracy (with their public mechanisms for self-correction) and also private institutions, liberal economics, and a recognition of fundamental human rights. The Muslim world offers deep roots in a system of values, emphasising service, charity and sense of common responsibility, and denying what seems to be the false dichotomy between religious and secular lives. The ex-Communist world, although it failed economically, made important investments in social welfare, with particular emphasis on the status of women, and was able to achieve in Tajikistan impressive social cohesion. These are powerful array of strengths and goals. Just how to combine them to solve Tajikistan’s problems is not clear. But if the outcome is to be sustainable, it seems necessary to concentrate resources on the development of the private institutions, of accountable public institutions, and human potential... (Aga Khan IV, MIT, Boston, USA, May 27, 1994).

The Imam has generated a profound enthusiasm in the teachers to remain in teaching and to excel: “We worked for the sake of the Imam”; I tried to become the best teacher of the year because of the Imam...”(Chapter 6);"I got the moral right to ask the teachers to come and work; We worked so that the help of the Imam becomes halal (deserved)”(Chapter 5). The Aga Khan has also sparked a motivation in the students to excel. Their motivation, a major factor of learning received a major boost (Lacey, 1977; Lortie, 1975; Woods, 1990).

The Aga Khan has been a resource in the teachers’ practices and methods of teaching. They employed his image to motivate themselves and their students, as they did before with Lenin. The teachers saw the Aga Khan as their major ally in their struggle against injustice and corruption and in their attempts to build a tolerant, prosperous, humane, peaceful and just society in Badakhshan and Tajikistan. They viewed themselves as sources of spirituality and civility, as the only ones who could and should promote ethics and knowledge in the society. Sino conceptualised the Imam as a model of citizen for his view of citizenship.
The teachers saw the Aga Khan as the most important, if not the only, power that could clean Badakhshan from cherez and lawlessness. "I hope Badakhshan be a place blessed by the Imam and ruled by laws; Only the Imam can bring justice. Only he can clean this place" was an overriding opinion in a place like Murghab. The teachers' optimism about the Imam rests in the belief that he sees everything and will bring justice; Ismailism views the Imam, by the virtue of the divine testament, as infallible on social and political intricacies:

The Imamate represents the necessity and continuity of the divine guidance...For the Ismailis the Imam is the link between an individual and Allah... and the Imam is believed to be infallible in his guidance in matters of faith (Thobani, 1993, p. 24).

On personal level, the Aga Khan has provided meaning of life and way out for Sino. "Unlike many people around, I believe I have to do a lot with my own hands, and mind. Like the Imam of the Time, I have to be a person of my time" he repeated. This notion has spiritual and particularly Ismaili roots. However, it is not only a religious notion, but also a holistic notion of the human being (Miller, 1988). In difficult conditions in impoverished countries like Tajikistan, such a notion may be the only option to survive, grow and transform the context into a more humane and just one. According to Sino, this image requires that one does things with one's intellect and hands; one should never give in; one should become more efficient, more creative, more critical, more hard-working, more resourceful and more sacrificing (Farrell & Oliveira, 1993). For Sino, being a person of one's time does not mean being a relativist for whom everything passes if it works; nor does it mean a transcendental being who disregards institutional and political constraints (Britzman, 1991; Liston & Zeichner, 1991). For Sino, to be a person of one's time means to be ethical and knowledgeable about the times, and places, about opportunities and constraints.

Though Nigin did not mention this image of a person of one's time, she would not reject the challenge it implies. For her, a person of one's time should not only rely on humanitarian supplies and external support. She is a person who raises her own status, improves people's lives and humanises their conditions, regardless of their background. A person of one's time, thus, is an ethical intellectual, possessing conscientisation:

... the process of becoming historical subject, permits one to respond to the socio-cultural realities that shape one's circumstances by developing, in concert with others, interventions, that interrupt forms of oppressions and thus make available creative practices (Freire, 1970, p. 17).

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356 The concept of Imam.
The Aga Khan's reputation has spread beyond the Ismaili areas. The Kyrgyz of Murghab wanted their children to attend the Ethics and Knowledge classes. Izzat and his other Sunni colleagues in Wanj, having heard the inspirational stories about the teacher's motivation and work in the Ismaili areas of MBAP, and some of the Aga Khan's sayings, urged that the Aga Khan's ideas be made accessible to the people of the Sunni areas of Badakhshan:

People here had promoted the ideas of Lenin for so many years. Lenin is Russian and many of his ideas were still accepted. The Aga Khan is Muslim and he has helped our people for so many years. I have looked at his books on ethics. They have the same meaning for all of us. I believe his ideas should be made accessible to everyone. Maybe they could help our people change their attitude to education (Int.5: 87).

At the same time, both Sino and Nigin not only rely on the Imam as hope but also deeply care about him (for example, Sino's article). More than that, they warn that this hope needs to be taken care of because, unlike Lenin's theory in the Soviet times, it is open to contest by other forces and ideologies on the socio-political landscape. It is also vulnerable because, like Lenin's theory, some individuals and organisations appear to use and sometimes misuse it for legitimising their positions and reviving their shaken reputations. Not all these people may be ethical, sincere and caring. Last, the hope is vulnerable because the people, including some of the teachers, have developed unrealistically high expectations of the institutions of the Imam. At the same time, these teachers find themselves too small, too weak and too isolated to fight. Badakhshan and even larger Tajikistan still constitute a context where even great politicians or powerful warriors are unsafe (Tajikistan Country Report, 1999).

At this stage of history, the teachers, in order to make sense of this vulnerability, have resorted to an old method: to distinguish the Imam who works for justice, generosity, cooperation, knowledge and ethics from those individuals and structures that use his name and institutions to promote their own selfish interests. This resembles how people viewed or used Lenin during Soviet times and provides the only way out now, conclude the teachers. Nigin warns: People can misuse a good theory and authority to misguide and manipulate people, keep them off balance, spread cynicism and maintain the status quo.

Another challenge to this hope arises from misuse of the teachers' devotion and spiritually-charged motivation. On the one hand, the teachers heartily adhere to the guidance of the Imam, who calls for transforming the Badakhshani community into a more humane one. On
the other hand, the bureaucracy shows little appreciation of this high level of motivation and enthusiasm. Though they talk sweetly, in practice there are bureaucratic forces that try to take teachers' devotion and motivation for granted, to control and manipulate, to monopolise their decision-making, and gradually push them to follow a single ideological framework. The bureaucracy in fact does little to support the teachers to become active human beings who could make changes work for them and fulfil their visions and goals of education, the principles of Tajikistan's Constitution, and the Imam's vision. Although voting for the religious freedom, no teacher supported the idea of a theocratic society. Sino and Nigin worried about the spread of religious intolerance in Tajikistan and elsewhere in the region. They recalled the painful pre-Soviet and late-Soviet experiences, when their religious minority was not only hated, but even became a major cause of tragedy.

At the same time, Sino and Nigin's position toward the post-Soviet pluralism differed. Sino enjoyed plurality, which allowed him to create a humanist position built upon positive qualities of the ideological diversity. Given this, he believed that he could find his way and lead his students to success. For Sino, a prosperous Badakhshan included the rule of law, the blessings of the Imam, a multi-party system, and the "absence of a dominant ideology." Nigin was wary of the current socio-political uncertainty. Perhaps, her subject, history, has made her believe that lawlessness and uncertainty are not good for any society. The leaders and parties should show a consensus about ultimate goals, she argued. Nigin was worried about her society and where it was heading. She believed that leaders have to maintain the social consensus.

In their critique of the Soviet and the current post-Soviet societies, these teachers did not distance themselves from the existing problems. Their self-reflexivity in this situation manifested itself in many of their statements. They generally puzzled about the fact that, despite a high education attainment, the people of Badakhshan remained at the mercy of humanitarian aid and international organisations. Nigin wondered why the so-called highly educated people followed a few populists who, in her view, caused the civil war and tore the country apart. She also wondered why people do not learn from the lessons of history, why people show respect and care only to those who have become rich, why those who have become rich have become arrogant and have forgotten about their teachers. Nigin acknowledged the irrelevance of the curriculum

357 Berman (1983, in Ginsburg, 1991) found similar situation of misuse of authorities and foundations with the Carnegie and Rockefeller foundations.
and her teaching methods; Nigin and Sino jointly decried the lack of conscious learning and critical thinking.

In summary, Nigin, Sino and the other participants are not simply teachers with visions; these are teachers with noble, ethical, responsible and transformative visions that move from the child and the classroom to embrace the school, home, community and world (Osborne, 1991). These visions do not discriminate among people along lines of ethnicity, nation, class and gender, but reflect the integration and balance of individual, communal, national and global interests (Bacchus, 1983). They are highly altruistic and socially oriented (Cochran-Smith, 1998; Collinson, 1996; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Huberman, 1983 in Gudmindsottir, 1995). Morality and the ethics of caring and serving form their bases (Fullan, 1991, 1994; Noddings, 1992). Accordingly, the teachers have appropriated roles that go far beyond the classroom and school. To have teachers with such vision is an asset; how many such teachers remain in Tajikistan is the question.

**Purposes of Teaching**

For Sino and Nigin, teaching appeared as an endeavour with multiple purposes, which varied according to the hierarchy and domain, age of the students and subject matter. Box 20 illustrates the types and levels of objectives Sino and Nigin exhibited. The objectives fall into three broad types; academic, social and logistical.

The teachers formulated all their objectives in terms of their own attempts to induce learning and do things to the students (e.g., help the students learn; explain to them; give them an understanding; tell them, expand their mind). The nature of the objectives, as Cole & Knowles (2000) put it, epitomised their own actions rather than the outcomes of the students’ learning.

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358 Fullan & Hargreaves (1992) mention that teachers serve the society better because they are intellectuals and because they work by persuasion, not force.

359 The notion of teaching as an inevitably intentional act is not new. Pearson (1989, pp. 63-85), for example, approaches the question philosophically, as part of his debate with Green (1971) and Fenstermacher (1986), to endorse that teaching and learning are related. Like my study, he suggests that intentionality: “...is rather a part of what we mean by teaching... It is the principal criterion that we use to identify actions as teaching actions.” He suggests the notion of intentionality to the possession of goals and purposes on the part of the teacher: “When someone is teaching, he or she has the purpose, goal or intention of getting some one to learn something.”
### Academic objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad goals</th>
<th>Pertinent subjects</th>
<th>Pertinent topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make all the children learn (S);</td>
<td>Be able to speak Russian freely without help (S);</td>
<td>Teach dates of events and names of people (N);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the child hardworking physically and academically (S, N);</td>
<td>Appreciate Russian culture (S);</td>
<td>Explain the reasons of the fall of the Kushans (N);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get good profession and feed their families (S, N);</td>
<td>Create basis for learning English (S);</td>
<td>Tell the causes and outcomes of Perestroika (N);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the students able to debate as equals with the increasing number of foreigners (S, N);</td>
<td>Learn how countries were governed and why they collapsed (N);</td>
<td>Sort out verbs from other parts of speech (S);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace corrupt leaders and politicians (S, N);</td>
<td>Not repeat the mistakes of the past (N);</td>
<td>Know the names of fruits and vegetables (S);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think andanalyse, distinguish good from bad (S, N);</td>
<td>Be aware of the politicians (S, N);</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create something new in their life (N);</td>
<td>Know the importance of unity and consensus, memorise the national anthem (N);</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become students of the upcoming University of Central Asia (N);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Want the children to speak good Tajik (N, S);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enlarge the child’s vision (S, N);</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make the children understand what is happening around (N).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Social objectives

In the child everything must be fine: the face, the body, the mind and the soul (S);

- Avoid bad habits such as alcohol, drugs and guns (S, N);
- Become ethical human beings who care not only about themselves but also the society (S, N);
- Develop love for the motherland and the Imam (S, N);
- Develop a sense of pride in the community’s and village’s contribution to the development of Tajikistan and to the victory in WWII (N);
- Foster friendship with Kyrgyz, other Pamirians and other Tajiks (S, N);
- Help and share with those who are needy (S, N);
- Celebrate multicultural characteristics of the people of Murghab (S);
- Understand the various aspect of one’s self (N);
- Respect not only adults, but also the classmates and siblings (S);

### Logistical/organisational objectives

- Attend the school; Listen to teachers; Forget the pencils and pen; have notebooks (S, N);
- Not throw seeds of sunflower on the classroom floor (S, N); Bring the peers to the school (S);
- Clean the classroom (N, S); Heating the classroom, supplying chalk, bringing wood (S, N);
Connecting this way of formulating objectives with cultural metaphors such as "I gave knowledge" and "students can take knowledge" with the larger debate about the relations between teaching and learning, Nigin and to some extent Sino apparently believed in a direct or causal link between their teaching and the students' learning.

The classification into academic and social objectives, as displayed in Box 20, was not the final step in breaking down the objectives. During the case studies, Sino and Nigin provided elaborate accounts, which turned each of their actions into an incident with its own story, history, purpose, and rationale. These action-specific accounts (Doyle, 1990) often connected to the objectives of a certain topic or to larger social or academic objectives. During their encounters in the classroom, these teachers not only develop objectives for a topic, but often for each of the students, as their event-based accounts revealed. Sino was more obvious in this regard: "I wanted her [a student] to speak up and express herself so that I know where she is; No one believes in Daler, but I put a paper in front of him and ask him to write"; or "I want the students to put their hands up even if they are not ready, because this makes them become motivated."

Given that Sino and Nigin usually connected their particular actions to long-term goals and larger contexts, these accounts reveal the complexity, and sometimes unpredictability of the goals of teaching. They also expose teaching's creative and strategic nature, when the teachers link their actions to previous topics and to future hopes for the child and the community. These accounts also revealed the dialectics between rationality and intuition, spontaneity and reason, and science and art in how these teachers understand and handle the complexities of teaching (Bennett, 1998, and also Bennett, July 2000, personal communication; Doyle, 1990; Doyle & Ponder, 1977).

In practice, the teachers did not treat the academic and social objectives equally and often dichotomised them. Both Sino and Nigin considered the social and moral domains more...
important and harder to achieve than the academic domain. "Olim shudan oson wa odam shudan mushkil" (it is easy to become a learned person and much harder to become a human being) as the old adage says. Their social objectives closely related to their educational and societal visions. Further, all the teachers espoused more or less similar social qualities; these had been inscribed in the unified code of students' behaviours across the whole Soviet Union. In fact, not only the teachers and the schools, but also the whole Soviet society had clearly defined goals. In the post-Soviet, diffused, polarised, plural society, this was not easily possible. Thus, all kinds of specially-designed new courses and accompanying textbooks, such as Ethics and Knowledge, Messages on Ethics, Course on Peace Making, Human Being and Society and the upcoming Human Being, focused on moulding the students' social character.

The teachers continued to believe that the development of the students' social qualities occurred more through modelling in the classroom and the community and less through such courses. "The more we teach ethics the less ethical we are becoming", pondered Sino about the ineffectiveness of the ethics-related subjects. Instead, the teachers suggested working without salary for years, bringing in guest speakers, local famous people, or veterans (Nigin), not drinking alcohol and acknowledging to the students that his smoking of cigarette is harmful (Sino), or rejecting to do drugs (Gorminj) as better methods of this type of education. In addition, through such extra-curricular activities as respecting bread and hard work, fostering bravery and developing love for one's motherland, Nigin tried to develop the students' social qualities.

The teachers dichotomised the academic and social objectives by allocating separate places for each objective (school for the academic and community for the social) and different modes of teaching (relatively explicit for the academic and implicit for the social; informative for the academic and sternly lecturing for the social). As a result, the promotion of social objectives overwhelmed the academic domain.

In the classroom, however, the entire lesson usually revolved around achieving the academic objectives; the academic domain consisted of particular topics from the textbooks. This

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362 The name of this newly introduced textbook was *Look at this world with an eye of wisdom*, a phrase taken from the Tajik classical poet, Rudaki, who lived in 10th century.

363 Human Being, a new program, emerged as result of the Aga Khan's visit to Tajikistan in 1998, where he was requested by the Minister of Education of Tajikistan to expand the extant program of *Insanishnoi* (Understanding Human Being) into the schools. Although the content and the curriculum of the program were still under construction, the rationale of the course resided in questions related to the ethical crisis in the region. In addition, the Institute of Ismaili Studies also conducts annual seminar on ethics in Khorog; most of the participants are teachers in MBAP general educational schools.
domain lay in the hands of each teacher, or at most in the hands of the subject-matter teachers in the school. Both Nigin and Sino had enough confidence in their subject matters to withstand challenges by the decreasing number of inspectors or the increasingly interested parents.

Various writers have cited examination practices, coverage of curricula, and cultural practices as reasons for the contrast between the rhetorical emphasis on developing social traits and the practical promotion of academic learning (Guthrie, 1990; Kizilbash, 1986; Massialas, 1990; Niyozov, 1995; Tabulawa, 1994). The mountainous and post-Soviet realities, in which the academic year was reduced to six months, coupled with the demands of disciplining, organising and grading (Fuller & Snyder, 1991), created a new panic situation: There was not time available to achieve the academic objectives.

The same constraints magnified the logistic or organisational objectives, emerged as a result of the post-Soviet shortage of support personnel and basic necessities such as fuel, chalk and notebooks. Although similar to the social objectives, the logistical objectives were even more basic to the teachers' academic and social success. Assigning the attending students to bring their absent peers to the next class, visiting the homes of their students for that purpose, making chalk and pens available, heating the classrooms, and collecting the few textbooks and storing them in the school closet have become goals as important as the preparation of a topic.

The teachers' accepted that within the current conditions of work, the spread of various types of video movies\textsuperscript{364} and corrupt practices, their educational goals and by extension, educational visions, were too hard to achieve (Waller, 1932; Postman, 1975). The forces of the street, such as Mafia, drugs, guerrillas, business and commerce were more powerful than those of the school, acknowledged Sino and Nigin. Sino's reference "the more we teach ethics, the less ethical people are becoming", his worries about which world they have been preparing their students for, Nigin's concern about the failure of their good students during the entrance exams at the universities, and their common acknowledgement of the disparity between those values that they promoted and those that "work" in the post-Soviet society are examples of this painful acknowledgement.

Both Nigin and Sino have also realised that since the 1980s, when corruption became the major quality of the Soviet system (De Young & Suzhikova, 1997; Rose-Ackerman, 1999;
Simis, 1982), the parents’ purpose in sending their children to school has become more for them to get a graduate certificate than to learn. Sino and Nigin also knew that their teaching did not guarantee their students’ full success in either an academic or social sense. This realisation was furthered by their belief that the quality of teaching and learning has gone down. Both teachers said they have lowered their expectations. Sino said “If we demand too much the child may do something harmful to his life; In the Soviet times, my students would speak Russian freely”; and “I will give them a 4 and a 5 for simply attending the school.” Nigin’s observed “studying has become women’s business”; and “There is little hope that one gets to University without a connection.” Such views, added to the absence of students and teachers in Murghab and Wanj, all exemplify the problem. This devaluation of teachers certainly increased their feelings of guilt and anxiety (Hargreaves, 1994).

Through the years of transition, the scope and complication of the nature of the teachers’ objectives obviously enlarged. Facing the various ideologies and forces, the teachers found it hard to negotiate between what to value and whose side to take, or, more important, how to develop objectives that draw from the best of all these ideologies. Nigin, with her subject of history found this particularly difficult. As a public teacher, in her subject, she had to follow the nationally-prescribed curriculum, which demanded that she promote Tajik nationalism, often with overtones of ethnic superiority. Nigin was wary of some of the implications of this policy. She appreciated her ethnicity, her Ismaili identity and the Imam, yet she was aware that this perspective was of limited value for living in the rest of Tajikistan. In addition, Nigin faced the intrusion of religion into her classrooms, reflected in her discussions on marriage (nikah) and the interpretation of the Basmachis (Islamic guerrillas in the 1920s). Personally, she continued to favour Socialism, which had now disappeared for long, if not for good. Sino too could transfer his passion from the Russian and Soviet forces to the rising Ismaili phenomenon. Yet, he too only carefully exhibited his enthusiasm for the Ismaili identity, not only because he was a public teacher, but also because he lived in a predominantly Sunni area in a non-Tajik community.

In this regard, the case of Izzat (the biology Sunni teacher) makes a useful comparison to Sino and Nigin’s cases. Unlike Sino and Nigin, Izzat’s challenge was more difficult: His personal belief in Darwin’s theory of evolution and Engels’ philosophy of nature went against altered even the nature of the gatherings in people’s houses. Nowadays there is much less conversation, much less recitation of spiritual songs, and much more watching of movies (Cohn et al., 1987).

385 Lisovkaya & Karpov (1999) analysing Russian social science textbooks foresaw a similar challenge for the Russian school teachers.
some of the Sunni Islamic clerics, in particular the Mujahedin who had strong influence on the content of the curricula. They warned the teachers in this district against promoting an atheistic and anti-Islamic agenda.

The teachers' absorbed their notions of ethics and knowledge into the existing Soviet categories of the upbringing and academic aspects of education. Although these concepts' explicit ideological claims have altered from the development of a communist personality to the development of a democratic, secular Tajik or a good Muslim, the teachers continued to believe that education involved the same desirable qualities of a human being. In other words, a good human being simultaneously showed the same character as a good Muslim, communist or democrat. Similarly, they replaced their love for the USSR with love for Tajikistan and Badakhshan, while their respect for Lenin and Marx was largely subsumed or at least joined with their love for the Imam, prophet Mohammad and the president of the new country. Some schools displayed the pictures and sayings of Lenin, Marx and the Imam side by side, to show the continuity of the values of education, hard work, honesty, justice and other egalitarian ideas. Not only did the old institutions absorb new ideas (Manheim, 1940, in Sergiovanni, 1998), but also and, more interesting, new institutions assimilated old ideas. Lenin was compared with the Imam more than vice versa, because, as Sino said, the Imam was higher. Nigin suggested that Lenin too was a holy human being who cared for the poor.

The teachers obviously ignored the ontological and philosophical differences between the various ideologies. Through an eclectic approach, Nigin and Sino appropriated various frameworks to serve their educational and societal visions. Finding similarities was more important than searching for differences. Although people equated Lenin to the Imam in positive notions, they equated AKDN to Komsomol and the Communist apparatus when they wanted to express their disappointment with its work. This alternation forms a fundamentally important basis for understanding the continuity, if not the eternity in teachers' and the population's perceptions of hope, as well as their willingness to change, whether from within or from without. Nigin observed that, as theories, Socialism, Democracy and Ismailism (by extension Islam) were great and kind. But at the level of practice, the teachers were wary and cautious at best in their ideological expression.

Yet both Sino and Nigin acknowledged that they could not teach any other way. They believed in the rightness of their basic values, because all the great leaders, prophets, Imams and poets have promoted these universal values. Times have changed; ideologies have shifted, but
these values have persisted, the teachers believed. The idealism of the teachers' goals made another major connection between the universal values and the teachers' societal vision. Through developing ethical and knowledgeable students and citizens, ones who practically care about the society, the desired society will emerge, believed Sino.

That the teachers' goals contradicted those of the community, particularly this rural one, has historical roots. Across the history of Russia, the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet period, the school and teacher have always been assigned the role of changing rural or marginal people's beliefs, mentality and practices and "civilising" them. Thus, schools were usually expected to promote values that often contradicted those dominant in the local society. Schools, in fact, took over the role of the church in moralising communities (Ekloff, 1993). Extensive literature has discussed the potential of school and teachers as change agents (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 1998; Fullan, 1993; Farrell & Oliveira, 1993; Watson, 1983). The communist state, holding a similar mandate for change, saw schools as part of its ideological state apparatus for reconstructing society (Althusser, 1971, in Apple, 1982; Ekloff, 1993; Webber, 2000). Apple (1982) maintained that states used schools not only for changing communities but also for changing them in ways that perpetuate the status quo. Current Tajikistan also expects schools to educate the students for complex realities, contribute to socialising society, provide a high quality of teaching, and perpetuate the status quo-- all on, as Ali said, a "nonsense and miserable salary."

The teachers' promotion of universal "good" values also stemmed from the moral nature of their educational and societal visions (Fullan, 1995). Like their visions, the teachers' noble intentions essentially form their response to the confusing, chaotic and unjust environment and practices. Although in practice, the teachers' goals inevitably focus more on the children, they also tried to promote a similar vision and goals even in the larger community, as the next section discusses.

Too Many Tasks With Too Little Support

I might have used the term roles for this section (Bascia & Thiessen, in press; Biddle, 1998266; Dove, 1986; Neave, 1992; Watson, 1983). However, I used the word tasks, for several reasons. First, this study did not aim to explore the teacher's roles but their practices. Thus, I examined what tasks they performed out of necessity, and what tasks they fulfilled out of

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266 Biddle (1998) discusses the role of the teachers in international scale in a more general sense; Watson (1983) and Dove (1986) speak to the role of the teacher in the developing countries. De Young (1991), Becker (1996) and the special issue of The Teacher Educator (vol. 33, 1998) provide discussions on teachers' role in the rural context of the United States. Iagaforova (1990), Ermolaev
expectations, so as to survive and excel as teachers and persons. These tasks fit within practices in the broader sense. I wanted to more authentically represent the participants, who used words like "wazifa" or "kor" (expected tasks or chores) to describe their lives rather than describing what roles they performed. Not that these activities are unrelated to the roles the teachers played. Box 21 displays five aspects of these teachers' tasks with examples from the words of Sino and Nigin; I then discuss the implications of these tasks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Examples and indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Captain of the ship&quot; (S); Source of knowledge; Knowler of the truth (N); Warner; guide students about</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>politicians (N); Tell about good and bad; respond to needs; Evaluator (S, N); Curriculum developer; find</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gaps in curriculum and rectify them; critique reform ideas (N, S); Adviser to parents about schooling,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>how to work with their children and larger issues (S, N); Teach one's own children (S, N); Defender of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>students against abusive parents (S, N); Fighter for them with the university instructors (N); Keeper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of students' secrets; counsellor about their future aspirations and professions (N, S); Organiser;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>involve students in extra-curricular arrangements; organise conferences (N); Subject matter specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N, S); Learner: Teacher should, like encyclopædia, know more than one subject (S); Knowledgeable;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One who enjoys working with ideas (S); Promoter of the cause of education and the status of teacher (S,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N); Writer of articles on professional topics (S, N);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moral-spiritual</strong></td>
<td>Moral guardian; source of spirituality (N, S); Attendant and performer of religious ceremonies (N, S);</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher of &quot;Ethics and Knowledge&quot; (S); Defender of the community and the Imam (N, S); Role model;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teach students to share food and clothes (S); Writer of articles in defence of one's religion (S);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political</strong></td>
<td>Conductor of census and referendum (S); Propagandist for democracy (S); Participant in the reception of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Aga Khan (S); Propagandist for the president and the State (N, N); Peace maker between Tajiks and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kyrgyz (S), between Tajiks (N, S); Teachers should bring people together rather than divide them (N,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S); Participant in strike (S, N); Consultant to rural people; Help them in writing complaints; give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>advice about many things (N, S); Warn people about corrupt politicians (S, N);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic</strong></td>
<td>Lead in preparing fodder for the Soviet collective farms (N, S); Educate shepherds and herders in tending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>animals (S, N); Seller in the market (S); Labourer for the rich (S); Commercants (traders) (S); Peasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative</strong></td>
<td>Head of the school (S); Head of method unit (N); Class teacher (S, N); Deputy head of the pedagogical</td>
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<td></td>
<td>school (S);</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Obviously, despite the general unemployment in Badakhshan, teachers have become amongst the busiest people in society. This “extensification”(spread)\textsuperscript{367} of their work (Hargreaves, in press) does not necessarily create happiness, although it certainly contributes to improving the teachers’ symbolic status and their position in society. However, when the teachers’ life and work conditions\textsuperscript{368} become impoverished, when they find themselves unprepared to fulfil these tasks intellectually, pedagogically and physically, and when the community does not value many of these tasks symbolically and materially, this extensification of responsibilities may lead rather to an intensification of teachers’ life and work. The adverse effects thus outnumber the symbolic advantages, particularly with regards to their classroom performance (Apple, 1988; Byrne, 1994; Connell, 1985; Dove, 1986; Hargreaves, 1994; Hoyle, 1980; Perry et al., 1995).

Despite the teachers’ increasing poverty, they have carried out almost all of these responsibilities on a voluntary basis. This forms a continuity with Soviet times, when, as the head of Nigin’s school mentioned, the bureaucracy took for granted that it could send teachers to do all the jobs of the village. They were to look after the cattle and educate the shepherds, to sow fodder for the collective farm, and to make sure that the cows produce the planned number of calves. In so doing, any resistance of teachers, including their resignation from teaching, was seen as sign of political opposition and disagreement with the line of party. This could end with dire consequences.

This assumption, that teachers in rural areas context have to do everything for everyone, not only survived the Soviet system but has become a cultural norm. Teachers, too, seem to take this for granted or, as products of Soviet collectivist upbringing, cannot refuse, as Sino’s case suggests. However, today’s practice significantly differs. The Soviet state at least managed to provide enough financial and professional support to keep the teachers happy and their aspirations humble: “Why not serve a state that takes care of you; I wholeheartedly served the Soviet state and the communist theory”, “I still believe there was nothing wrong with socialism”; “There was oily smoke coming from the teachers’ homes”, as Sino, Nigin and their colleagues said to this view.

\textsuperscript{367} Extensification, according to Hargreaves implies a quantitative increase of the number of teachers’ tasks (see Hargreaves, in press).

\textsuperscript{368} By working conditions, I refer to Menlo & Poppleton’s (1999) classification, which includes (a) personal support (i.e., colleagues’, parents’, community’s respect, value and recognition), (b) autonomy (e. g., freedom to experiment, inquire), (c) professional support (e.g., intellectual guidance, technical support), (d) workload (class size, planning, time, after school
In post-Soviet times, teachers find all these jobs emotionally stressful (Connell, 1985). Their salaries fall amongst the lowest. Unlike many other professions and even public service employees, for teachers, the other sources of income are out of reach. Their work is not valued: “The Government has done very little; What is the use of this ridiculous salary, Schooling is a waste of time; Teachers are useless” are similar opinions emerged in all three sites of the study. In their search to make ends meet, Sino and Nigin have stopped offering consultations, which mostly helped the weak and poor students. The load on teachers has also dramatically increased. As mentioned earlier, the professional demands on the teachers have expanded with the new challenges of social and academic development and logistical deficits.

Ideological complexity forms an important aspect of this expansion of the teachers’ role. Unlike in Soviet times, where they served one official ideology and fought others, nowadays the teachers face several competing and/or complementary agendas, none of which they can easily ignore or fight. Within this radical change lies the teachers’ incursion into the religious domain. In Soviet times, these teachers were expected to fight religion or religious interpretations of the topics they taught. Now, many teachers have become mullahs and khalifas. Sino and many of his colleagues have begun teaching Ethics and Knowledge. For Sino, serving the Imam means serving the community. Thus, he teaches Ethics and Knowledge, works for peace, employs Imam’s saying, and writes articles in Russian in defence of his community values and its spiritual guide. Why Sino has not only accepted the advancement of religion but has also wholeheartedly embraced it relates partly to the complex and contradictory relations between the Soviet State and religion.

During Lenin’s time the Government allowed the religious clerics to be part of the Communist State and work as consultants to the Party. Stalin initially repressed the clerics, then encouraged and used them during WWII, after which he returned to repressing them. After Stalin, the state managed religion through tight control by the KGB and the Party and used it selectively to serve the status quo, until Gorbachev allowed freedom (Fireman, 1991; Glen, 1999; Keshavjee, 1998; Olimova, 2000; Roy, 2000). Throughout, one thing remained constant: No teacher could ever openly support religion.

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administrative work), (v) espirit de corps (school climate and clerical support), economic incentives (pay, benefits, promotion opportunities) (p. 114).

An important change: in post-Soviet times, many teachers have become mullahs and khalifas in the villages and are taking over community’s religious affairs. In Soviet times this was almost impossible.
In post-Soviet Badakhshan, this dramatic shift toward religiosity has been eased not only by State and constitutional freedom, but also by the Aga Khan's pronouncements emphasizing the unity of secular and religious knowledge:

Exchange of knowledge between institutions and nations and the widening of man's horizons are essentially Islamic concepts. The faith urges freedom of intellectual inquiry and this freedom does not mean that knowledge will lose its spiritual dimension. That dimension is indeed itself a field of intellectual enquiry (Aga Khan IV, December 1985, quoted in Rajwani, 1987, p. 55).

But this change has not been easy for everyone. Nigin too, has accepted the change and the arrival of the Imam, but cannot overcome her Communist, propagandist past. Further, she has continued cautious about promoting religion. Nigin and her students, in their discussion of secular and Islamic approaches to marriage, avoided any possible controversy. By putting the secular (civic) marriage over the religious, she simply decided on behalf of her students to let the two co-exist, as they co-existed in Soviet times and in other post-Soviet countries (Lisovskaya & Karpov, 1999). The students too, were wise enough not to disturb her with further questions.

Nigin's cautious approach to embracing religion has not only resulted from a dilemma of switching from one value framework to another; it has also grown out of her reflections on her previous experience. Sino, on the other hand, quickly embraced Ismailism, but now worries that things do not work as well as he had expected, that some of the leaders are not serving the Imam's vision, and that they even may be manipulating it for their own ends. For Nigin, her observations of the mismanagement of religious doctrines give further confirmation of her doubt in the local politicians and leaders and of her doubt in the crisis of implementation of theories. She seems to have decided to wait and watch, at the same time maintaining her own perspective, and continue rather as the teacher she always wanted to be (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Diamond & Mullen, 2000).

To switch from promoting atheism to promoting religion and spirituality constitutes a difficult ideological, political and emotional challenge. Yet, the ability to find commonalities between the two, as Nigin and Sino have managed to do, and as Ismaili interpretation of Islam has allowed them to do, has made the shift relatively easy for them. It allows them to not shift their earlier paradigm, but expand it and employ both viewpoints to achieve a holistic and balanced development of the children in post-Soviet conditions.

The teachers managed to pull together ideas from the various forces active on the landscape. Tajik nationalism and pro-Russian bias, western market economy and Soviet collective farm, class-and religion-based interpretations, Stalin and Lenin, the president and the
Imam, all co-existed in the same classroom. The teachers integrated the Pamirian, Tajik and Russian languages, poetry, metaphors, images and proverbs, and both old and new textbooks in their daily teaching and their work in the community.

In fact, many of these forces existed even during the Soviet times but the state suppressed them, fought them or used them selectively. However, the more they were suppressed, the more people seem to have missed them.

At the same time, within the post-Soviet plurality, these various frameworks do not just form a pool of resources for problem-solving, from which where teachers can use what is available rather than what is right (Jackson, 1968). These ideologies represent certain values and interests, often with far-reaching implications. “Methods are not neutral recipes. Methodology is more than application; there are effects, both intentional and unintentional”, as Britzman warns (1991, p. 228). To use an approach without duly considering its underlying values and ideology provides not particular value in a field like education (Eisner, 1991). To approach these frameworks actively, to emphasise their humanistic dimensions and to appropriate them to one’s own worldview, requires teachers to have a socio-political consciousness (Freire, 1970; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Osborne, 1991) and an interpretive or reflexive framework (Cochran-Smith, 1998; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Lieberman & Miller, 1999). They need such consciousness in the classroom, school, home and community. In the classroom, they need it to assess whether actions such as hitting, ridiculing, constant correcting, indoctrinating, lecturing, advising, and disciplining serve their vision of a society of tolerant, productive, creative and active citizens (Dewey, 1916; Engle & Ochoa, 1988; McLaren, 1989; Osborne, 1991; Rust & Dalin, 1990).

In the community, the teachers need this consciousness to help people become active citizens who resist and reshape the mandated changes so as to contribute to the building of a democratic, civil and just society. Further, they need this critical consciousness to examine existing practices and norms and develop alternatives to those they find harmful and or hindrance to implementing their transformational worldviews. A Greene (quoted in Cookson & Lucks, 1997) puts it:

If teachers are not critically conscious, if they are not awake to their own values and commitments (and the conditions working upon them), if they are not personally engaged with their subject matter and with world around, I do not see how they can initiate the young into a critical questioning of a normal life (p. 971).

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370 Dewey (1916), McLaren (1989) and Osborne (1991) suggested that democratic ends could not be met by undemocratic means. They proposed that teachers need to be aware of means-end relations and transform classrooms into micro-democracies.
The Soviet state, contrary to its rhetoric of producing human beings with an active stance to life (Popkevtitz, 1982, Tabachnik et al., 1981), had done everything to eradicate critical thinking, decision-making and problem-solving on the part of both teachers and students. Decisions were to be "right" and problems were to be solved in "the correct Party way"; otherwise, the punishment was severe. Thus, teachers preferred to delegate decisions to higher authorities and to avoid responsibility and possible punishment. The teachers' view of curriculum development, another expansion of their tasks provides an example. Consistent with Soviet times, both Sino and Nigin perceived curriculum as something done "up there" by the central education authorities and sent to the teachers, who should implement it in the classroom (Muckle, 1988). Thus, while some teachers may have been happy to be recognised as curriculum makers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1999), Nigin was disappointed: "They left the curriculum development to the teachers too." In fact, here she almost contradicted her own views on curriculum development and educational relevance in MBAP. Nigin, herself had suggested that the curriculum include the local mountains, nature, history, culture, and social issues. She said that historical studies should begin with the self and the present; she criticised the Soviet curriculum for its irrelevance and blasted the scholars for telling lies.

However, in fact at most she wanted her voice be heard and included in curriculum development by those up there. She wanted an official sanction allowing her to teach what she though was important. Neither she nor Sino saw themselves as potential or inevitable curriculum makers and developers (Apple, 1986; Aronovitz & Giroux, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1992; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; McLaren, 1989). Their fear of being "incorrect" and belief that they won't be let free have outlived the Soviet system: "I am not sure whether what I teach is right"(N); "At the back of my head I know that this freedom is temporary"(S);" There is a push to follow one frame again"(N). Nigin and her colleagues even find the selection of the topics in the Method Unit not only unimportant but also a burden. Nigin did not recognise her arrangement of extra-curricular activities, her warning, advising and critiquing, or her preference for socialist explanations as proactive curriculum making. In fact, she was aware that the inspectors wouldn't like the way she teaches.

Sino appropriated old topics from the textbooks to serve new realities, for example, transforming of revolution to that of spring and of kolkhoz to village, and including topics about the Imam; he connected the textbooks with students' experiences. In both cases, he was making curriculum and making it relevant and meaningful to the students (Newman & Welhage, 1993).
Yet, even Sino, who had said he does not need a textbook, who managed to link the children and curriculum in a Deweyan manner, worried about the lack of textbook and completion of the curriculum (program).

That both Sino and Nigin looked forward to the curriculum being prepared by scholars higher up the system may not simply mean they viewed curriculum development as a burden. Their worries about the exams at the universities, their fear of inspection and their concerns about homework provide an important message. Teaching does not only concern what the teachers value and think important; teaching also involves negotiation between the ideal and real, between subjective and objective, between the desirable and the required.

Teaching, though it happens behind the classroom doors, is a social construction affected by many factors inside and outside the classroom. It also includes making children succeed in the long run, enabling them to be cautious, critical and humane and at the same time training them to pass exams, get a profession and make money. Not doing so rebounds on teachers, Nigin mentioned: “We find it hard to look in the face of those good students who failed in the university exams. We feel that we may have missed telling them some important things.” Ignoring the aspect of success will make it hard for these teachers to live in such a tight community. They must preserve the trust of parents who are also their relatives or neighbours. They need to maintain the honour of the families, the village and the community. Success through all this depends on teaching not only what they like but also on teaching to the test and covering the curriculum. These systemic demands not only have remained immutable but also have become more acute as the opportunities for upward mobility have shrunk. Finding herself caught amidst numerous tensions, Nigin delegated to those above the matter of linking curriculum development to child development. In her view teachers’ curriculum development had to be sanctioned from above and considered in the exams.

The economic dimension constitutes another aspect of the expansion of teachers’ responsibilities. Trading and farming have become a highlight of their lives. Trading was never the job of a teacher in this culture, as Sino’s case suggests. In fact, the Soviet system did not let people take more than one job. As to farming, before the Soviet collapse, the teachers had small orchards at home and helped the kolkhoz (collective farm) and sovkhoz (state farm) as part of the labour training and polytechnical education (Atutov, 1981), because ultimately these institutions also helped sustain the schools. The dissolution of the kolkhoz and sovkhoz, the evaporation of assistance from public organisations, and the disappearance of welfare state, left teachers to feed
and clothe themselves. This required not only a serious and draining commitment to farming, a highly acceptable cultural value, but also an engagement with other businesses such as trade, unacceptable in the Badakhshani culture.

