



SUMMARY REPORT

THE FRAGILE POWER OF MIGRATION:

the needs and rights of women and girls from Tajikistan
and Kyrgyzstan who are affected by migration

2018



Summary Report: “THE FRAGILE POWER OF MIGRATION: the needs and rights of women and girls from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan who are affected by migration, 2018”.

This research on the needs and rights of women and girls affected by migration from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan was prepared by a team of experts from PIL Research Company with the support of the IOM missions in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The IOM Mission in Kazakhstan – the IOM Sub-regional Coordination Office for Central Asia (IOM Central Asia) – provided overall guidance and coordination for the project.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
FIDH	International Human Rights Federation (French acronym)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ORT	National university entrance examination (Russian acronym)
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

INTRODUCTION

The concepts of migration, integration, multiculturalism and return migration, along with other terms, arrived in our lives not very long ago. However it seems like we have known them all our lives and understand their meanings, and what is more we often use them to describe real life. For example, young residents of Bishkek and Dushanbe¹ alike today react sharply to how rapidly their cities are being filled with migrants from rural areas and how they are negatively changing the faces of the capitals, and not for the better. In so doing they forget that in the last decade of Soviet history, the 1980s, the so-called titular ethnic groups made up 22.9 per cent and 31.6 per cent respectively of the population of these cities, and that most of today's "urban population" arrived in large numbers yesterday.

In his book "Integration of migrants: Concepts and Practices" Russian academic V. Malakhov subverts key migration terms, speaking about the ambiguity of each of them. For example, for the term "integration", Malakhov distinguishes at least three different interlinked phenomena: 1) assimilation of the migrant (loss of identity and distinctive characteristics of the culture of the sending society and "dissolution" into the host culture); 2) cultural adaptation (adapting to the new culture without giving up one's own identity); and 3) structural adaptation (inclusion in the social and economic life of the destination society).²

Researcher I. Plyugin's position entirely accords with this: he states that the term migrant has not yet been defined in international law, and law enforcement practices in various countries around the world use three main criteria to define a migrant: place of birth, citizenship and place of residence. Each of these criteria is also problematic and changeable. This can easily be seen from the status of Kyrgyz and Tajiks (over 30 years of age) in Moscow: citizens of the two sovereign states of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, who had been born in a single state called the Soviet Union, are now immigrants in the former capital of their homeland.

In their article "Who is a migrant? Once again to the issue of basic sociological characteristics",³ researchers P. Lisitsyn and M. Ermakova sum up their analysis with the conclusion: "migrants are not entities in the world, 'migrant' is a perspective of the world. Starting from this point, it becomes clear that migrants should be researched not as a group but as a category, and the key research questions should be: "Who makes up this category?", "How and why was this category created?", "How is the category institutionalized?" and "What does this institutionalization result in?"⁴

THE AIM OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT is to study the situation of women and girls affected by migration in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and to determine and analyse their vulnerability and needs – as well as the institutional, political and social environment that they find themselves in – in order to further develop policies and programmes of activity for countries participating in the field of migration. A particular focus of the study is to explore the challenges of reintegrating women and girls who have experienced migration after their return to their homelands, and the problems that women and girls from migrant families find in adapting after returning to their homeland.

How and why did it become necessary to distinguish the category of "women and girls affected by migration from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan"? How justified is it to include in this category women and girls who have had personal experience of personal migration alongside those who were members of families of labour migrants but stayed at home? Is it possible to see similar needs and problems, achievements and opportunities behind the separate trajectories and different destinies of the women and girls from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan affected by migration? These and other critical issues formed the basis of this publication.

In order to answer the research question, the study reviewed trends in the situation and needs of women and girls affected by migration from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and examined the impact and role of migration infrastructures on the fates of women and girls.

1 Bishkek is the capital of Kyrgyzstan and Dushanbe the capital of Tajikistan. http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2016/0677/analit04.php#_ftnref; Dinorshoev, M.D. (ed.), Entsiklopediya [Encyclopaedia], 2004.

2 http://www.liberal.ru/upload/files/Malahov_pp1-40.pdf

3 Sovremennyye problemy transnatsionalizma i migratsii [Modern Issues of Transnationalism and Migration], Volume 2, p.28, <http://tandem.spbu.ru/publications/>

4 Ibid.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main methodological framework of the study was the theoretical approach of migration infrastructure, which means systematically interconnected technologies, institutions and entities that create and provide conditions and regimes of mobility for different categories of people. That is, the approach is intended to demonstrate how different components of migration infrastructure specifically affect the migration behaviour and practices of various women and girls from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan affected by migration.

The most valuable thing about this theoretical approach is the understanding that the migration strategies of men and women from different countries and strata do not emerge from their will and desires, or from rational choice. On the contrary, the trajectories of mobility and the fate of migrants – women and men – are determined by specific complex configurations of this migration infrastructure: legislative systems and procedures for documenting citizens and non-citizens, communications and transport infrastructure, migration brokers of all types and statuses, cultural practices and social networks.

RESEARCH METHODS

In order to ensure the collection of complete and reliable data, a methodology was designed that included qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. In particular, the following methods were used: (a) desk review; (b) policy analysis; (c) expert interviews; (d) focus group discussions; and (e) content analysis.

The main aim of the desk review was to identify gaps in the field of the rights, needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls affected by migration in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan by analysing documents and statistics. The policy analysis component of the research included analysis of state policies, strategic programmes, national action plans, state expenditure and regulatory documents in relevant sectors. A total of 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted (15 in each country) with representatives of state institutions, local government, NGOs, international organizations, trades unions and other relevant structures. The expert interviews were used to reveal the opinions of experts about gaps in services and programmes, and to receive recommendations for actions at local, national and regional level to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls.

Focus group discussions enabled the collection of in-depth information about the needs and rights of women and girls from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan who are migrants or affected by migration, and also about the types of support services and programmes that they have used, are currently using and/or would like to use. A total of 203 people took part in focus groups in Kyrgyzstan, and 164 in Tajikistan. The number in each focus group varied between 6 and 12. The interviews allowed for detailed information to be obtained about the needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls who were migrants or affected by migration, and also a subjective perspective on the factors influencing the vulnerability. Extended interviews allowed in-depth information to be received about the needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls affected by migration, as well as a subjective understanding of the factors influencing their vulnerability. A total of 10 in-depth interviews were conducted: 5 in each country.

The research included a combination of qualitative and quantitative content analysis of mass media articles published in key media in both countries. The research group analysed media products from six leading online informational agencies in Kyrgyzstan (www.24.kg, kaktus.media, akipress.org, www.kabar.kg, www.azattyk.org, and www.sputnik.kg) and five in Tajikistan (avesta.tj, sputnik.tj, www.asiaplus.tj, muhojir.info and rus.ozodi.org) published between 1 May 2017 and 31 May 2018. Analysts conducted the content analysis in several languages: the original languages of publication and Russian.

Figure 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in Kyrgyzstan.

		Experience of migration		No experience of migration	
		Worked	Did not work	Wives / carers	Daughters
Total		105	20	59	19
Age (mean)		39	41	45	18
Family status	Single	19	2	1	18
	Married	58	15	53	1
	Divorced / widowed	28	3	5	0
Financial situation of the family	Enough for food and clothes	42	11	24	3
	Not enough to buy expensive things	56	6	32	16
	Can buy expensive things	7	3	3	0
Educational attainment	Secondary (including unfinished)	37	4	25	12
	Specialized secondary	30	6	13	4
	Higher (including unfinished)	38	10	21	3

Figure 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in Tajikistan.

		Experience of migration		No experience of migration	
		Worked	Did not work	Wives / carers	Daughters
Total		86	14	51	13
Age (mean)		40	45	44	24
Family status	Single	4	0	1	3
	Married	47	10	44	9
	Divorced / widowed	35	4	6	1
Financial situation of the family	Enough for food and clothes	53	10	25	9
	Not enough to buy expensive things	27	3	23	4
	Can buy expensive things	6	1	4	0
Educational attainment	Secondary (including unfinished)	37	7	30	5
	Specialized secondary	17	4	10	5
	Higher (including unfinished)	32	3	11	3

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This study used a qualitative strategy for data collection and does not fulfil the requirements of representativeness. Most of the survey respondents spoke of their experience of labour migration to Russia and Kazakhstan. The information sources (the statistics and research data) also mainly cover the migration context and the situation of labour migrants from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in these destination countries. The experience of citizens of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the expanding range of destinations of labour migration (Turkey, the Republic of Korea, Italy, the United Arab Emirates and other countries) is still very poorly represented in the scientific literature and statistics.