Getting into trade, thus, represented another dramatic value shift on the part of both teachers and of the community. Although the needs of economic and intellectual survival in the market economy and transitional Badakhshan necessitated this shift, the guidance of the Aga Khan eased the way to change:

We have a long tradition of intellectual search in our Jamat. We must not fear, therefore, the changing environment around us, but we must educate ourselves and our children, so that they understand the changes that will occur, and can properly prepare for them, and can make those changes serve you, the people amongst whom you live and future generations (Aga Khan IV, Badakhshan, At Khorog State University, May 1995, found in Keshavjee, 1998, p. 61, emphasis mine).

Nevertheless, the teachers believe that their involvement in farming and trading has largely damaged their teaching, their personalities, and their reputations. These activities have drained their energy and reduced their motivation; teaching has become the least of their worries.

According to Nigin, at least four major concerns (zaqakh) hunt her across all contexts. First, teaching is always on her mind, whether she is working in her field, or serving her guests or looking after the cattle. Second, she worries about just living: “I become impatient when it takes me long to work in the field or with the cattle. This is not what I am supposed to do. I know my real work is to be a teacher. But we need that piece of land and the cattle to survive. I do not want my son to only imagine what potatoes look like. I want him to have one in his hand” (Int.1:17). Third comes the concern of mothering: “I get worried when we have guests, when my son comes home late. Unlike the Soviet times, it is very unsafe nowadays: Narcotics, guns and all other kind of things. As a mother I have similar concerns about my students. So, as I think about this, I wonder why we, mountain women get old so early”(Int. 1:17). Fourth, she has citizen’s concern about where her society is heading: “I do not understand why people have changed so much. I don’t like it when people change quickly” (Int. 1:17).

Serving the cause of education and maintaining the reputation of school and of teachers has become another important task. Nigin did this as part of the whole school’s strategy. As she said, “We need to earn status by ourselves” and “children are our best messengers.” She searched

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371 Nasir Khusraw, a major Ismaili missionary, poet and philosopher, who lived in Badakhshan in 11th century, highly praised farming.
372 A poem by a local poet says: “I am a proud of my people, because they are not traders”...
373 Jamat stands for the community and congregation.
for a critique from her students through the assessment lesson and for a critique of the suitability and quality of the innovations. Her personal efforts exemplify the hard work and unity of school. Together with her colleagues, Nigin worked for years without salary and support, fought for their students in the university entrance exams, and guarded the students from drugs and guns. Furthermore, her colleagues had become involved in teaching Ethics and Knowledge, and the school head employed the Imam’s sayings about education and teachers. All these efforts comprised a well-defined strategy of the school and its head: “We need to prove that our school is good and our teachers are good; then money and fame will come”, said Ali.

Sino did something similar with his school when he was the head. He managed to carry on the school in the hardest post-Soviet years (1993-1997). Recently, however, his motives have become more personal. He clearly states such views: “Who else should care about teaching if not we?”; “I believe school should educate parents on how to look after their children in the new realities”; “School is a decent place.” He teaches Ethics and Knowledge with other teachers, participated in the Imam’s visits, and in the census. All represent his work to raise not only his personal reputation but also that of the school and its teachers.

Their contextual situation of course differed. Nigin’s school worked as a collective with a clear vision and hence could gain the support of the community. Disunity, lack of clear vision, the strike, and generally adverse teacher-teacher or teacher-administration relations in Sino’s school both arose from and contributed to tense relations between the school and the community.

In Soviet times, the State promoted the cause of education and the reputation of the teachers. Like almost everything else, their reputation was imposed from above (Medlin et al., 1971). The teachers “were detached” from and “put above” their communities. They could live and survive without support from the village; in fact, the rural community to some extent depended on the teachers and the school economically, intellectually and culturally. “A women-teacher, I used to not only give an advice, but also lend money to the people in the village” said Nigin. Sino’s colleague was attracted, because “oily smoke came out from the teachers’ house.” Those teachers who have yet understood the post-Soviet changes have found it hard to adjust to recent redefinition of their status in the community. Some, like Izzat, continued to believe that the state should improve the teachers’ reputation, make the parents respect them, and command the parents to bring their children to school. Izzat saw his job as providing knowledge lacking in the school and community.
In addition, teachers continued counselling students\textsuperscript{374}, teaching them outside the school\textsuperscript{375}, leading their villages, and advising their communities on political and economic issues. They continued to consider themselves the most educated people.\textsuperscript{376} But this fact has problematic aspects too. The teachers in rural communities often do have more formal education than most of the villagers. On the other hand, this elitist assumption may be a legacy of the Soviet system’s instilling in the minds of teachers a sense of superiority, intellectual arrogance and cultural insularity (Farrell, 1994). The system also elevated the teachers so as to co-opt and use them to disseminate propaganda and for other political purposes, that often, required their going against their community’s cultural values. Hence part of teachers’ annoyance with the present lack of acknowledgement and appreciation may result from nostalgia for the loss of a reputation held for centuries. One could thus see the emergence of competing professions, such as private businesses as a good phenomenon, that makes the teachers, as Nigin said earn the respect rather than take it for granted.

Subject Matter: More than “ Truths ”

Their subject matters played a significant role in shaping Sino and Nigin’s worldviews, practices and broader identities in the classroom, school, home and community. Their sense of their disciplines lies deeply engrained in their self-image as teachers. As their subjects’ circumstances and status have altered, so have their identities as teachers. Sino and Nigin appear to have reacted differently to this transition; however, at a more fundamental level, they have been going through a similar process of trying to reconceptualize their subjects, their teaching and together with them, their identity.

Both chose their subjects on rational, moral and affective grounds. They believed their subjects useful for them personally, for teaching their students to function better in society and for contributing to social development. Sino chose Russian for many reasons. Russian had power and prestige as the language of Dostoevski, Chekhov, Lenin, the Soviet Union, Communist elite, the “ protectors, liberators and imperialists.” It constituted an important means for upward mobility. Many of these reasons diminished with the collapse of the USSR. Sino painfully accepted the decline of the Russian language vis-à-vis English, but still endorsed the role of

\textsuperscript{374} One clear example was Nigin’s teacher-Halima, with whom the students shared their secrets. Izzat added that in Soviet times he had to not only help his students choose their future careers but also accompany them to Dushanbe and fight for them during the admission exams.

\textsuperscript{375} Lola, Sino’s colleague and Gorninj, Nigin’s colleague had many examples of how they continued teaching students after school, by offering consultations in the school and at their homes. In neither case did they solicit money.

\textsuperscript{376} Goodlad (1990) suggested that this quality of teachers should be promoted in the urban communities too.
Russian as cultural asset for the post-Soviet Tajikistan. He argued that Russian continued to be important for learning not only Russian classical and contemporary arts, but also western cultures. Together, the two created a cultural template for an easier learning of English, he suggested. Russian continued to link Tajiks to other nations, including to Kyrgyz of Murghab. Pulling together the cultural, ideological and political benefits of learning Russian importantly enabled Sino to construct his broader educational vision and internationalist worldview. Sino’s frustration with the parents’ denigration of Russian revealed deeper implications that went far beyond the classroom and the small village of Murghab. His societal vision of the new Badakhshan rested on synthesising the positive achievements of the Soviet, Russian, Western, Tajik, Pamirian, Kyrgyz and Islamic perspectives; obviously, there was a space for Russian. Here, Sino connected his personal values with those of the prosperity of his community (Collinson, 1996; Huberman, 1983 in Gudmindsottir, 1995).

Nigin’s experiences with History exemplify a profoundly emotional case, where the subject matter affects the teacher’s identity, self-esteem and health. Like Russian, History was an important subject in the Soviet times (Davis, 1989). It opened a window to world culture, and was the major tool for promoting the legitimacy of the Party and the State. Nigin too had had a great teacher like Sino’s Russian teacher, who instilled in her a love for History. Like Sino, she suffered from the intense post-Soviet emotional turbulence, despite these good reasons for faith in her subject. She felt guilty, betrayed, and hurt by the Soviet historians and politicians who had provided a one-sided and distorted version of reality (Darvas & Nagy, 1995; Karlsson, 1993; Mehlinger, 1993). From a solid and serious subject, history became the most useless. It was banned from the school curriculum and examinations until the mid-1990s (Lisovksaya, 1997). Nigin was accused as a History teacher who told propaganda about the Communist leaders, as one who, contrary to her actual values, had protected corrupt leaders. She was denigrated as one of those who had promised the students that Socialism and Communism were

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377 The impact of the epistemology of their subject on teachers’ sense of guilt is this study’s addition to Hargreaves’ (1994) notion of teacher guilt, which results from the intensification of their work.
378 Karlsson (1993) provides the following background:

Dogmatism and scholasticism, distortion of the historical truth, embellishment of the past, dissemination of myths and stereotypes have destroyed the historical memory of the people have for decades been predominant both in history research and social history. History teaching in school has suffered tremendous distortions and does not answer to the needs of today’s Soviet society, parents and students (p. 219).

Darvas & Nagy (1995) point a similar feeling among Hungarian teachers about miseducating students and community and collaborating with the previous regime. Mehlinger (1993) states that American textbooks were not essentially much different in indoctrinating and creating animosity in their citizens.
inevitable, that capitalism was behind all the problems in the developing countries, and that the USA was an enemy. As a teacher and a propagandist, she had apparently cursed capitalism and the market economy, fought religion, and promoted the cause of socialism and atheism. She had confidently explained that the world was going toward Communism.

Part of the intensity of Nigin’s frustrations stemmed from life in the rural and mountainous context. She lives in a village where she cannot escape those she might have attempted to “indoctrinate.” She not only sees them but also often asks them for help. More painfully, she has witnessed some of those she fought against (e.g., the religious elite and guerrillas) become leaders of the community. She also sees that those “above” who had assigned her to tell their version of the truth have no shame in continuing to enjoy post-Soviet benefits as if nothing had happened (cf. Solzhenitsyn, quoted in Keshavjee, 1998, p. 75).

She has to reconstruct the truth, because those above again compel her to tell their “truths” on behalf of the new social structures. Ironically these are almost the same people who ran the old system. Nigin had to overturn her feelings and mind to accept the substitution of Tajik for Soviet, “bad” for “good”, and “wrong” for “right.” She had to accept, reconstruct and reinvent the past where necessary. Her doubt is stronger; she thinks about alternative interpretations, but she leaves them to others. “I am sure the children will get access to other interpretations of the term Tajik. We cannot stop the information from coming. If the powerful Soviet Union could not do that, how can a small and poor country like Tajikistan can stop the flow of information?” she hoped.

Kizilbash (1986) and Aziz (1993) point out similar issues about history and social studies in Pakistan. According to Aziz (1993), the content of history in Pakistan altered (distorted) each time the leadership of the country changed. The periodical reinvention and proliferation of history according to each new governing party’s will has resulted not only in repeating the mistakes of the past but also the people’s cynicism and distrust of their leadership and of each other (Niyozov, 1995).

Although they had initially decreased in value, Sino’s and Nigin’s subjects did not disappear. Russian gained new impetus as Tajik-Russian relations revived and the two countries became strategic allies. History too gained new impetus from the state in its drive for self-legitimisation through Tajik neo-nationalism. The official endorsement of the two subjects has, however, not restored their value in the eyes of the people.
The setback to these subjects also came from dividing the students into various streams, where these subjects seemed irrelevant. Nigin complained as “Everyone rushed to study English. Not because history is not on the timetable, but because the students see it as useless.” Sino called for considering Russian as important for studying English. Both illustrate the problem. Both teachers accepted, nevertheless, that learning English was important not only for the future of their students and society but even for their own professional development and improved living conditions. The Aga Khan’s view played a prominent part among their reasons for this acceptance. In his farmans, the Aga Khan has expressed to his community worldwide that the success of the Ismaili community depends on both supporting and mastering their own national languages and cultures, and at the same time, becoming able to communicate internationally in English, which as the present period’s international language allows the achievements of their own culture to be shared with the whole world (cf. Aga Khan IV, Lisbon, Portugal, December 1996).

During this period of transition, however, both Sino and Nigin realised that teaching is something broader than their subject matters. This realisation allowed them to subdue their subjects to their broader educational visions and to their multidimensional tasks as educators whose jobs went beyond subjects and classrooms. In other words, in rural contexts teachers act not only as subject matter teachers, but also as educators on another level. Nigin’s re-conceptualisation of teaching as warning, guiding and guarding her students and community, and informing them about corruption, injustice, selfishness, and dishonest politicians exemplify her rethinking the nature of her subject and appropriating it to her broader educational vision. Hence, she combined telling and cautioning, imparting truths and criticising, indoctrinating and empowering, talking about past and implying the present. Similarly, but more than Nigin, Sino reshaped Russian into teaching more than grammar, into a subject that connected grammar to the life of the students in Murghab and around it.

The case of Izzat and his subject biology is quite interesting here. First, Izzat believed that biology was the most relevant and useful subject for rural areas. He saw the advantages of biology in his personal life:

Due to biology, I have become one of the best peasants in the district. I can take care of the health of my family members. I know what kind of food is best for them and try to find that food. Many people, even the agronomists, ask my advice for farming. If children learn biology well, they do not need to pay doctors and agronomists for each [a bit of] advice. They can also teach their
parents about farming. I am very disappointed that people do not realise that biology is essentially the most important subject in rural areas (Int. 5: 2).

Unlike Sino and Nigin, Izzat wondered whether in his village people needed less English and more biology: “If we want the people to live here and improve their lives we need to emphasise a better learning of biology” (Int. 5: 65). A good understanding of biology contributed to the general improvement of people’s health and economic conditions and accordingly to the preservation and development of the local ecology, Izzat believed. The lack of attention to biology was also a legacy from the Soviet times:

At that time everything was available and we prepared the students for exams and for leaving this place. But now, we cannot leave easily, even if we wish to do so. The current life conditions ask for more knowledge of biology (Int. 5: 65).

Yet, regardless of being a scientific subject, biology too could not avoid socio-ideological transformation in post-Soviet times. Understanding biology as a system of established truths, believing in Darwin and Engels, and being able to provide “superior” explanations of natural phenomena socialised Izzat into adopting Socialist theory and a scientific, anti-religious position, which he enjoyed in Soviet times. The post-Soviet challenges have shaken his adherence to science, but he has to accommodate the realities of the religious advance. Izzat exits in subtle tension between putting forward the ideas of Darwin and Engels\footnote{Izzat considered Engels as a biologist and often quoted him. One of his favourite quotations from Engels was “Life is the existence of the proteins”, which he believed was 100% right.} and suffering possible repercussions from the mullahs and Mujahedin.

Nigin’s, Sino’s and Izzat’s subjects are important for other reasons. First, these subjects influenced the teachers’ cultural and ideological socialisation (Sockett, 1987; Donmoyer, 1996). Nigin’s preference for socialism did not merely arise from the general life conditions. Her subject was politically constructed in such way that it socialised her into loving and legitimising the Soviet Union and Communist ideology, and into searching for certainty and consensus in society. The recent dramatic experience where the lack of consensus between the various forces in Tajikistan provoked the civil war confirmed her belief in the necessity of presenting a single truth and in the prioritisation of consensus over controversy. She continued to attempt this even despite her distrust in the new higher authorities and new ideologies. Similarly, how Russian was politically located, and used to frame what mattered in schools, socialised Sino into the Soviet ideology and Russian culture, which he loved and promoted.
Second, the participants’ subjects inform about the politics of the hidden curriculum and hegemony. Nigin, and to a lesser degree Sino and Izzat explicitly expressed this. Their descriptions of the topics of their subjects revealed that under the Soviet shell, there was often a hidden Russian bias: “Soviet we said, but Russian we taught”, said Nigin. Sino recalled “I had a sense that I was doing something good for the Russians, but I did not know that I was promoting love for the Russia at the expense of an independent Tajikistan.” Sino was disappointed with the local leaders who tried to promote the “superiority of the Russians” over the Tajik teachers: “The Russian teachers were good. We had no problem to work together and learn from each other. It was our leaders who put us down by telling the Russians to "make us human beings" (emphasis mine). Izzat also often mentioned that the biology textbooks described plants and animals that lived in Siberia, not Tajikistan.

At the same time, both Sino and Nigin have managed to be more than victims of socialisation through their subjects. Nigin used history to warn, criticise and tell what she valued, even as she taught content from the textbooks. She arranged extra-curricular activities to promote local history and culture. Nigin suggested that the Tajik historical present should be positioned at the heart of historical analysis, which should then branch into the past and future. She believed that history should begin with an understanding of self. Her questions about Pamirian and Badakhshani identities, Badakhshan’s role in history, and the relationship of both to Tajikistan’s past and present are essentially curricular questions. So are her pondering about why modern Tajikistan has been unable to learn from this history or to overcome its clan, ethnic and linguistic barriers. Also her musings on corruption and nepotism in the new Tajikistan likewise raise similar curricular issues, connecting her personal and societal visions. All reflect her views on sustainable development of a peaceful, cooperative and tolerant society, but also suggest fundamental changes to nature of history as a subject.

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380 Hidden curriculum was disclosed by Jackson and further conceptualised as unintended but real outcomes of schooling that were not acknowledged to the learners (for more, see Apple, 1990; Pinar & Bowers, 1992).
381 By hegemony I refer to the Gramscian notion of the process by which domination is exercised not purely by force but through consensual social practices, form and structures produced in the school, mass media, political system and family (for more on hegemony see Giroux, 1981; Apple, 1982; McLaren 1989; Tabulawa, 1997).
387 Judge (1975) and Belkanov (1997) describe some of the practices that in their view promoted Russian colonial policy under the Soviet flag, such as (a) isolation of the Soviet republics from the outside world and tight control of foreign relations, (b) integration of the economy, (c) enforcement of Russian as a ticket to getting a better job.
Thus, Nigin proposes a return to a social issues-based history, an approach that had existed in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and early 1930s, but was eliminated during Stalin’s reign, partly because its focus on contemporary issues would have exposed the problems of Stalin’s rule (see Ekloff, 1993). Sino, likewise, appropriated Russian not only to teach topics from but also to include social issues; he used Russian to serve his culture and community.

All the teachers emphasised the need for knowing other subjects in addition to their major. Sino’s teaching Chemistry, Tajik, and Geography supports the thesis that rural teachers generally teach not only more than one grade but also more than one subject matter (Becker, 1996; De Young, 1991; Stem, 1992). But Sino, Nigin and the teachers also suggested the need to know particular subjects: humanities and Tajik literature. The necessity of knowing literature connects to their larger visions of social change and their broader roles in the society. In the classroom, this knowledge could assist the children with language and with children’s social development. It could also help the teachers educate their society through its moral and spiritual heritage.  

The Rationale for and Meaning of Teaching

The participants revealed a rich and complex web of reasons for remaining in teaching. To better understand this complex set of data, I classified their reasons into several groups, which sometimes overlap (Box 22). Box 22 makes clear several continuities and changes in teachers’ rationale for teaching. The pedagogical and professional reasons, such as the importance of education and teachers reveal the continuity of the teachers’ belief in teaching as vocation (Freire, 1970; Lacey, 1977). In Soviet times, teaching was their major, if not their only, job. When Nigin says: “I cannot imagine myself except as a teacher, I am not ashamed of being a history teacher”, or Sino states “I am proud to be a teacher, I cannot go into trade, because I am not trained to say no to people”, both communicate pride and acknowledge the fact of their

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284 Knowledge of Tajik-Persian classical poetry is seen as a quality of a wise person. In gatherings in Badakhshan, classical poetry is preferred to the modern due to its deep didactic and spiritual character. Use of classical poetry is very common practice and it comes through in the cases of Nigin and Sino.

285 The literature has developed many definitions of teaching. According to Smith (1987, in Dunkin, 1987) these include (a) descriptive—teaching as imparting knowledge and skills; (b) success—teaching has not taken place if no learning has taken place; (c) intentional act—teaching is an activity pursuing definite goals, (d) normative behaviour—teaching conforms to certain ethical and ideological biases and includes conditioning or indoctrinating; and (e) science—teaching is occupational performance. Robertson (1987) views teaching as an educative endeavour aimed at encouraging beliefs supported by evidence and at developing students’ capacities for independent thinking and decision-making. Gallagher (1970 in Dunkin 1987) and Elsner (1977) have argued that teaching is an art, while Gage (1978) considered the importance of developing a scientific basis for it (for more discussion, see Dunkin & Biddle, 1974).

286 Woods (1990) provides three sets of motivations for teaching: vocational, professional and occupational. The discussion here derives from Woods’ categories but breaks them into different aspects and expands on them.
socialisation into their role. Whether in the classroom, at home or in the community, teaching has become the major quality of their personalities and interactions. Teaching goes beyond the conventional understanding of something happening behind the classroom doors and school walls. It also relates to the community’s expectations, which are based on the enduring value of education in the community’s culture. Because the community saw education as something given in the schools, the teachers usually gained importance. The Soviet State maintained this value (Aini, 1986; Medlin et al., 1971; Shonavruzov & Haidarsho, 1991), not only out of the Marxist-Leninist drive to liberate the people and put an end exploitation (Muckle, 1988; Popkewitz, 1982), but also from a desire to change the society in ways that maintained the rule of the Party, State elite and Russians (Belkanov, 1997; Fireman, 1991; Heynemann, 1998; Medlin et al., 1971; Roy, 2000; Zajda, 1980).

The desire to deserve the Imam’s blessing has led the teachers not only to stay in the profession but also to the resent intrusion of consumerism and the commercialisation of social and educational relations in the community. The children’s respect and the Imam’s love sufficed for them to ignore the other hardships related to remaining in teaching. Nigin’s case referred to teachers as fidai (a selfless devotee of the Imam). Within this notion, sharing knowledge, caring and helping the needy constituted desirable qualities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Teachers’ statements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical &amp;</td>
<td>There is no country without education and there is no education without teaching(S, N); It is service to the children, community, the Imam and the profession of teaching(S, N); When I see the children my heart breaks(N); I love children and they also respect me(S, N); I am a good teacher: I have students who teach at University, My students won positions in the Olympiads; I have helped many students grow; I am not ashamed of being a teacher (S); Students are motivated and they need us(N); Teaching is the mother of all other professions(N); A lesson pulls all of me together. It keeps me grow (N); Only teachers can convey ethics and knowledge(N, S); We do not want our Badakhshan to go as low as Afghanistan (N); We need to prepare the students for the new University in Badakhshan(N, S);</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographic &amp; Demographical</td>
<td>Where can I go with my family? The good places are so far from here(S); This is our land. We all speak the same language and belong to the same faith and ethnicity (S, N); Murghab is a tough place, but it has always been taken care of (S); These mountains are the place for real teachers (N);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>There are conflicts and insecurity all over the former Soviet Union(N, S); As a teacher I can equally and openly talk with the men in the village (N); I am not politician. Teaching is not politics. It is about making the students aware about politicians (S, N); Teachers have to be peace makers and consensus builders who bring different people together rather than divide them(S); The recent experiences have taught me many important lessons to convey to the youth (N);</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural &amp; Spiritual</td>
<td>The appeal of the Aga Khan and his confirmation of teachers as important figures in his community(S, N); If there was no the Imam, I would have never tried to become the teacher of the district (N); Each day ask yourself if you are man. What service have you done to the people(S); We work for the sake of Mawlo and his steps in Badakhshan(N); The humanitarian assistance of the Aga Khan Foundation both motivated these teachers and made them feel ashamed of not working and eating freely(S, N); The importance of teacher is proved in our poetry and prose(S, N); Leaving the children is unethical: They will find a bad guide who may involve them in drugs and guns(N); We are the intelligentsia of the village(N, S);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>I have no money to move and resettle in other areas (S); I have a few more years left to retire (N); The lands in the native villages have been privatised and I can not go back (S); Education and health are the only two fields that work in Badakhshan (S, N);</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>It keeps me busy, provides me with energy; It is the worst thing to be unemployed (S, N); It helps me grow and feel useful (N); There is hope and there are signs that things will improve (S, N); I have tried other jobs, but failed: You have to be able to say no to work as commersant (S); I cook and wonder what am I going to teach in the next History lesson in grade 5 (N); Teachers die soon after they retire, because thy cannot get bear the separation with children, school and teaching (S, N); Every one looks at teacher and if we give in that would be too bad (N, S);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>I have become a better parent, teach my own children (N, S); I cannot imagine myself except as a teacher (N); It is honour to be an educated woman in the village (N); Teachers are ideal human beings. They are source of culture and spirituality, pillars and moral guards of the society (N, S); It is better be a “noble of the village” than a slave in Russia (S, N); I find it hard to look at the faces of those whom I taught not give in and have given in myself (S);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Connecting these notions with the Soviet image of an intelligentsia\textsuperscript{387} for the rural and mountainous context, the teachers continued to believe that they have to bear the hardships to make their community better, more educated and more ethical. Further, if the geographic and economic reasons kept them in the job by default, the cultural and religious reasons have motivated. This motivation rests on the Aga Khan’s support and his reiteration of the enduring value of education across the centuries. Like his grandfather, the Aga Khan has always stressed the value of education for the future of Ismailis, clearly encouraging education for both men and women equally (e.g., Aga Khan IV, Malia Hatina, India. November, 1992, see also Aziz, 1997).

Communities often have high societal and political expectation of their teachers, particularly in rural contexts (Becker, 1996; Dove, 1986; Nachtigal, 1992; Popkevtiz, 1988; Waller, 1932). The teachers here seem to have internalised these expectations. They regarded teaching as a special mission bestowed upon them; they believed their job expanded far beyond the classroom doors and school walls. The honour (nonus) of the Pamirian community as a progressive, educated, and one that made many advances in the Soviet period can be understood only through understanding ethnic and religious relations in Tajikistan, where the Badakhshanis constitute a minority. The wider society has continuously conveyed to the Pamirians implicit and explicit messages to be harder-working, better educated, more efficient, more conscious and smarter in order to become equal to and be appreciated by the major ethnicities.

Such attitudes added to teaching’s symbolic value across the contexts of classroom, school, home and community. The teachers’ statements (Box 22) show they have clearly absorbed this value and their role in upholding it.

The political reasons for remaining in teaching, such as insecurity and conflicts, coupled with the difficulties in mobility and communication in the mountainous context, have become prominent as a result of the post-Soviet realities. Life in the mountains has become harder economically and professionally. This might provide a good reason to leave, but the political and ethnic tensions in Tajikistan have made the teachers choose the safety of staying in Badakhshan over the risks involved in departure, even though the latter might lead to material success.

With regard to economic reasons, the local understanding of the notion of work shows an interesting continuity with Soviet times. Consistent with the Soviet way of thinking, the only “real” jobs are those which are paid by Government. Hence, despite the fact that day-labor in the

\textsuperscript{387} The term intelligentsia, slightly different from intellectual, embodies notions not only of a higher level of education but also of a role model, a notion of civility and centrality, where teachers are in the middle of social actions in the community (Long & Long,
market of Murghab could bring to Sino more money than his monthly salary, and despite the fact
that Nigin’s total annual salary could not equal her husband’s monthly salary, both teachers
carried the label mohonador (a salary earner). To be a salary earner in the rural Badakhshan in
Soviet times almost equalled belonging to a higher class.

Now, teachers with their current salaries have become more like beggars and “dervishes
of the 21st century”, as Sino said. Their engrained principles at the same time present them from
succumbing to individualistic survivalism. For example, although they do private tutoring, Nigin
and Sino, unlike many teachers in the lowlands of Tajikistan, do not solicit money to supplement
their meagre incomes. They consider soliciting money culturally and pedagogically unethical.
Further, believing that everyone in the village was poor and that teachers were servants of the
State, they were waiting for the Government to take care of its obligations to the community.

Despite all the above good reasons to remain in teaching, the economic factor will
become one of the major forces. The Government continues to keep teachers’ salaries miserably
low. Teachers like Sino and his colleagues moonlight, trade and labour for the affluent few in the
villages to make ends meet. Choosing teaching implies choosing poverty, frustration, sacrifice
and humiliations; inevitably, the quality of teaching will suffer. Those who can, will migrate to
become “slaves in Russia” or change their profession, as Nigin’s husband did. Even spiritual
force will be on their side to do so, the teachers believed. Gorminj powerfully expressed this: “At
the end of the day, I will say: O Imam, you knew why I left teaching.” It is hard to imagine if
good graduates will join teaching any more. “If things go like this, we will have no teachers in
the schools. The outcomes of this denigration of education will be seen 15 years from now”, as
Nigin’s colleague stated. The increasing commercialisation of education, currently tolerated as a
remedy for keeping teachers in the profession in the lowlands of Tajikistan, will become a

1999; Sutherland, 1999).
388 It is interesting that the people continued to see government work as the only recognised job, but not private initiatives. Hence a
commercant (trader) was rarely accepted as a one who had a job.
389 Teachers’ salary was not high even in Soviet times (Gerhsunksy & Pullin, 1990; Melnikov, 1997). The average teacher salary
was 197.5 Soviet rubles per month, lower than the USSR’s average wage of 203 rubles per month. This point however represents
the viewpoint of policy. The financial satisfaction of the teachers in my study is based on their real experience. The above Soviet
salary was payment for a workload of 16 hours a week only. The majority of teachers, particularly good and experienced ones, could
easily take on more than one workload, thus doubling their salaries. There was also a “high mountain bonus”, in the case of Murghab
about 75% and Shugnan 50% addition to their salaries. In addition, teachers were paid extra for being a class teacher, or head of a
method unit. They were provided with facilities such as coal, apartments, and electricity at a cheaper price. Thus, the average
earnings of a teacher in Soviet Murghab could reach about 600 Soviet rubles monthly, compared to the single salary of an industrial
worker.
Rust & Dalin (1990), Webber (2000) provide elaborate discussions on the effect of poverty on the life and work of the teachers in
poor countries, including the former Soviet Union.
cultural norm. Not only have private schools and fee-paying classes become a necessity (as Nigin's and Sino's schools), but also bribery, taking gifts, faking grades, and selling certificates become accepted practices (as in both cases, see also De Young & Suzhikova, 1997; Hope & Chikulo, 2000; Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Simis, 1982). These trends may erode the egalitarian values and ethics that hitherto have created tremendous motivation in the teachers to stay in teaching and devote their full potential and energy to it. Individualism⁹¹, cynicism, and consumerism could replace these values: school knowledge will become a commodity to sell. Nigin meant this, when she referred to the teachers being paid and given gifts in the large cities of Tajikistan. Hence, practices seen as unethical by both the profession and the culture, may become acceptable for two related economic reasons, and with time, they become tolerable cultural norms. Teachers' increasing poverty and the increasing importance of money and commodities in the market economy. When education becomes a commodity to sell, better knowledge usually costs more and is bought by those who can afford it.

If Teaching is not a Political Activity, then What it is?

Researchers increasingly have seen teaching as inherently political (Apple, 1982; Aronovitz & Giroux, 1986; Britzman, 1991; Dove, 1995; Ginsburg & Kamat, 1995; Smyth, 1998). But Sino, Nigin and their colleagues viewed teaching as a non-political or even an anti-political act.⁹² Sino said, "I am not a politician, I am not a show-off person. Teaching is not politics. It is against politics. It is about making students aware of the politicians and their sweet words. I do not use Russian for political purposes." Nigin warned her students against untrustworthy politicians. Both highlight the importance of this theme. Somehow, despite the manipulation and control by the Soviet State, despite the intensification of their lives by the current bureaucracy, the teachers still did not view teaching as a political act. Despite their strategic position in the rural society, and despite their broader educational visions (Cochran-Smith, 1998; Hursh, 1995), they, in fact, saw teaching as incompatible with politics. This view appears to controvert their warning students against corrupt politicians and bad guides.

To resolve this contradiction requires a socio-historical journey into Sino and Nigin's view of politics. First, they had learned to see politics as something dirty, unethical and embroiled with lying and manipulating people so as to get power. They saw teaching, on the

⁹¹ Given the Soviet and even pre-Soviet practices of subjugation and repression of individual by the community, or Party, and ideology, I contend that a share of individualism is welcome. I, however, share the teachers' legitimate concerns about selfish, relativist and consumerist individualism achieved at the expense of public manipulation and disregard of societal and environmental concerns.
other hand, as about serving without dividing and manipulating, "bringing people together, saying good words and doing good deeds." As Nigin said, teachers represent the "most caring and most honest people, who just give and let others grow, who help the students to be better and the society to stand on its feet."

At least, since the Soviet times, the various regimes have promoted the apolitical notion of teaching (Ekloff, 1993). Politics was the monopoly of the state, a matter between adults. It could not involve children and teachers. Politics was seen as something done to enemies. The Soviet regime saw independent political activity as a negative phenomenon, because an interest in politics meant being dissatisfied with the Soviet State and Communist Party; it meant having doubt. Hence, it was seen as not only as unethical but also as dangerous. The only right and useful politics was that of the Communist party; teachers (as propagandists) purveyed that politics (Davis, 1989; Jones, 1991). By essentialising independent politics as something bad, the Soviet State and Party managed to discredit the notion of politics in people's eyes.

During Perestroika, the teachers realised that the Soviet leaders were corrupt. Nigin realised that she had been domesticated to tell lies to the students and the community. She realised that people could use good theories to promote their own selfish agenda. She was anguished: "How could they tell lies for so long?" At the same time, Sino realised the deeply corrupt nature of the Soviet leaders. Both teachers realised that through teaching the textbooks and working in the community they had been serving not the good theory and ethical authority they believed in, but a corrupt elite. They realised that the corrupt Soviet leaders had used them, the authority of Lenin and the theory of socialism for their own benefit. The civil war "confirmed" this negative notion in the minds of Sino and Nigin. Politics became synonymous not only with power and corruption but also with ruthlessness in manipulating the population.

Sino and Nigin thus use the word service (khizmat), which in the Pamirian and Tajik languages has an altruistic sense, conveying that an act of service implies no particular expectations. This notion is rooted in the culture; Sino's maxim, "Each day ask yourself if you are capable. What service have you provided to the people" goes back to 11th century poet Nasir Khusraw. Teaching is seen as a job with good intention and without discrimination. It is a service to the children, the community, the state and the Imam. Trust is deeply implied in it.

The notion of service, however noble, does not take away the political features of teaching. Those who ask for this service have intentions: Some of these intentions are humane

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392 See Chapter 2 for a review of literature on the political quality of teaching.
and noble, others may not be so. Nigin’s criticised the Soviet historians, or current bureaucracy and Sino criticised the Communist party, a new elite precisely because they misused the teachers’ service. In the post-Soviet reality, the number of those to be served has become larger and their intentions more diverse. Lack of awareness about the real interests of the people they serve constitutes one of the major sources for the contradictions and tensions in these teachers’ practices in the classroom and out of it. Thus, they get confused between various ideologies, unable to sort out their perceived and real differences. They served ideas that they may have not have served, had they known the effects of those ideas. They talk about pluralism, democracy, tolerance, justice, equity and freedom, caring for the all children and producing children with a balance of ethics and knowledge; However, in practice they more often promote (often unwittingly) docility, passiveness, indoctrination, obedience, rote learning, control, punishment, and monolithic interpretations of reality. They continue to carry out every activity the bureaucracy wishes them to do, while spending less time in the classrooms, they think about the weak and poor but teach classes for fee-paying students.

These teachers—servants of the State and members of the community—probably will not exercise the option of refusing to participate. They were honoured to serve the Soviet State, the current state, the Imam, and the community. Teaching for them is a professional, intellectual, technical and aesthetic and ethical activity. But it is also a political act, because education operates in the context of various interests and power relations (Apple, 1988; Ginsburg et al., 1995; Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Osborne, 1991).

Given that education is a politically-oriented act and no teacher can be out of politics (Apple, 1982; Cochran-Smith, 1998; Dove, 1995; McLaren, 1989), Sino’s and Nigin’s notion of teaching as something opposed to politics could represent an alternative politics, one that has qualities opposed to those mentioned above. Given Sino’s peaceful nature and Nigin’s emphasis on consensus, their politics poses no a call for revolt. However, it does not entail serving injustice and selfish politicians, although both Nigin and Sino often unwittingly still serve them somehow. Their politics involves being ethical and not doing harm. It aims to enable the students and community to reveal the intentions of the various theories and various people operative in their homeland: as Nigin said, revealing both the good and bad sides of anything. It involves warning, caution and doubting, as Nigin began to do, or developing critical thinking, as Sino would add. It comprises what Cochran-Smith (1998) called an “interpretive framework.” Life,

393 Freire (1970) called these qualities outcomes of the “banking method” of teaching.
including teaching "...is increasingly becoming a matter not just of handling overwhelming data and theories within a given frame of reference... but also a matter of handling multiple frames of understanding, of action and of self-identity" (Barnett, 2000, p. 6).

At times Sino and Nigin have had no choice or knowledge about how they have been exploited. Nevertheless, the cases show that despite the Soviet and post-Soviet attempts at controlling people's thinking in Badakhshan, Nigin and Sino have always had a degree of political understanding. Their active positions, doubts, and critiques clearly show this. The moment they see something harmful for society and the children they resent it; at the minimum, they would not join it. They would tell their students, who are wise enough to keep these secrets between them and the teachers. Nigin warns, she says that she will tell about both good and bad things, and will critique the leaders whether the inspectors like it or not. Sino refuses to join the bureaucracy, or to fake certificates. Both share a caution about neo-nationalism. All these examples suggest these teachers see their work as serving with an ethics of honesty, caring and justice. Their politics has a positive notion; it balances personal and societal interests (Miller, 1988). It is about their using their convincing power to make people ethical and knowledgeable.

In sum, trying to live out their worldviews, these teachers, in some form or another, exhibit the leadership qualities of transformative, ethical intellectuals (Giroux, 1988; Miller, 1988; Noddings, 1992, 1995), extended professionals (Broadfoot et al., 1988; Hoyle, 1974, cited in Broadfoot et al., 1988), reformers (Thiessen, 1993b), moral guardians (Goodlad, 1990), curriculum makers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1992), teachers for social change (Cochran-Smith, 1998; Fullan, 1993), cultural and political workers (Apple, 1990; Smyth, 1998; Sprague, 1992; Sultana, 1990).

However, neither Sino nor Nigin fit any of these conceptualisations in the pure form. In addition to the complexity of the nature and context of their, the teachers also lack deeper socio-political knowledge, such as an understanding of hegemony (Ladson-Billings, 1995), or cultural imperialism (Avalos, 1992; Carnoy, cited in Bacchus, 1983), or reproduction and perpetuation of status quo (Giroux, 1988). They illustrate undeveloped ability to see realities as social constructions. These deficits go to the roots of the Soviet system of control of human thought. The Soviets not only discredited the term politics, but also did not let the teachers
develop socio-political knowledge and critical reflection (Ekloff, 1993; Webber, 2000).

Although, the Soviets could not control the teachers' thinking in the total sense, one also cannot develop much free agency in a totalitarian system. The issue now is whether these capacities are being developed in post-Soviet times? Nigin, and Sino continue serving everyone without much expectation of reward, but not because they are unaware or critically unconscious. Rather, they share an altruistic commitment and devotion to their profession and to their vision of patiently making a difference to their students and the community (Fullan, 1993; Noddings, 1992). Stronger socio-political knowledge would have helped Sino and Nigin to avoid much of the turmoil they underwent as result of post-Soviet changes. Possessing a critical framework, they could see realities as humanly constructed. They could then have employed teaching better to serve their visions and missions, promote strategies they value, lead their community, and reconstruct ideas in favour of their vision of community and citizens. It would have helped them to make the ideals of independent, democratic and secular society inscribed in the Constitution of Tajikistan more real and meaningful. It would have helped them to make the recent changes work for them and for their society, as the Imam has advised them.

**Summary**

This chapter discussed several aspects of the two major participants' worldviews, supplemented by the insights from the three other teachers. The teachers' worldviews comprised their societal visions, educational goals, subject matters, various roles in their life and work contexts and reasons for staying in teaching. Their worldviews emerged and developed from their beings as teachers, parents, community members and country citizens. The development of their worldviews crossed Soviet and post-Soviet times, as well as the contexts of classrooms, schools, communities and homes. They also created these worldviews by evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the various ideological perspectives on the Badakhshan socio-political landscape. They reflected on their past and present experiences, memories, comparative knowledge, and future hopes. The teachers have formed such elaborate views about society and education in a totalitarian society and harsh living conditions; one can glean from this a few important lessons about the Soviets' and post-Soviet attempts at educational change. First, trying to change people's mentality by disregarding their beliefs and values, regardless of their quality,

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394 Ladson-Billings (1995) includes the necessity of socio-political consciousness as one part of her proposal for the development of "culturally relevant pedagogy." The two other components of her idea are the promotion of academic success and the teachers' cultural competency (see also Gay, 2000).
fails. Second, imposing certain values and ideologies as truths of superior quality, with the aims of controlling the teachers’ thoughts and channelling it in certain ways, has proved unworkable and unethical. They clearly do not serve the purposes of independence, freedom and sustainable development.