For this study, thanks to the forum of Kyrgyz diasporas held in June, we were able to conduct several interviews with labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan from all over the world. However, for the most part these interviews reflect the interests of diaspora leaders. In addition, the researchers did not have the opportunity to conduct interviews with representatives of Tajik diasporas.

The limitations of the study also include a non-systematic approach to the study of public discourse on labour migration from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in Russia.

CHAPTER 1. THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY IN TAJIKISTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN: TRENDS AND PROBLEMS

The research data facilitate analysis and evaluation of trends in key social institutions such as family and marriage – and the system of family and marital relations – in conditions of migration, and description of how the personal documentation of women and children in the family and society depend on those persons' documentation. The lack of birth certificates and passports for women and girls reflects their low status, and can often become the reason why they cannot migrate with other family members, are limited in access to basic services when staying at home, and also consequently cannot acquire other documents important for their lives: property ownership papers, marriage certificates and so on. Moreover, the lack of documentation of one generation of citizens automatically makes their children vulnerable.

This research has shown that, for the respondents also, documentation is a significant problem, which influences their attitudes to and opportunities for migration in many ways.

THE DOCUMENTATION OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN

According to the World Health Report (for 2008), 40 per cent of all 128 million births in the world every year remain unregistered because of the lack of a civil status registration system. The situation concerning deaths is still worse: more than two-thirds of deaths are not recorded in state registries around the world.⁵

The importance of the problem of documentation of civil status in the Asia-Pacific region is demonstrated by the agenda of the first Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in 2014, which led to the Proclamation of the Decade of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, 2015-2024.⁶

A review of literature on migration in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan revealed that the countries have their own peculiarities with regard to access of citizens to the documentation of civil status. In Tajikistan large numbers of people still have problems obtaining state registration of civil status (such as birth certificates, passports, state registration of marriage and so on). Thus, the 2012 study “Legal problems: the needs of the population for legal services and practical solutions” found that 54.7 per cent of the women and 45.3 per cent of the men among the 909 respondents mentioned receiving civil status documents as a key legal problem. Of these 38.3 per cent of respondents did not take any active actions to obtain documents, due to lack of information on how to resolve the problem.

Accurate official statistics on citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic without passports or birth certificates and people living in the country without defined status are not made public, although officials, civil society and human rights activists, testify that there are many such people in the country.⁷ It is important to note that the situation in Kyrgyzstan has improved significantly since 2011, when the first public service centres (hereafter referred to as “one-stop shops”)⁸ were established to make provision of the population of Kyrgyzstan with national passports more efficient, and the services themselves were standardized.

5 <https://books.google.kg/books?isbn=9244563738>.

6 Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade 2015-24 https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Asian_and_Pacific_Civil_Registration_and_Vital_Statistics_Decade2015-2024_Booklet_Russian_1.pdf

7 <https://ru.sputnik.kg/society/20180212/1037711595/obyazatelen-li-inn-dlya-detej.html>: Checks by the State Registration Service revealed that 216,000 schoolchildren did not have personal identification numbers, while several thousand children (the number required clarified) did not even have birth certificates. https://24.kg/obschestvo/85216_bez_bumajki_tyibukashka_problemyi_jdut_kyrgyzstantsev_ukotoryih_net_pasportov_/; https://kaktus.media/doc/377882_piatiletnij_malchik_jivet_bez_svidetelstva_o_rojdenii_otec_vinit_mestnye_organ.html

8 https://grs.gov.kg/uploads/handbooks/manual_teachers.pdf

The study respondents have identified the reasons why women migrant workers or members of migrant families do not register their civil status. For each of the identified reasons there is a country specificity.

LACK OF FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

This reason was typical for Tajikistan: not one respondent mentioned financial problems in Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, the problem of documentation was revealed to be very gender-sensitive: according to a study of legal problems in Tajikistan⁹ women, particularly young women are the ones who end up without documents (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Figure 3. Legal problems by sex (%), n=909¹⁰