The teachers’ biographical experiences have played crucial roles in the development of their worldviews. Their life journey has exposed them to contradictory experiences. Their parents helped them grow, but only to a level that was not yet enough to fully realise themselves. They enjoyed teaching and the relationships with their own wonderful and caring teachers, but also witnessed dehumanising and discriminatory attitudes; particularly painful, yet educative have been their experiences as members of religious and ethnic and linguistic minorities. They have observed continuities and changes in the system, context and profession of teaching. In their life, the teachers have seen great leaders and corrupt functionaries, stagnation, safety, and revolution. They have undergone pluralism and unification. They have experienced sweet promises of different versions of Communism, Democracy and Islam. They have experienced comparatively good lifestyles and extreme poverty. They have not only read about peace and war, poverty and disease, oppression and betrayal, but also have endured them all. Within their comparatively short lives, they have seen the collapse of empires and the explosion of freedom, and the revival and diminishment of hope; they have seen radical transformations of values and systems. They have also seen how things have changed and yet remained the same, while simultaneously becoming worse, particularly for teachers. They have experienced a deep fall from the previous high elevation of their status. Within these contradictory realities of life and work, the teachers have tried to negotiate their ways, identities, positions and practices. These experiences and their reflections upon them have been crucial to the teachers’ own transformation and development of new agendas.

Within the teachers’ worldviews, their subject matters constitute very important elements. Subject matters appeared as more than an element of the pedagogical content knowledge in the sense of objective facts, definitions, substances and principles. They constitute an equally powerful element of the teachers’ identities, of curriculum relevance, of meaningful instruction and of sustainable personal and societal development. Subject matter can make teachers happy or famous, enrich their vision, enhance their intellectual and leadership capacities, and improve their life conditions. But subject matter also consists of an interpretation of phenomena, reflecting the values not only of its authors but also of the ruling ideology of the society (Sockett,
It is not easy for teachers to subvert the prescribed interpretations, whether these teachers like them or not. The dominance of a single prescribed interpretation of reality deskills the teachers, affects their beliefs and practices, and powerfully socialises them into certain ways of seeing the world. In so doing, the teachers reveal the emotional, psychological, and ethical damage that a subjects’ monistic presentation of reality can cause to teachers, students, the society and even the theory itself. However, regardless of the teachers’ emotionally painful revelations about, and call for the rethinking of the nature of and approaches to their subject matter, the new system, ignoring the lessons of history, channels the teachers into following the same old approach.

The teachers’ worldviews indicate powerful elements of transformative and humanistic positions, because they envision a society based on cooperation, tolerance, peace, knowledge, internationalism, democracy, spirituality, and justice. Their worldviews rest on enduring ethical principles of caring for the self, others, the community and the country. Sino and Nigin’s societal visions, for example, rest on their historical and comparative knowledge and dramatic experiences of wonderful gains, painful losses and beautiful dreams as Tajikistan moved from the pre-Soviet and Soviet past to the post-Soviet period; they look towards a hopeful future.

The teachers’ worldviews are grounded in several layers of synthesis that incorporate the best of: (a) the past and present; (b) Socialism, Islam, Western democratic ideals, and technology, and their own community and nationality; and (c) their rural, mountainous and urban contexts. From the urban context, they suggest, the children can take the courage and confidence to speak up; from village and mountains, the children can learn hard work, humility, reciprocity, and respect for the community. Linking this point with the sayings of the Aga Khan an interesting notion emerges: Though the teachers’ vision echoes that of the Aga Khan, it further unpacks and contextualises that vision. They suggest that it should also embody the positive aspects of the Tajik, Uzbek, Russian and Kyrgyz cultures. They also emphasise the need for including and developing the local Pamirian perspectives within the Tajik culture.

Important points of this synthesis are its moral criteria: those ideas that promote justice, equity, respect, care and diversity. With a preference for collectivist and communitarian principles, these teachers’ visions rest on the concern for showing “individuals how they can function together in the society”(Galbraith, 1996, p. 38, italics in original).

These worldviews both define and are expressed in the teachers’ multiple goals, standing as an alternative to values they see as unethical, and aspiring to a citizenship grounded in
knowledge and ethics. The teachers’ goals are complex, multi-layered and interconnected. The ultimate purpose is to produce a well-rounded human being, in whom every aspect should be developed in harmony. The teachers’ educational goals promote a holistic approach where ethics and knowledge, humanity and erudition, individualism and society are brought into balance. By so proposing, the teachers’ visions and goals embody qualities more ideal than real, possibilities rather than realities. But they stem from the realities of current Tajik society and represent an alternative to that society.

The teachers’ visions promote qualities generally incompatible with post-Soviet Tajik society. They stand against some of the values of the deregulated market economy, such as consumerism, greed, individualism, cynicism, and corruption. Such commercialisation ultimately results in a divided society with different types of schools and teachers serving different segments of society. A situation like this certainly does not fit the present values of Nigin, Sino and their community; it would make it tougher than ever for teachers like Sino to help all the children, particularly the weak ones, to succeed. It will make it more challenging, if not impossible, for the teachers to be who they want. Sino, Nigin and their colleagues know about the idealist nature of their view of a society. However, perhaps exactly because of this, they have developed visions largely alternative to the existing realities.

Despite many convincing reasons to leave the profession, the teachers seem to have found a number of equally good reasons to remain in it. But the implications of their understanding of teaching and their continuing with it pose a dramatic dilemma. On the one hand, such belief, high motivation, and investment in teaching show a commendable sacrifice on the teachers’ part and a credible basis to capitalise on. On the other hand, struggling to deal with the increased expectations without due support means their sacrifice and commitment can result in deleterious effects on their health (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1998) and even more pressure to quit the profession.

Within their mountainous, rural, socio-economic and political complexity, among increasing demands and considerable constraints, Sino, Nigin and their colleagues somehow manage their complex professional lives. With the changes in the society the number of the teachers’ tasks and roles increased significantly, including teachers’ incursion into areas earlier seen as incompatible with their values, status and prestige. The teachers apparently do not refuse some of their new roles. However, given that they experience sharply dwindling material, financial, professional and moral support, this increase of tasks, responsibilities and roles has led
to intensification of teachers’ life and work. This in turn results in either cynicism or guilt and burnout.

However, the teachers find themselves unprepared to address the dilemmas of their situation. They face both extensification and intensification of their work. They must try to identify the real interests of the various forces and ideologies in MBAP. They reconcile the realities of survival with the necessity for excellence, and the enjoyment of freedom with a sense of responsibility. Somehow they need to prioritise the needs of the students, community and country.

Living in poverty, they look almost like beggars, with torn shoes, unwashed shirts, and pale faces. They have no time and opportunity to upgrade themselves and reflect upon larger social issues. All these factors impede their performance and create additional emotional anxieties. As Nigin’s woman colleague said: “We are torn apart by the tensions between the field, home and school in a way that we become good in none of these. When we look at the women in the West, we say: “why have we been punished by living here?” Again increasing demands without concomitant support contribute to the deterioration of the teachers’ health, to their burnout, and ultimately to their leaving the profession and even the country.

The teachers’ formulations of their worldviews’ various elements have been embroiled with continuities and changes, tensions and dilemmas pertinent to structure and agency, given and possible, real and ideal, past, present and future. The challenges of life, context, history, culture and system have prevented the teachers from developing truly transformational worldviews and conveying them to others. They constructed their worldviews through a process of negotiating between given, imposed and possible, between real and ideal, between what they thought important and what others wanted them to do. The next chapter, on the teachers’ methodologies and relations, will further reveal the complicated challenges that affect the teachers’ transformational positions.
Chapter 8: Comparative Cross-Case Analysis.

The Teachers' Methodologies and Relationships

This chapter continues the cross-case analysis. As in the previous chapter, I augment the discussions and arguments from Sino and Nigin's cases with insights from the other three participants. The chapter consists of two parts: First, I analyse the teachers' methodologies and the factors affecting their classroom life; then, I discuss the nature of teachers' relations in the rural and mountainous community and spell out the factors inside and outside school that affect these teachers' relationships with their students and students' parents. The discussions suggest that, contrary to their transformational and transactive worldviews, the teachers in practice have largely opted for teacher-centred and transmission strategies and cohesive relationships. In addition to the complexities of classroom life, several other factors--such as the physical context, students' biographical experiences, cultural and systemic structures, and the changing realities of the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, have challenged the teachers' transformational worldviews and affected their practices.

At the same time, the teachers have not been victimised by the above-mentioned factors. They have actively negotiated with the realities of the context, reshaping them to promote their espoused worldviews, methodologies, and relationships and to reconstruct their identities. The inconsistencies within and between the teachers' worldviews, methodologies and relationships thus does not simply reflect teachers' supposed "inadequate mentality." They also loudly speak to the contradictions in the teachers' socially, historically, culturally and politically constructed life and education in MBAP, Tajikistan, Central Asia and USSR.

Methodologies: Dominance of Teacher Directedness

This section displays and discusses the teachers' actions and methods in the classroom which seem primarily transmissive. Box 23 illustrate this dominant mode of teaching on the part of these teachers. The box is divided into three principal sections: the teachers' names, sayings and actions. The third column (actions) is further divided to display their particular or common actions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Sayings</th>
<th>Particular</th>
<th>Common to All</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nixon</td>
<td>Students can take knowledge; Listen to wise people; I know the truth of the matter; I am older and more experienced; I know what is best for them; Due to lack of textbooks I have become the source of knowledge and have made them parrots; In the natural science profile, I have to cover the same curriculum in very short time. To do this is possible only through lecture; I want them to be fast so that I can tell more and more; The students are not used to group work; Due to cold and long winter break, we cannot finish the topics; I prioritise the curriculum; I cannot wait when students keep silent. I want them to be quick so that I can tell more and more; I tell them the good side and bad side of an issue;</td>
<td>Warn; Stand in front; Always have a serious face; Recall years, dates and names; Convince students; Maintain the relationships with parents; Interrupt.</td>
<td>Mainly stand in front; Mainly row-based classrooms; Mainly whole class instruction; Lecture, Tell; Daily planning and developing a conspectus; Order; Discipline; Explain; Reprimand; Recall; Advice; Ask question and give feedback; Prefer the mixed lesson framework;^395^ Do not let the students move without permission; Assess; Use moralist poetry; Do not let them speak in their mother tongues; Repetition is the mother of knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sino     | Teachers are the most educated people in the community. They are the only one who can promote ethics; Teacher is the captain of the ship; Teacher should be like an encyclopaedia. He should know everything possible; I know what is best for my students; There is not enough material for them to work on their own; Many became schema teachers due to pressures of the visitors from Komsomol and Party; The inspectors won't like to hear the noise in my classroom; It is too difficult for them to learn the rules by themselves; I find myself asking too many question and sometimes telling; I pay attention to everything in the classroom; My students language is too weak to participate actively. | Organise activities; Build on the students' interests in activities; Let the students chose activities but not the content; Ridicule; Discipline. | |}

^395^ In addition to the mixed lesson framework there are: (a) lesson devoted to a new topic only, (b) lesson-conference, (c) lesson-test, and (d) question and answer lesson.
Box 23 displays the dominance of teacher-centred instruction and the transmission mode, with an emphasis on teacher domination of the agenda, "artificial discourse"; products, and memorisation. The teachers seem to have believed that there is a direct link between their teaching and the students' learning. They believed that the more alertly the students listened, the less they moved, the more they looked at the teacher and the better they copied, the more they learned.

Though Sino could be viewed as someone who has moved closer to the transaction and transformation positions, the box places him firmly within the teacher directed method. Even his famous statement "Making students learn" essentially signifies learning as done to the learners by an external force, that is by the teacher. His other image "Captain of the ship" may, according to Britzman (1991), imply being certain of the direction rather than exploring the unknown, as well as, being a captain who has to be on top to prevent the slightest possibility of a mutiny. The teachers used transmission not only for achieving the lesson's academic purposes, but also for the development of social traits in the students. Only a few responsibilities, such as assigning duty, or bringing chalk and a duster were left to the head students in the classes. In general, the post-Soviet classroom was not so different from those in Soviet times:

Instruction from the first grade on was characterised by fairly rigid pattern of rote mastery of text, oral recitation by students, and teacher dominance of classroom activity...the typical Soviet school was often a dreary place: a decrepit building with few textbooks, out-dated equipment, alienated students, bored teachers and authoritarian administration. Students graduated with little understanding of the concepts or principles they had studied, or with narrow, outdated occupational training that was often useless in practice (Kerr, 1990, p. 27).

Further, the portrayal resembles those in some developing countries:

Teachers occupy a central role in the conduct of teaching. Most classroom activities are directed to the whole class, with the teacher appearing as a "benevolent dictator." The teacher solicits, requests, or orders responses from pupils who in turn must render such services. The children's personal experiences is seldom used as a learning input. The provision of feedback to pupils' responses is often arbitrarily decided by teachers who might "ignore" a child's response or treat a child's error as personal insult...teaching of norms and rules overshadows other teaching activities (p.212)... even though a great number of questions are asked, most of them are either recall or simple direct questions mostly initiated by teachers (Avalos, 1990, p. 211).

Although to a different extent, this general classroom teaching and learning life appear to not only exist, but also dominate the classroom practices even in the Western industrialised

396 Transmission teaching implies a "one way movement wherein the student imbibes certain values, skills and knowledge" (Miller, 1988, p. 4).
397 Metlan (1992) refers to artificial discourse as a two-person dialogue where the teacher initiates with a question, the student responds and the teacher provides feedback.
398 However, no one could call Nigin, Sino and Lola bored (or boring) teachers.
countries. (Goodlad, 1984; Ramirez, 1992, in Cummins, 1996, p. 16): Sirotnik provides that a typical American secondary classroom reflects:

a lot of teacher talk and a lot of student listening...almost invariably closed and factual questions...and predominantly total classroom instructional configurations around traditional activities-all in a virtually affectless environment. It is but a short inferential leap to suggests that we are implicitly teaching dependence on authority, linear thinking, social apathy, passive involvement, and hands-off learning (Sirotnik, 1983, p. 29, quoted in Cummins, 1996, p. 16).

However Sino's and Nigin's practices refute these authors' and others' conclusions about teaching in rural, mountainous, post-Soviet, or less-developed counties as being entirely within the transmission mode. Box 24 for example, shows practices representing one of its alternative, "transactive teaching" (Miller, 1988399).

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399 Transaction position views education as a dialogue between the students and the curriculum in which students reconstruct knowledge through the dialogue process (Miller 1988, p. 5).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give students feedback and read their work.</td>
<td>Help the students speak and read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide feedback to the class.</td>
<td>Students will write and present their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade homework and assessments.</td>
<td>Students will write and present their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss social issues and let the students talk about them.</td>
<td>Students will write and present their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage students to ask questions.</td>
<td>Focus on the students that are struggling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet the needs of the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide clear instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide feedback to the class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common to All</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on student work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on student work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect on student work.</td>
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<td>Reflect on student work.</td>
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<td>Reflect on student work.</td>
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<td>Reflect on student work.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on student work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect on student work.</td>
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<td>Reflect on student work.</td>
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<td>Reflect on student work.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read and reread the essay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read and reread the essay.</td>
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<td>Read and reread the essay.</td>
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<td>Read and reread the essay.</td>
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<td>Read and reread the essay.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read and reread the essay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Reflect on student work. | Focus on students that are struggling. |
| Reflect on student work. | Focus on students that are struggling. |
| Reflect on student work. | Focus on students that are struggling. |
| Reflect on student work. | Focus on students that are struggling. |
| Reflect on student work. | Focus on students that are struggling. |
| Reflect on student work. | Focus on students that are struggling. |
| Reflect on student work. | Focus on students that are struggling. |
| Reflect on student work. | Focus on students that are struggling. |
From Box 24 one can see, for example, that Sino, while being the "captain of the ship" and defining the direction, asked questions and engaged the students in a series of activities. There were times when he agreed with the kind of activities the students suggested, such as role play, *pole chudes* and guessing games.

Nigin too (as we shall see later) allowed the students to recite poetry, dance, sing songs, and ask questions in her extra-curricular lessons and lessons on Messages of Ethics. Nigin’s case becomes especially illuminating, if one looks at the differences between her approaches to her official and extra-curricular lessons (Box 25).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Lessons</th>
<th>Extra-curricular lessons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Taken from textbooks or curricular guides and journals;</td>
<td>Taken from what she thought was important for the students and the community;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposes</td>
<td>Focus on coverage of the national curriculum; Order, academic and social;</td>
<td>Focus on particular and local traditions; Social, academic and order;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Lecture; Dates, years and names of the events; Guided discussion, mainly through questions and answers, with little participation from the students; Whole class instruction;</td>
<td>Guest speaker; Short introduction by her; Songs, dances, music; Whole class instruction;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ participation</td>
<td>Limited to answering her questions, asking questions and assessing of their fellows, monitored by Nigin; Mainly short oral answers that have to be up to the point;</td>
<td>Students’ questions, songs, dance and talk were guided by her, prepared and organised a priori;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Textbooks and charts, mostly from Soviet times: The teacher; Mostly Tajik nationalist and Communist value frames; Tajik-Persian literature;</td>
<td>Veterans, scholars, famous people; Musicians, other teachers, students’ experiences; Mostly local Pamirian, Ismaili, the Aga Khan but with some Socialist and internationalist perspectives;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places</td>
<td>Classrooms;</td>
<td>Halls, dining room;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure/ Organisation</td>
<td>Formal, orderly, rows and U shape; Tense, hurry and monotony;</td>
<td>Orderly, but informal, and U shape; Relaxed, and engaging and diverse;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Formal, daily, marks, verbal appraisal;</td>
<td>Assessment informal, expressed in words of thanks;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>40-45 minutes;</td>
<td>1.5-2 hours;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images</td>
<td>Quick, fast, to the point, hurry; Huge topic, little time; Repetition; Curriculum &amp; Inspection; Give knowledge, take knowledge; Events and reasons; Parrot;</td>
<td>Emotions, feeling; Fun, relaxation, dances, songs; Praising and thanking the Imam;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images common to both</td>
<td>Stability, certainty, peace, love for the county, consensus, good relations, unity, order and law abiding, warnings about politicians;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Tajik (Shugnani very rarely);</td>
<td>Multilingual with Shugnani dominant;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis</td>
<td>Rote learning, telling;</td>
<td>Relevance and authenticity; What else the official curriculum should include.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The patterns illustrated in Boxes 24 and 25 challenge some of the description of teachers in similar situations as overly transmissional (Guthrie, 1990, Tabulawa, 1998\textsuperscript{400}). The evidence here tends to agree with Fuller et al. (1991) and Farrell (1994) that teachers in developing countries also move between the transmission and transaction modes of teaching. Nigin’s extra-curricular practices and Sino’s, such as bringing in of social issues and letting the students share decisions about some classroom practices, indicate a transformative position.\textsuperscript{401} In fact, the teachers infused the teacher-directed and transmission structures and strategies with interactive and transformative content. In other words, they tried to reshape the existing structures to serve their worldviews. All these teachers had the potential to become transactional and even transformational teachers for social change (Cochran-Smith, 1998; Miller, 1988), who could promote culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Nevertheless, comparing Boxes 23, 24 and 25 with each other and with the teachers’ worldviews raises a number of questions. For example, one might ask whether transmission and control in the classroom help to promote the free, just society and active, critical human beings, that the teachers’ educational and societal visions call for? Although not all transmission teaching might be oppressive (Osborne, 1991), the practices mentioned in box 23 do not obviously form part of a transformation position (Miller, 1988). In addition, one may wonder how far could the teachers push the boundaries of the established cohesive and transmissive practices on their own.

According to Dewey (1929), a school in a democracy should follow six principles: (a) respect individual capacity, interest, and freedom of inquiry, (b) enact a genuine disposition to build upon the child’s experience, (c) display the atmosphere of informality, (d) emphasise activity as opposed to passivity, (e) pay enormous attention to human factor and social relations, and (f) support ethical contact between the teacher and children. Dewey also suggested that schools could promote democracy only by:

> becoming a democratic place, where students work together on common problems, establish rules by which their classroom be governed, test and evaluate ideas for

\textsuperscript{400} In the examples of Botswana, Tabulawa (1994) and Guthrie (1990, p. 228) concluded that the teachers were utterly formalistic and transmission-oriented. The authors end up either supporting very slow change or even defending the formalist model of teaching. Tabulawa’s cautious approach is more plausible; it is hard to agree with Guthrie’s defense of transmission mode. My study questions whether teachers could ever be solely transmissional. In practice, to promote transmission methods would not serve the teachers’ vision and goals about the kind of the society; neither would it serve the Constitutional purposes of Tajikistan, the goals of educational policy (e.g., Law of Education of Tajikistan, 1994) and the guidance of the Aga Khan.

\textsuperscript{401} Transformational teaching for social change, according to Miller (1988) concentrates on an integrated, holistic transformation of individuals and society. It rests on a humanistic stance for social change. “In this position the student is not just viewed in a cognitive mode, but in terms of his or her aesthetic, moral, physical and spiritual needs” (Miller, 1988, p. 6).
improvement of classroom life, and participate in the construction of the objectives for their own learning (1916, p. 83; see also Cummins, 1996, Chapter 1; Osborne, 1991).

Certainly, in Dewey’s terms, the teachers’ methods seem inappropriate. The teachers themselves doubted that the methods they used really promoted the values they espoused. During the post-lesson discussions, they revealed this, though they often realised that circumstance had pushed them to this position. As Nigin said, “Due to lack of the textbooks I have made them parrots.” Sino admitted that, “I have never been rude, but I may have slapped; conditions make me be rude. I imagine how would that hurt the child’s personality.” He also said, “I do not believe that forcing causes prosperity; I know that constant correcting may make them not to speak, but I get angry when a student repeats the same mistake.” As a result, Sino admitted, “We missed to teach the students critical thinking.” Nigin realised, “May be that is due the way we teach. We do not read consciously.”

These teachers, who largely had democratic worldviews and near-transformative vision, saw themselves as agents of social change (Cochran-Smith, 1998; Fullan, 1993, 1994). They even knew about some of the practices that could promote this vision. Nigin, Sino, and their colleagues said, “We have had these methods [i.e., some of the child-centred methods offered to them in the workshops]. “I have used these problem-posing method, this group work, although a bit differently”, “I have had few ideas and wanted you see them and provide me with feedback.” Yet, they continue to prefer transmission over interaction, cohesion over collaboration, control over freedom, and monism over pluralism in their practices and relationships in the classroom, school and even in the community. One questions whether they had in fact developed their vision on a conscious basis (McLaren, 1989).

The Persistence of Transmission and Teacher-Directedness

Connecting Sino and Nigin’s practices to their biography and larger contextual realities illuminates some of the reasons for the persistence of transmission and teacher-centredness in their practices. I shall point out a few major factors.

Biography. These teachers’ educational experiences through schools, VUZs and training courses have mainly relied on transmission and teacher-directed methods. Their comments reflected this, for example, “I did not need to study at home, because the teacher was so clear; There was nothing except lectures and we took pains to write down all their words. In

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403 A Russian abbreviation for higher educational institution.
the exams we simply retold them their own words." The participants gave credit to their teachers and saw themselves as receivers of those teachers' wisdom rather than as active constructors of knowledge. They saw education as something given to them, rather than actively constructed by them. But they all, particularly Sino, also experienced moments when the teachers treated them in humane way, and helped them to succeed. They recalled their schoolteachers who spoke so beautifully that Sino and Nigin memorised the course content right from their mouths. Many of their teachers always came with equipment and teaching aids, told stories, and involved their students in extra-curricular activities. Some of them asked deep questions and criticised the system.

These teachers’ reflection on the contradictions between being both told and listened to, being both mistreated and respected have ultimately led them to begin to think not only transitively but also transactively: “I left those practices that I hated and took those I liked”, Sino said, explaining how he had made these experiences educative (Dewey, 1938).

**Pedagogy and psychology.** These teachers were strongly influenced by behavioural psychology, which suggested a direct link between teaching and learning. Soviet educational practices and teaching methods, of whatever variety (Popkewitz, 1982; Zverev, 1983), despite their rhetoric of dialectical materialism (Tabachnik et al., 1981), remained grounded in Pavlovian behavioural psychology and positivist epistemology (Kerr, 1990; Long & Long, 1999). Vygotsky's social constructivist psychology and interactive pedagogies, such as the “pedagogy of cooperation” were not encouraged until the time of Perestroika (Amonashvili, 1987; Suddaby, 1989). The Academy of Pedagogical Sciences monopolised educational research and had a clear ideological agenda: to implant those viewpoints of Marx and Lenin that served the communist elite and to ensure that research discovered only technical and individual problems rather than systemic ones (Davis, 1989; Dneprov & Ekloff, 1993; Dunstan, 1992; Long & Long, 1999; Webber, 2000). Educational doctrine saw knowledge and truth as objective and identifiable. Education aimed to fill the learners’ heads with these “truths” and replace the students’ supposed wrong assumptions, misconceptions and prejudices, particularly in rural areas (Bacchus, 1983; Ekloff, 1993; Freire, 1983; Karlsson, 1993).

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464 Pedagogy of Cooperation emerged in the mid-1980s. Its main principles were allowing for more creativity of the teachers and relaxing relations with the students. Teacher domination and lecturing was replaced with cooperating with the students and considering their individual differences. Pedagogy of cooperation also let students actively participate in the classes and do more independent work inside the classroom. The idea had limited dissemination in Tajikistan and much less in the MBAP. The 1980s witnessed a burst of various innovative movements in the Soviet education; amongst them the most popular were Commune
Consistent with this doctrine, classroom life focused on imparting knowledge of the content. Both Sino and Nigin believed that they knew much more than their students and even their students’ parents. They believed that they used only a small share of their knowledge in the classroom. At the same time, they thought the students’ knowledge was too small in size and too raw in quality. Nigin viewed a good teacher one from whom the students could take a lot of knowledge. As she said, “I dispensed knowledge. Students can take knowledge, because they are motivated, they are looking for it and when it comes, they take it. I want to be a teacher from whom the kids could take a lot of knowledge; 100% of a topic could be resolved within a 45 minute lesson.” Belief in the truthfulness of Soviet theory formed a part of this reasoning: a view of teaching where science becomes ideology to serve the status quo \(^{405}\) (Hathaway, 1995).

The teachers’ perceptions of their subject matter also played an important part in defining their approach to teaching. \(^{406}\) Nigin perceived history as serious, ideological and indoctrinating, as too huge and too “old” for the students to know by themselves. Coupled with the tensions of curricula coverage, examinations, and students’ inadequate linguistic abilities, this belief has made her teaching “monistic”, monological and based on lecturing (Karlsson, 1993 \(^{407}\); Seregni, 1993; Stodolsky & Grossman, 1995; Szembu, 1992, in Mintrop, 1999). She has made the content, as Shulman (1987) would say, “pedagogical” by breaking down the topic into parts, making it concrete and simplifying the language (Grossman et al., 1989). But she blends information with warning and implanting the “truths” with critical thinking (Banks & Ambrose, 1990; Brophy & Van Sledright, 1997; Osborne, 1991). \(^{408}\)

Sino’s view of Russian as a tool for bringing different people and perspectives together made his teaching close to what Brinton and Master (1997, pp. vi-vii) called content-based second language teaching, a strategy within the language across-the-curriculum movement (Corson, 1993; Cummins, 1996). Although he did not lecture like Nigin, he ensured that the

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\(^{405}\) Marxism, despite Marx’s own warning in the *Communist Manifesto*, was transformed from a form of critique and guide for praxis into a dogma to serve the Communist party elite (Cork, 1950; Kohli, 1994; Keshavjee, 1998; Muckie, 1988).

\(^{406}\) Nigin’s approach to teaching history, particularly in the official classroom, resonates with what Barr et al., (cited in Brophy & Van Sledright, 1997) called “citizenship transmission”: inculcating the right values and correct information though the use of authoritative textbooks, lectures, recitations and structured discussion and problem-solving. It follows a celebratory, consensus model.

\(^{407}\) The term monistic implies that claims of knowledge and truth derive from one authoritative source. In the Soviet period, this source was the Party and the State. A monistic approach is characteristic of authoritarian regimes, including those based on a single religious interpretation. In contrast to this, a pluralistic conception holds that a variety of interpretations are valid.

\(^{408}\) Grossman et al. (1989) suggested that teachers’ beliefs about subject matter added to their belief about students, schools, learning and the nature of teaching powerfully affect their teaching.
children learned curriculum topics. However, here too, the contradictory messages of the old Soviet pedagogical system resurface. Soviet pedagogy ostensibly aimed to produce people with an active stance to life, fighters for justice (Muckle, 1990; Popkewitz, 1982; Savin, 1972; Suddaby, 1989; Zverev, 1983). According to Knipskaya (cited in Muckle, 1990), the purpose of Soviet education was spiritual liberation and ending oppression. However, the reality of Soviet practice and classroom life revealed another picture. The liberatory rhetoric remained the same; however, its implementation somehow now involved the return of authoritarian teachers and a tightly-controlled curriculum all over the Soviet Union in the early 1930s (see Dunstan, 1992; Sutherland, 1999). If, for some, this contradiction was a rhetorical devise to manipulate and control, for others it gave birth to various innovations in Soviet practice, including the “pedagogy of cooperation” (Baljenova, 1987; Olimov & Abdulloev, 1992; Suddaby, 1992; Sutherland, 1999). Sino appeared as less transmissive than Nigin, perhaps because of his deep acquaintance with the pedagogy of cooperation. Sino not only used these ideas, but also developed and disseminated them. Nigin, in contrast, refuted these ideas on the grounds of her doubt in their contextual relevance: “This is Pamir and a blind imitation of Amonashvili won’t work. We need to see what we have here.”

Sino also taught Ethics and Knowledge and participated in the methodology courses arranged by the Aga Khan Foundation; these two opportunities exposed him to child-centred techniques. More than that, they confirmed his already enduring belief in working with children rather than for them. Using his own interactive techniques, he thought it valuable to let the students try, to treat them as human beings, and to value what they said. He also insisted on caring about the weaker students.

Culture. Similar to many places of the world (Guthrie, 1990; Tabulawa, 1998) in Badakhshan too, one cultural constant that has crossed pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods is the belief that adults have higher-quality knowledge that should be accepted, often without question. Any question or disagreement from youth signifies disrespect and a violation of essential traditions. The Soviets challenged religion and class aspects of Tajik culture, but left the notion of the adult’s, particularly the teacher’s, superiority not only untouched, but even enhanced.

The teachers’ cases support these local cultural assumptions. Nigin’s case provides expressions like “Children can take knowledge; I give knowledge; The whip of teacher is like a

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409 Amonashvili was one of the initiators of the “Pedagogy of Cooperation.”
nightingale's voice." Sino's case reveals: "Forcing causes prosperity; Take my son's skin but make him a human being." The literal meaning of the mystic Rumi's verses, quoted earlier by Nigin, indicate a total acknowledgement of and submission to the teacher. These constitute not merely simple linguistic expressions, but cultural images that predate Soviet times. One could see them as cultural constructions that perpetuate the notion of teacher as the unquestionable authority and portray the child as a problem and deficient. They have maintained their notion of teacher-centredness, and the power of the teacher. As parents, both thought that children were immature and unprepared to stand against the bad habits that the street promoted.

However, culture, school culture in particular, may not solely determine teachers' practices (Hargreaves, 1994; 1997). Neither the culture of Sino's school nor the school's relations with the parents encouraged the teachers to stay in teaching and improve their practices. In contrast, the culture of Nigin's school actively did both. Yet, Sino often appeared more innovative and creative than Nigin.

Objectifying culture as constant and monolithic often serves to perpetuate the status quo in order to preclude improvement or change in teaching and, by extension, in society (Aronovitz & Giroux, 1985; Clifford, 1986; Boudaau & Passeron, 1977; Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Geerts, 1973; Giroux, 1988, 1989; McLaren, 1989; Nieto, 1998). The Soviets saw preserving one particular cultural construct, teacher's authority, as a tool for both social change and reproduction of State socialism (Giddens, 1984). So they invested in teachers, indoctrinated them in the Soviet "truths" and tried to change their mentality so that they in turn could change their students' and their community's "superstition-dominated" beliefs into scientific communist ones (Medlin et al., 1971). But they did it in a contradictory ways: to believe in revolutionary theory of total liberation, praxis and dialectic, while at the same time, take Marxism-Leninism for granted and unquestioningly obey the Party leadership.

The teachers apparently did this, often consciously, as Nigin and her colleagues admitted: "I served the Soviet state wholeheartedly; why not serve a state that takes care of you?; I promoted the theory, but not the practice." Sometimes Nigin did so half-heartedly: "Soviet we said, Russian we taught. I had doubts, but did not follow them up." Sino fell into the same ambiguous position, as he pointed out: "I knew I was doing something for the Russians, but not to the level that I was promoting love for Russia at the expense of Tajikistan."

410 McLaren (1989) describes social reproduction through education as a process whereby schools perpetuate or reproduce the social relationships and attitudes that serve to sustain the existing inequalities of the larger society.
The teachers have also witnessed how old Soviet cultural practices have now changed. The local people have also redefined some of their previous deeply-held values (e.g., accepting trading and commercial values, changing some religious practices) within a fairly short time.\textsuperscript{411}

These changes reveal that even a rural, mountainous culture is dynamic, rather than fixed and complex rather than monolithic. Sino and Nigin have appreciated some traditional values (such as sharing, respecting, seeking knowledge, respect for the Imam), but have questioned or even rebelled against others (such as forced marriage, superstition, showing off, excessive respect for elders, nepotism). Again, Sino robustly exposed the contradictory and complex nature of the local culture and therefore used this contradiction for change. He, more than Nigin, adopted expressions and practices that challenge the dominant assumptions of obedience and blind respect for the elders, including teachers. For example, he used sayings such as “Buzurgi ba aql ast na ba sol” (Greatness is in the amount of intellect, not in amount of years) and “Turfa shogrde ke dar hairat kunad ustodro” (Glory to the student that puzzles his teacher). Such aphorisms supported the teachers’ attempts to distinguish respect from blind submission.

The relations of the teachers to the cultural practices could be described as an active and complex negotiation with implications for their worldviews and pedagogy (practices and relationships). Their life has been a journey of negotiation between being silent and vocal, passive and active, unaware and conscious. They have journeyed towards a realisation of who they are and be who they would like (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Diamond & Mullen, 2000). They sustained those practices they found useful\textsuperscript{412} and challenged those they found miseducative (Corson, 1997). Nigin actively chose her husband as opposed to becoming a “target of the arranged marriage”, but she did not pursue her doubts about the system and the theory of socialism. She openly distrusted the politicians and yet she also promoted their versions of understanding of life. She criticised the approaches to the socio-political and educational changes, yet implemented these changes in her school and society. She challenged religious clerics, yet attended all their ceremonies and sought their advice. She openly talked to and argued with men other than her husband, yet knew that she is a Muslim rural woman living in a patriarchy (Akhmedova, 1999; Tadjbakhsh, 1998; Touhidi, 1995). She debated with university

\textsuperscript{411} The major force that has made the population of MBAP change and accept the market economy and small business development has been the Aga Khan (see Ismaili, special number devoted to Badakhshan, 1995; also see Keshavjee, 1998).

\textsuperscript{412} Clandinin & Connelly (1995) discussing the Deweyan notion of educative experience reveal three concepts: awakening, cultivation, and transformation. Any of these becomes educative when it leads to more creativity, spontaneity, activism, and ability to grow and help others to grow. Dewey himself alluded that educative experience is one, which produces growth, which is if students leave the experience more capable or interested in engaging in new experience.
instructors and fought against corruption, but she would not stop her students using connections to advance. She encouraged her students to be independent, but she guarded them and indoctrinated them in the ways she both wanted and was assigned to. She cared for her students, which she, however, realised more through doing for them rather than with them or by them. She related to them and earned their hearts, but with the purpose of making them take knowledge from her and wholeheartedly trust her. Nigin's cautions and warnings, her rectification of the gaps in history curriculum, her ability to gain high reputation in the far-away village, and her work with the school in the community exemplify how she tried to maintain her identity and reconstruct her environment.

Sino, too, obeyed his parents' order to return home after the Institute, but also managed to persuade them to let him return for further studies. He questioned harmful cultural practices in the classroom, school and community, yet there were times when he used them. He brought the students' experiences into the classroom, yet was seriously concerned about completing of the curriculum. He brought critical issues to the classroom, but did not see them as a substitute for the textbook. He rejected the tight schema, yet followed it in a relaxed way. He distrusted politicians and authorities but also followed their orders, and not simply form. He fought with corruption yet had supporters that were corrupt. He selected the ideology of humanism but also served other forces. Sino, too, cared for his students and community. Unlike Nigin, he was oriented towards working and being with his students, rather than working for them.

This kind of rethinking of educational and social practices becomes possible through a critical examination of existing practices in classrooms, schools and community (Day, 1999; Hargreaves, 1992, 1995). The Soviet system allowed questions, but only about capitalist systems, religion and the past. Any question about the Soviet system, including its educational practices, met deep repercussions not only for the questioners, but even for their families. The teachers suggest that this line of thinking has not been abandoned in the post-Soviet era: "There is no democracy; you cannot criticise the authorities. They can easily call you terrorist, instigator of interethnic conflict, and a member of the Narcomafia; we are again pushed to think in the old way. Last year they put people in jail." The voices in the cases suggest that the system still holds to old ways to sustain itself in the new post-Soviet times (cf. Johnson, 2001; Sagdeev & Eisenhower, 1995).
System and Structure

The cases, together with the literature, have shown that the humanistic, egalitarian, internationalist and emancipatory rhetoric of the Soviet ideology (Muckle, 1988; 1990, Popkewitz, 1982; Pivovarova, 1989) covered the often ugly practices of repression, colonialism, irrelevance, ethnic, gender and rural and urban inequities. The cases have revealed several systemic factors from the Soviet period that contributed to the persistence of teacher-directedness and the transmission position.

The monistic-ideological quality of Soviet education required teacher-centredness, control, preaching the “truth” and the acceptance of teachers’ role in reproducing the Communist truths, social relations and modes of production (Apple, 1986, 1993; Bellaby, 1979). The largest country in the world, with its incredible diversities, had only one acceptable philosophical and one psychological viewpoint. The centralised curriculum and unified textbooks brought this interpretation to the teachers. The inspectors and methodologists closely focused on how to teach this particular interpretation better. The approach proclaimed, “You must do it and do it the politically and academically right way.” Even the work at Method Centre, according to Nigin, focused on how to teach the program better, not on questioning whether there was anything wrong with the text or whether it was irrelevant. Other visitors, such as members of Komsomol and Pary too, visited the classroom for the same purpose. According to Sino, they had little clue about the complexities of teaching. They were often to point out teachers’ mistakes and what they missed.

As a result, the political aspect of teaching overshadowed the informative aspect. The teachers’ fears of the inspector, their worries about the competitiveness of the examinations, and the intensification of their lives ensured that control-oriented politics dominated teaching. The teachers also believed this: “What is wrong with serving the State that feeds you and gives you clothes,” or “I believed in the Soviet system and served it with my heart and soul”, “I still believe that there was nothing wrong with the Communist theory”, “We had very good education”, even years after Perestroika and the collapse of the USSR were still strongly respectable views. All the teachers trained and grew up in a system and culture of categorical truths and an either-or

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413 Hargreaves (1978), Ginsburg (1991), and Goodson & Hargreaves (1996) have pointed out that education systems in the capitalist societies are also embroiled in deep contradictions between: (a) the rhetoric of individual development, self-actualization, democratic participation and social mobility, (b) socialization into nation state, and (c) narrow requirements of industry and the efficiency of the economy. In other words, they have similar contradictions to the Soviet and post-Soviet education systems described here.

414 Giddens, in Grabb, (1990, p. 181), mentioned that the contradiction of socialism is that it seeks mass equality and participation in social policies and decisions and yet requires a centralised system of production and administration that focuses power in the state.
approach, based on belief in the absolute right of the Communist party. In such a culture, they did not ask serious questions about the relevance of curriculum or appropriate provision of education. As they moved to the post-Soviet uncertainty and diffusion, they continued to find themselves in virtually the same system. The rhetoric spoke of empowerment but the realities controlled and perpetuated the status quo. Sino found it hard to “understand the current Tajikistan with reason.”

*The traditional classroom layout,* where the students sat in rows and the teacher moved around freely, checking, organising and controlling, also contributed to teacher-centred practice. Though he was less strict than Nigin, still no student could move in Sino’s classroom without his permission. Even though the students sometimes asked questions of each other, this occurred only when allowed by the teachers and at particular times in the lesson. The teachers took charge of the class organisation and routines (e.g., attendance, cleanliness, discipline and order). Sino felt that “school is a decent place and it has to be clean.” He was disappointed in other teachers who let the students throw sunflower seeds on the floor. Ensuring students’ attendance in the form of registering it in the class journal seemed the teachers’ most important measure for accountability to inspections and parents.

*The mixed lesson framework* also indicated teachers’ preference for teacher-centredness. The teachers saw this lesson structure as comprehensive and convenient, because it allowed them to control and exercise authority, while at the same time providing some possibilities for the students to participate. It seemed systematic and rational, and integrated all the other types of lessons. It had coherence, in the sense that it had a beginning and an end. Most important, this lesson framework allowed them to cover the program. It enabled them to regularly check for students’ understanding and thus provided a sense that some sort of learning was actually taking place. This checking for understanding usually showed that the majority of the students could repeat what the teacher had taught them.

Within this framework, the element of reinforcement of the lesson (when the students were supposed to learn by independent work) usually received the least attention. Even if it occurred, it mainly took the form of short, direct questions and answers. For an efficient handling of this lesson framework, Nigin and Sino had created a conspectus, a pedagogical tool for shortening and simplifying of text so as to compensate for the absence of a textbook. It also kept the children busy with homework. Their conspectus became the authoritative source of

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415 Indeed, this was Sino’s adaptation of a saying of the 19th century Russian poet Gribodov about Russia itself.
knowledge. Nigin lectured the students on conspectus. Sino alternated lecturing with writing the conspectus on the board and asking the students to copy it.

*Their grading and examination practices* basically checked the students' knowledge of the topics from the textbook. Sino and Nigin sometimes allowed children to speak from their experiences, and talked about the students' social development and thinking abilities. But they did their daily and annual grading ultimately on the students' knowledge of the information from the textbooks and from their conspectus. Nigin's annual assessment lesson revealed the power of the examination, though it also disclosed that she might unconsciously consider the children's social aspects when assigning grades to them: "Fazila is not only good in her knowledge; she is also very helpful to others." Sino's worry about the textbook, as well as his metaphor "Neither the stick burns nor the meat" also revealed this ambivalence. Despite his care for students' experiential learning, he concentrated on completing the curriculum and the textbooks' topics, because the "success of the students in the exams was based on the topics from the textbooks." He could not forget about this in this rural context, because he had to face daily not only his students but also their parents.

**Environment**

The cases revealed a set of geographical or mountainous factors that affected the teachers' practices. Although the influences of these forces on life and education in Badakhshan were mediated differently in Soviet and post-Soviet times, their effect in post-Soviet times has become more real in terms of various aspects of teaching and learning in the rural and isolated communities.

The effect of *weather, particularly cold weather*, on teaching and learning has not received due attention in educational research (Ermolaev, 1990; Jewell, 1990; Mambetakunov, 1996\(^{416}\)). The teachers here recognised that cold weather, flu, fever, cough, mountain sickness and trembling that invariably accompanied the climatic shift negatively affected both their

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\(^{416}\) Mambetakunov (1996) a Kyrgyz scholar, on the basis of the analysis of several Soviet and international physiological and educational studies of scholars such as Orbely, McFerland, the Stitz, concludes that citizens and particularly children in the mountains such as the Pamirs and Tian Shan, suffer from low working capacities; are two-three years late in their development compared to their fellows in other parts of the flat areas of the USSR; are physiologically and psychologically immature. These children, and by extension even the adults, (i) have to make extra efforts in resolving intellectual tasks, (ii) have a highly negative attitude towards others, (iii) lack an inclination towards mental work, (iv) are slow in thinking and memorizing, and (v) express a high level of irritation towards being told what to do by others. Mambetakunov suggests that the reasons for these qualities are lack of oxygen, and air pressure, cold weather, absence of humidity, increased solar radiation, wind, lack of essential nutrients in the soil (pp. 523-524). My study has shown examples of the adverse effects of the mountains, particularly the cold weather on the process of teaching and learning and life and work of the teachers and students. While acknowledging the adverse effects of the high altitude such as cold,
teaching and their students' learning. Their essential image of Badakhshan was an unusually restrictive, climatically unsafe and cold place.

The cold weather was often given as a reason why teachers persisted with transmission methods. In winter the classes were reduced from 45 to 30 minutes in all three sites. Schooling began at 8:30 a.m. everywhere, but ended at 2:00 p.m. in Porshinev, 1:00 p.m. in Murghab and 11 a.m. in Wanj. The academic year began on September 1st everywhere, but was halted in November in Murghab, and in early December in Shugnan and Wanj. Then it resumed in April in Murghab. In winters the temperature in the classes goes down to -20 C inside the buildings because there is no coal for the stoves. The academic year resumed in Wanj and Shugnan in March. Schooling ended at the end of May everywhere. Given this, the school year in Badakhshan was around six months. As a result, the teachers focused on what they thought most important for the students. This meant preparing the students for exams: covering the curricula and telling the students what to expect in the tests, rather than listening to the students' voices and engaging their experiences. Frequently, more than one topic had to be covered in one lesson. Sino and Nigin believed that only lecturing made this feasible. Sino complained on several occasions:

What can you teach in a lesson of 25 minutes? What can you teach when children are shivering and cannot hold their pens? In March, it is still 20 degrees below zero here. From April till May we move very fast. We have to finish the textbook. Thus, we often teach two topics in a lesson. 

*What kind of learning can there be in such a cases?*(Int. 2: 45, emphasis mine).

Cold has affected not only the teachers' methods and the coverage of the curriculum. It has also affected the students' and teachers' health. The son of one of Sino's colleague (a six-year-old child) lost his hearing ability due to meningitis. Cold was amongst the reasons for Nigin's and her son's kidney problems. She annually spent two months in hospital to treat her kidneys. These times are hardest for Nigin because she misses seeing the children's faces. Almost all of the teachers in Murghab and Porshinev suffered from cold-related diseases: chronic bronchitis, tonsillitis, kidney disease, meningitis, and headaches. Azima, a gifted child in Nigin's class, faced having to leave the gifted program due to tonsillitis. Sino regarded the first closure of his school in 1992 due to lack of fuel in the freezing Murghab, as a tragedy. Even during WWII,
schools had worked; now his school was closed for seventh months. Flu and coughing was a constant feature in all the classes I visited.

When these are the realities, any talk about teachers’ teaching and students’ learning is questionable. The teachers wondered how the poorly clothed, skinny, hungry children of Murghab, Shugnan and Wanj could learn anything in their classrooms. Izzat (the biology teacher) commented:

I don’t know if the students are learning anything. But as a biology teacher I believe that, if things go this way, these children are all going to have chronic disease for the rest of their lives. They are going to be useless in terms of health (Int. 5: 65).

Cold represents another aspect of the unsustainable development of region in the Soviet times. Soviets designed schools with very little consideration of the cold climate. Although some of them look as beautiful as those in the warmest parts of Tajikistan, the cold makes studying in these schools a torment for the children and teachers alike. Ali (the head of Nigin’s school) tried to convey this to the inspectors from the provincial Directorate of Education when he kept them in his cold office. The Soviet system managed cold through enormous energy supplies and consumption. “In the Soviet days we got 120 tons of high-quality coal. Now we get 15 tons of rubbish for the whole winter,” said the head teacher of Sino’s school.

The school system continues to operate in the old way without giving due consideration to the new lack of fuel in the schools. The school season (i.e., from September until May) remains a cold season. The teachers hesitated to change the academic season\(^\text{417}\) not because of post-Soviet inertia or because they would miss their expected travels outside the province in summer. Summers are only time when teachers can do some of their major work for the whole year, such as building and renovating their houses, preparing food and fuel for the winter, and attending university exams, which may also include cherez for their own children and their students.

Clearly, resolving the question of cold constitutes not only an economic issue of heating\(^\text{418}\) and cost-effectiveness but also a policy issue. It requires the policy makers to reconceptualize the school year. It requires designing schools that are appropriate to the

\(^{417}\) Khan (1997) reports that the schools in Chitral, where the environment and culture resemble MBAP, operate in summer and take a break in the winter.

\(^{418}\) In post-Soviet times, Red Cross and Red Crescent usually provided the schools with coal, which was transported from southern Kyrgyzstan, 400-1000 kilometers away. In 1999, the MBAP Directorate of Education refused to take coal from the NGOs because of the coal’s perceived low quality. A representative of the NGO, on the other hand, informed me that the particular officials were more worried about getting the allocated money rather than heating the schools.
environment and satisfying teachers’ home and recreation concerns. And it also requires adequate nutritional empowerment of all those who attend the schools to withstand the general “cold.”

*Lack of textbooks and written learning material*419, according to Nigin, turned the teachers into the source of knowledge and their students into parrots. She felt: “If there were books the students would have got more knowledge on their own. Now they tell me back what I lecture to them. If there were books, I would have told them the hard things only” (Int. 1: 52).

The lack of textbooks has forced Nigin to lecture the entire lesson rather than divide the topics between classroom work and homework.

Due to the lack of textbooks, neither Sino no Nigin could organise independent work, the only student-centred element of their lesson framework. The time it took for them to write up the conspectus on their board and their students to copy it could have been used for other learning activities. The lack of textbooks meant that the teachers had to use old material and resources, which they felt were either outdated or ideologically or contextually irrelevant. “I have no option except to use these torn-apart and worn-out textbooks”, mentioned Sino, admitting that with these textbooks he is preparing the children more for the past than for the present and future. Given the long winter breaks, both Sino and Nigin regarded textbooks as important for maintaining the subject content in the students’ heads.

Nigin commented “teachers of history are in hell, I do not know how to teach some of the topics; I am not prepared, I do not know if I am not lying to the students again.” Sino remarked “I don’t need textbooks. But they are important for keeping the students busy at home.” Both reflect the general feelings among many teachers of inadequacy, inefficacy, guilt, anger and frustration. Further the lack of textbooks and learning materials has deeply intensified the teachers’ work at home (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). They now have to do a lot of research at home and write a conspectus, highlighting the major points, simplifying the language and making the texts relevant to the curriculum.

419 Heyneman and Farrell (1989) and Farrell and Oliveira (1993) highlight the significance of the textbook and learning material vis-a-vis teacher training and development in the developing countries. They argue from education efficiency perspective on how decreasing resources could be used to get more gains. Farrell (1993) considers the use of textbooks for assigning homework as a promising possibility for improving students’ learning: “In a classroom with no textbooks, about the only teaching-learning style possible is teacher lecture, group recreation and rote memorization. All in all, textbooks appear to be the best available investment a poor nation can make from an education efficiency point of view” (Farrell & Oliveira, 1993, p. 33). For example, MBAP schools have highly motivated children, long breaks during summer and winter, high teacher turnover, and the dominance of transmission modes of teaching. In such circumstances and with proper guidance by the parents, learning materials, including textbooks can be almost as important resources as teachers (for more on the role of the textbook in teaching and learning in developing countries, see Heynemann & Farrell, 1989).
Regardless of these difficulties, the cases reveal that the lack of textbooks is not necessarily always a bad thing. Without a single set textbook, Nigin and Sino, as responsible teachers, became inquirers, searching for materials, using their discretion to consider various interpretations and becoming more effective in using available resources. They searched their home libraries, school libraries and village libraries, read scholarly books and adapted them to the students' level. Due to Porshinev's proximity to the centre of the province, Nigin had access to more resources than Sino. She was also able to receive newspapers; her school had a relatively richer library than did Sino. Sino lacked all these. His own library and the village library saved him.

Lack of textbooks has also made Sino and Nigin assign their students more imaginative and relevant homework. For example, Nigin asked her students to imagine being a defender of Badakhshan to talk to their parents about Perestroika. Sino asked his students to solve a puzzle and create a puzzle at home; and to compose three sentences about how they spent their time in the summer. By using the local culture and nature to make up for the lack of textual resources, they hoped to improve school-community integration and curriculum relevance. Such work would lead to a better understanding, preservation and development of local fragile ecology and cultural identity (Atutov, 1981; Bacchus, 1983; Pinar & Bowers, 1992; Freire, 1983; Pratt, 1996; Selby & Pike, 1988). Sino's lesson on Tajik-Kyrgyz relations, Nigin's extra-curricular sessions and Nigin's sessions on Human Beings and Society and Messages on Ethics provided some of the most meaningful lessons. They suggest that dealing with issues such as unemployment, drugs, guns, disease, poverty, and ethnic and religious tensions, issues that have a real impact on the local people's lives could not only replace the textbooks but also make teaching meaningful and real (Bacchus, 1983; Newman & Welhage, 1993; Niyozov, 1995).

The teachers made much less use of nature and physical geography. Even Izzat, the biology teacher, despite acknowledging its potential as a resource, talked about the physical environment as something "out there", but not worth classroom attention. The roots of this neglect also go deep into Soviet times. Soviet educational policy, in theory, based on the Marxist idea of polytechnical education, argued for teaching children the skills of productive labour. It saw production as one of the major linkages in educational relevance and in the integration of school and community (Bacchus, 1983; Muckle, 1990; Webber, 2000). In reality, however, this connection never seriously occurred. Contrary to its rhetoric of equalisation, Soviet policy disregarded and underrated manual labour in comparison to mental labor, rural contexts in
contrast to urban conditions, and rich in relation to poor. In spite of the drive to develop a well-rounded Soviet citizen, education mainly focused on preparing students to fill position in the industries and offices in urban and central parts of the Soviet Union (Bacchus, 1983; De Young & Suzhikova, 1997; Dunstan, 1992; Fireman, 1991; Judge, 1975; Nikolaeva, 1994; Webber, 2000; Zajda, 1984). One wonders whether the Soviet policy-makers ever thought about the consequences of irrelevant education and unsustainable development for rural, mountainous places like Tajikistan. One also wonders whether the new change agents realise the magnitude of the challenge they face.

Although the past lessons, current situation, and the needs of sustainable development invite the serious study of local realities, the realities of cold weather truncate the learning period to the degree that there no time remains even for covering textbooks, let alone studying local culture and nature. The neglect of local nature and culture as learning resources has also a cultural reason. The local commonly see schooling as a place to get students working with books and teach them about what they do not know and have not seen, rather than about their own experiences (Baker, 1989; Blanchet, 1996; Dove, 1986). Even teachers seem to have accepted this view. "There is not much in nature in Murghab that we could discuss in the classroom", said Sino. The teachers in all three sites argued that teaching required the expansion of the vision of the students by introducing them to the knowledge that was outside and about other places. In so doing, few efforts were made to critically engage with both' students' knowledge and the outside knowledge, brought in by the teachers. Given that the teaching took the form of lecturing and disregarding local realities, McLaren (1989) provides a challenge:

Knowledge is relevant only when it begins with the experiences students bring with them from the surrounding culture; it is critical only when these experiences are shown as problematic; and it is transformative only when students begin to use knowledge to help empower others, including individuals in the surrounding community.(p. 190).

The rarity of including nature, culture and various aspects of self-understanding, implied by Nigin and Sino makes Dewey's (1938) advice more necessary:

A primary responsibility of teacher is not only to be aware of the general principle of the shaping of the actual experience by environing conditions, but also recognise in the

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420 Blanchet (1996) brings an interesting insight from a Bangladeshi child, which essentially represents economically poor countries generally: "This country is no good. I am going to America. Teach me what I need for America, not what is needed for this country...Let's not waste my time" (p. 151).

421 McLaren (1989) approaches the issue from the viewpoint of critical pedagogy. He misses the intrinsic aspects of relevance, for example, such as that knowledge makes one noble and contributes to self-actualisation. Kere (1982) suggests the existence of two approaches to the question of relevance (a) practical, where education is viewed as making a tangible contribution to the quality of life of people (e.g., Dewey, 1899, 1900, Briner 1973), and (b) intrinsic relevance (Baker, 1989). For a review see Kere (1982).
concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth (p. 4).

Bacchus (1983) argues that school-community integration requires not only the introduction of a new educational program and instructional strategy but also accompanying political, economic and social changes, ideological support for these changes among key elements of the population, and radical reform of the educational administration. Otherwise, purely curricular changes often result in the reproduction of occupational, ethnic and gender discriminations.

**Language of teaching and language of learning** was another factor in the prevalence of transmission of teaching. Except in Izzat's case, neither Tajik nor Russian was the students' or teachers' mother tongue. Tajik, however, has long been the major language of poetry and songs in Pamirian secular and religious ceremonies. In addition, since 1990, the Ministry of Education introduced a one-year preparatory course for children of Pamirian origin to enable them gain some knowledge of Tajik before they started official schooling. Yet the real use of Tajik was very limited. In places like Murghab and Porshinev, almost no one uses Tajik outside the classroom.

The many local languages nonetheless remain important. They are spoken by the Badakhshani settlers in the plains of Tajikistan and in Afghan Badakhshan. Some of them are also spoken in Northern Pakistan and Western China. Almost all Pamirian Ismailis and Pamirian Kyrgyz, as well as a significant number of the Tajik-speaking population of Badakhshan know Shugnani. Since Perestroika, writing in the local languages has steadily increased, while access to literature in Tajik and Russian has sharply decreased.

Sino and Nigin, from time to time had to use Shugnani to elaborate and explain a concept or a term, particularly when they felt that their students did not comprehend the concepts in either Tajik or Russian. They also used the local languages to discipline the students, motivate them and build relations with them. As in the Soviet times, they did this in fear of the administration and parents, but apparently with students' agreement. Yet, Nigin and her colleagues also felt that Shugnani was of little use as far as their students' future success was concerned.

The cases revealed that classroom insistence on Tajik and Russian posed a barrier to students' participation. Given that students achieve much better learning though active
participation with active use of language (Cummins, 1996; 1998; Urr, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978), the language barrier poses a serious problem. Students hesitated to speak Tajik and Russian, because, if they made mistakes, the teachers and their peers either immediately corrected or ridiculed them. This ridicule, according to the teachers, often went beyond the school and could end up labelling the students for the rest of their lives. If the students kept quiet or spoke inappropriately, both Sino and Nigin corrected them immediately, got angry, or simply took over to lecture, tell and explain, because they wanted the students to speak correctly, quickly, clearly, and to the point. Nigin wanted them to do so because she wanted to tell them more and more. The teachers knew that the students could not express themselves or sometimes could not understand what they taught. Nigin’s children have taught her that some students get bored or do not understand what teachers say when they speak Tajik. Using Tajik created distance, superficiality and formality between the teachers and students.

Yet both Nigin and Sino spoke correct, official Tajik and Russian because the inspectors and parents wanted them to do so. In Soviet times, using the local languages would have constituted a big “error”, if not misconduct. Nowadays, the teachers still teach in Tajik and insist that their students speak it correctly. Success during the examinations required official Tajik. The students’ future depended on it. Sino’s colleague mentioned that he had a very creative student, who could create mechanical things, but who would never get to university because of his weak command of Tajik. At the same time, the teachers acknowledged that they had to use local languages, at least sometimes, when they had to explain hard concepts, encourage students, or solve complex real problems.

The teachers knew about the language problem from their own student experiences. Both Sino and Nigin mentioned that they had suffered in schools due to their linguistic and cultural differences. Their weak command of the official languages created a barrier to their careers. Lola, for example, like Sino, had suffered from being unable to speak appropriate Tajik. She voiced her frustrations: “Instead of thanking us that we spoke and studied in literary Tajik, we were often ridiculed in Dushanbe for our accent, and our grades were lowered” (Int. 4: 12). Having experienced humiliations, the teachers wanted their students to avoid them. Emphasising the correct use of Russian and Tajik placed the teachers again in a difficult position between the

422 For Izzat and his students Tajik was the mother tongue. However, Izzat often used the local dialect, quite different from the official Tajik. Official Tajik largely represented the language of the Northern Tajiks’ dialect.

423 Due to the dominance of the clan system, speaking a particular form of Tajik was seen as taking sides in ethnic and clan tensions and intra-Tajik politics.
system's requirements, their students' long-term success, and their present understanding of particular topics.

Although acknowledging that Shugnani has only limited uses, the teachers, parents and students have all begun to realise that even Tajik, despite the independence of Tajikistan as a nation-state, does not guarantee a good life in the globalized economy. Tajik has moved further down in the list of ingredients for success in the new world order than it was in the Soviet period. All the participants mentioned this. Lola was more articulate than some others:

It is a self-deception to say that Tajik is our mother tongue. It is as foreign to us as Russian and English are. Why then do we not start teaching everything in English, if we all see that possessing English makes one get good jobs and earn a lot of money. The Imam has also said that we need to learn English if we want to succeed in our life424 (Int. 4: 78).

The cases raised fundamental cultural, pedagogical and ethical concerns about the language of instruction (Cummins, 1983; 1996)425 Given that the question is about understanding and applying knowledge, the problem might lie less in the use of Tajik and more in the non-use of the local languages in the classroom.426 Prioritising language over understanding, though a noble idea for unifying Tajikistan, in practice alienates the majority of the students from any authentic learning427 (Corson, 1997; Cummins, 1996; Newman & Welhage 1993; Urr, 1991), and leads to teachers' excessive use of transmission approaches. Besides, only some children, mainly from the affluent families can afford opportunities to learn English and Russian; hence a legitimate question emerges about the connections between language of instruction, marginalisation and social injustice. Language raises questions not only of method, comprehension and diversity but also of justice and fairness (Anderson & Sumra, 1995; Bernstein, 1973; Corson, 1993, Cummins, 1996; Gagne', August 2000, personal communication;
Thus, the majority of the students in Badakhshan, whose mother tongue is not Tajik, and who are increasingly impoverished, risk being doubly disadvantaged.

**Teachers’ salary.** The new educational rhetoric in education in Tajikistan urges moving to child-centred pedagogy (Inoyatova, 1996, also personal communications at the Ministry and Directorate of Education of MBAP in 1998 and 1999). This position requires the reconstruction of many factors: classroom structure, curriculum, understanding of the content, materials development and new instructional strategies. Nigin’s case suggests that the teachers have gained some freedom (perhaps by default) to work with curriculum. Inspectors are visiting less and the system has declared schools “free of ideology.” However, all this “freedom” makes little sense when teachers’ salaries are about $7-10 CDN a month. In a place like Murghab, where nothing grows and everything is imported, this monthly salary buys only five to seven pieces of soap. Teachers are among the poorest people in the society; the nature and ethics of their profession prevents them from taking bribes in a society where corruption is becoming the norm rather than the exception (Tayler, 2001, *ICG Asia Report*, 2001). Sino, after having served so long, does not have a place of his own to live in, and debates whether he should teach or search for wood and bread. Nigin, Gorminj and Izzat spend most of their time in the agricultural fields. They, like Sino, have no money to treat their illness caused by the cold, hunger and stress. Sino’s colleague could not save his six-year-old son from losing his hearing; Lola could not buy medicine for her only daughter who got hepatitis. Ali could not visit his only daughter, a university student, who was near to death from typhoid. Sino and his colleagues spend their extra time in the market and labour for others so as to simply survive. As Marx and Maslow proposed, when basic human needs are threatened, talk about intellect and education makes little sense. Furthermore, given the current rhetoric of the importance of teachers and education in positive societal development, and the realities and constraints on teachers’ income, one wonders whether teachers’ current impoverishment is due to the general poverty, or is an issue of priority, or due to the Soviet-inherited strategy of managing and controlling teachers’ thoughts and actions aimed at maintaining the status quo.

Here lies a post-Soviet paradox: In Soviet times the teachers complained that they had sufficient conditions but not the freedom to teach the way they wanted; now they are allowed,

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428 According to Maslow (1970 cited in Menio & Popplet, 1999, p.54) the hierarchy of human needs could be presented as a pyramid. At the bottom are physical security (food, health and shelter), and personal and professional security (e.g., job); next comes acceptance needs (family and society); next are self-esteem and ego needs (extrinsic rewards). For discussion on needs particular to teachers and education, see Broudy (1976), and Kere(1982).
even “ordered”, to be child-centred and to change their mentality accordingly, but they lack the conditions to do so. As Ali, the head of Nigin’s school, said, “We need the conditions of the past and the freedom of today.” Freedom without sufficient conditions becomes almost as much hardship and struggle as totalitarianism with good conditions. Now the teachers fear that they have not only lost their conditions, but are also gradually losing their freedom too (Djalili et al., 1998; Sagdeev & Eisenhower, 1995; Tayler, 2001). For the teachers, as for the majority of people, the changes have not resulted in improvement, but in impoverishment (*ICG Asia Report*, 2001).

**Global Influences**

The post-Soviet educational system in Badakhshan seems to have inherited the paradoxes and contradictions of the Soviet system: separation of theory from practice and rhetoric from reality, dominance of administrative and bureaucratic approaches, superficiality, and indoctrination (Dneprov & Ekloff, 1993; Gireva, 1995; Johnson, 2001, Nikolaeva, 1994). To these problems have been added new clashes between the traditional egalitarian, reciprocal values of the community and the emerging non-egalitarian practices of the market economy and capitalist society (Keshavjee, 1998; Vulliamy & Carrier, 1985). This results in such puzzling questions as the ones posed by Nigin: “Why does every one care about the gifted students?, Why do people respect the rich and the powerful only?, Why teachers are respected less than commerchants?” and “In what way is the market economy helpful for the community?” The incident with Azima in Nigin’s classroom exemplified how the schools now attempt to sort out the students. Azima had missed school due to flu and poverty. As a result, she got a low grade, which not only jeopardized her future at the Lyceum but also created an image of failure for her and her family in the school and the village.

Sino voiced similar doubts: “Why, despite the teaching of ethics, people have stopped sharing? Why do people want to befriend only the rich and powerful? Nowadays, you should be able to say no to your own brother, if you want to succeed: I am not educated to say no.”

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429 In general, the cases in this thesis confirm discussions on the deleterious effects of low pay and bad working conditions on teachers’ status, self-esteem, quality of teaching and innovations (see Rust & Dalin, 1990). Hurst and Val Rust (edited in Rust & Dalin, 1990) present cases of Brazilian teachers that bear strong similarity to the cases here, though my discussion deals more with the problematicity of salary. Unlike Hurst and Val Rust, this study deals with contexts where the “basket of goods”, such as heat, water, food and clothes can be very expensive. Comparing the teachers’ salaries with those of other Government and non-Government employees should include the recognition that the others use various “ambiguous” ways of earning money, while schoolteachers are structurally deprived from of this possibility, leaving aside the ethical aspects.

430 Mendlo & Poppleton (1999) add that Soviet teachers also “had to differentiate without being elitist, increase standards without resources, develop individualized courses with no teaching aids and textbooks and develop individualists who maintain commitment to socialist principles of collectivity.”
and Nigin's worries about the effects of streaming on the children's holistic development further reflect the contradictions, when people, instead of reshaping the market economy to work for their personal and community's reciprocal values, have become victimised by its burst to individualism, competition and greed.\(^{431}\) Nigin and Sino ask these questions about the relevance of both the Soviet and post-Soviet curricula to the individual and communal needs and aspirations of post-Soviet Badakhshan and Tajikistan.

Badakhshan also faces challenges related to globalisation and the new world order (Hargreaves, 1994, Keshavjee, 1998; Wells et al., 1997), in which countries such as Tajikistan appear as being designated the role of failures and consequently have become zones of interest and sources of raw materials for the superpowers (Sagdeev & Eisenhowner, 1995; Giddens, 1984; Jonson, 1997; Said, 1989; Samoff, 1999). To what extent can the education system in an impoverished and weakened country like Tajikistan change its system (including examination) so as to produce creative, critical thinkers and develop general capacities, when even in the strongest nations of the world, education still emphasises results, performance, and teaching for specific competencies? (Bloom, 1987, for critique see Aronovitz & Giroux, 1991; Day, 1999; Cummins, 1996; Giroux, 1988; Osborne, 1991; Thiessen, 1993a).

Thus, too many factors hinder these teachers from becoming transactive and transformative teachers. These forces often operate in combination, in way that seem to limit these teachers and their capacity to teach the way they want and to promote what they believe useful for their students, the community and the country (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Sizer, 1984\(^{432}\)). This in turn contributes to making the teachers panicky, worried, drained, overwhelmed, and burnt out (Blasé, 1997; Byrne, 1994). Hence, they lose rest (Hargreaves, 1998), blame themselves and others, including their students for the faults of the system (Hargreaves, 1994; Ryan, cited in McLaren, 1989)\(^{433}\), become defensive and complaining (Britzman, 1991), give in,
and ultimately leave the profession (Byrne, 1994; Dove, 1986; World Bank, 1999). For those who stay, undergoing these tensions, dilemmas and contradictions (Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Lampert, 1985; Nias, 1989) can lead them to create cover stories and practices (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). The teachers want others—insiders and outsiders, reformers and change agents, parents and policy makers, leaders and followers—to understand and reverse those adverse forces and enable the teachers to reshape them (Cuban, 1988; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1998; Giroux, 1988; Lieberman & Miller, 1999) before asking them to change their practice and perspectives.

The current systemic realities, both those inherited from Soviet times, and emerging since the Soviet collapse, prioritise transmission over transformation, and obedience over independence. This is further complicated by recent developments, which emphasise individual over society, self-actualisation over service, selectivity over inclusion, competition over cooperation and corruption over merit (Djalili et al., 1998; Johnson, 2001; Keshavjee, 1998; Mintrop, 1998; Tayler, 2001).

**Learning of Methods**

Clearly, the teacher participants possessed a wider variety of methods than those they exhibited in their classrooms. Collectively, they endorsed method as an important quality of a teacher. But the teachers, as we shall see later (section on relations), also suggest that reducing teaching to methods and mere technique of delivery of a subject is a mistake. Method was seen as an ability of teacher to educate the students academically, socially, ethically and aesthetically. The method was the teacher because everything counted as part of methods: personality, knowledge, skills, techniques and outlook. Further, each method obtained a different look as each teacher used it. Methods were “created and recreated by those who teach in the classroom.” They were also responses to daily classroom challenges; “I use these things and then forget about them”434, said Sino: similar to Nigin, he had his own methods. “Each teacher has his own methods, and teachers are different.”

The cases of Sino and Nigin show various sources from and contexts in which they learned new methods.435 Most of their learning seems to have taken place through resolving some of their daily teaching concerns (Anderson, 1997). As Nigin cooked or worked in her orchard, she continued wondering about how to teach those history topics unavailable in the textbooks that she had. Sino searched in his library at home to find ways and content for teaching topics

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434 This view may be related to boring experiences, listening to lectures at the VUZs.
that were in the new curriculum but not in the old textbooks. As they thought about how to teach, Sino and Nigin also wondered about how to teach better and provide meaningful learning to all the children. They combined old textbooks and new materials; often they used the most available materials rather than the most appropriate. They learned by researching the topics from different sources and synthesising and simplifying the material in order to make it not only meaningful, but also feasible to teach within the shortened lesson periods. As Thiessen (1993a) put it, the teachers were learning on the job “in part as a requisite for survival, in part as a step to improvement, and in part as a way of life” (p. 291). Although they learned constantly, Nigin and Sino, as caring persons, remained unsure whether their approaches were right and the content taught was adequate for the students to pass the exams and to become better human beings. Sino, seizing the research as a learning opportunity, said: “I have had many ideas and wanted someone to observe me and tell me if those were good ideas.”

Nigin and Sino also learned from their homes. Sino refined his educational vision, when he became a parent. They thought of their own students’ future, as they helped their own children with homework. From her children, Nigin learned important things about the language of instruction, teacher-student relations and the students’ power in defining the teachers’ reputation in the community. All this led Sino and Nigin to make adjustments in the classroom (Doyle, 1990a). Nigin asked the students whether they understood her intentions and her language. Thinking of his daughters’ questions at home, Sino allotted a few minutes at the end of his classes to invite the students to ask him about any issue that bothered them. Their parenting made them tolerate children, become better teachers and learn about the children’s real images of the teachers. Nigin’s family has been a critical friend, informing her about methods she might wish to use and about what the students like in a teacher. That Nigin’s husband was also a teacher made her home’ discourse similar to that of school, reducing the difference. Her home was a safer place for her than the Method Unit, as far as issues of teaching and learning were concerned. Both Nigin and Sino mentioned their homes as places where they could release their frustration and tensions. Their children were the best students in their schools. In sum, homes and schools, parenting and teaching were deeply interconnected and affected one another (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Gur’ianova, 2000).

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435 For more elaborate discussions about teachers’ learning, as well as the context of their learning and their approaches to learning, see (Mulby et al., in press, Putnam & Borko, 1997; Richardson, 1996; Thiessen 1993a, 2000; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999).
The teachers also learned from their colleagues. However, there are differences between the two cases in relation to the culture and conditions of the learning. Nigin’s work at the Method Unit and Sino’s chatting and problem-solving with his colleagues Farokh and Daler go on in two different structures to which the teachers had different attitudes. Though Sino enjoyed his community, Nigin thought of it as burden. Sino was an equal member of his group, while Nigin led the Method Unit. Sino’s community was unofficial and informal, while Nigin’s Method Unit was a formal, bureaucratic structure. Sino participated on a voluntary basis, while Nigin was paid for her work. Sino’s group was created by the teachers spontaneously out of their willingness to help each other and a need for belonging. Nigin’s structure was contrived by authorities. Sino’s network was self-sustaining, while the Method Unit was costly for the teachers. Their colleagues saw Sino’s group as safe but the Method Unit as threatening (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Cole, 1991; Hargreaves, 1992).

Yet both cases challenge the official viewpoint, which sees such structures as open lessons and teacher contests as major sources of teacher improvement (Anderson, 1992; Cuban, 1988; Hargreaves, 1997; Jones, 1999; Little, 1987; Long & Long, 1999; Webber, 2000). Sino and Nigin (and Izzat, Gorminj and Lola) saw these official structures as burdens that required extra work without any incentives, particularly in pay. They viewed them as just for show: something that exhibited not the real but the specially-arranged unreal classrooms. In fact, such displays go back to Soviet times if not earlier. Further, because the culture of distrust and competition created, they also regarded these exhibitions as occasions that threatened and endangered their reputations. These bureaucratic structures, according to Little (1987), Anderson (1992), and Thiessen & Anderson (1999) lack two enabling conditions: interdependence, where teachers perceive and believe interaction with their colleagues as essential to being an effective teacher; and opportunity, which in the case of Nigin’s Method Unit and the teacher contests required support from the district authorities to make collaboration work. These feelings, exacerbated by their intensified life conditions, led the teachers to subvert the structure that might otherwise contain opportunities for professional development. The teachers’ voices echo the warnings of Hargreaves (1992) and Cole (1991) about the “success” of structures created in top-down, bureaucratic, technically-controlled and masculine ways. Contrived collegiality, according to Hargreaves:

makes collaboration compulsory rather than voluntary, forced rather than facilitated, formal and scheduled rather than informal and evolutionary, directed towards administrative priorities more than teachers’ concerns, predictable rather than
unpredictable in its outcomes, and because of all these things—predominantly masculine rather than feminine in its administrative orientation and style (Hargreaves, 1992, cited in Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992, p. 16).

Both Sino and Nigin seem to have also learned a few things from the externally-arranged professional development courses. Sino attended a few courses arranged by the Institute for Ismaili Studies for teachers of Ethics and Knowledge and those arranged by the Aga Khan Foundation for English teachers. Again Sino made an important point as he talked about his participation in these courses. They have been useful not only for teaching him a few things about child-centred learning but also for confirming his long-held desire to shift to interactive teaching. In fact, during these courses he preferred those classes conducted in a child-centred way, not those talked about child centredness, but conducted as straight lectures.

Nigin did not like any of the post-Soviet courses she attended at the Teacher Training Institute; they were theoretical lectures, as boring to her as those in Soviet times. In suggesting alternatives, Nigin and her colleagues provided important messages about how teachers learn new ideas from externally-arranged courses. First, Nigin and her colleagues suggested that, before having any new method suggested to them, they need to be asked what methods they already possess; they need this in order to sort out the differences and similarities between what they know and what is proposed. They also said such inquiry is necessary for the change agents not to waste their time in suggesting something as new, while the ideas may have not only existed, but also may have been tried and even failed to institutionalise. Only after that any idea, even a truly new one, should be suggested. In this case, Nigin wants to understand an idea’s purpose, become convinced of its usefulness, watch it in practice, and see how the students react to it. Maybe she would talk at home to her husband and children about the method because she believes they can provide her with genuine critique. Next, she would try the method in her own classroom. Last, as she usually does, she would ask the children if they liked the innovation, and learned something from it, and whether she should continue with the idea. Here Nigin confirms and contributes to understanding the complexities of staff-development approach (Joyce, Showers & Bennett, 1989; Joyce & Showers, 1988) as well as, the notions of practicality, congruence and instrumentality (Doyle & Ponder, 1977) and teacher change (Anderson, 1997; Guskey, 1986).

Nigin’s case suggests two levels of convincing in and acceptance of an external idea; a theoretical and a practical level. She also suggests two levels of acceptance: both the teacher and the students should learn method and see its usefulness. This last point—students’ perspective on
curricular innovation—has received little attention in curriculum change (Beattie & Thiessen, 1997; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Cullingford, 1987). Nigin’s and her colleagues’ cases suggest an integration of the constructivist (Bruner, 1986; Posner et al., 1982; Prawwat, 1992; Richardson, 1996) and the staff-development approaches (Joyce & Showers, 1988; Joyce, Showers & Bennett, 1987). Nigin confirms Sino’s suggestions that teachers are knowledgeable and have their own methods; but she also admits that teachers are learners who need to be convinced on many ways\textsuperscript{416} by the teacher-educator and by their students.

Further, these instances show that the teachers want to improve and change. Because so much has changed around us, we cannot remain the same, said Nigin (cf. Hargreaves, 1994). But one cannot change their perspective by force, by lecturing to them, or sometimes, even by exposing them to a new idea (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). Change should not merely imitate and take ideas from outside; neither should it turn the students into experimental mice, as Nigin suggested. Nigin, Sino and their colleagues maintain that teachers have ideas and these ideas, whether good or bad, need to be examined first. As accountable people, they equally doubt in their methods and others’ methods. Their learning from outsiders should, however, occur on their own terms and respond to their needs, not only to those of the change agents. Such learning takes time and involves important steps. The quality of their learning depends on the culture of the process and structure of learning: the safer and more trustworthy the structure and the process, the better the quality of learning.

Change cannot succeed when it ignores excellence but also when it ignores mediocrity and ignorance. Mentality, whatever bad, cannot be wiped out. In fact, a mentality and practice may look bad for an outsider, but it may be real, meaningful, and highly workable for the teachers within certain context of actions (Freire, 1983). In other words, mentality and practices are not only universal and objective, but also are deeply subjective and contextual. Therefore, a necessary part of change, the teachers need to be critically engaged with not only ideas from outside, but primarily with their own practices, beliefs and the contexts and cultures that sustain their beliefs and practices.

Further, the change needs to consider teachers as human beings. Changing teaching is more than modifying teachers’ techniques and methods. Teachers will not create new ideas, or acquire and apply innovations, if their life is separated from their work, these cases suggest. Sino

\textsuperscript{416} This view includes, but extends beyond, the ideas of Guskey (1986, 1990), who dichotomized change in belief from change in practice, and suggests a sort of multi-layered acceptance of a new practice.
said: “Should I teach or look for wood?”, and Nigin worried: “Our school has many innovative ideas but due to lack of opportunities we cannot employ them.” Their colleagues generally ask: “Why make extra efforts, when there is no result from what we teach?” All speak to this point.

Izzat, the biology teacher, clearly and powerfully supported Nigin and Sino’s call:

Even though I am very busy with handling my survival needs, I could still find time and energy to put into teaching. I could daily put 3-4 hours into preparation for teaching. But why? Who needs my teaching? When positions are bribed and diplomas are bought? When the school authorities say to the students and teachers: “If you do not want to come to school, to the devil with you.” When there is misuse of the school’s property. When the sons of the leaders of the village stop their peers from coming to the school. When some people at the rayono say they don’t care whether our children get education (Int. 5: 98).

**Relationships: I Care About Everyone… Who Cares About Me?**

In this section I describe the relational aspect of the participants’ practices. I complement the comparison of Sino’s and Nigin’s relations with the data on the other participants where appropriate. I discuss the special significance of relations in the rural and mountainous context, point out the nature of these relations, and spell out some of the forces that have affected the teachers’ relations in the classrooms, school and community.

**Relationships in Rural, Mountainous Badakhshan**

Box 26 gives representative statements from both Sino and Nigin about their relationships as teachers. It indicates both the special and changing nature of relationship in a rural community such as Badakhshan.

Clearly, the teachers felt it their duty to care⁴³⁷ for their students not only academically, but socially as well (Box 26). This alone would suffice to lead them into a wider network of relationships; the nature of the community intensified this situation. In this tight mountainous context, with a more or less homogeneous community, the school-community boundaries get quite blurred. The teachers’ interactions with the students and their parents go beyond the schools, beyond one-shot meetings with the students in the classroom, and beyond merely professional matters to include the personal, professional, familial, cultural and religious aspects.

Human relationships were at the heart of Nigin’s and Sino’s work and life in the classroom, school and community (Cummins, 1996). These relationships were special, more complex and more intense, because relating to students meant relating to their parents, relatives

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⁴³⁷ A Russian word, means District Education Board.
⁴³⁸ The notion of care here is broader than that espoused by Noddings (1992, 1995). In her view, care is limited to the students and includes modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation.
and community. There was no escape from them, and the positive and negative implications of the relationships were more immediate for the teachers' life and work. Like the teachers' other practices, relationships too were a process of negotiation between various forces and realities (Cummins, 1996; Tarlow, 1996).
Good teacher is one who develops students' love; Method of teaching is not enough. For me the relations are more important than methods; To know whether I am doing a good job will be seen from the kind of relationship and attitude I face with those I work with; Everything has changed, but my relations have remained the same; I love children and miss them; I defend the students from the abusive parents; We have decided to treat children as human beings; I really like this mutual understanding between the teachers themselves and with the students; They help me with preparing conferences; We decided to fight against the students being pulled into drugs and guns; When I see parents avoiding me, I feel something went wrong; We have decided to educate the community; Students are our best messengers; If teachers insult the students, they too will be insulted; I had to get the grade for my cousin, because of Arwhen khotir (sake of spirit); If you don't give the students the grades they ask, their parents won't say hello; My students respect me and their parents respect me, and the teachers asked me how to teach better; I feel hurt when someone has become rich and has forgotten his teacher; I want our people respect other nations and be respected; We work for the sake of the Imam; People do not invite teachers to their gatherings any more. We are too poor and irritating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nigin</th>
<th>Sino</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good teacher is one who develops students'</td>
<td>Here in the village if things go bad, they may go so for generations;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>love; Method of teaching is not enough. For</td>
<td>I can see how slapping may hurt the child’s personality;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me the relations are more important than</td>
<td>I believe strict relations won’t result in good outcomes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methods; To know whether I am doing a good</td>
<td>I want the students to feel that that I am with them;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>job will be seen from the kind of relationship</td>
<td>From them a try and from me blessing;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and attitude I face with those I work with;</td>
<td>We need a multicultural and tolerant society;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything has changed, but my relations</td>
<td>Parents are useless, but we cannot succeed without them;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have remained the same; I love children and</td>
<td>The Government has done very little for us, but we need it;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miss them; I defend the students from the</td>
<td>I was hurt by my relatives because I did not listen to what they wanted me to do for them;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abusive parents; We have decided to treat</td>
<td>I love teaching and children love my classes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children as human beings; I really like</td>
<td>Unlike others I do not believe that forcing causes prosperity;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this mutual understanding between the teachers</td>
<td>Good teaching is about weak students;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>themselves and with the students; They help</td>
<td>I want all the children to learn;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me with preparing conferences; We decided to</td>
<td>The Russian teachers treated us as human beings and were always equal to us;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fight against the students being pulled into</td>
<td>Our leaders put us down and asked the Russians to make us human beings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drugs and guns; When I see parents avoiding</td>
<td>We need to teach parents how to work with their children;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me, I feel something went wrong; We have</td>
<td>I can convince any inspector in the rightness of what I do;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decided to educate the community; Students</td>
<td>I work for the blessing of the Imam; Only the Imam cares about us;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are our best messengers; If teachers insult</td>
<td>I have realised that you need to say no to your own brother and sister, if you want to succeed nowadays;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the students, they too will be insulted; I</td>
<td>Nowadays people respect only the rich, Mafia, and the commerсants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had to get the grade for my cousin, because of</td>
<td>Arwhen khotir (sake of spirit);</td>
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<td></td>
<td>If you don't give the students the grades they ask, their parents won't say hello;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My students respect me and their parents respect me, and the teachers asked me how to teach better;</td>
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<td>I feel hurt when someone has become rich and has forgotten his teacher;</td>
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<td>I want our people respect other nations and be respected;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We work for the sake of the Imam; People do not invite teachers to their gatherings any more. We are too poor and irritating;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Nature of the Relationships

Although Sino's and Nigin's and their colleagues' relations varied according to their personalities and specific context, they had many features in common. First, these teachers' classroom relations were teacher-directed (Goodlad, 1984).99 Both Sino and Nigin defined the relationship and the frame for what was or was not acceptable; they allowed little negotiation of
rules in the classroom. Their rules were important to maintain control and an orderly learning environment so as to make teaching and learning happen. Sino pays "attention to everything" and Nigin "cannot bear mess."

Classes emphasised imparting knowledge and learning the topic of the day, fidelity to subject matter, coverage of the curriculum, and speaking in the official language rather than affection to the students and their holistic development (Noddings, 1984). Here, relationships did get secondary attention, because the teachers saw them as part of the children's social development. According to Sino, "students cannot learn when relations are tense." Nigin emphasized, "I am hard in academics and soft in relations" (cf. Holliday, 1995 cited in Gay, 2000). However, Sino's and Nigin's educational visions saw developing human being as more important than developing a scholar (DeVries & Beijaard, 2000).

They also monitored misbehaviours, resolved conflicts, and decided who should sit where. They used reprimand, ridicule, questions, or shouting to reinforce their rules of behaviour. By and large, relations in the classroom were formal and cohesive (Cummins, 1996). However, within this teacher-directed frame, Sino let the students feel easier and more relaxed than Nigin did. He thought it important that students talk and talk more; he got upset when they kept quiet. He let them make noise and raise their hands even though they might have not been ready to answer. He let them relax so that they would come to school. He did not pick on each behaviour of each student: "We all have a habit", he allowed. Relations were a part of working together with the students and a part of enabling them to enjoy learning (Cummins, 1996).

Nigin's classes were more formal and tightly organised. Nigin said that noise, or any additional movement on the students' part disturbed the course of her lessons. For her, relations were a means to achieving an end, which was leading the students in their hearts to accept knowledge from her.

Second, both Sino's and Nigin's relations exhibited transparency and consistency across the contexts of home, school, classroom and community (cf. Kleinfeld, 1974, cited in Gay, 2000). The classroom was not a closed and private world, separate from the community and homes. As in Soviet times, teachers continued educating not only the students but also their parents. Thus, Nigin and her school fought drugs and guns by their teaching in the classrooms and by working in the community with the parents. Nigin said: "As a mother, I want my children

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459 Several researchers have discussed teacher-students relations in some detail (e.g., Ayers, 1993; Collinson, 1996; Cummins, 1996; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Gay, 2000; Nias, 1989).
to be the best in all matters. But as I come to school, I see children who are like my children too. So I repeat to my students what I tell my children at home" (Int. 1:17). So Nigin kept close relations with the parents, paid attention to the community's sukhum gham (happiness and sorrow), fought for her students against the university instructors and even against the abusive parents. Sino met, talked with the parents, rejected joining the local administration, and talked in public about improving Tajik-Kyrgyz and inter-Tajik relations. He also, as an ethical model, participated in the Imam's visits, did not drink alcohol, and refused to fake certificates. He motivated the parents to speak up in parent-teacher meetings. Similarly, Nigin said that she was a teacher, mother, sister, friend and counsellor to her students. In some senses, the two teachers' relations were the same, though they were redefined in each context.

Sino's consistently relaxed relations in the classroom made him similarly approachable in the schoolyard and the village, where students came and asked him to visit them for a cup of tea. Sino believed controlling and forcing the students to work was not useful. His methods and his relations with his students were geared towards enabling and empowering the students to learn on their own and become independent thinkers.

Like her own teacher Tazarv, Nigin was serious yet approachable, both in the classroom and outside it. Because she warned the students about "bad things and bad people", kept their parents informed, and wanted her students to be cautious, older students often approached her and talked about their life issues, including the intimate. With the younger ones, she was more formal, more of a cautious and warning mother, just as inside the class. She hugged them, cursed them and sat with them in the garden to help with exams. She felt the more the students liked her, the more knowledge they took from her, because they believed she cared about her students' future and because she had trustful reputation among their parents (cf. Lieberman & Miller, 1990). At the same time, Nigin's practices, such as her assessment, revealed the deep complexity of student-teacher relations. Nigin began to wonder whether relations between students and teachers could ever be equal.

In the post-Soviet times, both Sino and Nigin have considerably reduced the number of consultations they had previously offered to their students, which included inviting the students home, visiting their homes or staying after classes. Though academic, these consultations were less formal and more enjoyable. Here, both teachers and students were free to be who they are, have a more individualised approach, and speak the language they wanted. Both teachers reduced these sessions, largely because of the poverty and intensified life in post-Soviet times.
In the latter respect, the cases, particularly Nigin's, revealed an unusual solidarity and mutual sympathy between the students and teachers. Sino and Nigin felt that their students had missed the good life as children that they themselves had enjoyed in Soviet times and tried to compensate for it. Similarly, the students empathised with teachers' impoverishment and extended their support in various forms. Good teaching, in addition to knowledge and methods, also included collaborative and caring interpersonal relations (Collinson, 1996; Cummins, 1996).

Third, both teachers saw the relations as or at least as important as the methods of teaching, or even more important. Relations were also important because they were very sensitive politically (Tarlow, 1996). Sino and Nigin taught children to whom, and to whose parents, they were connected by blood, faith, language, and land. They also educated students' parents. Relations were important to successfully playing their expected roles and acting as important members of their communities. Good relations meant living in peace and counting on the community's support whenever needed. Lately, relations in the village had become more tense because of the lack of everything. "We have no land, no food, and no space. It is narrow to hide or avoid oneself. Our life is risky and survivalist in nature" (Nigin, Int. 1:27).

Relations were more important than methods, because the methods and content of teaching were confined to the classroom and school, whereas relations extended beyond these. While methods and content changed across times and space, relations were more stable. Each encounter with the students thus became a challenge of making an intellectual and social difference (Noddings, 1984). Nigin's remark "Relations are more important; the challenge of teaching is to develop students' and teachers' love and respect", conveys an image of teaching that is much broader than subject matter, methodology and classroom practice. Her statement forms a politically, pedagogically and culturally grounded insight (Bartolome, 1994). For her the nature of teacher student interaction defined not only the nature of successful teaching, but also the nature of successful educational change (Cummins, 1996).

Fourth, the teachers' relationships with the students and parents were grounded in a rich knowledge base (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Their contexts gave birth to a rich historical knowledge about the students, their parents, the history of their families (including their zor440), their ancestors, their lifestyles, their relatives, their economic status, and their familial relationships (See Box 11). The cases of Sino, Lola and Izzat for example, revealed that the

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440 Zor, a cultural construct, sees families as genetically gifted in certain fields of knowledge or craft. A whole family could have zor in math, languages, wrestling, or drawing.
teachers met their students' parents almost as often as they met their students. The knowledge thus accumulated, importantly influenced the teachers' practice, relations with the students, judgement and expectations about them, and methods of working with them personally, instructionally and strategically (Noddings, 1992). Sino, for example, relying on his philosophy "teaching is about the weak students", paid more attention to those students whose fathers he thought were weaker. Nigin, on the contrary, kept close to the parents of the students in the gifted program, because these parents asked for more accountability (Oakes, 1985).

Fifth, like their methodologies, teachers' relations were eclectic. The teachers could be soft or rude, laughing or serious. They used praise, ridicule, threats and requests. They employed family pride and blame; they might refer to their students' parents at time in ways that hurt the children and at other times in ways that boost their confidence (Abi Nader, 1993, cited in Nieto, 1998). Nigin's discussed the students' health during the annual assessment. Sino recounted the incident of the ridiculing of Khursand by his peers. They both called on the students to make nomus (keep up the family and community pride). They both believed that being constantly too nice to any student might cause as much damage as being continuously rude. All these pictures exemplify how they used this rich community's knowledge, norms and practices.

Although Nigin and Sino tended to be positive and sensitive in their eclecticism, Izzat was predominantly strict and formal. He used to ridicule students, often mentioning their relatives in derogatory terms. "Rukhshona, instead of coming to class unprepared and wasting our time, you better sit with your mom and sell goods", or "You better be careful of this girl, before she steals your wood."

Sometimes he would also praise their families to motivate them. "Abdullo, your three uncles are all scholars. You too should keep the family's name high." In other words, his relationships too interacted with the students' family histories.

Factors Affecting Relationships

A closer look at Boxes 26 and 8 will yield that the teachers' relations were affected by multiple factors and forces interacting on the community landscape. Their complex nature and multiplicity made the teachers' relations negotiated, eclectic and tense (Ashenden, 1992; Ayers, 1993; Cummins, 1996).

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441 Ashenden (1992, cited in Gay, 2000) puts it, "Relations with students can be spectacularly conflicting, upsetting and humiliating. These relations border on constant movement in the classroom from consent to coercion, from resistance to compliance and pragmatism" (p. 57).
First, schooling and life experiences affected them (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). From Sino’s and Nigin’s recollection of their schooling experiences, one can gather that the Russian teacher Svetlana and Pamirian-Tajik History teacher Tazarv played crucial roles in their career choices and their general views of teaching and relationships. These and other teachers, through their erudition, kind relationships, caring attitude, pleasant personalities, sweet and clear language, engaging methods, accessibility to the students, and cooperation with parents, nourished enthusiasm, courage, humility, a drive for excellence, hard work, honesty and modesty in Sino and Nigin. Svetlana, Tazarv and many other teachers knew that there was corruption and malpractice; but they were “warm demanders” (Gay, 2000) and taught Nigin and Sino what they thought was right, ethical, and feasible. They took teaching seriously, as modelled by their dress, outlook, and personality. They spent time with the students, were their friends, fought for them against injustice, kept their secrets, helped them to resolve their problems, and shared their successes and failures. Sometimes Nigin and Sino saw them as more trustworthy than their parents.

However, during Sino’s life journey, the relations have not always been so humane. Particularly painful were incidents connected to his minority status. Sino was able to critically examine the relations exhibited towards him. He selected the humanistic elements and deplored the oppressive practices as he moved from pre-service to in-service teaching. Similarly, he has also been able to challenge oppressive practices within his own community. He rejected notions such as “forcing causes prosperity.” He believed that every student could succeed. He conveyed to his students that he would always be there for them as long as they tried. He suggested the need for mutual respect between elders and youngsters. He criticised some of his community’s self-deceptive practices, such as showing-off, outside-orientedness, and disregard towards one’s own people. He disliked it when the local authorities put Russians above the locals.

Nigin seems to have always had positive relations. Her parents emerge as very caring. She also encountered some good and honest Communist leaders. Her father, her teacher Tazarv, many of her university professors, her husband and children, and the head of her school have all been nice in their relations with her and have taught her about the importance of good relations. Yet she, like Sino, says that being always in a good relationship can be as harmful, particularly with the students. One sided, one way relations end up creating extremes. Thus, Nigin and Sino moved between opposites: kindness and strictness, using ridicule and praise, discipline and request, shouts and smiles. They saw providing contradictory messages not as confusing, but as
being careful not to spoil the children. They did this with their own children too. The community believed it; Soviet education theory also suggested it. The idea that a “strict regime informed by kindness results in self-discipline” made up one of the two general principles of Soviet education theory as advocated by Makarenko\(^{442}\) (see also Long & Long, 1999; Medlin et al., 1971; Muckle, 1988; Webber, 2000).\(^{443}\) They knew about the adverse outcomes of ridiculing and used it in ways that showed caring and invitation rather than hatred, as Sino said. Nigin often clarified that she meant no ill-feeling. She also took as jokes the war veteran’s culture-based propositions about teachers, such as “the whip of the teacher is like nightingale’s sound”, and “take the child’s skin and meat and give me his bones.” Sino and Nigin used the concepts of zot and nomus in positive terms, to boost the student’s morale and make them succeed (Abi Nader, 1993 cited in Nieto, 1998). Thus, they not only redefined culturally held assumptions about teachers but also worked as change agents of the larger culture itself. They knew that they had to be sensitive to cultural practices, yet be able to show alternatives to those parents who cared little and even hit their children (Ekloff, 1993).

During the years of their undergraduate studies, the participants’ geographic origins, language, religion, and manners, all became realities affecting their life and growth. Sino, for example, revealed that his differences were seen as an anomaly.\(^{444}\) The teachers’ stories tell that they experienced unpleasant relations or outright discrimination for being Ismailis, speaking “inappropriate” Tajik, and being Pamirians. Lets recall Sino’s voice: “These teachers [university instructors] used threats, pointed to our mistakes, put us down... They demanded obedience... (Int. 2: 29); “...There were teachers who would beat the students...” (Int. 2: 62). Like Sino, Lola was also deeply hurt by this: “Instead of being thankful that we still managed to learn everything in Tajik, and speak it as well as the Tajik- speaking students, some of the instructors lowered our grades and made fun of our accents” (Int. 3: 21). Izzat, himself a Tajik-speaker, revealed the politics of differentiation by some of the university’s instructors:

At the university some of the instructors and students considered us Wanjis as Pamirians, though we speak Tajik. Though we are Sunni like them, some of them considered us infidels, as they

\(^{442}\) Makarenko was one of the famous revolutionary Soviet educationalists in the 1920s and 1930s (For more on Makarenko see, Long & Long, 1999; Sudaby, 1989; Webber, 2000)

\(^{443}\) The second principle was that learning takes place through community and collective activity (for discussion, see Holmes & McLean, 1989).

\(^{444}\) For additional discussion on how identity differences affected Pamirians in lowland Tajikistan, see Glen (1999), Keshavjee (1998), and Roy (2000).
usually considered the Pamirians. It was surprising for us to be treated as strangers by those to whom we were closer by language and religion (Int. 5: 65).

Second, in-service teaching experience during Soviet times instilled authoritative and formalised teacher-student relations, formalised by codes of behaviour for both teachers and students. As the teachers moved from Soviet to post-Soviet times, Nigin and Sino redefined their rules of relationships according to the changing realities. They let the students relax and changed the nature of their expectations; life was already too hard to be tough and formal. Students, as Nigin said, had missed the good childhood their teachers had had. The teachers did everything to make the students come to schools. Even in a time of total apathy in Murghab towards schooling, the students were enthusiastic about seeing Sino and attending his classes.

However, Izzat was unable to change. Ever since Soviet times, Izzat, as a deputy head of the school, has been forcing the teachers to follow the old code of duties and make the students follow the old students’ rules.445 Despite the deterioration of conditions, despite the cold weather and hunger, despite the decline of the status of the teacher, and despite the increasing absence of the students, he continued to reinforce that students should put their right hands over their left446, not make the smallest move, not smile, but listen to and look at him only. Unlike Sino, he was annoyed with the primary teachers’ “inability” to instil the rules of behaviour in the students before they moved to secondary level. Consistent with the Soviet times, he refused to teach classes where the attendance was less than 50%. Unlike Nigin, he rarely talked of his students in positive terms. Unlike Sino, he never used his many encounters with the parents to talk about the students and education. He was not bothered with building relations with the schoolteachers and parents of his students. His participation in the school and his relations with his colleagues became the basis of complicated stories.447 Several of his colleagues mentioned that his lack of interpersonal skills had prevented him from becoming the head of the school. Izzat’s paternalist attitude in the classroom made the students keep quiet in front of him even in the street and at home. He often ridiculed, and pointed out his students’ “naughty” sides even outside class.

445 Comparing Izzat with Sino reveals Woods’ (1979 cited in Bail & Goodson, 1985) distinction between two types of teachers: (a) teacher-bureaucrats, who are bound by institutional form and processes, exert their authority, foster depersonalized relations and are governed by the institution; (b) teachers as persons, who are relaxed, more natural, more friendly, treat students as equal and are in control of the institution.
446 Izzat explained that they needed to put their right hands over their left, because they had to raise their right hands e.g., to answer, to ask).
447 Several people in the school and community called him Francisco. Francisco was a cruel, rude character in a Brazilian teleserial Simply Maria that played throughout the former Soviet Union in the late 1980s. Francisco was interlocutor (foreman) between the owner of the plantation and the black slaves. As such he was strict and ruthless in his duty, which often included subjugating and punishing the slaves.
connecting their “shortcomings” to those of their parents. At the same time, he was a deeply caring person and educator. Izzat often acknowledged that he should treat the students otherwise. His home was full of guests and travellers and he produced some of the most successful people in the district.

Third, the existence or absence of a clear school policy on cooperation with the students was important. Nigin’s school not only explicitly respected the students as human beings, but made this policy as school norm. “If the teacher insults a child he will be insulted too”, said Ali, the head of the school. Nigin added: “In our school we have decided to treat out students as human beings.” Together with her school, Nigin also enjoyed good relations with the community. She became happy to see the enthusiastic children. This renewed her energy and recharged her motivation. Together with her colleagues, she had little trust in or respect for the higher authorities. Together with the school, she fought for the students in the community and during the exams. The students knew this and responded with mutual care. They visited her when she was sick, helped her with home chores, reduced the price of goods for her, and sent her presents on occasion.

Sino’s relations were not defined by the culture of his school. Although the school was divided and its relations with the community were strained, Sino enjoyed equally good relations with the children, the head, his colleagues, the community and even the higher education authorities. All sides perceived him equally as the best teacher. Sino and Nigin shared at least four keys to success: (a) reputation as hard working, honest, caring, knowledgeable and capable; (b) keeping the parents informed of their children’s progress; (c) consistency and integrity in their relations across times, contexts, social groups and ethnicities, (d) courageously voicing against the ills of the society and its unethical leaders. Though not all their communications have been smooth, people viewed Nigin and Sino as teachers who cared for the students, parents, school, community and even the country.

Fourth, the teachers’ deeply held egalitarian and humanistic values and ideologies had affected their relations. These values have persisted in the culture across time. Forces have shifted, modes of economic production have altered, but no authority could challenge their value of caring and concern for others and the society. Further the teachers preached these values and as such were socialised into them. “The times have changed, everything has changed, but my relations with the students remained the same”, said Nigin. These values were encouraged by the nature of their work as teachers, by the necessities of the survival in an impoverished minority
community, by the gurus of Tajik classical literature, by the communist ideology, and more lately by the Aga Khan and the Constitution of Tajikistan.

Sino practised these egalitarian values in his attempts to help Daler, who was seen as a failure by not only the school, but even by his own parents. Sino tried to make all the students learn. He rejected to join what he saw as a manipulative system. Together with Nigin, they criticised those who tried to misuse and pervert the Imam's vision. Nigin preferred to share with the community rather than to eat in secret. She worried about the decline of care for the weak students.

The teachers' adherence to egalitarian values collided with several challenges that arrived with post-Soviet market economy: consumerism, individualism and globalisation. As socio-economic relations have changed, some parents have begun to avoid teachers, because they saw teachers as poor moralists and idealists. Others attacked teachers for getting salaries but not working well enough. Still others accused teachers of corruption, of soliciting the community's money and misusing it, of forging grades and certificates, and of selling vodka. The teachers' authority was further undermined by new, influential role models, such as commerchants (businessmen, merchants), guerrillas, Mafiosi and religious clerics. All of these were wealthier, looked healthier, and were better dressed.

Educational reforms related to the marketisation of schooling challenged the teachers' relations with the children. Nigin was torn between criticising the reforms for ignoring the weak students, noticing that even her own school treated different children differently, and being herself implicated in this: "Why does everyone care only about the wealthy and gifted? Where is society heading? What is going to happen to our country?"

Nigin's and Sino's comments about educational reform reveal the difference between the bureaucratic and professional approaches to reform (see Thiessen, 1993a, for an analysis). The bureaucrats apparently put populist political appeal at the top of the reform agenda, suggesting that practices such as streaming and fee-paying classes constitute necessities of the market economy; that these programs will help the good students to excel. Within this approach the division of students into good and bad is largely positioned in the will of God, biological reasons, or in the hard work, rather that in the unjust and corrupt structures of the society, including its education system (Bacchus, 1981, 1996; Oakes, 1985; Osborne, 1991).

Nigin and Sino, however, looked at reform from an ethical point of view. These reforms deeply challenged the ethics of the relations between the teachers, the students and the
community. Nigin wondered about the lyceum program in her school, the irrelevance of the curriculum, streaming, the market economy, and the continuity of humanitarian supplies. All these questions reflect her concerns for the students and the community.

Streaming supposedly would rationalise the curriculum, provide better education, cater the students’ individual interests and prepare children for market-oriented economy (Lisovskaya, 1999, Long & Long, 1999, Webber, 2000). Some teachers, such as Gorminj also seriously accepted and promoted streaming. “Streaming makes it easier for me to teach. When it is easier for me to teach, it is easier for the students to learn”, he often stated.

However, Nigin, Sino and the other participants felt the idea of streaming as part of the transition to market economy and economic pluralism, has ignored major critical issues affecting their relations with their students, the enduring reciprocal values of their community, and their methodologies: streaming has divided the students socially, academically and emotionally and altered the community’s perception of the students and their parents (Anyon, 1988; Oakes, 1985). Today Nigin’s school has four tracks: The “brightest” students are in the lyceum; next come those in the natural science stream; then come the students in the social science stream. The majority of students, who are considered as weak, and also hail from disadvantaged families, are in the general stream. Ironically, these students also have to pay for their studies in high school, should their parents wish them to continue. A parent from this stream voiced the concern, “Our children will end up as servants to those from the lyceums.” Paradoxically, Nigin of the egalitarian principles teaches in the lyceum, where the brightest and the well-to-do students are.

Streaming has classified school subjects and teachers into more and less important, according to the subjects’ value in the market economy and the new higher education. As teachers of History and Russian, Nigin and Sino are on the losing end. Nigin had much to say on this issue:

When the students say they do not need History it is like a knife in my heart... The students disregard history until grade 10 and then come and ask for consultations... Students ask me to give them a 5 undeservedly, because they feel that history is a secondary subject... (Int. 1: 43).

These examples could be augmented by Sino’s concession to English and his disappointment with the neglect of Russian in the post-Soviet times. Streaming has divided community of one faith, a common tradition and close relations into many fractions. Here too, Sino is on the losing side. Nigin, on the contrary, may join the new local elite, because her husband left teaching and now works at an NGO.
Streaming is imposed from above, without due consideration to the schools' material and technical base. One can hardly talk about successful streaming in the current conditions of impoverishment. For example, all of the biological equipment in Izzat's school consisted of one microscope and a few charts. There are no chairs for the students to sit on in Sino's school. Teachers have no opportunities to upgrade themselves. Students even have no pens and notebooks to write on.

Streaming is also causing a one-sided development of the students (Noddings, 1992): "It is not that the other subjects are not in the timetable. It is that students simply ignore them, because they find them useless for their future. They focus all their time and energy on learning either Mathematics or English", as Nigin said. Streaming, thus, has not responded to the students' real interests; it has merged them. Given the rural lack of opportunities and lack of career counselling, the students streamed themselves not according to their talents or true nature, but according to what they saw as fashionable and useful, often in financial terms. In Badakhshan, most students embarked on studying English and natural sciences. Thus success, for many students is not about actualising what they are really talented in; it is often about learning and excelling what they may not like otherwise; further, it is about becoming able to make money.

In sum, there is an irony in the allotment of care. The teachers care about the children, the curriculum, education, community, reforms, the state and the authorities. In so doing, they work despite hunger, sickness, misunderstanding, mistreatment, devaluation, intensification and de-professionalisation. They work to overcome the arrogance of those who have become rich and powerful, some parents' unrealistic expectations and accusations, attempts to change their mentality from above, and demands to fulfil, obey and serve. But no one seriously attempts to improve the teachers' conditions. Apple (1990) puts it as follows:

In the time...when the schools are blamed for nearly everything that is wrong with society, when there is profound mistrust of teachers and curricula, it is very hard to be a teacher. Added to this are effects of the very real economic crisis that affects many of our cities and rural areas, where many teachers work in conditions that would be laughable were they not tragic (cited in Liston & Zeichner, 1991, p. vii).

One questions how long the teachers can continue to care for so many others without themselves being taken care of (Noddings, 1984, 1992, 1995).

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448 At the Ministry of Education, I was informed that a new department on career counseling had been established at the Ministry and that the training of the specialists was under consideration.
Summary

I have discussed two aspects of the participants' practices: methodologies and relationships. These discussions revealed the complexity of trying to be teachers with transformative worldviews in post-Soviet Tajikistan. The section on methodologies demonstrated that the participants' practices were mainly teacher-centred, though Sino was more transactive and Nigin more transmissive in methods. Although transmission dominated in the classroom, particularly Nigin's, both Nigin's extra-curricular sessions and Sino's official classes showed a strong potential for developing transactive positions. Yet, again, none of the teachers exactly fit within either of the two categorisations.

At the same time, the teachers' practices also exhibited moments of transformative teaching. They occasionally brought together care for and transformation of the students, teachers, community, country, and world to urge a more egalitarian, just and cooperative society. Such transformative efforts necessarily imply a holistic approach and some underlying transformative view.

The discussion revealed the multiple factors that have contributed to these predominantly teacher-centred classrooms and transmissive methods, despite the teachers' different aspirations. These factors included personal reasons, such as the teachers' educational experiences at schools, universities and professional courses; there were also cultural, geographic, systemic and even global factors. Discussing all these, I illustrated their complex nature, revealing that they mainly served as challenges to the teachers' promotion of their predominantly transformative worldviews. Though the teachers generally viewed these challenges as "obstacles", their influence was never deterministic. The teachers often reshaped them as opportunities to promote their values and goals. The teachers infused teacher-directed approaches with transactive and transformational contents, though quite limited. They used the lack of textbooks as an opportunity to invoke students' experiences, local environment, culture, and issues and to provide more imaginative homework. They used the absence of inspectors to use local languages, criticise corrupt practices and dishonest leaders, and care about the students rather than the curriculum.

The teachers' experiences suggest that educational culture is a complex, dynamic, evolving and problematic phenomenon, just like any culture. They need to examine not only their educational practices, but also their broader context, cultural practices, therefore, against the human growth. It matters who benefits from certain cultural practices and relations. It matters
who is marginalised by the educational methods that promote authoritarianism, alienation, division, obedience, silence, corruption, and blind acceptance. One must then ask why only those cultural practices that promote teacher-centredness are actually encouraged and maintained both inside and outside the classrooms in MBAP and Tajikistan. Surely these values do not serve the participants’ worldviews of teaching as educating for social change, as transformation, and as moral responsibility. No do they serve the teachers’ goals of producing students who balance knowledge with ethics, action with responsibility and self with society, students who are critical and creative thinkers. The teachers would hardly agree that these methods could contribute to the kind of society they envisage.

Sino’s practice in particular reveals that moments of awakening and transformation occurred when he was not only exposed to alternatives but also critically engaged with existing familial and communal traditions and practices. In so doing, the teachers found that their own practices and cultures contain not only elements that hinder growth, but also, and more interesting, elements, methods and ideas that support change, growth and transformation.

As part of their cultural context, the teachers and their students differed not only in language but also in their ethnicity and religious affiliations; their linguistic diversity was only a part of their cultural diversity. Disregarding their languages thus implied disregarding their cultural experiences and their identities as a whole, hence Nigin’s complaints about the irrelevance of the curriculum. Sino’s and Lola’s personal experiences also speak to this point. The issue of language of instruction emerged as more than just an element of method. It raises questions about equity, justice and opportunity to succeed for the majority of youth and adults alike in Badakhshan, particularly, for those who have no opportunities to master Tajik and Russian. It also poses questions about the relevance of education and the sustainable development of the economy, ecology and cultural identity.

Given the increasing number of constraints and continuous impoverishment and deskilling of teachers, the shift from transmission to transformation appears a daunting task, though possible. The shift from transmission through transaction to transformation will depend on serious political will and courage to acknowledge the problems confidently and move together with the teachers and other stakeholders towards creating relationships, free of intellectual arrogance and cultural insularity. In other words, the policy makers must sincerely listen to teachers and apply approaches to developing creative teachers and students who can solve their own problems and the society’s. They must honestly promote democracy and share
power; unless they are open to criticism, perspective taking and learning, they cannot learn from the history of previous educational failures and successes. In fact, this requires a critical and qualitative break with the concepts of leadership that brought to the collapse of the Soviet State, suggest both Nigin and Sino because this kind of leader will break any hope.

The avoidance of listening to teachers’ voices (good or bad), coupled with the avoidance of critically engaging with the past and present educational realities, may result not only in the failure of new change efforts but also in the further spread of empty rhetoric, cynicism and corruption with all their implications, including implications for social and educational theories and innovative practices.

The problem of changing teachers’ practice, thus, cannot be reduced to a simple issue of changing their mentality or introducing new techniques and methods through rigorous in-service training. Rather, it requires a courageous and honest acknowledgement of the social complexities, and a genuine political and ethical commitment to discussing issues of justice, conditions, power relationship, voice, and politics. The mismatch between the teachers’ worldviews and practices does not issue from the teachers’ weaknesses, or their biography, nor the complexity of classroom life. To a great extent, it reflects systemic, societal, and cultural contradictions; it thus is a question of available choices against imposed constraints—bureaucratic, logistical, geographic, and even political. It also is a question of the promise of rhetoric and excuse of practice. Any change, particularly one initiated from outside, needs to connect the teachers’ practices and beliefs with their social, historical, biographical, educational, political, and cultural contexts.

The discussions suggested that the rural, mountainous context has nurtured the special nature of teachers’ relationships, in part because of the blurred boundaries between schools, homes and communities and the frequency and informality of interaction in the villages. The teachers generally exhibit consistency across contexts, transparency, holism, and eclecticism. They generally defined their relations according to what they thought was in the best interests of the children and community. As a result, teachers such as Sino and Nigin built confirmed reputations as hard-working, honest, knowledgeable, caring and successful teachers in the school and the community. Relationships, more than methods and subjects, form the heart of their educational practices in these contexts.

The teachers’ relations were also affected by several factors, including their personal histories and minority experiences, school policy, cultural and global constraints and
opportunities. The teachers themselves particularly emphasised recent forces related to market socio-economic changes and how these have reshaped relations in education and accordingly in society. These factors are important not only for their power in diverting the fidelity of the teachers' care towards all students, but also for their implications about the future Tajik society and schooling. Together with insights about the reforms, one can assume that post-Soviet changes in the name of educational efficiency, effectiveness and quality in fact contribute to creating inequities along various dimensions. Given this, all those involved in educational change need to realise that bureaucratic and non-reflexive approaches to change result not only in a stasis where “the more things change the more they remain the same”, but in a decline where the more things change, the worse they become for the majority of the population, including teachers.
Chapter 9: Endings and Beginnings

This chapter provides a closure to the thesis journey. It consists of five sections. The first begins by displaying the principal research questions. Then I move to abstracting some of the major findings at a more general conceptual level. As in the cross case-analysis, I relate the findings with insights from relevant literature in developing and developed countries. The life history approach allowed me to connect the conclusions of the classroom practice to the insights about the continuities and changes in the teachers culture, physical surrounding, educational system and biography. As I draw the conclusions, I also emphasise their broader implications for teaching, teacher development and educational and societal change. Then I spell out some of my study’s “limitations”, followed by identifying critical directions for further research.

The Principal Research Question

This study has attempted to explore how teachers in post-Soviet, rural and mountainous Tajikistan understand their classroom practices. This principal question of this study has two main components:

1. The context of teaching. This component included two areas: (a) post-Soviet, which involved the changing economic, political and ideological forces that interacted with teachers’ classroom practices and knowledge, and (b) rural and mountainous environment, which brought social, geographic, cultural and identity factors to the forefront of the study;
2. The dynamics of teaching. This component addresses how these teachers make sense of their classroom practices, handling the daily complexities and challenges of their professional life, evaluating their teaching and the achievement of their goals within the foregoing realities. Below I summarise the major findings of the study and connect them to the major questions of my study.

Conclusions 1: Teaching as Contextual and Socio-Historical Construction

Broad Notion of Teaching

The study revealed that teachers in the rural and mountainous exhibit a broad notion of educator and teaching that goes beyond conventional categorisations. Chapter 2, An Overview of the Literature, discussed several approaches to conceptualising teachers. The cases of this study revealed that, as far as teachers in this rural, mountainous context are concerned, any of those conceptualisations appears arbitrary. None of them portray the entire scope of what teachers do.
Many of the portrayals provided in the review of the literature "are calls for or reconceptualisations of a more professional image, rather than the reality of the teachers' work and life" (Thiessen, 1993a, p. 286). On the one hand, these conceptualisations reflect the researchers' values and hopes, often very humanistic ones. On the other hand, they appear as "intellectual projections" that do not capture the full complexity and contradictory nature of teachers' professional life. The reality of their professional lives, as this study revealed, is more complex and broader. In fact, the teachers in this study exhibited all the qualities mentioned in the categorisations of teachers in the literature.

Similar to the behaviourist concept of "effective teachers-technicians" (Brophy & Good, 1986; Good, 1983), and transmission-oriented teachers (Guthrie, 1990; Tabulawa, 1994), Nigin and Sino believed that students could take knowledge from the teachers' lectures. They believed that there was a close connection between what they taught and what their students learned. The students' regurgitation of their lectures sufficed as evidence for them to believe in this connection and believe that their students had learnt what they had tried to impart.

Like the "classical professionals" of Shulman and associates (Shulman, 1987; Wideen et al., 1996; Wilson, et al., 1987), the teachers in the present study believed in the importance of truths and scientific certainty of the subject matters they taught. They believed in the superiority of teachers' knowledge over that of the students, farmers, shepherds and other inhabitants of the rural area. They believed that teachers were best educated and possessed certain kinds of knowledge and qualities that made them special, even indispensable (Lortie, 1975).

Similar to the concept of "restricted professionals" (Broadfoot et al., 1988; Guthrie, 1990; Hoyle, 1980; Jackson, 1967; Tabulawa, 1997), these teachers too, were restricted by a bureaucratic hierarchy, centralised curriculum, unified textbooks, the transmission of academic content and the need to teach toward set examinations. To teach as the system demanded, they lectured at their students in the truths of the subject matter and demanded that the students memorise names, words, dates and rules, and that they speak, write and behave correctly. They used intuition to make decisions so as to enable their students to pass exams and get into good professions (Jackson, 1968; Schon, 1983). They wanted their students to become knowledgeable and learned ("olim"). They were concerned with planning their lessons according to the curriculum mandated from above. As "curriculum takers" they worried about covering the curriculum and using the commonly accepted schema that had become a taken for granted tradition (Louden, 1991).
Like "practical professionals" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1999; Elbaz, 1983), the teachers tried to make the curriculum relevant, inserted what they valued into their teaching, let the students’ participate and bring in their experiences, let them ask questions of each other and of the teacher, and sometimes even disregarded demands that they should blindly follow the proposed curriculum. In so doing, they created stories and practices\textsuperscript{449} for various stakeholders, filtered the curriculum through their own subjective perceptions, and used their common sense and reflection. But they were also more than autonomous teachers, who would close the classroom doors, allow themselves full freedom, teach the way they desired, and see themselves as inevitable curriculum-makers (for a critique of various types of autonomous teachers, see Britzman, 1991).

Like the "extended professionals" (cf. Bascia & Thiessen, in press; Broadfoot et al., 1988; Cochran-Smith, 1998; Goodson & Cole, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Wasley, 1991), the teachers had a broader vision of education. This vision included their perspective on the kind of society they lived in and wanted (Cummins, 1996; Dewey, 1938). They played an extended and active role in the classroom, school, home and community (Altbach, 1990; Dove, 1986, 1995; Rust & Dalin, 1990). They cared about not only the academic, but also about the social, moral, aesthetic and physical development of their students. They naturally cared about their students and school; they also cared about their students’ parents, and their community, country and ethical authority. Wherever they could, the teachers used not only the textbooks, but also their students’ experiences. Similarly, although they generally used teacher-centred and transmission-oriented methods, the teachers also used interactive strategies. They asked critical questions; they also let the students question them and each other and help each other. They attended to both the short and long-term interests of the students. Although in the classrooms they paid more attention to the students’ academic development, they nonetheless did not neglect their social development. Ultimately for them developing odam (human being) was of as high priority as producing olim (a learned person).

They used their knowledge about the students and their parents, and built productive relations with their students. Further, as extended professionals, they worked with other teachers,

\textsuperscript{449} Connelly and Clandinin (1999) and Clandinin and Connelly (1996) suggest the existence of various stories on the professional knowledge landscape as ways through which teachers maintain their identity as curriculum makers. These stories are secret (lived) stories, cover stories (stories where teachers portray themselves as experts), sacred stories (stories that are mandated and funnelled to the teachers through conduit).
wrote papers, attended community gatherings, and took courses to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

As “teachers for social change” (Cochran-Smith, 1998; Fullan, 1997) and “public intellectuals” (Aronovitz & Giroux, 1991), the teachers had formed views not only about educational goals but also about broader societal development. They brought social issues into the classrooms and played leadership roles in the community (Bascia & Thiessen, in press); they voiced and fought against drugs and guns, corruption and injustice. They worked for peace between ethnicities and nations in MBAP and Tajikistan. They invited the leaders to care not only about themselves and their close relatives but also about the society and the people at large. They educated the community that rhetoric did not count. There has been too much rhetoric; it was time to exhibit care and justice in practice.

As “complex professionals” (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996), they faced more complex, challenging, overloaded and extended responsibilities in the post-Soviet times than they did in Soviet times. The post-Soviet idea of deideologisation was misleading and confusing. The previous ideology stayed alive; but now, these teachers needed to navigate their way among it and various new ideological frameworks and forces, among an increasing number of more vocal stakeholders with often-contradictory and unrealistic demands. The complexity was also due to the fact that unlike the Soviet open adherence to Communist ideology, the emerging forces acted subtly, and through a hidden curricula. They wondered about the implications of the various forces’ agendas. In order not to get lost, they needed to maintain a critical perspective amidst the confusion and chaos (Barnett, 2000; Miller & Lieberman, 1999). In this age of increasing complexity and paradoxes they have found that successful life and work “are increasingly becoming a matter not just of handling overwhelming data and theories within a given frame of reference...but also a matter of handling multiple frames of understanding, of action and of self-identity” (Barnett, 2000, p. 6).

In the post-Soviet period, the teachers have also had to fulfil more challenging tasks in and outside classrooms with less support; they have had to work within much worsened conditions of living, working and learning (Farrell & Oliveira, 1993; Woods, 1990). They faced students, who like them, not only experienced hunger, cold and depression but also were now divided into bright, good and dumb according to streams and fee-paying classes (Anyon, 1981; Oakes, 1985).
As social and educational reformers (Fullan, 1993; 1994; Thiessen, 1993b), the teachers suggested ideas about the kind of society, citizen, education and curriculum that could have been culturally more relevant and meaningful to the present and future of the people of the mountains. They promoted an egalitarian, multi-cultural, and democratic society where various perspectives are considered. They suggested the necessity of including local cultural diversity, the local nature, local history and languages into the official curriculum (Corson, 1993; Cummins, 1996, 1998; Gay, 2000; Nieto, 1998). As reformers, the teachers also pointed to the positive and negative aspects of the current and previous reform programs in Badakhshan and Tajikistan on material, technical and ethical grounds. They also proposed ideas about how teachers learn new methods, and about what may happen to the methods if their designers and promoters do not consider socio-political, cultural and systemic issues. Teaching and teacher change is much broader issue than injecting a technique into the heads and hands of the teachers. Without considering the integration of the personal and professional dimensions, and the systemic, socio-political, historical and cultural factors, any attempted change will predictably fail.

As cultural and political workers (cf. Apple, 1986, 1990; Dove, 1995; Ginsburg & Kamat, 1995; Watson-Franke, 1983; Young & Whitty, 1977), the teachers promoted the agendas of the state, such as loyalty, patriotism and national culture. They tried to change the villagers’ thinking according to the state’s agenda. As they had before, they made sure that their students knew the names of the current leaders, memorised the current anthem and were loyal to now independent Tajikistan. They made sure that the students learned Tajik and Russian and were proud of their heritage. The teachers participated in the various ceremonies organised by the Government and community; they also conducted elections, referenda and the census and “voluntarily” participated in other state activities.

At the same time, the teachers revealed the meaninglessness of “depoliticisation” of teaching. They in fact, provide a different meaning of politics: for them teaching, as a positive political act, depends on ethics, service and care for self, society and environment (Cummins, 1996). It is based on the principles of balance, justice, respect and cooperation (Goodlad et al., 1990). Further, the teachers were not simple cogs in the bureaucratic machinery (Aronovitz & Giroux, 1991; Helsby, 1999; Giroux, 1988). It was almost impossible for the bureaucracy to control their thinking and behaviours completely. They resisted various forms of imposition from above and outside, connected the classroom life to the outside realities, let the students...
participate and tried to build humane relations with them (Osborne, 1991). In Soviet times, they had doubts in the Soviet propaganda and knew that there was something wrong with the system.

They inserted into their lessons materials and ideas they thought professionally and culturally relevant to their students. In the post-Soviet times, they promoted internationalism, along with love for the Aga Khan, for MBAP and for Tajikistan; they voiced concerns about the rise of ethnic nationalism and religious extremism, and about the spread of guns, drugs and corruption in the region. They made the students aware of the differences between their and other ethnic groups and prepared their students to face the future challenges of the life in larger Tajikistan and the globalised world. While acting locally, the teachers thought globally.

Although working and living within authoritarian, restrictive structures and complex situations, Sino and Nigin, like the teachers portrayed by Cole & Knowles (2000), Greene (1973), and Diamond & Mullen (2000), tried to be the teachers and the persons they wanted to be. In so doing, they also helped their students not to be blindly ruled or fooled anymore. As they underwent painful experiences, they also asked questions; they became more and more conscious, complaining and critical about the way the system and the traditions of education and society in Badakhshan work. They managed to convince the inspectors of the rightness of how they taught. They tried to avoid telling lies and keeping silent. They wanted to fulfil their mission and make others aware of what they had learned through their years of teaching and living. At times, they rejected the demands of the superiors and the curriculum’s irrelevant mandates. They also refused to join those they believed were corrupt and unethical. They continued modelling and sharing across the contexts of classroom, school, home and community. These teachers exhibited these qualities both consciously and intuitively, willingly and unwittingly. They exhibited them as they solved problems, managed dilemmas and provided meaningful instruction to their students.

Portraying teachers as complex, evolving and important professionals involved in sometimes contradictory processes, and connecting these portrayals to their biographies and to the multiple layers of their context (Day, 1999), have several implications. First, the process makes one recognise their strategic position within their schools and within their rural, mountainous context. Policy-makers, whether political, social or educational, all depend on teachers for the success of their agendas, whether these are about change or about maintaining the status quo. Teachers play crucial role not only in the present society; they lay foundation of the future. Second, this approach recognises the complexity of their work, its limitless,
emotionally diffused and politically sensitive nature (Connell, 1985), and the kind of choices made available to them. Teacher development should provide teachers with conditions and opportunities that enhance their capacities to effectively and confidently fulfil this broad and strategic conception of teaching and teacher role (Aronovitz & Giroux, 1986). For emerging and struggling countries like Tajikistan, education might well constitute an important powerful tool to take charge of their national identities and redefine their roles as truly independent nation; teachers thus are prime resources.

**Teaching as Negotiation**

The ambiguous, emotional, ethical and complex nature of the teachers’ work revealed teaching as a process of negotiation rather than a process of either autonomous decision-making or complete obedience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Cummins, 1996; Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Lyons, 1990; Sikes et al., 1985). My cases support Britzman’s critique (1991) of transcendental conceptions of teachers like “teacher as self-made, teacher as an expert” or “everything depends on teacher”, and capture the human reality of teachers described by her:

The image of teaching advocated here is dialogic: Teaching must be situated in relationship to one’s biography, present circumstances, deep commitments, affective investments, social contexts and conflicting discourses... Teaching is social progress of negotiation rather than an individual problem of behaviour. This dynamic is essential to any humanising explanation of the work of teachers. Teaching concerns coming to terms with one’s intentions and values, as well as one’s views of knowing, being, acting and in a setting characterised with contradictory realities, negotiation, and dependency and struggle (Britzman, 1991, p. 8; see also Cole & Knowles, 2000, pp. 7-8).

Through negotiation, the teachers handled the expectations of the various stakeholders (e.g., parents, Government authorities, religious leaders, and the political opposition). Negotiation enabled them to navigate between and around various efforts to control them or use them; it enabled them to use the structures and realities around them in order to reshape their lives and help others. By negotiation, they could maintain their identities as teachers and persons, preserve their language and religion, get higher education, and become important members of their minority communities (Cummins, 1996). The ability to negotiate played a crucial role in facing ideological and epistemological pluralism, old concepts and new realities, and the dilemmas of covering the curriculum versus children’s learning. Negotiation offered a way to not only survive, but also to reshape such conflicting roles as agents of the state, members of a cultural and religious minority, and individuals devoted to promoting a socialist viewpoint.

Negotiation helped construct not only their teaching but also their lives in general. The ability to negotiate allowed them to succeed, to take advantage of givens and possibilities and to
manoeuvre through the structures that both let them grow and channel that growth in a certain way: in short, to cope.

Negotiation enabled the teachers to handle the tensions inherent in their work; like the teachers described by Berlak and Berlak (1981), Duffy and Anderson (1984), Lampert (1985) or Nias (1988), resolving tensions and dilemmas was an inevitable part of their work. The difference between the teachers in MBAP and those described by Western authors lies in the magnitude of tensions, intensity of their struggle, and the degree of support and choices the teachers get in handling them. Farrell and Oliveira captured this situation:

The irony in the case of developing countries is that choices are reduced, the price of mistake is higher, and conditions for success are more limited. Yet to overcome these problems, they have to be more efficient than industrial countries have been (1993, p. 22; see also Avalos, 1992; Dove, 1986, 1995).

The teachers have not always been completely active and successful in this process of negotiation. Neither have they been always consciously engaged in it. This process involved more of their compromising and giving in and less of their taking advantage. It has been more a matter of reacting to the decisions of others rather than proactively making one's own decisions.

Tensions embroiled all aspects of the teachers' practices, worldviews, methodologies, relations, and life journeys. For example, looking back at their methodologies, one can see how Sino and Nigin underwent tensions between refusing to be "schema teachers" and yet using schema in a broader sense, between criticising inspectors and leaders and fearing and obeying them, between rejecting the program and realising that they have to follow it, between worrying about all the children and mainly paying attention to a few of them. They moved between teacher-centred and child-centred pedagogies, between transformative worldviews and transmission methodologies and relationships. They used some cultural constructs (e.g., nomus and ridiculing), rejected others (e.g., outside-orientedness, punishing the students), supported others (e.g., family values) and modified a few others (e.g., respect not only for the elderly but also for the young).

Both Sino and Nigin had concerns about religion and criticised capitalism, yet had to promote them. Earlier, they had doubts about Soviet policies, yet promoted socialism. They worried about how to teach "good" values and ethics while acknowledging that these values might be currently disempowering. Contrary to their egalitarian perspective, the teachers acknowledged that in the post-Soviet times, the question of access to good education is no more taken for granted. The schools have openly become mechanisms for sorting children
The teachers painfully noticed that now if students (whom they regarded almost as their own children) fell sick or did not get a good grade, that is their problem, not that of the teachers and the schools. They wondered about how to adapt textbooks with old concepts to the new realities, and how to handle students’ cultural diversity. They knew that the students’ participation was reduced due to their struggle with the Tajik and Russian languages, yet they continued to ignore the local languages and with them, the children’s and their own experiences (Cummins, 1996). They faced pressures of time, ideological correctness, coverage of program, lack of resources, large and often detached from their context topics, annual examinations, and the general post-Soviet uncertainty and crisis of values.

The teachers’ worldviews underwent tensions between the continuing talk about high teachers’ value, the increasing expansion of teachers’ role, and the further impoverishment of the teachers’ works and lives. The teachers wondered whether the values which underlined their intentions could really work in a society where the market and consumerist ethics have begun to clash with the community’s egalitarian and reciprocal traditions such as trust, unity, sharing, cooperation, spirituality and caring. They talked about morality and ethics, while noticing that it is guns, drugs, money, nepotism, and corruption that rule. They had to overcome the painful reduction of the importance of their subjects, Russian and History of the USSR, and the concurrent loss of a more pleasant past situation. They had to accept in practice the antithesis of what they had previously taught: namely a English and capitalist worldview. They faced a situation where rhetoric and reality, practice and theory, vision and implementation, grand theories and personal motives clashed with and complemented each other. They became entrapped in being “free from ideology” and yet being compelled to promote a new ideology. They were caught between the rhetoric of democracy and a growing bureaucratic, authoritarian system, which challenged their internationalist, global perspectives and their autonomy in teaching. All these dilemmas and tensions, practical, professional, philosophical, political and emotional have negatively affected their mood, health, commitment, devotion, relationships and classroom practices.

In sum, my participants would certainly agree with Fullan (1993) and Thiessen (1993a) that tensions and dilemmas are inherent to teaching as a profession; teachers cannot and even

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450 Zajda (1980) suggested that Soviet education has contrary to its promise of equality and promotion of the disadvantaged, not avoided the sorting function. Zaugmenov (1993) maintains that the post-Soviet changes in the republic of Belarus have not served the purposes of equity and quality education.
should not avoid many of them. Tensions and dilemmas, as Fullan has suggested, need to be viewed as friends and opportunities from which to learn. But my study also suggests that without professional, material, and emotional support, teachers cannot handle all challenges on their own, especially such extreme difficulties as my participants faced (Fullan, 1993; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Woods, 1990). Left to handle so many increasingly complex challenges on their own, teachers often have no option but to lower their expectations, contend with failure in their objectives, compromise their values and ethics, cut the corners, pay lip service, suffer negative emotions, wonder whether they should stay in teaching, look for alternative jobs, miss their classes, feel guilty and tired, get exhausted, and burn out (Liston & Zeichner, 1991). In other words, extreme conditions and lack of support put their entire identity at stake (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Connell, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

Knowledge, Caring and Ethics

Many authors have characterised teachers as knowledgeable, thoughtful persons, capable of making decisions and solving problems (Ayers, 1993; Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1999; Clandinin, 1986; Clark, 1995; Goodson & Cole, 1994; Davis et al., 1993; Elbaz, 1983; Shonavruzov & Haidarsho, 1991; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999; Woods, 1995). Like the findings of the above authors, the teachers in my study have also developed formidable worldviews that extend beyond classroom doors and school walls and beyond the technical, behaviourist view of teaching. Though keeping the students' past, present and future at the centre of attention, these visions also consider larger communal socio-political realities and speak to the fundamental issues of the kind of society, teachers, and educational reform in post-Soviet Tajikistan (Fullan, 1997; Menlo & Poppleton, 1999). Through years of working with students and colleagues, and as active members of the community (Bascia & Thiessen, in press), these teachers have formed ideas about how the current troubled, weakened and underdeveloped Tajik society could be made a more humane place for its various ethnicities, faiths and minorities; how could the respect for diversity, plurality and identity be based on a real application of justice, equity, freedom, human rights, and prosperity. The teachers have nurtured holistic and valuable educational goals that aim at producing citizens with balance of ethics and knowledge. They have exhibited a broader understanding of teaching.

Although they used a relatively limited number of methods during the study, their voices reveal that through their years of teaching, these teachers have developed a richer methodological repertoire than the one they expose. The teachers suggest that a method, as a
technique, essentially depends on context and situation. But as a constant, a method also represents the teacher himself or herself. The teachers believe they can produce methodologies, were they given the resources and freedom to do so (Farrell, 1994). They suggest that those who try to impart methods into teachers' repertoire should first ask whether the teachers themselves have methods or ideas similar to the ones suggested and then sort out any perceived or real differences between them (Thiessen & Kilcher, 1991). At the same time the teachers are also open to learn from external sources.

Sino, for example, by applying ideas from the external courses, proves that in-service courses are useful. Nigin, however, adds that external ideas should be presented to teachers in suggestive rather than impositional modes. Those who suggest new ideas should also practice them, not just preach them to the teachers. Teachers need to understand why certain ideas are better than those they already use. They need to see whether those who suggest an idea can demonstrate its viability to them. Further, they need to observe how the idea works in their real classrooms and with their own students. For this, they need the students' critical, not acquiescent, feedback on the application of the new ideas (Joyce & Showers, 1988; Showers et al., 1987). In other words, like students', teachers' learning is an active and constructive process not only of interaction between what teachers know and what others know (Posner et al., 1982; Richardson, 1996); but also, and more important, of teachers' critically engaging with their own practices and the external ideas (Hargreaves, 1992; Thiessen, 2000).

The teachers' methodological repertoire also raises an important question for educational reformers: why do the teachers not use the ideas they already know? Understanding why teachers have never used, or stopped using the methods they know and heard about would help predict the acceptance, failure or sustainability of an innovation. Both teachers and change agents may initially get excited about new technique, particularly if its has been presented at in-service educational centres, but this does not mean it has any viability (Niyozov, 1995; Niyozov & Dean, 1997).

Further, the cases revealed that, unlike many teachers described in studies of developing countries (Fuller & Clarke, 1994; Guthrie, 1990; Prophet & Rowell, 1993; Rust & Dalin, 1990; Tabulawa 1997, 1998), the teachers in this study emerged as more than transmissional (Farrell, 1994). The teachers' voices question whether a teacher can ever be utterly transmissional. Second, they make problematic the claim that transmission always means "banking and indoctrinating"(Tabulawa, 1997). For example, Nigin's warning that the students should have
doubts about the politicians is more than banking and could even be viewed as imparting critical thinking to raise the students' awareness. Sino's discussion of Kyrgyz-Tajik relations, though directed and guided by him, clearly cannot be called banking. The teachers let the students participate, ask questions and help each other. In sum, they not only used some of the interactive strategies, but even tried to reshape the teacher-centred methods and teach for more than the test, more than fact and more than grammar (Bacchus, 1996).

Although methods might be important, the cases here support Goodson and Hargreaves' (1996) notion that methods alone do not solve teaching and learning problems. In other words, teaching should never be equated with methodologies. Instead, they saw caring, attitudes, and relations as keys to whether a method could work or not. Indeed, these cases suggest that not only more than knowledge of techniques and skills, but also even more than knowledge of the subject matter, teaching involves relationships, service, care, commitment, responsibility and motivation (Cummins, 1996; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Noddings, 1992). Teaching means duty and service to the children, the community, a spiritual guide and the country. It requires not just mastering a schema and following a prescribed curriculum; it requires investing their health, energy, and passion.

Similarly, for these teachers, the notion of education went beyond the classroom doors and school walls and beyond working only with the children. The classroom, for these teachers in a relatively homogeneous rural community, included the whole village; teaching, in turn, included teaching both the young and adults. The challenge of this wider notion of teaching has made the teachers to undergo the tension of consistency between their behaviour, talk and relationships across all these contexts. While Giroux (1988) and Smyth (1998) call for regarding teachers as intellectuals, and while Cochran-Smith (1998) suggests that teachers should be teachers for social change, the teachers in this study seem to be naturally situated within both the intellectual and leadership positions.

In sum, the present study confirms Farrell's (1994) argument that teachers in poor countries can be so creative, caring, committed and devoted that many educators in well-developed conditions might envy them. Interestingly, this idea was also supported by a senior officer at the Tajikistan's Ministry of Education (see page 236, Chapter 6).

The above discussion of these teachers' knowledge also supports Cole and Knowles (2000) contention that to talk about what kind of knowledge these teachers need to possess might in fact be limiting their scope and perspective. This study implies that knowledge does not mean
just accumulating information. For example, the teachers’ suggestions about the value of religious knowledge do not represent a simple addition to their knowledge of subject matters. Rather, they suggest getting into another epistemology, another way of knowing the reality and perspectives that the teachers had been denied before. Nigin’s suggestion about access to computers for getting different interpretations clearly relates to knowing her subject matter more and from multiple perspectives. Sino’s suggestion about the promotion of multicultural education and his involvement in teaching ethics and knowledge responds to the diverse realities that have always existed in Murghab but have hitherto been ignored by an education system that continues to control, unify, assimilate, homogenise and standardise (Cummins, 1996). The ability to take on various perspectives of the world and navigate between them was the necessity of the proper functioning in the post-Soviet world.

Given that no knowledge is neutral (Donmoyer, 1996), the study suggests that teachers need to not only develop philosophical and political perspectives; but also to develop a meta-analytical perspective. The teachers could manage teaching as a non-political act if they could develop a higher level of thinking and a meta-perspective which allowed them to critically view the various forces’ ethics and interests that historically existed and were also imported into new Badakhshan. Teaching in this case involves knowing more from more than one single perspective. It has become fundamentally a perspective-taking and perspective-assessing endeavour. Teaching in the post-Soviet era of supercomplexity, pluralism and diffusion requires an expanded paradigm, built on considering and synthesising various frameworks, rather than shifting from a single previous one to another single new one (Donmoyer, 2000, forthcoming).

Similarly, the participants’ call for developing a positive knowledge about their place, that is the participants’ reconceptualisation of their mountains and rural physical geography is a call for what Sher (1991) suggested a demystification of the rural stereotypes. This requires the development of an environmental intelligence, namely the ability to see the surrounding environment as a resource (Dewey, 1900, 1938), look at it with a critical and pedagogical eye (Gudmindsottir, 1995; Wilson et al., 1987), and make it a part of meaningful instruction (Cummins, 1996; Newmann & Welhage, 1993).

In sum, this study builds on Fullan’s (1994), argument that teachers have to and need to further develop all kinds of knowledge (that they already possess to some extent): (a) knowledge of how to deal with the exigencies of classroom life (including pedagogies and new approaches to assessment); (b) knowledge of working with and relating to each other, the students and the
parents; (c) knowledge of the local cultures and religions; (d) knowledge of more than one subject; (e) knowledge of the physical and social environment; (f) knowledge of educational and socio-political change; and (g) knowledge about emotions and affects. Teachers also need to explore, learn and incorporate the knowledge from the various learning communities. They also need moral and ethical knowledge to understand the implications of their work. The teachers in this study use all these forms of knowledge for the broader reconceptualization of their classrooms and profession. All this knowledge crucially links their classrooms to the broader economic, political and ideological forces and to the rural, mountainous environment (Goodson & Cole, 1994; Fullan, 1994).

**Teachers' Practices and their Biographies**

This study strongly supports the findings in the literature that the teachers' current practices and their future visions are deeply connected to their biographies, consistent with the life history approach (Butt et al., 1992; Casey, 1993; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Diamond & Mullen, 2000; Goodson, 1992, 1996; Goodson & Cole, 1994; Grumet, 1988; Fuller & Kapasaka, 1991; Knowles, 1994; Middleton, 1999; Osler, 1997; Schulz, 1994).

The teachers' biographies told about their evolution towards a higher level of the consciousness, towards becoming the teachers and persons they wanted to become. Their biographies told us about the roots of their visions, methodologies and relationships. They informed about what methods teachers possessed, used, deplored and hid. Their biographies opened a window to an understanding of the continuities in their practices and connected these to the broader continuities and changes in Tajik education and society.

Their childhood educational experiences, for example, revealed the hard working and living conditions, their family’s deep motivations to improve their lives and their hopes for education as a tool in this improvement. Nigin’s and Sino’s schooling experiences shed light on the enduring influence of their great teachers on Nigin and Sino, their choice of profession, their selection of subjects, their relations with the students, and their strategies for teaching. Their university experiences illustrated the nature of interethnic relations in Tajikistan, and how they formed conscious identities as teachers and members of ethnic minorities. These experiences also reveal the character of teaching and learning practices in undergraduate and pre-service education in Tajikistan. Their high motivations to excel, to work hard, to search for knowledge, to be good teachers and human beings, to help others, to care for the students and the
community, have been the enduring lines of Sino and Nigin's life. Their years of teaching have let them see changes and stability, reforms and failures; this enabled them to observe critically the differences in the changing policies and structures and to use what they know to interpret the new ideas (Sergiovanni, 1998).

The years of Perestroika and afterwards have accompanied the most dramatic experiences, where the teachers underwent radical transformations and re-orientations. Their lives are rich, full of complex, contradictory messages of gains and losses. These are lives worth sharing. Butt et al. summed up such life learning:

Teachers' knowledge then is grounded in, and is shaped by the stream of experiences that arise out of person-context interactions and existential responses to those experiences. This knowledge and pre-disposition to act in certain ways in the present moment is grounded as much, if not more so, in life history, than just current contexts and action; it is autobiographic in character (Butt et al., 1992, p. 68).

We have seen how the collectivist principles of the past affected the teachers' societal visions and how these principles led the teachers to reject the individualistic and consumerist values advanced by the market economy. Their minority discriminatory experiences made them prepare their students for possible mistreatment by non-Pamirians and non-Ismailis. Their sense of community pride (nomus) helped them to withstand hardships and become what they are now (Diamond, 1992; Diamond & Mullen, 2000).

Understanding the teachers' practices meant perceiving not only who they are now, but also who they were and how they became who they are: people are not static. Understanding their classrooms meant looking at the wrinkles of their faces and the scratches on their hands, the tears in their eyes, and the colour of their faces.451 Thus, in addition to the external realities, understanding classroom and teaching practices required an exhilarating journey into worlds of the minds, hearts, emotions and souls of the teachers.

The teachers' identities, for example, emerged, developed and changed according to changing expectations and roles within the changing times and contexts. In all cases, the teachers' attempts to construct themselves met with often unfavourable, repressive and silencing forces. Personal evolution became a process of negotiation, but an asymmetrical one: There was more acceptance, adjustment to and internalisation of imposed identities and roles than autonomous choice of roles (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Cummins, 1996; Woods, 1990). Sino

451 Locally, the colour of one's face is believed to reflect one's emotional, physical and material state. For example, yellow and dark colours usually signify distress, poverty, hardships and sickness. Rosy and red colours, on the other hand, mean prosperity, and well-being.
and Nigin tried to build on a positive and constructive approach and be active. This improved their status and reputation. Sino said: "Unlike many, who look to external help, I believe I have to do things with my own mind and hands." Nigin added: "Unlike Soviet times, now we have to raise our status; she connected the negotiation of her identity to the collective school campaign. Generally, the biographical aspect of the teachers' practices showed the process of:

coming to terms with the imperatives in the social structure...From the collections of life histories, we discern what is general within a range of individual studies; links are thereby made with macro theories but from a base that is clearly grounded within personal biography (Goodson, 1980, p. 74).

The contextual influences embedded in the teachers' life journeys also revealed various reasons, sources and aspects of their practices. They shed light on the teachers' intentions, choice of subjects, roles, approaches, resources and relations in their classrooms, homes, schools and community. The teachers' practices tell about the kind of choices available to them, their students and the larger community. Not only the complex realities of their classroom (Lortie, 1975) but also the pressures of the larger society and system (Apple, 1991 in Liston & Zeichner, 1991) appear to have made the teachers become conservative, abandon their creative ideas, become externally-oriented, fearful of inspectors, worry about curriculum coverage, rely on external solutions, disbelieve in themselves and become executors. The reasons lie not only in the lack of resources, but also in the general devaluation of education and knowledge and the teachers' powerlessness in the face of the spread of guns, drugs, and corruption. The teachers' life stories also provided serious messages about the kind of society Tajikistan was, is and where it may be heading up. The teachers' life served as a window to the life of the community, province and country: the ways things are made unacceptable, available and possible.

At least two important implications of understanding teachers' biography come from this study. First, if one wants to know and change teachers and their ways of teaching, one must understand teachers' biographies and the continuities and changes in their practices. Second, to change the teachers' practices, one must, together with teachers, critically engage with their own life histories and connect these lives to the histories of the context. Reformers need to connect the personal change to historical and societal change. Reformers and teachers together need to realise that people are born into history and historically established norms, which are nevertheless mutable. Such critical engagement should help the teachers examine the sources of their practices, and the implications of their school, home, and wider societal experiences for their present teaching.
Influence of Teachers' Homes

The study confirmed that the teachers do not separate their work from their homes. The two are deeply connected (Altenbaugh, 1992; Corr & Jamieson, 1990; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Fuller & Kapasaka, 1991; Nelson, 1992; Weiler, 1988). My data demonstrate that teaching helped the teachers to become better parents of their own children, work with them at home, model for them, and treat them with consistency and integrity. As a result, the teachers' children were amongst those who did best in the schools. Their children also helped them to refine their social and educational goals, play more active roles against harmful social activities, relate to the students and conceptualise the students as partners in the creation of a better image for themselves. They enjoyed the respect of their students and were there for them, as much as for their own children (Noddings, 1992). In fact, as parents, members of extended families and members of the community, the teachers might count among their students their own children, or their relatives', or their neighbours'. The teachers merged being a parent, a relative, a counsellor, and a community member with being a teacher. All these roles enhanced the teachers' status, while at the same time blurring the boundaries between classroom and community; the teachers saw the community almost as an extended classroom.

The participants sometimes put teaching, school and often their students higher than their own children and their homes. They might ignore their health and home economic problems in favour of teaching and even their larger extended educational roles in the community. On the other hand, these multiple hats and roles required different, often contradictory approaches. A teacher, who puts scientific explanations above religious ones, is not the same as a community member, who conforms to the status quo, attends religious ceremonies and serves traditional values. In other words, the different roles in the different contexts not only require different approaches, identities and voices, but also convey different, often conflicting messages. All this raises the necessity of exploring the various roles of the teachers inside and out of the classroom.

Unlike in Soviet times, teaching was not making their lives easier. In rural communities, homes are never for rest and recreation. They are another major source and object of worry. Given the low salaries and increasing demands, teaching nowadays was more a burden than something they enjoyed. Because they were caring and responsible teachers, teaching created for them deep moral, emotional, physical and professional tensions. Teaching drained their energy, created tensions with their spouses, and even children, and affected their health and mood. Their educational values and the effects of teaching on them (Waller, 1932) prevented them from
selling in the market, joining the Government or other more profitable ways of supporting their families.

The mutuality of home-school influence calls for approaching teachers as total persons, supporting them in their life in the full sense. Changing teachers’ practices, while ignoring the other aspects of their practices is an unethical approach; it is almost an exploitation of their vulnerabilities, in this case, their high motivation, devotion and commitment. Changing teachers requires changing lives (Louden, 1991).

**Teachers and the Larger Societal Forces**

Right from the formation of the research question, the study has aimed at connecting the dynamics of teaching (stories of practice) with dynamics of the context (history of the context) (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). This approach proved most valuable for exploring the complex nature of the teachers’ knowledge, social values, attitudes and skills (Goodson, 1991). The cases revealed that teachers are not transcendental human beings; not everything depends on teachers (Britzman, 1991). Teachers’ life and work are socially constructed and powerfully influenced by the choices and constraints of the larger society (Cummins, 1996).

The teachers’ voices and classroom practices linked us both to the fundamental qualities of human experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994), and to the crucial questions of the rural and mountainous communities of the Tajik society. These include questions of struggle, pains, purpose of life, justice, equity, help and care for self, students and community, opportunity for one’s growth, freedom of expression and self-actualisation, development of one’s identity and uniqueness, hope and authority. The teachers’ personal losses and gains, tensions and dilemmas resonated with those of the large country. Understanding the teachers’ classroom practices and understanding the teachers essentially became a window to a socio-historical understanding of Badakhshan and Tajikistan. This opened a window onto the history of the context (Goodson, 1998), the history of the education in the country, and the contradictions not only of capitalist society (Hargreaves, 1978, 1998), but also of self-named socialist (Djalili et al., 1998; Fireman, 1991; Zajda, 1980) and Muslim societies (Akiner, 1986; Arkoun, 1994; Djalili et al., 1998; Roy, 2000). In revealing these issues, the study also revealed that the teachers’ words about injustices made them and myself vulnerable, politically, professionally and emotionally (Behar, 1996; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Gass, 1994).

Sino and Nigin’s cases have clearly revealed that their classrooms and schools were not isolated from outside forces (Gur’ianova, 2000; Liston & Zeichner, 1991). In the rural, poor, and
homogenous contexts, confining a qualitative study of teachers to the classroom is essentially impossible. In providing the smallest explanation of an event, or a justification for an action, or a critical incident, the teachers continually referred to the realities of the village and to the histories of the province and country. In addition to their preferences, the teachers always considered many other factors. They linked the classroom events and actions to the various cultures that have come together in the area (e.g., Tajik, Pamirian, Kyrgyz and Russian). They connected their practices to the socio-political, cultural and environmental realities outside their classrooms (Avalos, 1985; Cummins, 1996). These realities included their previous education, the laws, the sayings of the ethical authorities, the culture and structures of the community, the parents, the educational system, and the national interests.

The economic poverty was reflected in the broken doors, bleak boards, freezing cold, scratching chalkses, outdated and torn-apart textbooks, notebooks, and few, worn-out pens and pencils. The students and teachers had hungry, pale faces, poor clothing, coughs and weakening health. The schools were cold, often unheated for lack of fuel. The social problems, such as corruption, guns, drugs, and unemployment, rendered the teachers’ societal and educational visions utopian, devalued their goals, downplayed their status, turned them into irritating preachers, reduced their motivation to work hard, and left their efforts useless (Heynemann, 1998; Hope & Chikulo, 1998; Keshavjee, 1998; Simis, 1982; The World Bank, 1997).

The pressures of preparing students for exams without textbooks also contributed to intensifying the work of the teachers and making their teaching transmissional. The discrepancy between the community’s language and the language of instruction in the classrooms and school broke what Dewey (1938) called “continuity of experience.” It hindered active participation by the students, resulting in more teacher talk and lecturing. In addition, the curriculum, sent from above and monitored by the exams and inspectors, added to the irrelevance of the schools and the teachers efforts (Fuller & Clarke, 1994; Prophet & Rowell, 1993; Tabulawa, 1995, 1998).

In sum, this study revealed that in small rural communities the classrooms clearly reflect the society. Classrooms are a microcosms with all their society’s dynamics and tensions, as Gur’ianova argued:

the two function together in a single temporal space. Because it is an organic part of the whole, the rural school reflects all the contradictions, problems and values intrinsic to the whole. Thus a healthy society means a healthy school and an ailing society means an ailing school (2000, p. 17).
The cases of Sino and Nigin support the argument made by several authors (c.f., Johnson, 2001; Djalili et al., 1998; Keshavjee, 1998; Niyozov, 1996, Rust, 2000; Tayler, 2001) that so far the more things changed, they not only remained the same, but even became worse for the majority, including primarily the teachers (see Chapter 4). Like a hundred years ago, Badakhshan remained vulnerable to social and natural threats. Even worse, people have been returned to natural environment after having forgotten about it, having become unaccustomed to it and having been deskillled to cope with it. The collapse of the Soviet system removed the unsustainable food, energy and medical system it had built up (Keshavjee, 1998). The old diseases, such as typhoid, scabies, diarrhoea, and tuberculosis, have returned and are augmented by new ones. Drugs and unemployment have come back with more dangerous consequences. Poverty became as prevalent as in neighbouring Afghanistan, if not worse. MBAP has ended up once more dependent on the mercy of external aid. The highly-educated people of MBAP have ended up largely unemployed and desperately poor... as before.

Socially, the pre-Soviet ethnic and religious hatreds seem to have returned with more dangerous implications. Rule by Party never fully replaced rule by clans and ethnicities; it either appropriated them to serve the Soviet system or suppressed one by promoting other (Akiner, 1986; Djalili et al., 1998, Sagdeev & Eisenhower, 1995). There remains little guarantee that the ethnic and religious minorities will still have their voices heard. As ever before, talk about democracy and freedom remains empty phrases. As before, the fate of the population is decided by warriors, Mafia, guerrillas and fanatics (Ignatieff, 1993; Tayler, 2001).

All these problems lead one to wonder how much learner-centred instruction teachers can possibly provide in such an authoritarian and hierarchical society. The teachers in the study, as many of the educators at even higher level, believed in critical thinking and creativity, but tried to promote them in a society that always operated with single frameworks for maintaining the status quo. In such a cultural and social context one might argue that the teachers' voices remain unheard, and their efforts make no difference. Many researchers have shown how the contextual realities inhibit teachers' actions and channel them into doing things only in certain ways and to certain benefits (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Bordeau & Passeron, 1977; Guthrie, 1990; McLaren, 1989; Tabulawa, 1998).

This study revealed several insights in this regard. First, while context is fundamental to understanding teaching, it also added to the spreading revelation (cf. Britzman, 1991; Geerts, 1973; Nieto, 1998) that cultures and systems are dynamic, evolving, contradictory and
contextual. Even the apparently monolithic Soviet educational system regime was riddled with contradictions and countervailing forces (Tabachnik et al., 1981).

Second, there are always forces within any culture that promote change and improvement and oppose oppression. In MBAP, such forces were political, religious and literary authorities: the Imam, the great poets, Marx, Lenin, the Tajikistan Law of Education and the Constitution often served as forces that supported teachers’ transformative worldviews and aspirations. In addition, there have been change-oriented heads, supportive inspectors, dedicated officers at the boards and ministry, and sincere communists and democrats even inside the systems. The enduring value of education and the students’ and teachers’ high motivation suggest a strong influence from significant positive forces in the context.

Third, the explanations that portray culture and structure as fixed fail to notice that structure and culture have what Giddens (1984) called a “dual nature”; as social constructs, they could serve perpetuation of the status quo or transformation and improvement. Both Sino and Nigin, in small ways, used the current ideological pluralism and uncertainty to promote their valued “humanistic internationalist ideology.” They used the weakened system’s control, their low salaries, the remoteness of their location, and the absence of inspectors to teach the way they wanted. They tried to augment the curriculum’s demands with bringing in the children’s’ experiences, cultures and languages, to caution the children and make them aware of selfish politicians, and to treat their students as human beings. They used the lack of textbooks to engage the students’ experiences, assign them homework that was of interest to them and bring in the realities of life. They used their low salaries to justify promoting what they valued. They went on strike to get the necessary attention from policy-makers and the community to their life and educational situations.

In addition, my study showed that culture could not be monolithically determined or manipulated. Attempts to homogenise and control teachers’ thinking and actions proved impossible. Even in Soviet times, under the tight surveillance of the Party, state and KGB, the teachers tried to convey what they wanted, had doubts about the official stories and adapted the curriculum in favour of their students’ interests. They taught not only for tests, but also for children’s broader development. They did not just transmit, but warned and criticised. They covered the textbooks but also engaged the children’s experience. In other words, the teachers, though not having full autonomy to determine the official curriculum, still chose to
accommodate, resist, and create alternatives to it (Ginsburg, 1991; Helsby, 1999). They have had a say in the making of curriculum (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Liston & Zeichner, 1991).

The discussions on the teacher-context relations call for the followings: Unless the number of favourable contextual and structural forces for change prevail, teachers’ and reformers efforts a change will be strongly limited. A major force in this equation is the teachers’ own intellectual abilities; professionally empowered teachers can reshape the contextual forces to serve their students, community and society.

**Subject Matter in Teachers’ Life and Work**

The cases revealed that subject matter is not just an aspect of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986; Wilson et al., 1987) confined to the classroom and considered as sets of generalisations, principles and even objective facts. My study has shown that subject matter has deep effects on the personal and professional dimensions of teachers’ lives. First, it defines the teachers’ identity and status in the school and the community. Due to Biology, Izzat became one of the best farmers in the district. Nigin’s history gave a reason for her son get into the History department at the University without cherez (nepotism). Sino could occasionally use Russian to defend his Pamirian community and its spiritual authority (for example his article published in a newspaper in Kyrgyzstan). Further, the participants were addressed as teachers and teachers of their subjects more than by name as citizens of their villages.

Their subject matters created the toughest emotional and epistemological crises for the teachers; the devaluation of their subject matters resulted in identity crisis. For Sino and Nigin, this meant an almost radical reincarnation in a lower status.

Subject matters are not only subjective interpretations of reality but also clearly ideological interpretations of it. Subject matter challenged whether knowledge, generalisations, principles and facts could be objective and codifiable (Donmoyer, 1996; Sockett, 1987). In these teachers’ subjects, many universal facts, concepts and principles turned out to be ideological and political “truths.” Izzat’s experience with biology, for example, showed that this ideological quality occurred not only in humanities, but also in so called “natural” subjects.

The study also illustrated the limitations of scholarship in totalitarian and authoritarian systems, which is reflected in dogmatism, ideological imposition, censorship, and methodological rigidity (Aziz, 1993; Ekloff, 1993; Glowka, 1992; Karlsson, 1993; Kizilbash, 1986; Lisovskaya & Karpov, 1999; Mehlinger, 1993; Tabachnik et al., 1981).
The teachers' subject matters also served as primary indicators of the relevance of the educational system to the realities of the mountain society. In so doing, they revealed the hidden agendas behind teaching History and Russian. Although times changed, neither the local languages nor the local culture and nature ever became real parts of the school curriculum.

The subject matters strongly effected the socialisation of the teachers into both, an understanding of reality and into presenting the "truths" about this reality to their students and community. Particularly, this process led to their indoctrinary presentation of new topics, corrective handling of the students' responses, and preferential and regurgitation-based assessment of the students.

Nigin's comments about the changes in History also revealed that very little is learnt from the past lessons of ideological dogmatism in historical scholarship, education policy and textbook production. The Soviet "lies" have been replaced with new "truths", which differ in scope and details, but not much in nature and purpose. Indoctrination, closed-mindedness, dogmatism, and aggressive nationalism appear to continue in the whole region, and will have deep implications for the security and development of the majority of the people of Central Asia. The study suggests that the uncritical usage of the old methods for new times is absolutely harmful if the Central Asian states wish to enter the new millennium as a peaceful, prosperous and united countries.

Subject matter, because it embodied the curriculum, also provided important insights into the question of relevance. Given that the textbooks and the curriculum do not reflect local languages, cultures and environment, one can assume that the textbooks are of little relevance as learning and teaching resources. Further, given that the parents and the teachers do not see the inclusion of their own languages and cultures as of use, the question of relevance, in Tajikistan as in other developing countries, becomes more complex than a simple concern about the students' cultural background (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995). My findings imply that the curriculum should be developed in such a way that it brings together the local rural realities with the students' and their parents' higher aspirations (Bacchus, 1983; Cummins, 1996; Vulliamy & Carrier, 1985).

Conclusions 2: Continuities

This section focuses on a number of continuities that I identified through analysing the stories of teachers' classroom practices and histories of these practices' contexts. An analysis of these continuities in turn sheds bright light on the teachers' classroom practices. Continuity is
important because any change (internally or externally-initiated) will have to deal with the continuing practices, values, attitudes, norms and structures on the ground (Cuban, 1988; Hargreaves, 1994).

Continuities are particularly important for knowing why teachers tend to absorb changes in terms of their existing values, beliefs and practices (Manheim, 1940, cited in Sergiovanni, 1998). Understanding the continuities also helps realise how certain changes have become essential norms of a society and education system and then have promoted or prevented new changes (Louden, 1991; Tabulawa, 1997, 1998). By comparing across time, teachers try to figure out the real differences and similarities between their practices and new changes; then they decide whether to accept changes, modify them or reject them (Posner et al., 1982. Thiessen & Kilcher, 1991).

Knowledge of continuity provides us with important evidence of what teachers enduringly value and what concerns they have as they move from what they practice usually to adopting or adapting innovations (Anderson, 1997). The history of these continuities provides insights into how change could happen in reality and why, despite so many apparent changes, many things have almost remained the same (Cuban, 1972; Sarason, 1972; Tabulawa, 1997). Through a historical inquiry into the educational and societal structures of Botswana, Tabulawa (1997) found the deeper roots of the persistent transmission or “banking” methods of instruction in Botswana classrooms. Like the present study, Tabulawa’s research identified structural, cultural, institutional and global factors that make teachers become transmissional (see also Guthrie, 1990). Finally, a close look at continuities and changes discloses the politics of the rhetoric versus reality in education and society (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996).

Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 have illustrated multiple continuities and changes in the contexts and in the teachers’ worldviews, relations, practices and biographical journeys. In this section, I will provide a deeper analysis of the continuities and point out their implications for understanding the teachers’ practices on a broader and more general level. Below I shall discuss each of them under a separate subsection.

**Continuity of Commitment to Caring and Service**

One of the major continuities that emerged from the last three chapters is the teachers’ enduring desire to see the children and enjoy feeling useful for them. Regardless of the changed times and conditions, Sino and Nigin continue to see teaching as a duty and moral responsibility. This principle shows itself in the teachers’ care for their students, the school, the community and
the country. The teachers readily served and sacrificed for the good of all these. This broader notion of teaching has surpassed the years of transformation; it reflects the teachers' egalitarian, humanistic values, their commitment to the children's holistic development, their integration of children's social and academic development and their promotion of altruism, cooperation, respect and sharing. Apparently, these values have become important features of the teachers' identity. Teaching affects teachers not only negatively (Lortie, 1875; Waller, 1932) but also positively.

As the teachers continued in their sense of duty, they revealed the continuity of their humanistic values as norms of the local culture. These values have served as reasons for the teachers to resist competition, gathering of wealth, selfishness and individualism. The teachers rejected drugs and guns, though they saw many people around them become rich by using these.

They continued accountable and principled in a time of chaos. They preferred being poor and unpolluted, despite noticing that their poverty has made them "dervishes of the 20th century", and has adversely affected their prestige among their community and their students. They continue serving and helping everyone, with little appreciation and acknowledgement. They continue to worry about the community and society in a time when many people focus on their personal interests. They continue sacrificing in a time when it is fashionable to grab and run. They continue to promote internationalism in a time of the upsurge of ethnic nationalism (Ignatieff, 1993). They continued to serve Lenin and Marx when many people misused their ideas and used them to serve their personal and colonial interests. They continue serving the state and community when there is little reciprocity. They serve and protect the Imam while noticing that some people apparently misuse his institutions and the teachers' devotion to and belief in him. They continue to believe in education when even their students seem to have lost trust in it.

They dream of and work for a stable, developed, peaceful, educated, and democratic Tajikistan in a time when they see the country's riches pillaged, and its people increasingly divided across ethnic, religious, gender and class lines. They endorse justice and hard work in a time when corruption is taking over society. They continue to believe in the centrality of teachers when the community believes that they are the time-passers at best. They continue to believe that they have to be moral guardians and intellectuals of the rural community, when people are less and less prone to listen to them. They continue to believe in truth and consensus, while many around them use "truth" as a shield to cover cynicism and hypocrisy.
Continuity of Ethical Authority

Though its nature has shifted from secular, atheist Marxism-Leninism to the spiritual and religious Islam (in this case Ismaili), the concept of an ethical authority as a major source of reference has remained intact in MBAP. In fact none of these two authorities have disappeared. The concept of the Imam existed in the minds of the teachers and the community all the time. Yet during the Soviet times, Marx and Lenin were promoted officially. In post-Soviet times the prophet Mohammad and the Imam came to the forefront; Lenin and Marx, however, did not disappear. The teachers, unlike the politicians, and perhaps philosophers, managed to reconcile these seemingly opposed authorities in their practices so as to promote their own worldviews in the various contexts of their life and work.

The cases have revealed that, to the teachers, what the Aga Khan said about teachers, education and human relations resembled what Marx and Lenin said on the same subjects. They noticed that the codes of ideal behaviour of a good Muslim resemble those of a good Communist. They saw the balance of the ethics and knowledge they try to achieve now as similar to the balance of the social and academic aspects of education in Soviet times. The continuity of ethical authority (in this case, mainly about Lenin and socialist theory in the Soviet times and the Aga Khan and Ismaili Islam in post-Soviet) provided a crucial foundation for the teachers’ promoting the value of education, their status and the rightness of their cause. The continuity of the ethical authority enabled the teachers to back up their extended roles in the community by fighting against drugs, guns, corruption and other harmful activities and by promoting justice, cooperation, humanity, tolerance and care. This authority was also valuable to balance against increasing moral relativism and value crisis related to post-Soviet uncertainties, pluralism of thought and economic activities and to counteract the selfish materialist and consumerist attitudes in post-Soviet confused times. In addition, the concept of authority provided the teachers with moral ground to criticise those in the positions of power for their perceived misuse of the authorities’ ideas and institutions.

The participants’ discussions about authority provide several important messages. First, through connecting spiritual with secular authority, tradition with change, the essential with the contextual, intellect with faith, and Western with Eastern, the teachers’ religious interpretation has come to play a powerful, constructive, encouraging and transformative role in their lives. It provides hope and meaning to their life and work, and to their enthusiasm and motivation to change and improve (cf. Giroux, 1988). The teachers’ and others’ voices from this study reflect a
love, respect, and devotion to the Aga Khan that have produced a readiness to sacrifice and endure, which, until now, has been one of the most fundamental preconditions to the current Government's, AKDN's and other NGO's successes in peace and development in Badakhshan and Tajikistan.

Second, the teachers, however, warn that theories are hard to apply. The question is not in whether people will or will not serve and employ the concept of religious or secular authority. The question, as Giroux (1992) put it, is to what end and by whom is an authority employed and whose interests are served in reality and in practice. Thus the teachers warn that not everyone has an ethical approach to the ethical authority (in this case Marx and Lenin and Socialist theory in Soviet times and the Aga Khan, Nasir Khusraw and other authorities in post-Soviet). The teachers and, by extension, the population at large suggest that there might be people in the positions of power and privilege who, in fact, promote their personal and political agenda by manipulating the people's faith, love and devotion to the Imam, their patriotism and loyalty to the ideals inscribed in the country's constitution and educational laws; that some people may, consciously or unconsciously, betray the ideals of justice, service, caring, equity, and compassion espoused by the grand ethical authorities and emancipatory theories.

Together with the teachers, one worries whether malfeasance here will dissipate another hope and vision, not only among the teachers, but among the community in general. Teachers and the population at large have deepest hopes in the ethical authorities and their institutions. The betrayal of such hope and aspirations by those in the official structures, including NGOs, will make double standards, hypocrisy and cynicism the rules and norms of the society. Although the teachers' fears may not be fully and factually truthful, they are nevertheless honest. For, as long as people perceive reality subjectively, what they believe in will remain true for them.

Continuity of the Irrelevance of Education

Both Sino and Nigin suggested that the curriculum continued to be of little relevance to the realities of mountainous Badakhshan. Although the content of History has moved from Soviet and Russian to Tajik and Persian, the history of Badakhshan, its culture, language, mountains and people continue largely left out of the picture. History continues to concentrate on the past and past relations with other states (sometimes ambiguous); it excludes the current problems of Badakhshan—such as drugs, diseases, ethnic rivalry and diversity, unemployment and religious conflicts—from discussion as ever before. History has continued to be about learning names, facts and events, rather than about discussing life issues. In addition, there is
also little evidence that History has moved from indoctrination to an unconfined inquiry. Nigin suggested that she would like to discuss how the mountains affect the people’s lives and how have these people come to inhabit in such harsh living conditions. She would like to explore and discuss the local and national ethnic diversity. She would discuss what is wrong with Badakhshan and Tajikistan that they continue being at the mercy of external aid. She would like to discuss how could peace and consensus be achieved. She would like to talk more about the politicians and corruption. She would like to use Shugnani and let the students speak it when necessary so as more students learn and speak more in her class.

The Language curriculum has shared a similar fate. The content of Russian textbooks has remained about old concepts that are often alien, not only to Badakhshan, but even to the larger Tajikistan. Further, no language training has become a tool by which the local culture can express itself to become part of the larger Tajik or global culture. Sino would like both Russian and English to serve as a bridge where local, national and global cultures interact on an equal basis (Freire, 1983). Izzat suggested similar insights about the irrelevance of the current courses in Biology to the local context. Biology, in his view, should be the prime subject in the rural context and deal with that context, because it enables people to find food and keep healthy; its uses are immediate and basic to all other activities, academic or not.

The participants’ practices also revealed that curricular relevance deeply depends on the teachers’ intellectual abilities and commitment to care and promote their transformative worldviews. Sino and Nigin illustrated many ways by which they tried to make curriculum relevant: they brought into the classrooms their students’ experiences, linked the textbooks with the local realities, discussed issues, and occasionally used the local languages. Yet, the participants see this process of curriculum making as taking personal and political risks or professional burden. As in Soviet times, their job is still about covering the textbooks and teaching for the tests. Nigin, Sino and their colleagues would make the curriculum relevant, if they were allocated time to do it, conditions to live, learn and create, and support from the inspectors. They would make the curriculum relevant if they knew that letting the students speak their mother tongues and talk about Badakhshan would not cause students to fail during the exams. Currently, evidential success in Badakhshan does not involve relevance in the sense of teaching about the mountains, but relevance in teaching how to leave the mountains. It deals not with experiences, but with covering the textbooks and teaching for the exams. It emphasises
memorising, mastering other languages, behaving differently and choosing a fashionable stream rather than self-actualisation (Bacchus, 1983; Fuller & Clarke, 1994).

The roots of this irrelevance go back to the Soviet system and education, which talked about empowerment but manufactured an unsustainable, mythical reality. The Soviet system ignored questions of local relevance in the name of moving people out of Badakhshan and creating pan-Soviet citizens (Muckle, 1990; Webber, 2000). It created structures that dismissed the enduring natural severity. In the Soviet times, the mountains mattered little, perhaps only during earthquakes and snowslides. People truly believed that the mountain environment could be subdued through the power of science and technology.

Partly due to the enduring challenges of survival, and partly due to Soviet education’s inattention to the local nature and culture, the teachers have developed a negative attitude to their mountainous contexts and cultures. They see the mountains as hell, inhibiting, diminishing and restricting, under-civilised, socially backward and less advanced than the rural and urban areas (Becker, 1996; Stern, 1992). They associate mountains with earthquakes, snowslides, cold, narrowness, obstacles, isolation, dead ends, hopelessness, and lack of confidence. As a result, the local people rarely see growth and development as achievable in the mountains. For teachers, to have a good life in the mountains means to leave them. Stakeholders see the mountain environment as one of the major reasons for the decline in the teachers’ professional quality and in their classroom practices. Similarly, the school system phased out local culture and languages. Linguistic and cultural differences became problems to be avoided rather than richness to learn from. Hitherto, proposed solutions to the problems in Badakhshan all involved bringing in outside models.

The teachers, however, suggest developing new, indigenous models through a dialogue between the local and external wisdom (Bacchus, 1983; Freire, 1970, 1983). They suggest that connecting classroom to community is a powerful concept that will work so naturally for the villages in MBAP. In fact, the question is how could people “become aware” and conceptualise the naturalness of this necessity. This study suggests that connecting the classroom and community plays a fundamental role in understanding one’s self and one’s community and the community’s contribution to the larger society (Cummins, 1996). It also contributes to the appreciation and development of the local nature and culture, including the resolution of social issues and problems, which continue being excluded.
This connection is crucial for making curriculum and instruction relevant and meaningful to the students. To make this connection requires a basic reconceptualization of the nature of knowledge and the purposes of education. In addition to teacher development, this requires a serious commitment of education policy in Tajikistan to the preservation, maintenance and development of the local culture and ecology.

**Continuity of Child-Centred Rhetoric and Teacher-Centred Practices**

Much policy rhetoric in MBAP and Tajikistan has stressed the supposed move to child-centred pedagogy, active learning, creativity and critical thinking since the Soviet times (Inoyatova, 1996; Kruder, 1996; World Bank, 1999; personal communications at the Ministry of Education and Department of Education of MBAP between April-December 1999). In reality, however, teacher-centred instruction has continued as the major aspect of the teachers' pedagogy. The cross-case analysis revealed biographical, pedagogical, cultural, environmental and systemic continuities that had contributed to the persistence of teacher-centred pedagogy. Nigin and Sino's occasional deviance from transmission arise partly from the recent weakening of state control, rhetorical encouragement, their own belief in the necessity of variety for improving the teaching and learning process, and their abilities to reshape the existing structures to serve their worldviews.

Teacher centeredness and transmission are sustained ideologically. The teachers, who are workers of the state, are to implement its policy, which requires that they, despite the rhetoric of deideologisation (Ekloff, 1993), should promote the new ideology of the nation state. The criticism that Nigin makes is still essentially forbidden; the alternative interpretations that Sino makes are also not encouraged. As in Soviet times, any criticism must focus on the outside and past, not inward and present. Teachers should emphasise uncritical patriotism and encourage and model sacrifice for the country, not discuss the current issues and current system. They are still to preach ideological correctness and singular interpretation.

Transmission is sustained organisationally. Curricula, textbooks and examinations are all centralised. Hierarchy persists; inspectors are watchful. Classrooms continue to be front-oriented and row based; mixed lesson frameworks predominates and standardised lesson planing persists. The belief that Soviet educational system was excellent and therefore, needed not be altered persists as the teachers compare the new systems with the Soviet ones (Zaugmenov, 1993).

Transmission is sustained culturally. Adults cannot be wrong, and should be listened to. Students are immature, their outlook is narrow; they can and should take knowledge. True knowledge is in
books. The culture is sacred and one should not question it. There are many authors and scholars in the culture who suggest the need for total submission to teacher. Ultimately, the literal meaning of Rumi’s and the war veteran’s sayings support transmission and teacher-centred pedagogy (see Chapter 6).

Transmission is also sustained linguistically. Students are not encouraged to speak in their mother tongues; they should speak only Tajik or Russian or English, which are a second, third, or fourth language for them. They are watched to speak these languages them correctly. If they cannot speak them correctly, they should keep quiet and let the teachers show them how one should speak these languages properly and expressively. Teachers appear to have no training in using immersion strategies. Lastly, given the pressures of covering the curriculum and examinations, the lack of learning materials and even the cold weather also contribute to transmission approach.

These factors are interconnected; together with classroom (see Chapters 5 and 6; also Blasé, 1985), institutional (see Chapter 7, 8 and also Cuban, 1988; Hargreaves, 1978) and geographical challenges, they make the possibility of continuance stronger than that of change. Some of these factors have in fact become norms and traditions of the society. In addition, they are not value-free, but serve the interests of certain groups. In sum, the prevalence of teacher-centred pedagogy does not reduce to a simple technical issue of imparting methodologies and techniques into the heads of the teachers; it raises political, ideological and cultural questions of power, norms, habits and interests. Unless these aspects are critically dealt with, talk about the shift to child-centred pedagogy will always remain rhetorical, and will continue to cover up practices that promote obedience, docility, cynicism, and submission.

Continuity of Top-Down and Outside-in Approaches

Discussing first and second order changes452, Cuban (1988) disclosed that for 100 years, American teachers’ classroom practices have changed little in substance. This continuity stems from the absence of what he called second order changes; that is, changes in the structures of education and society. These persisting structures strongly affect the processes of initiating, implementing and institutionalising changes (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). Cuban suggested that the neglect of structural continuities and their effects has largely resulted from research and

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452 By first order changes, Cuban (1988, p. 92-93) meant changes such as recruiting better teachers and administrators, raising salaries, allocating resources equitably, selecting smarter textbooks, adding (or deleting) courses to the curriculum, scheduling people and activities more efficiently, and introducing more effective forms of evaluation and training. By second order changes he meant introducing new goals, structures, and roles that transform familiar ways of doing things into novel solutions to persistent problems.
change programs' focus; that is how to change the teachers rather than how teachers teach and why they teach the way they do. Hargreaves (1992, 1994b), pointing out the dialectics of structure and culture in change, suggested that more enduring changes occur when teachers and change agents engage in the critical examination of their historically developed practices and structures. Current problems and successes cannot be separated from their historical roots (Goodson, 1998; Hargreaves, 1992, 1997; Louden, 1991; Tabulawa, 1997).

The cases inform us that most post-Soviet attempts at educational change in Tajikistan have remained like those of Soviet period: As before, these reforms officially promote freedom, justice, equity and empowerment, and prosperity for all. As in Soviet times, reform is expected to require a necessary "change of mentality." As before, the approaches to educational reform have mainly continued to follow the Soviet centralised model, under which all decisions/reforms are decided on in the centre and merely implemented at the local level, with teachers acting as technicians and servants of the bureaucratically downloaded policies, rather than as partners in the policy making and curriculum development.

As before, teaching is seen as something that consists only of two components: subject matters and methodology. The reform initiatives, as before, do not take into account the local contextual realities (in this case, Badakhshan's) and the local people's voices and visions about how to live and teach in their area. As a result, the local population continue to have an inferiority complex about themselves, their culture, languages and their locations (Cummins, 1996). They continue relying on outside help and solutions. They associate the collapse of the USSR with their own weaknesses and disloyalty. Schooling remains more about getting a certificate and trying to move out of MBAP; teachers continue to view themselves as receivers and transmitters of externally developed knowledge and their students as mere receivers of that knowledge.

In Tajikistan, as in many post-Soviet countries, the Soviet centralised, bureaucratic, authoritarian system of administration has remained intact (Taylor, 2001; Zaumlenov, 1993). Teachers still fear the inspectors and other official visitors, whom they think judge them according to their lesson plans and how well they follow a prescribed schema. The textbooks have to pass the scrutiny of the higher authorities in order to be accepted. Instead of listening to the voices of the teachers, and instead of improving their conditions of work of work and life, the system still threatens them with punishments and repercussions. It still sees them as civil
servants who are there to do all the jobs that the state asks them to do. As before, questioning is not encouraged; teachers still feel the lack of academic and political freedom.

Most of the personnel in the education system also were trained under the Soviet system. They continue to carry unexamined Communist baggage. Although many of the goals and procedures of Tajikistan’s education system have been revised, in fact it is often difficult for personnel to adapt fully to the new conditions. As a result, many former practices, values and systems remain, making the implementation of reforms and the implementation of the new methods of work and social relations difficult.

Professional development courses continue to exist. As in the Soviet times, they emphasise training of often decontextualised skills and methodologies. Similarly, they consist of one-shot retraining courses, arranged in the centres, and run by educators who often have little understanding of the context, history and complexity of teaching and learning. The courses are driven by propositional knowledge, which originates outside the region. In Soviet times, ideas derived from non-Badakhshan Soviet conditions were applied in the special conditions of MBAP, sometimes inappropriately. Today, ideas derived from the experiences of other places continue to be applied to MBAP. However, now the ideas from West are added to those from Russia’s experience. Many trainers lecture at teachers about child-centred pedagogies and expect them to use these pedagogies in classrooms that are row-based, with no learning materials, where the students and teachers cannot use their mother tongues or their cultural background; where the curriculum largely involves memorising words, dates, names, facts and rules; where the relevance of knowledge is dubious; where the cold inside often exceeds that outside the classrooms. As in Soviet times, the system predominantly sees teachers’ mentality as something that has to be replaced; those days, the teachers were not socialist and atheist enough; nowadays, they are not market-oriented or nationalist enough.

Dialogue with teachers, mutual exchange and critical examination of both indigenous and external ideas are still avoided. The teachers in the cases show that they possess certain knowledge of their subject matters and methods. They also suggest that teaching is more than subject matter and methodology: Teachers’ practices include their vision, goals, commitment, ethics, and relations; teachers’ practices are also deeply affected by their feelings, mood, health, and psychological and emotional concerns. More than that, the teachers suggest that their greatest challenges are systemic; they lack support, freedom, autonomy, appreciation, material infrastructure, salary and encouragement for creative work and decent life.
The attempts at achieving greater effectiveness, efficiency and quality by such means as streaming, opening fee-paying schools and the lyceum experiments appear to rest more on imitation and political fashion than on critical examination of these ideas against the existing material and technical realities or against issues of educational relevance and harmonious community and individual development. The planners have also dismissed the calls for examining how these new market-based initiatives relate to the continuity of traditional values of egalitarianism, reciprocity, spirituality, and justice in the community (Fuller & Clarke, 1994; Keshavjee, 1998; Vulliamy & Carrier, 1985).

Importantly however, in parallel to the dominance of the outside-in, bureaucratic, and top-down approaches, stands the continuity of oppositional professional, alternative approaches expressed in bottom-up innovations, dialogical and collaborative relations, resistance to the external imposition, indoctrination, control and silencing. The cases suggest oppositional trends and occasional moments of teachers’ victories (e.g., teachers’ strikes, teachers’ avoidance of bureaucratic control and manipulation, teachers’ innovative movements during the Soviet periods), as well as signs of acknowledgement; of teachers’ power, knowledge and wisdom (e.g., the Ministry’s official’s acknowledgement; see Chapter 7), and of listening to teachers’ voices and accepting their practices (e.g., the inspector’s respect for Sino and Nigin). In some cases teachers have appropriated curriculum to fit their students’ needs and the contextual and cultural realities (e.g., Sino and Nigin’s modification of curriculum, Sino’s refusal to blindly follow the prescribed schema, Nigin’s extra-curricular sessions, their open critique of reform and corruption). Some supportive grand authorities in the culture and some caring and ethical leaders in the Government and non-government structures, have encouraged change, communication, dialogue, respect and advocacy of teachers (e.g., Nigin’s recollection of some good Communists, Sino’s of empathetic inspectors). This contradictory, split and socially-constructed character of structures and culture reveals not only constraints but also possibilities and hope for teachers’ enactment of their humanistic and largely transformative worldviews.

The major challenge of post-Soviet educational reform, thus, is twofold: democratising the existing structures and approaches and at the same time making the subordinate, subtle (yet professional), ethical alternative dominant. This latter alternative will enable the teachers to ultimately develop the abilities, knowledge and attitudes necessary for developing democratic, prosperous, tolerant, active and confident citizens and society: ideals inscribed in Tajikistan’s Constitution and promulgated by ethical authorities and humanistic discourses across centuries.
The above discussion implies the necessity for the policy makers, change agents, and administrators to critically reflect upon their own practices and relations with the teachers. The teachers' voices urge that we all take their perspectives and ponder how one can promote critical thinking, decision making, and moral reasoning, how one can develop democratic mentality and an active approach to life; and how one can realistically expect teachers to learn new ideas, improve their practices and sustain child-centred pedagogies in similar structural conditions.

Furthermore, the teachers invite us to honestly acknowledge that the mere developing policies and creating structures and infrastructures does not suffice to assume and proclaim improvement: How we shape the practices, content, culture and relations of these structures, and how seriously we commit ourselves to genuine development, are what deeply matters (Hargreaves, 1994).

Conclusions 3: Changes

Increasing Complexity, Paradigm Expansion and Interpretive Framework

The world has become increasingly more complex; diffusion and multiplicity have become the new realities of the teachers' life and work. To function productively in post-Soviet society requires, in addition to a clear perspective, an ability to see the world from multiple perspectives, what I shall call paradigm expansion. Paradigm expansion is more than a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1972), more than moving from one way of looking at the world to another way of looking at it. Not an either/or position, paradigm expansion constructively brings various alternatives together. The paradigm expansion the teachers have been forced to make has several reasons.

In Soviet times, the teachers were required to promote one ideology. Despite this, the tries to eradicate alternative outlooks from the teachers' mentality failed. The post-Soviet multiplicity of forces inevitably requires a new level of consciousness to be able to view the world through multiple lenses. Ideologically, the teachers need to consider various powerful forces outside the school, such as religious clerics, nationalist bureaucrats, opposition, Government, community and outside influences.

Epistemologically, unlike Soviet times, the teachers openly face multiple interpretations of the phenomena and events about which they teach. Economically, the teachers see multiple ways of making money as legitimate. They themselves have to take more than one job to make ends meet. In addition to the Government structures, they observe the private sector and local and international NGOs operating on the educational and economic landscape. Organisationally,
they witness the diversification of the centralised curriculum and decomprehensivisation of schooling; they now meet students divided by streaming, fee-paying classes, lyceums, and private schools. Professionally, Nigin, Sino and their colleagues simultaneously engage in several activities in the various contexts of classroom, school, and home. With globalisation, they meet and work with increasingly diverse people outside the schools.

Sino, Nigin and their fellows are expected to bring together their collectivist Soviet upbringing, the post-Soviet competition and individualism-oriented market ideology, the various secular and religious interpretations, the requirements of the state and the voice of a disillusioned Pamirian minority. They encounter, prioritise, serve and employ more than one force, party, ethical authority and interpretation.

Given that monistic interpretation, control and manipulation by any single force is becoming harder to achieve and maintain, the teachers, to function well require a move from accepting an imposed perspective (in Soviet times) to taking one’s own perspectives (post-Soviet). This resulted not from their wishes but from a reality in which they were involved consciously or unconsciously, wittingly or unwittingly. This task clearly requires a reconciliation and prioritisation of tensions, dichotomies and opposites, particularly for these teachers, who had been officially educated to be anti-religious, anti-capitalist, and to an extent even anti-their own culture and environment (Fuller & Clarke, 1994).

Teacher development has to empower teachers not only to consider more than one perspective (Barnett, 2000) but also to develop an interpretive framework for critically analysing the various theories and appropriating these to serve their own values (in this case, justice, tolerance, equity, cooperation, peace and diversity).

Intensification of Teachers’ Life and Work Conditions

The increasing number of roles, the rise of expectations, the new intellectual and professional demands, and the spread of responsibilities powerfully intensified the work of the study’s teachers. At the same time, the lack of basic needs for survival and improvements meant that their non-work lives were correspondingly intensified. These two stresses fed into each other. The cases show that the teachers are impeded in carrying out their daily classroom duties by lack of basic necessities, such as:

1. Pedagogical support, textbooks and other curricular materials.
2. Infrastructure and an environment where learning can take place with sufficient desks, chalk, chalkboards and heating.
3. Financial conditions: low, unreliable salaries force teachers to leave or take other jobs.

Several authors have suggested that teachers’ status and conditions were always lower than those of white-collar workers or industrial employees in Russia and the former Soviet Union (e.g., Ekloff & Dneprov, 1993; Dunstan, 1992; Gershunsky & Pullin, 1990; Melnikov, 1997; Sutherland, 1999). Of course, in my study’s rural context, there were never many white-collar and industrial workers; however, in general, the teachers’ salaries were still low. Their salaries appeared relatively high because they were let to take double teaching load in a country that did not allow people to take more than one job. Thus, despite their generally low wages, the teachers could manage their basic needs. However since the Soviet collapse and national independence, they have become impoverished, along with most of the rest of Tajikistanis.

Even amidst generally poor living conditions, there has been a continuing impoverishment of the conditions of teachers’ life and work in MBAP and Tajikistan, as a result of which they have become beggars and “dervishes of the 20th century.” From clean, well-dressed and well-groomed teachers, they have become tattered, exhausted, thin and unhealthy persons. Truncated academic years and daily lesson periods, unfulfilled curricula, missed consultations and extra curricular lessons, unprepared lessons, quasi-empty and freezing classrooms, exhausted, hungry, and angry teachers and students are just some of the images that the teachers associate with life and work in the mountains in the post-Soviet period.

The teachers’ social status has changed from being central figures to objects of empathy at best and accusation at worst. They have become labourers for those whom they taught how to live and behave. They borrow money from those to whom they until recently gave loans. They are at the mercy of those whom they consider immoral, corrupt and unethical. From being near the top of the community, they have sunk to the bottom. They find themselves professionally unequipped to face the new realities of teaching new content, using new methods, and handling ideological multiplicity. They are unprepared to compete with the powerful, malign outside forces such as corruption, guns and drugs.

There were always high expectations from the teachers. But now, given the decreasing opportunities, the stakeholders all expect teachers to create miracles, provide good education, serve all other forces, develop curricula, find books and other learning materials, employ child-centred methods, develop students academically and socially, participate in, if not lead, official and unofficial ceremonies in the community, and model good citizenship to the students in and outside the classroom.
As public teachers, Sino, Nigin and their colleagues remain under the strict control of the state. The stakeholders still view them as servants of the centralised system (Davies, 1988; Dunstan, 1992). Now the system asks them to promote what they fought against, project as right what they had said was wrong, mention as good what they had cursed, describe their previous “truths” as lies and teach new “truths.”

They are asked to believe that the state is poor, and that for teachers to be poor and make sacrifice is good. It seems to be acceptable to eat the supplies from the NGOs and yet still wholeheartedly serve the system and status quo. They are told that they should serve the current status quo, because, unlike the Soviet state, this new one is on good terms with their Imam. In sum, since Soviet times, the teachers’ actions continue to be manipulated, their emotions misused and their devotion monopolised (Hargreaves, 1997; Liston & Zeichner, 1991). They are conveyed to believe that a strike is not good, that teaching is not politics, that teaching is serving without asking whom do you serve, why do you serve and what are implications of one’s service. The new society has increased the extent to which the riches of the province go only to a few. The teachers are asked to be content with what they have. From their recent Perestroika experiences, they have learned that change does not always bring about improvement; nor does it necessarily replace leaders-beneficiaries of the old system. Change brings only more misery, is the message of Perestroika to them (Tayler, 2001).

The teachers’ inability to comprehend all these complexities of rhetoric and reality makes them wonder confusedly. They undergo tensions and feel guilty for failures that stem more from the educational and societal systems rather than from the teachers’ own mistakes. Liston & Zeichner (1991), building on Connell’s research on teachers’ work (1985), point out the implications of this kind of emotional upset for teachers’ work:

When one construes teaching, in part, as an emotionally diffuse labour process in which two central limitations are the teachers’ time and energy, then the teacher’s “emotional economy” becomes a prominent feature of teaching. This is important in a number of ways. When a teacher committed to democratic education (or his/her set of articulated educational aims) encounters intolerable work conditions, the result is not simply the experience of one more “encumbrance,” but rather a sense of personal and professional frustration. When a teacher encounters situations in which the effort it takes to create his/her educational relationships is continually frustrated, it takes a toll on the teacher. And when a teacher reacts to those situations with new educational strategies and approaches, the teachers’ professional identity is at stake (Liston & Zeichner, 1991, p. 8).

All the above discussions provide another important lesson: the common-sense assumption that connects teachers’ departure to low salaries is true, but only in part. Neglect of the increasing complexity of their work and life, lack of recognition, and negative treatment from
stakeholders all have equally strong impacts on the quality of their teaching and on the painful choices they must make about staying in the profession (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Lacey, 1992; Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Pivovarov, 1989).

Given the conditions in MBAP, the puzzle is not why teachers leave teaching; the real puzzle is why good and creative people such as Sino and Nigin continue teaching and trying to excel. All this has deep implications for educational change and teacher development. For a change to occur, the teachers and their students require opportunities for learning and teaching (Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Woods, 1990) and opportunities for a decent living (Ball & Goodson, 1985). At minimum,

it would seem that teachers should have time to plan, implement and evaluate their educational plans, should have opportunities to work in collegial and cooperative setting, and be able to secure the advice and comments of other informed participants inside and outside of the school (Weinshank et al., 1983, in Liston & Zeichner, 1991, p. 98).

**Possibilities of Positive and Sustainable Change**

Given the present gloomy picture about continuities, what do Sino and Nigin have to say about the possibilities for constructive change? Several worthwhile insights emerge from their cases.

First, the cases suggest that changes have always existed in a dialectical relationship with the continuities. To paraphrase Hargreaves (1994), changes have been there because they have been everywhere else. The teachers suggest that most of the innovations to which they are introduced are not particularly new: “I have used this group work, but I usually do it with the full row rather than a group of four people”; “I have used this dialogical method; I have been using this problem-solving method for years”; “We had the idea of lyceum during Khrushchev’s time”; “Some of the outsiders behave as if what they talk about is completely new.” These private voices of the teachers echo the history of multiple innovations during the Soviet 70 years (Suddaby, 1989; Tabachnik et al., 1981). Like many Soviet innovators, these teachers also suggest that they have methods and they can produce methods. Sino said: “You ask about my health, improve my living and working conditions and I will improve”; “Our school has many ideas but we have no conditions to put them in practice”, added Nigin.

Second, though transmission has been the dominant continuity of their methodologies, transactional and dialogic approaches have occurred in the teachers’ practices and relationships. In fact, interaction and transformation often took place inside the teacher-directed approaches. Working with existing teacher-centred approaches and structures and making these structures
and approaches work for them, Sino and Nigin have suggested that the structures in fact are social constructs and therefore could be used or modified according to one’s values and one’s abilities to enact these values. By so doing, the teachers’ actions suggest that the system’s controlling teachers, manipulating them and channelling them in certain ways is becoming economically costlier, logistically more difficult and ethically less acceptable.

However, change does not simply involve an autonomous decision-making. Sino’s and Nigin’s attempts at change have been risky endeavours, challenging the existing beliefs and norms of the society and the school (Hargreaves, 1992). Comparing Nigin’s practices with the war veteran’s sayings on the traditional role of the teacher, one can agree that Nigin has gone quite far from the traditional norms. Similarly, the actions of Nigin’s school’s head are illustrative that despite of great risk, reforms from within are possible and available. Elements of dialogue and humanisation have always lurked in the teachers’ repertoire, but the teachers did not use them for the reasons mentioned above (for more detail see Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8). Nigin used transaction and transformation in her extra-curricular activities; Sino used them in his official lessons.

Third, the research process itself revealed a possibility for change. During our interactions, the teachers and I often deliberated upon the teachers’ existing practices and examined their roots and reasons (Cole, 1987). The research process served as a catalyst that provoked the teachers and me to see the possibilities for change (Lather, 1986). Encountering questions, sometimes not so pleasant ones, the teachers immersed themselves in reflecting upon their practices. For me, a question such as “How else do you motivate the students” aimed to get to the teachers’ knowledge; for the participants it stimulated them to think of alternatives and perhaps even to try them. During my stay at the sites, the teachers used me as example to motivate their students, and Sino asked me to arrange courses for the teachers and the students at the Murghab Pedagogical School. Nigin said: “I am telling you all this with the hope that things will change.” Izzat, who wanted to leave teaching, decided after our fieldwork to stay in the profession. The research process revealed the power of the trustful collaboration, collegiality, free inquiry and reflective engagement with the local traditions, culture and practices (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Hargreaves, 1992; Louden, 1991).

**Going About Sustainable Change**

One may argue that the teachers’ practical ideas are different and less sophisticated from those the reformers propose (Fenstermacher, 1994; Richardson, cited in Cole & Knowles, 2000).
For teachers, however, to adopt or adapt the new ideas will come mainly by sorting out the similarities and differences, the practicality, and the advantages and disadvantages between what they have and what they are offered. Nigin suggested that educational reformers should consider the resources available locally before they emulate reforms done elsewhere in the former Soviet Union or in the West.

Nigin’s and Sino’s cases inform us about two paths to change: bureaucratic and ethical. The bureaucratic path talks about educational reform because it provides popular support, makes it possible to stay in power and enjoy the status quo. The ethical path asks questions like those Nigin and Sino ask: Why should we imitate others? Is our material and technical basis ready? Will the change make our society any better? Which segments of the society do the proposed changes benefit and which ones do they marginalize? The teachers need to know whether the changes that aim to improve their practices will also improve their lives. They wonder what will they get in exchange for their extra work and sacrifices of time, energy, health, and family. The teachers need to know who the change agent is, whether he or she really knows what classroom life in the post-Soviet Badakhshan is, and whether that person knows the conditions and the history of the context. In other words, when a change comes from outside, teachers do not necessarily see it as something of their own, even though they may agree with its worth. If reformers assume that change can be achieved only through teachers’ making personal sacrifices, they are wrong, say Nigin, Sino and their colleagues. “Who are you? What have you done for us? Teachers are not stupid”, the voices from both cases ask.

Given this increasing complexity of our understanding of teachers and teaching, the reformers need to recognise, approach and support teachers adequately. This attitude (ethical) towards teachers and teacher development would help to develop more realistic but more sustainable approaches to changing teachers and the system (Cuban, 1988; Goodson, 1992; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). In other words, changing teachers’ work requires changing their work conditions (Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Woods, 1990). Further, the ethical approach sees teachers as complex professionals and supports them to critically analyse their complex and rich experiences. This critical engagement provides possibilities for transformation from within, where the increasing consciousness helps the teachers to see the implications of their actions in the classrooms and out of it (Diamond & Mullen, 2000; Hargreaves, 1995; Knowles, 1994).
Thus, this study puts the current policy in Tajikistan about “changing the mentality of the teachers” in question, particularly through the courses where they are exposed to the external methods and techniques (World Bank, 1999). Rather it supports many authors’ contentions that viewing teachers’ mentality as a problem, considering them as mindless agents, injecting ideas into the teachers’ heads, controlling them, threatening, manipulating and forcing the teachers to follow one way are unworkable, unprofessional, unsustainable, and, therefore, unethical (Apple, 1990; Farell, 1994; Connelly & Clandinin, 1992, 1999; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Cuban, 1988; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Thiessen, 1993b). Given their knowledge and the impossibility of manipulating and controlling them (Bakhtin, in Gazden, 1989), this study supports these teachers’ central role in the process of societal and educational improvement and denounces the bureaucratic path to understanding teaching and educational change. Thiessen (1993a) argues that the bureaucratic path assumes that teachers:

(a) are primarily responsible for what happens in the classrooms;
(b) work with increasingly obsolete skills and inadequate knowledge base;
(c) tend not to change their classroom practices unless formally required, closely monitored, and generously supported; and
(d) need clear guidelines and specific criteria for success in any plan of reform

In this image, teachers are ineffective public servants who are unable to fulfil their obligation as purveyors of policy. They neither satisfactorily enculturate their students in the norms of society, nor provide them with sufficient knowledge and skills for effective participation in life’s endeavours. There is very little evidence that verifies this limited portrayal of teachers or substantiates their lack of competency and impact (p. 284, emphasis mine).

According to Thiessen, the alternative path to understanding teachers, the professional path, recognises the above concerns. However, unlike the bureaucratic path:

The professional path starts with the assumptions that some excellence already exists, that many teachers already have the capacity to create excellent classrooms and schools, and that the further solutions will come from working closely with more empowered teachers (1993a, p. 285, emphasis mine).

This study suggests that reformers need to begin with how teachers teach, why they teach the way they do, and what in their biographies, socialisation, educational background, their context, and their culture makes and inspires them teach that way. Reformers also need to assess their ideas before proposing them; in fact, what reformers may offer as a new idea, the teachers might have already tried, and rejected. In sum, the present study confirms the arguments that:

1. Teachers are at the core of any improvement effort (Lieberman & Miller, 1999);
2. Teachers are partners in reform, not problems and not subjects whose mentality must be changed, particularly by an external force (Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Thiessen, 1993b).

Therefore, change agents need to:

1. Overcome their own cultural insularity and intellectual arrogance, of which they may not be aware, and move towards a caring dialogue with the teachers (Farrell, 1997; Freire, 1970; Fuller & Clarke, 1994; Miller, 1988; Noddings, 1995);

2. Through critical engagement, involve the teachers’ underlying assumptions and knowledge, their conceptions of teaching and their ideologies (Popkewitz, 1987; Wasley, 1991);

3. Unleash teachers’ creative and critical capacities, to transfer every encounter into teachable moments that could be used in the classroom, home and community (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, 1992; Cole & Knowles, 2000), particularly in the developing countries (Farrell & Oliveira, 1993; Niyozov & Dean, 1997; Rust & Dalin, 1990);

4. Pay attention to the teachers’ personal and professional concerns and longings, consider their work as mutually affecting their life, identity, personality, and honor (Anderson, 1997; Day, 1999; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Menlo & Poppleton, 1999; Noddings, 1995);

5. Examine why the teachers are not using their own good ideas, which requires studying the local society’s, education’s, context’s, and culture’s histories, with a particular attention to previous innovations and the reasons for those that failed so as not to “move in circles, feel lost and conclude that the more things changed the more they stayed the same” (Sarason, 1972, p. 22, cited in Wasley, 1991, p. 155; see also Cuban, 1988; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

The ethical or professional path to change suggested by the teachers asks whether the proposed changes differ from ideas that the teachers on the ground already have. Ethical change also asks whether the students will like the new ideas and whether the ideas will increase the teachers’ status and the value of education in the society. Ethical reform should consider issues such as examinations that require rote memorisation. There should also be freedom for teachers to try their own new ideas and methods without fearing. In other words, each change attempts should be accompanied by critical dialogue and reflection upon the teachers’ and researchers’ voices and the contexts of their practices.
Summary

The above discussions about continuity and change in MBAP reveal several general conclusions. First, there have always been continuities and changes, which have co-existed in a dialectical mode. Therefore, though at the surface level there has been more talk about change, in a reality there has been more stability in practice (Cuban, 1988).

Second, continuity and change not only co-exist but also clash. Changes in any part of the context will inevitably have to consider the existing continuities, both in teacher’s individual practices and in the contexts of their practices. For example, in MBAP the structural and cultural continuities have been further enforced by the environmental realities and by the further social impoverishment of the teachers’ life and work. Many of these continuities have become norms and traditions that stakeholders see as natural, if not sacred. Therefore, contextual factors and the way people perceive them (e.g., as fixed objective realities or as amenable social constructs) have a deep effect on the teachers’ practices, life, work and the opportunities for change. Change thus involves a process of negotiation; to become real and sustainable, any change effort will have to critically engage with the existing continuities, examine their nature and contradictions, and identify the areas where it can root itself and grow (Cuban, 1988; Hargreaves, 1994b). Teacher development should help teachers to enhance their critical and creative capacities to both view reality as socially constructed and to constructively engage with the existing norms, values, practices and structures.

The Study’s Contribution to Educational Theory and Practice

This study aimed at illuminating how teachers teach and understand their practices and what contextual forces and realities influence their understanding and practice of teaching. In so doing, it did not aim at producing fixed rules for action (Shavelson, 1988, quoted in Kennedy, 1997, p. 10), but at providing a new and better understanding of the dynamics of teaching and learning. This notion of research contribution, according to Kennedy (1997) “leaves teachers with considerable professional judgement as to how they might draw on these insights to make their moment to moment decisions” (p. 10).

Ultimately, each reader will individually judge the study’s contribution. However, here I provide a brief discussion on the study’s general contributions to the theory and practice of education on conceptual and comparative levels.
Conceptual Contributions

Conceptually, this study has confirmed the suggestions of an increasing number of the researchers that teachers, regardless whether they live in developed or less developed countries, are knowledgeable, responsible and caring people. Their concern includes care for the children, the community and the country. The teachers have developed formidable views on the society, meaning, goals and purposes of teaching. They have some and can develop various methods of teaching. The teachers have valuable insights about how teachers learn new methods and how they change. They have formed critical views about the purpose, processes, approaches and ethics of educational and societal reforms. The teachers' knowledge is broad, rich and constantly evolving; they construct it from many sources and develop it across their life and work experiences. Their knowledge also goes beyond technical and practical matters to include socio-political qualities.

Teachers in rural, mountainous and less-developed areas play important educational, strategic and political roles in their respective communities. The zone of their active involvement extends beyond the mere classroom and school. In the various contexts of their work and life (classroom, school, home and community), they exhibit roles that go beyond single categorisations; they operate as complex professionals within complex social organisations. The complex nature of teachers' practices has become obvious due to the small size of the context in which my inquiry took place and due to the life-history approach, which linked their stories of educational practices to the histories of the contexts. The blurred boundaries between the school and outside realities enabled me to illustrate the interaction between the contextual realities, the teachers' biographies and their practices.

This study makes another contribution of the field of theory and practice of education by identifying the contextual realities and forces and their complex interaction with each other and with the teachers' practices. The context included not only the material and technical basis, the geographical challenges, and the socio-political forces but also the places, the sources, and the times in which the teachers' reasoning usually took place. Context and biography defined who the teachers were, and how have they became so. They defined the teachers' selection of methods and the nature of their knowledge. The context affected what the teachers said and what they kept silent about; both context and biography had influenced the options available to them. Given this, this study revealed that teachers' practices essentially embody a contextual process of negotiation between the teacher's person, and the physical, contextual and socio-political
realities. Their life histories, particularly educational experiences emerged as fundamental variables affecting the teachers’ ability to affirm what they value and who they want to be. It revealed that unless the favourable forces prevail, the teachers’ high motivation and commitment will not be enough to make child-centred pedagogy and transformational teaching a reality. At the same time, given teachers’ high commitment and the enormity of challenges and pressures, the amount of support for the teachers has to adequately increase so as they fulfil their personal, societal and educational aspirations and roles. The study’s life and work approach revealed that powerful contextual forces affect the teachers’ practices. Teaching, teacher change and teacher development can neither be understood nor reformed without understanding teachers’ personal and social history and the history of their contexts. Teachers’ life and work served as windows to view and understand the contexts and the histories of the contexts where they lived.

**Contribution to Comparative Research**

This is one of the first systematic, in-depth studies in English of post-Soviet education and teacher development in the former USSR, particularly Badakhshan and Tajikistan (Glowka, 1992, in Dunstan, 1992; Keshavjee, 1998). As such, it represents an emerging world, and an unheard voice (Hargreaves, 1994). Amongst the few studies on the teachers of Badakhshan, some (e.g., Nazarshoev, 1982; Nazarshoev & Nazarshoev, 1985; Shonavravuzov & Haidarsho, 1991) are limited by Soviet ideological imposition (Glowka, 1992). These studies also represent personal interpretations rather than conclusions based on rigorous empirical fieldwork. The actual voices of the teachers and educational stakeholders are fully absent in these studies. Two internal studies by the Aga Khan Foundation on education of MBAP (Greenland, 1994; Kruder, 1996) provide important factual and statistical information. However, both are survey type studies. As such, they beg for depth, complexity, dynamics and historicity. The present study substantially fills this gap. One in-depth anthropological study of the social and health situation of MBAP mentions education sparingly within the author’s larger sociological and political-economic arguments (Keshavjee, 1998).

The present study’s uniqueness lies not only in being the first of its kind about education in MBAP, but also in being conducted by a researcher who hails from Badakhshan and has had educational and life experiences in Soviet and post-Soviet Tajikistan, a number of developing countries and in the West. Most studies on teaching and teacher development are still conducted in the Western context and scholarly traditions, and mainly by Western scholars (see Samoff, 1999; Vulliamy et al., 1990). Hence, they focus on structures, content and perspectives that are
of primary relevance and importance to Western countries. Recently, research on teaching and teachers' life and work in the developing counties has increased (Avalos, 1985, 1992; Davies, 1988; Davies, et al., 1993; Fuller & Kapasaka, 1991; Fuller & Clarke, 1994; Heynemann, 1998; Benham & Dudley, 1997; Osler, 1997; Perry et al., 1995; Prophet & Rowell, 1993) However, both contexts--the developed West and the developing countries--substantially differ from Tajikistan and other post-Soviet countries, where changes are more rapid, more radical and more complex (Heynemann, 1998; 2000).

Being an insider helped me to know the participants' languages and habits, the cultural constructs they used, and these constructs' importance for their life and work. It also made it easier to build trust, ask more sensitive questions, debate with the participants, reveal emotions and provide the necessary historical, cultural, and political background. My being an insider made the participants tell me things they may have not said to external researchers due to family or community pride. In other words, I could achieve the kind of depth, complexity and sensitivity that characterises this inquiry because of being myself a native researcher. My experience implies the necessity of developing the local research and scholarship capacity across the whole Tajikistan education system (Samoff, 1999; Vulliamy et al., 1990).

This inquiry is a contribution to the increasing number of studies of Soviet and post-Soviet education (DeYoung & Suzhikova, 1997; Ekloff, 1993; Heynemann, 1998, 2000; Gur’ianova, 2000; Lisovsakaya & Karpov, 1997; Sutherland, 1999; Webber, 2000; Zaugmenov, 1993). However, the scholarly studies in the Soviet Union (even during Glasnost) still had to conform to the official version of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and its methodology of dialectical materialism (Tabachnik et al., 1981). These philosophical and methodological approaches, watchfully censored by the Communist Party and its state apparatus, limited any study's critical scope (Glowka, 1992, cited in Dunstan, 1992). In contrast, my study has the advantage of being an open inquiry.

This does not mean that it is neutral, totally objective or comprehensive. Though I have tried to be as critical and as reflexive as possible, I have also been conscious of the study's socio-political and ethical implications for all those involved: the participants, myself, the agencies, and the countries (Anderson, 1991; Cole 1994, Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Dockrell, 1987; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Lather, 1986). Within these limitations, this inquiry listened to Nigin's critique of scholarship and tried to pave a way for the new research methodologies that "put the observed, observer and the structures of observation on the same critical plane, and
which seek to interrupt any tyrannous voice, resisting closure and extending play” (Diamond & Mullen, 2000). By this I hope to have had a modelling effect at the local level (Glowka, 1992). Unusually, my study systematically explored the voice and vision of the teachers in rural, mountainous areas and examined the conditions of their life and work as these realities interact with teaching and learning. Except for a few studies (Khan, 1997), most research on teachers’ life and work in mountainous areas also has been conducted by visiting scholars from urbanised lowlands; therefore, it fails to represent the perspective of the local inhabitants of the mountains (Porter, 1996). These studies have only rarely empirically researched realities such as mountains and rural isolation and how they affect teachers’ life and work (e.g., Becker, 1996; Galbraith, 1990; Iagaforova, 1990; Farant, 1982; Pivovarov, 1989; Pratt, 1996; Stern, 1992).

Only a few studies have aimed like mine at illustrating teachers’ life and work in conditions of extreme poverty and lack of professional development opportunities (Avalos, 1990). My research aimed at examining what could be done to provide teachers with self-empowering tools both contextually and culturally grounded so as to utilise the existing realities and potentials for teacher development. The world as a whole faces an increasing scarcity of resources and tries to find more cost-effective yet high-quality ways of development (Farrell & Oliveira, 1993). To know about how teachers in MBAP coped with their current situation provides more knowledge of how to study coping strategies themselves (Hargreaves, 1978).

Hence, I aimed at synthesising Soviet, Western and local educational wisdom, with the goal of developing a relevant and sustainable approach to teacher development. The study also speaks to relatively similar conditions of life and work, challenges of change, and prospects of development for teachers across Central Asia, the former USSR (De Young & Suzhikova, 1997; Lisovskaya, 1997, 1999; Zaugmenov, 1993) and perhaps many developing nations.

**Limitations of this Study**

In the chapter on Methodology (Chapter 3), I discussed general and specific limitations and difficulties of the study in some detail. Here I will briefly reiterate the general limitations of the study:

1. This study did not aim at providing solutions to the social and educational problems of Tajikistan or countries elsewhere with similar conditions. The thick description (Geerts, 1973) it produced aimed at exploring and portraying the teachers’ practices and views about what it means to be a teacher, and understanding their professional functions in the mountains of rural, post-Soviet Tajikistan.
2. Given the ethics of my research approach, I cannot claim to have got hold of "the truth." Therefore, even in its current shape, this study is a tentative examination; it is open to critical assessment and debate.

3. Although this study went beyond the teachers' voices and visions, it prioritised the teachers' perspectives. Within this limit, it focused on a number of participants, exploring their situation in depth. This thesis as written narrowed that further to two major participants, sparingly using the other three teachers' voices.

4. The study used only a qualitative approach. The duration of the fieldwork was limited to 8 months (between April 1999 and January 2000).

5. It was conducted by one researcher, and should be seen as one of the first steps in establishing my career as a professional researcher.

6. This study, due to its small scale and qualitative nature, did not aim at making even specific recommendations. However, other more instrumental research projects could be designed on the basis of the research areas identified below.

**Areas for Further Research**

Below, I spell out possible areas of further research, starting from those closest to the classrooms and moving towards those with a larger societal focus.

**Classroom-Focused Research**

In cross-case analysis, I raised many questions for further research and study of classroom life (see Chapters 7 and 8). Among them there were questions of truth in subject matter, language of instruction and methods, cold weather and textbooks, the connection between home and classroom, the connections between teachers' personal and professional lives, the relationships between school and community, and the implications of methodological and ideological eclecticism in teachers' practices. Future research endeavours may wish to focus on each of these and other issues more particularly, more deeply and more broadly. Below, I spell out a few critical areas that have deep implications for the future of education and society in Tajikistan in general and Badakhshan in particular. (In fact, some of these issues might be of relevance to all of post-Soviet Central Asia).

**Other Stakeholders' Perspectives**

This study revealed discrepancies between teachers' and other community stakeholders' views on the proper kind of education and teaching for MBAP. An important field of study would be the students' and parents' viewpoint about teaching and education in rural,
mountainous, post-Soviet Tajikistan. Such a study could provide insights into some of problems of academic learning, such as lack of participation, high drop-out rates, disinterest, status of teacher, biased examinations, and issues of language of instruction.

Curriculum Relevance

Curriculum relevance or lack of it strongly affected the participants’ practices. This issue’s importance emerged from several angles. First, the study revealed the unsustainability of Soviet projects, as a result of which things not only have remained the same but in some critical areas have worsened. Second, Soviet education not only lacked relevance but it also developed a negative attitude in the teachers and population towards some aspects of their own culture, such as their religion, languages, identity and environment.

However, conclusive results on how the issue of curriculum relevance affects teaching and learning in MBAP require specifically-focused research. For example, a comparative study could be designed to explore and compare the various stakeholders’ viewpoints—students, parents, teachers of other subjects, politicians and policy makers—with regards to what meaningful and useful education means to the people of Badakhshan, and how it could be made a part of the school curriculum. Why is there an increasing apathy towards education among the youth (particularly male population) in MBAP? Such study should include the close investigation of how new perspectives on relevant education differ from those of Soviet times. Similarly, studies need to be conducted at both policy and grassroots levels about how to address issues of cold, isolation and inadequate communication in isolated mountainous communities.

Curriculum and Textbook Analysis

The cases raised fundamental questions about curriculum and textbooks in both Soviet and post-Soviet times. Researchers might explore several issues. For example, how could the teachers compensate for lack of textbooks, or how could textbooks be produced in ways that engage students in relevant and meaningful learning. Tajikistan educational system may wish to analyse its curriculum with the aim of sorting out biases and prejudices. It is important to recognise that one-sided, monistic and dogmatic curricula or textbooks have serious and harmful implications for sustainable development, for tolerance, diversity, justice, democracy and peace within Tajikistan and between Tajikistan and its neighbours.

Languages and Education in Badakhshan

The study revealed language as an important issue for meaningful instruction, including the shift to child-centred pedagogy. Language also emerged as an issue of the identity and
cultural uniqueness for the people of Badakhshan. Further studies could investigate what kind of language practices will enable the students to engage in meaningful learning in Badakhshani classrooms. Introducing new techniques and methodologies will have little effect and benefit few, if the basis for active students’ participation is undermined by language discrimination. Investigators need to assess how the children of the Pamirian ethnicities can be enabled to use Tajik without being ridiculed in their own villages and later on in wider Tajikistan? Researchers need to explore how to provide opportunities to the students to improve their command of Tajik outside the classroom and how to support and promote the level that it is seen as language of success. If Tajik is not enough for these students’ success and if these children need to know more than three languages to be successful in the globalised society, it will take much research to make it feasible to arrange a trilingual or bilingual education in their schools and communities.

An important question with regard to language of instruction in post-Soviet Tajikistan is the exploration of the socio-political implications of a shift from teaching Russian to teaching English? Given that the amount of time available to formal schooling in Badakhshan is far less than in other places, what measures could be taken to enable the Pamirian and Kyrgyz children to master Tajik enough to succeed?

There is a need for research into the issues of bringing these people into the global society while still preserving the diverse richness of their cultures and languages. If they need to learn English to succeed in the new world, how could this learning of English be channelled so as to not repeat the marginalization, denigration and erosion of the local languages and cultures?

On the other hand, how could teaching and learning of English be arranged in ways that do not result in students’ cultural insularity and intellectual arrogance towards their own culture, nature and less-fortunate peers? The problem for development and education researchers is how to bring the local culture into the world so it becomes known and enriches other world cultures rather, than becoming extinct under the increasing pressures of several official lingua francas, such as English, Russian and Tajik (Cummins, 1996; Nieto, 1998; Pennycook, 1996).

Teacher Development

This study clearly revealed the need for researching the various aspects of teacher development in Tajikistan, including recruitment, pre-service and in-service education. It is important to study why so many teachers have left teaching. The assumption that teachers leave due to salary does not provide a comprehensive answer, my study suggests. There are many other reasons for teachers leaving the profession, intensification of life and work being one.
Another field is the teachers' general dissatisfaction with the nature, processes and purpose of undergraduate studies and pre-service education courses, which in the Tajikistan context are integrated. Given the teachers' status, role and potential in the rural context and the necessity of their developing a critical perspective, it is disturbing to hear the participants' views on the uselessness of subjects such as sociology, philosophy, pedagogy and psychology. I believe these subjects, if taught critically and interactively, could greatly help the teachers fulfil their roles as teachers for social change, transformative intellectuals and change agents.

The teachers' biographies, on the other hand, raised some unpleasant questions about the nature, processes and structures of pre-service education; at best, the pre-service educational courses lack stimulation, relevance, and practicality.

Similarly worrisome are the teachers' voices about the continuance of theoretical and boring nature of in-service teacher education programs. In addition to critically examining the nature of the programs at the teacher training centres, studies need to explore the possibilities for alternative collaborative and independent teacher development programs (action-research, art-based research, teacher-research, field-based research; for various forms of research on teaching, see Carson & Sumara, 1997; Cochran-Smith & Little, 1993; Cole & Knowles, 2000). Clearly in-service training must concern itself with more than just methodologies and techniques. It has to regard teachers as persons with minds and souls, knowledgeable and capable of developing solutions and making decisions. Teacher development, whether pre-service or in-service need to regard, prepare and project teachers as complex professional who require critical, socio-political perspectives. Therefore it has to involve dialogue, humility, enabling the teachers and supporting them to engage with their and with the research-based knowledge, with the contexts, cultures, bureaucracies and authorities (Avalos, 1985).

Teacher development has to help teachers to actively define their leadership role and status in the society. While improving the theoretical aspects, teacher education in Tajikistan also needs to develop the teachers' technical competencies and critical abilities to address the daily challenges of rural, mountainous contexts, and to create knowledge necessary for the realities of classroom and school life. Indeed, the realities of rural, mountainous contexts have to be brought into the forefront of research and teacher education, both pre-service and in-service.

Research and Scholarship

The study revealed somehow contradictory insights about the Soviet education and its scholarship. On the one hand, this study has raised serious questions about the nature of Soviet
and post-Soviet scholarship in the area, supporting previous arguments about its ideological narrowness, epistemological dogmatism and methodological rigidity (Akiner, 1986; Ben Ekloff, 1993; Glowka, 1992). On the other hand, the teachers of this study and several researchers illustrate the existence of innovative and comprehensive research and educational traditions (Suddaby, 1989, Sutherland, 1999; Tabachnik et al., 1981). In its drive to prove the rightness of dialectical materialism, Soviet scholarship failed to explain and improve the people's life and work. It remains puzzling how dialectical materialism as a comprehensive and promising philosophy of Soviet research was reshaped to become dogmatic and serve to sustain the status quo (Hathaway, 1995; Said, 1994). I also raised questions about how free and critical the current post-Soviet research is. This begs for in-depth research into the research traditions of Soviet and post-Soviet periods of the former USSR. It is important to explore the possibilities and constraints for the scholars within Tajikistan and elsewhere in the former USSR who attempt a critical and open inquiry in the post-Soviet contexts (Heynemann, 1998).

This kind of study is fundamental not only to understanding the research traditions but also to creating grounds for introducing qualitative research perspectives in education and other social sciences. My study, due to limitations of space, only touched on the intense physical, emotional, technological, linguistic, political and systemic challenges and risks for the researchers and participants in transitional, poverty-stricken and closed societies.

**Change/Reforms**

Research into the history of educational innovations in Badakhshan could be two-pronged: One part could look at the nature, purpose, processes, impacts and fates of the imposed changes and innovations during the Soviet times (cf. Amonashvili, et al., 1987; Dunstan & Suddaby, 1992; Sutherland, 1999). The second could look at local educational innovations that have been disregarded or buried. Understanding the reasons and processes involved in the failure or success of innovation on the ground will enable the new change agents to better predict and manage their change efforts. It will also provide a crucial foundation for more sustainable, relevant education and teacher development for mountainous, rural contexts.

Several studies need to be conducted on the new change initiatives by the Tajikistan Government and NGOs. It is important to assess how much these efforts differ from the previous efforts, what ends they pursue, who they benefit and who they marginalize. In Nigin's words, it is important to examine whether these reforms are aiming at improvement or at keeping up with political fashion. Consequently, it is important to explore the advantages and disadvantages of
the current educational changes in MBAP, such as streaming, fee-paying classes, and the privatisation and marketisation of schooling.

**Relations between Teaching and Society**

This study demonstrates the need for launching a set of sociological, socio-educational, socio-cultural and socio-political explorations into such elements of the MBAP education system as examinations, quotas, the Teacher of the Year contest, the micro-politics of schooling and the cultures of tertiary, secondary and primary schools. A study of the examination and evaluation system and its transformations, for example, might provide deep insights into the growth of corruption and how to combat it.

In addition to researching corruption’s effect on education, an important area of research emerging from this study is the exploration of identity issues at the universities, colleges and schools of Badakhshan and Tajikistan. The study revealed disturbing evidences of intolerance, marginalization, abuse and denigration between the various ethnic groups at the Higher Education Institutions and other social organisations in Tajikistan, particularly for minorities and women. It similarly revealed the cultural politics of post-Soviet Badakhshani society, where some ethnicities remain deeply underprivileged. Any study on these issues will have to employ both critical and historical lenses; the roots of many of the current ills go deep in Soviet and pre-Soviet times as well as to current issues of power and politics.

Exploration into the realities of women teachers’ work and life in MBAP is both necessary and important. Not only is the teaching profession in Tajikistan predominantly female, but also the contextual and socio-cultural realities of women teachers’ work present tragic scenario, exposing some of the Soviet myths about the empowerment of Tajik women (Olcott, 1991; Tadjbakhsh, 1998; Touhidi, 1995; Roy, 2000). My study has confirmed the intensified quality of the rural women teachers’ life and work, which affects their practices, identity, and health as well as their students’ learning.

**Relations between Teachers, Authorities and Representations**

This study clearly shows that the teachers rely greatly on grand ethical authority to justify various aspects of their practices inside and outside the classrooms. They have somehow managed to overcome the ontological differences between Marx and Lenin on the one hand, and the Aga Khan on the other, to support their worldviews, goals, commitments, relations and practices. However, this reliance (often unquestioned) on authority does not mean unquestioning acceptance of the representatives of these authorities. The teachers’ cases clearly show that they
increasingly distinguished individual representatives of the Soviet system from the overall system and the socialist theory. They clearly supported the overall goals and methods of Soviet education while equally suspecting the representatives of the system as capable of bureaucratism, careerism, and even corruption. This combined respect for authority and caution towards its representatives has continued in their attitude toward post-Soviet educational system and the NGOs, including the AKDN.

Given the above, an important field of study could be the further exploration of the Aga Khan's spiritual impact on education in the Ismaili and non-Ismaili communities of Badakhshan. It is important to look at how other contemporary interpretations of Islam regard the question of free inquiry and unity of knowledge. For example, why do some interpretations allow for free inquiry and others inhibit it? Researchers could profitably investigate whether free inquiry is really happening in the Ismaili community of Badakhshan or is it remaining at the level of espoused visions and spiritual guidance? Related to this, the teachers and other participants of this study call for studies about the role of the various agencies of the NGOs (including the AKDN) in Badakhshan and Tajikistan, not through external one-shot evaluators, but through the internal voices and local knowledge (Samoff, 1999). Why, for example, do the majority of the teachers, and by extension the other people on the ground, view some of the NGOs (including the AKDN) as similar to the bureaucracies of Soviet times? Based on the historical knowledge about recent implementation of Marxist theory in the region, where is the guarantee that the vision of the Aga Khan embedded in "moral force and persuasion" (Kolko, 1988) is not deluded and encountered with similar fate as the value frameworks that existed there before? Research could provide useful insights into the challenges and tensions that the AKDN institutions face in implementing the Aga Khan's vision and its principles of ethics in societies where there is the crisis of ethics.

Similarly, researchers could pursue a whole array of studies about the relations between the Government and teachers. They could assess the accuracy of teachers' views about the Government's actions and how well the Government programs of democratisation, pluralism, decentralisation and child-centred pedagogy are implemented. There are serious issues of how different the current Government approaches to education are from those in Soviet times. The bureaucratic policy about "mentality change" also has serious implications for teachers. The current education strategy of Tajikistan appears to be grounded on the imitation of external
education policies and models rather than on the contextual and cultural realities. We need to further explore on what grounds are education policies and strategies formulated.

**Summary**

This chapter has provided a closure to the study as whole. I reiterated that that the purpose of the study was to explore how teachers understand their classroom practices through the interaction between the classroom dynamic and the contextual realities. I suggest that in rural, mountainous communities teachers are naturally positioned in the roles of complex professionals. They carry out expanded, strategic leadership and emotionally-infused responsibilities. They are caring, knowledgeable and enviably committed about educational and societal improvement. They exhibit elaborate worldviews and goals; they play multiple roles. They stand at the centre of students’ parents', community’s and states’ expectations. They attach deepest commitment and understanding to teaching; teaching defines their identity and the meaning of their life in the various contexts. They exhibit a fairly varied instructional repertoire and develop caring and humanising relations with their students. They also have valuable ideas about educational relevance and change.

The teachers’ worldviews, visions, practices and relations are deeply affected by their biographies, homes, culture, subject matter and larger systemic, geographical, and societal forces that surround their life and work. The tensions, dilemmas and inconsistencies of their practice are not personal issues of mentality or fit; they reflect the tensions between rhetoric and reality in the larger system, society and culture. These tensions were reflected through the dialectic of continuities and changes that emerged from the teachers’ practices and voices. These included continuities in teachers’ care and commitment, in the irrelevance of the education, in ethical authority, in teacher-centred pedagogy, and in top-down and outside-in approaches. The changes included the increasing complexity of teachers’ work, the intensification of teachers’ life and work, and the possibilities of constructive and sustainable change.

I delineated the study’s conceptual and comparative contributions to the theory and practice of education, and suggested possible areas of further research, beginning with those close to the classroom and moving towards those with larger societal focus.

**Epilogue**

This study is a humble endeavour. Its limitations are embedded in its structural parameters and my professional abilities. I aimed to produce valuable stories that expose the deepest tensions, dilemmas, contradictions and paradoxes; I believe I have managed to highlight
the fundamental qualities of teachers' experience. Further, believing that the voice of a single person is never single, and believing that teachers represent the most articulate segment of the rural society, I have touched upon questions that are critical to these teachers, the students and the population of Badakhshan and Tajikistan in general. Given that teachers in the post-Soviet Tajikistan represent one of the most impoverished segments of the society, this study has almost inevitably become polemical; it talked about marginalized, impoverished and neglected people, whose voices have been ignored, upon whom silence is imposed, whose destiny is channelled and whose subjectivities have been suppressed (Barone, 1992; Torress, 1995).

This study not only described a drama of human struggles, vulnerabilities and pessimistic possibilities. It also, and more important, revealed hope: A powerful hope that rests on a mutual bond of the creative forces: dedicated human agency and a spiritual and ethical guide. With all its problems, Tajikistan today is more peaceful, united and prosperous than previously in the decade since independence. People, driven either by pride, by interest, or by ethics, want it to improve. Given this hope, none of us who should care can resign. The efforts and sacrifices of teachers whom I can only call as heroic fidais (selfless devotees)--Nigin, Sino, Lola, Gorminj, Izzat, Ali and the others--supported by caring, responsible people in the Government and NGOs and blessed by the Aga Khan, surely presage a better future for the children of the mountains of Tajikistan.

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452 By subjectivity I mean the ability to become the subject of one's own life and a shaper of one's destiny (see Britzman, 1991; Freire, 1983; Giroux, 1988; Greene, 1974; 1988),
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Maps of the Republic of Tajikistan and MBAP

Map of Regional Groups and Clans

- Pamiris (Mainly in MBAP)
- Khujandis (also known as Leninabadis, mainly in north of country)
- Kulabis (Largely in south of the country)
- Garmis (Mainly in east and south)
- Uzbeks (Mainly in north, south and south west, make up between 20 to 24% of the country’s population)
Map of Administrative Divisions
Appendix 2: Invitation to Participate in the Research Project

I am a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). I am conducting a study that attempts to explore how teacher makes sense of and improve upon their classroom practices in the context of the post-soviet, rural and mountainous Tajikistan. This study is needed for partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy in Education. It aims at exploring your practices and reasons behind your actions. I believe this is an important study in many ways:

(a). Exploring your practices might provide insights into the challenges of work and lives of the teachers. Here I am interested in exploring with you the relationship between your beliefs about teaching, your habits of practice and how both of them are connected to your life and work in and out of school.
(b). Life and work in the rural mountains has its own challenges. This study also aims at exploring how the notion of rural and mountains impinge upon your teaching and how it interacts with your teaching and students' learning.
(c). After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992 and the setback to the communist ideology, you as teachers, have been going through enormous changes. I am interested to reveal how these changes have influenced upon the content and pedagogy of your instruction.

This study is useful for:
(a). conceptualising and developing a contextualized framework for understanding teaching and teacher knowledge as well as the conditions of teachers' life and work in the rural, mountainous and post-Soviet Tajikistan,
(b). comparing this contextualized frame of teacher knowledge with similar notions in the Western contexts. These insights might challenge, examine and/or enrich the existing theoretical, contextual and conceptual frames with regard to the concept of teaching, teachers' voice and knowledge that exist in the Western educational contexts,
(c). rethinking our approaches to teaching, teacher development and curriculum innovation in Tajikistan and elsewhere, and
(d). illuminating challenges of conducting qualitative research in the context.

These contributions are largely dependent upon your active participation in the whole research project.

I am a qualified teacher and teacher educator with experience of teaching and researching at primary, secondary and university levels. During the research I am willing to make myself available to teachers and administrators, where deemed possible within the frame of this study, in assisting in the daily process of teaching and learning, for a period of working with you.

On the other hand, I am planning to observe your lessons and conduct interviews with you. Your observations and interviews might be video/audio taped, and accordingly transcribed and translated. I will take observation notes about your work and life in and out of classroom. All the notes will be shared with you. Your corrections will be welcome. Any part of information that you will feel uncomfortable with will be discussed as to whether it could be eliminated or reconsidered in ways that its importance is explored.

The purpose of observation and interviews is not to judge your performance according to external criteria but to find a detailed account of your actions and knowledge behind them.
I will also appreciate if you keep a journal where you could write your reflections and impressions about our research project. I expect you to ask me as many questions as you wish during the course of our research project.

Safeguards will be taken to maintain the confidentiality, of the data in that all the data will be locked in a filing cabinet, shared with only committee members and will be destroyed five years after completion of the research project. Every effort will be made to guarantee your anonymity. You will be invited to provide feedback on my interpretation of data. Publication of any materials related to this research will proceed with your explicit consent. The identity of your school will be concealed and revealing information will be withheld. I endorse that no data from the study will be used for evaluating or passing judgment about any aspect of your work and life.

All teachers who agree to participate in my research are free to withdraw at any time they wish.

Thank you

Sarfaroz Niyozov
Graduate Student
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Participant Consent:

I hereby willingly volunteer to participate in this research project and acknowledge that I have been advised of full anonymity. I also understand that I may withdraw from participating in this study at any time;

I am aware that this study is being conducted to partially satisfy the requirements for the researcher's Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute For Studies in Education;
I will engage in the up to 4 interviews, which will focus on my personal history and background;
I will engage in up to 3 interviews about general educational, financial and socio-cultural issues surrounding education;
I will engage in up to 2 interviews about my involvement, feeling and experiencing this research;
I may wish to keep a reflective journal on a voluntary basis during the research process
I will allow up to 15 observations of my teaching practices arranged at mutually convenient time;
I will engage in discussions about my professional practice arranged after each two observation lessons. Overall there will be 15 discussions/of this type;
I understand that all the information regarding my personal and professional practice will remain anonymous;
I will allow the interviews, observations and discussions to be audio/ tape recorded;
I give permission for any information gained through my efforts to be printed in a publishable document;

Participant’s signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Appendix 3: A Request for Permission for Conducting a Qualitative Case Study

Mr. Saifullo Davlatshoev,
Director, Department of Education of
Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast
of Republic of Tajikistan (GBAO/RT)
March 18, 1999

Safaraz Niyozov Ph. D. student
Ontario Institute for Studies in
Education, University of Toronto
Canada

A Request for Permission for Conducting a Qualitative Case Study

By this letter I am asking for your permission as Chief Educational Officer for conducting my research project with teachers, students and administrators in the public schools that are under your jurisdiction. I am a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). I am conducting a study that attempts to explore how teacher makes sense of and improve upon their classroom practices in the context of the post-soviet, rural and mountainous Tajikistan. This study is needed for partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy in Education. It aims at exploring their practices and reasons behind their actions. I believe this is an important study in many ways: It will contribute to:

(a). Conceptualising and developing a contextualized framework for a better understanding and exposing of teaching, teacher knowledge and the conditions of teachers' life and work in the rural, mountainous and post-Soviet Tajikistan,
(b). Comparing this contextualized insights about teaching and teacher knowledge with similar notions in the Western contexts. These insights might challenge, examine and/or enrich the existing theoretical, contextual and conceptual frames and conceptions on teaching, teachers' voice and knowledge in the Western and non-Western contexts,
(c). Rethinking our approaches to teaching, teacher development and curriculum innovations in Tajikistan and elsewhere, and
(d). Illuminating (indirectly, because this is not a highlighted purpose) some of the aspects of the qualitative case study method the researchers might want to further consider while exploring contexts similar to that of this study.

These contributions are dependent upon your permission for cooperation for conducting this research project.

I am a qualified teacher and teacher educator with experience of teaching and researching at primary, secondary and university levels in various contexts. During the research I am willing to make myself available to the participant teachers and administrators, where deemed suitable, in assisting in the daily process of teaching and learning, for a period of working with the teacher and other participants.

I plan to conduct case studies in a small number of schools in three or four districts of Gorno-Badakshan Autonomous Province. The districts will be identified as I arrive in Khorog. My work in each district will take about 1.5 months. Overall, the duration of the research project will be about 6-7 months.

In addition to the teachers, I will also meet with the students and members of wider education community. I am planning to have discussions with the officials at the Directorate of Education and Institute of Teacher Training.
I am planning to observe the participant teachers' lessons and conduct interviews with the teachers and other participants. Their observations and interviews might be video/audio taped, and accordingly transcribed and translated. I will take observation notes about their work and life in and out of classroom. In addition my data collection methods may involve studying educational documents (e.g., school record, brochures, etc.).

Safeguards will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the data in that all the data will be locked in a filing cabinet, shared with only my committee members and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the research project. Every effort will be made to guarantee the anonymity of the participants. Any part of information that the teacher and other participants will feel uncomfortable with will be discussed as to whether it could be eliminated or reconsidered in ways that its importance is exposed. The identity of the teachers and their school will be concealed and revealing information will be withheld. Publication of any materials related to this research will proceed with their explicit consent. All teachers and other participants who agree to participate in my research are free to withdraw at any time they wish.

I would like to highlight that this study should not be viewed or used as a source for evaluating of and making administrative decisions about any of its participants in any way.

Thanking you

Sarfaroz Niyozov
Graduate Student
OISE/UT

Mr. Davlatsho Saifulloev, Director of
Education GBAO, Tajikistan,
Appendix 4: Classroom Observation Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Classroom Subject Matter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on:</td>
<td>Academic Competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affective/Social Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content:</td>
<td>Adherence to the Textbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of Additional Material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reference to the local environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reference to the experiences of the students and teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher is confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lacks knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance of Students is Based on:</td>
<td>Respect for the Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compliance to the rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fear of the teacher/other authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Materials:</td>
<td>Available for students as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dispensed by teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developed locally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brought from outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality (Relevance, language, accessibility)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations for Students:</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obedience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' Behaviors Addressed When:</td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student/Teacher Interactions Are:</td>
<td>Interactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Initiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Initiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student/Students' Interactions Are:</td>
<td>Encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' Assignments are:</td>
<td>Directed and evaluated by teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chosen, shared and evaluated by students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation:
Forms (praise, grading, etc.)
Content and purpose
Who does it (teacher, peers)

Teaching Strategies and Methods:
Teacher Centred
Students/Learner centred

Appeals to Authority:
Religious
Secular
Both

Connecting Classroom with Life out of it:
Village
Region
Local culture
Global

*Note:* The guide is a not a rigid tool but a helping frame to allow me to capture the classroom inasmuch as I could. Mainly observations were taken freely in a narrative mode. The guide was used for focusing myself to see if I have covered as many aspects as possible. The guide became modified by new insights and/or on the ground realities of the context of my inquiry.
Appendix 5: Interview Guide: Principal Participants

(Adapted from Brawn & McIntyre, 1993; Cole, 1987; Hargreaves, 1995; Jackson, 1968; Louden, 1991; Niyozov, 1995; Thiessen, 1993a+)

Part 1. Constructive feedback on the classroom practices
Extension/classroom particularities:
Rules for your classroom
Design of your classroom
Design of your school
Comparing students of today with your own time
Elements of good teaching in your view
What kind of teacher for this school would you have selected?
How differently did you teach this lesson ten years ago?
How do you know you are doing a good job in your classroom?
What is a lesson?

Part 2. General Educational:
What kind of characteristics do you try to foster in your students? Why so?
How has it changed?
What kind of relationships do you try to develop with your students?
What role does the textbook play in your classroom?
What kind of strategies do you use?
What is your role as a teacher in the classroom?
What in your opinion motivates students’ learning?
What is the purpose of education?
What kind of education should there be for students in this rural mountains?
What does it mean to teach in the rural setting? What are the challenges?
Are there are opportunities?
What challenges do the mountains provide for your classroom?
Does the curriculum/textbook provide this kind of learning?
In what ways does the ideological change influence your classroom? How do you feel about it?

Part 3: Related to Life History:
Tell me about yourself;
Family, Parents
Childhood experiences with schooling

Schooling
Subject liked, teacher liked. How have they influenced your choice of becoming a teacher and your ways of teaching?
University:
Why Teaching? Professors you liked, disliked and learnt from
Would you have chosen this profession again?
First years of Teaching
Marriage and Family, spouse, kids
Teaching in the Soviet time
Pesestroika and after it.
Independence and civil war
Current realities
Relations with colleagues. Favourite teacher
Learning from:
   Russians
   Westerners
   Local Community
   heritage and one's own culture
   Life in mountains
   Life in village
   Gains and Losses

Role of Ideology:
Communism and Soviet Education
Religion: Islam and Ismailism
Nationalism
Arrival of the Aga Khan and his institutions
Democracy
Appendix 6: Interview Guide: Secondary Participants

How do the mountains and rural context affect your life and work? Why did you remain to teach? What are the major challenges you face in the post-Soviet Tajikistan? How do you address these challenges? How has the Aga Khan’s arrival affected your teaching? What is the future of teachers in Murghab? How could one better understand your teaching and your life? What professional development opportunities do you have now? How are they different from those of the Soviet times? What has changed in your life and work? What has remained the same? What should reformers and policy makers consider? What kind of education, in your view is required for the mountainous post-Soviet Badakhshan? Are there any questions that you may have?