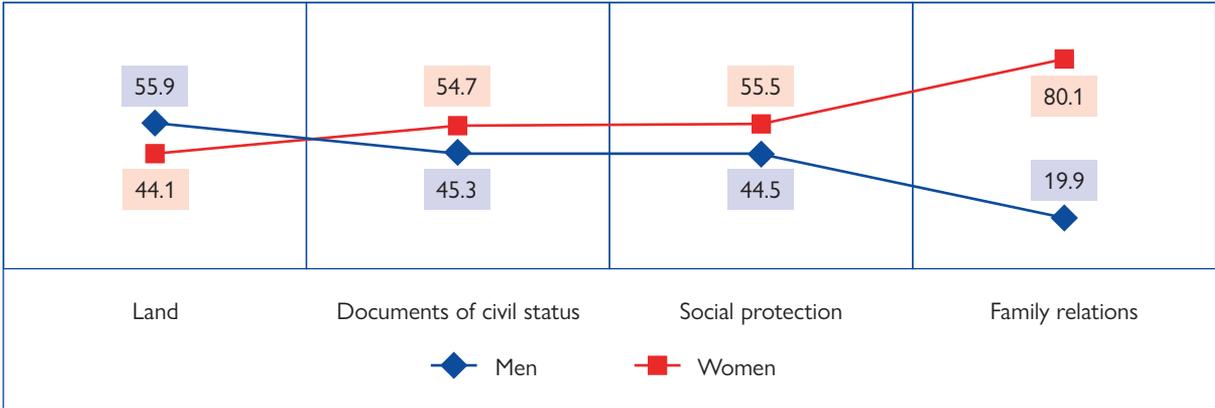
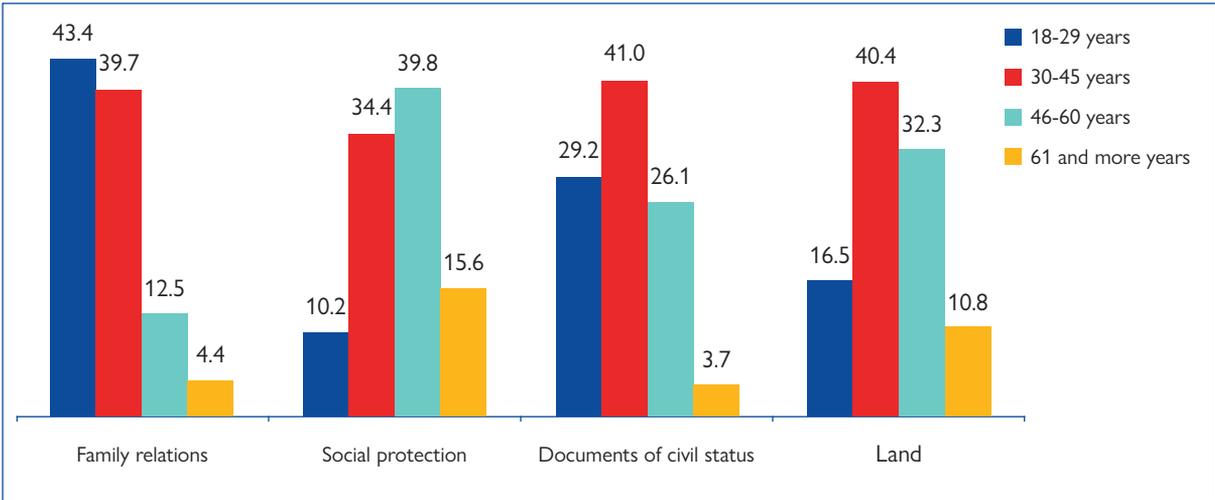


Figure 4. Legal problems by age (%), n=909¹⁰



The respondents from Tajikistan did not raise the issue of high prices without reason: passports in this country are the most expensive in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). “The official cost of a biometric passport (consular fees), as established by Government Decree 546 of 2 November 2007, is \$75. In addition, the recipient must pay 75 somoni of state duty and 40 somoni for the service. This is an additional 115 somoni, or \$13 (National Bank of Tajikistan rate of 23 January 2018). As a result, a biometric passport costs \$88,¹¹ and the standard period of receipt is 15 days from the date of submission of documents.

9 Fond Sodeystviya v Tadjhikistane, Pravovyye problemy: potrebnosti naseleniya v yuridicheskikh uslugakh i praktikuyemyye sposoby resheniya [Legal Problems: The needs of the population for judicial services and practical means of resolution. IOO — Zerkalo, 2012.
 10 Ibid., pp. 82-83.
 11 <https://news.tj/ru/news/tajikistan/society/20180207/nash-dorogoi-zagran>

“... The cheapest passports in the CIS¹² are issued for citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic. Receiving it initially costs 530 soms, or only \$7.70. The period for receipt is 18 days. If you need an international passport urgently then, depending on the timescale, the cost will increase. However, the maximum cost is \$90 for a period of receipt of three hours. Replacing a passport in Kyrgyzstan will usually cost 590 soms. For its loss or damage, citizens of this country pay 730 soms.”

BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO FULFIL

The actual cost of an international passport can increase in Tajikistan, largely because citizens (according to our respondents), have to travel repeatedly for a document. For example, single women from Bokhtar with experience of labour migration discussed it as follows:

“Participant 3: *If only at least it became cheaper.*

Moderator: *How much does it cost to get a passport?*

Participant 3: *For example, 150 somoni. And a fine on top of that.*

Participant 6: *You run back and forth.*

Moderator: *Why is it so difficult to arrange?*

Participant 6: *Every time you have to go to the Jamoat.*

Moderator: *How many times do you go?*

Participant 6: *More than a month. It will take about 1.5-2 months.”*

The second most frequently mentioned problem with civil status registration mentioned by respondents from Tajikistan was bureaucratic red tape. The research participants stated that they needed to travel repeatedly from their villages to a city and wait in queues, and that their registration could be postponed because they did not know in advance what package of documents they should provide. Some indicated that it took them from several weeks to several months to receive a document. That is, despite the de jure existing standard for documentation services in Tajikistan, obtaining a passport is not standardized in practice, and there are not points that provide services in each village, but only in administrative centres: this increases the transportation and other overhead expenses citizens need for documentation. Experts argue that the problem of documentation is chronically repeated from generation to generation, as often children cannot obtain citizenship because their parents are stateless.

A Radio Ozodlik publication referencing UNICEF Tajikistan data asserts that in 2015, 12 per cent of all children born in Tajikistan did not have documents.¹³ A respondent to our study in Ishtrovashan testified: *“Like I said before, between 1994 and 2005 (her sister studies with my daughter), it’s like that for everyone. Not one person was registered. After other people were born, they began processing the document. Everyone still travels to Dushanbe city. We travelled, got there, but still do not have a birth certificate. They only did the checks in Dushanbe.”*

The respondents noted that citizens who were children during the civil war have particular problems with documentation. Birth certificates issued and received during that period are often deemed invalid and so they have to restore the information about the birth registration in the archives. This requires procedures and trips to the capital, and naturally expenses are required for this.

The research in Tajikistan aggregated the figures taken for length of procedures for receiving services:

¹² It should be noted that in some CIS countries, including Uzbekistan, internal and international passports are combined.

¹³ <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/26930196.html>

Table 1. Issues and time needed to resolve them (%), n=636¹⁴

Issue	Within a week	Less than a month	One to three months	Three to six months	Six months to a year	More than a year
Family relations	7.8	10.7	26.2	17.5	13.6	24.3
Social protection		4.3	24.7	14.0	23.7	33.3
Receiving documents certifying civil status	19.8	25.4	23.8	8.7	4.8	17.5
Land / plots	2.3	4.1	9.8	9.4	20.3	54.1

Meanwhile, according to some respondents from Tajikistan, many of those who were deported from Russia or Kazakhstan receive documents in other names. What is more they can redo all the necessary documents at once, from birth certificates and certificates of education to passports, to circumvent the list of re-entry banned migrants. As one of the respondents from Bokhtari noted: *“I was deported. So I need new documents using the surname of my parents or one of my relatives. Now you need a lot of money to change documents”*. In other words, according to the respondents’ testimonies, it is quite possible to obtain counterfeit documents with fake names. One of the experts said that she often came across cases in which people quasi-legally changed their documents, changing their names to circumvent the list of re-entry banned migrants. The expert believes that *“the entire state apparatus is working on forging documents, and state bodies – including registry offices, the Ministry of Education and passport offices, which earn good money changing marriage certificates, certificates of education and passports – are still benefiting”*.

According to experts in the Kyrgyz Republic, the “replacement” of passports of deported citizens from Russia also occurs in that country, if not to the same industrial scale: at least fairly often people apply for and receive new passports with new (often arbitrary) names and surnames.

In Kyrgyzstan, the problem of the remoteness of documentation service centres was largely resolved in 2011-2012, when a one-stop shop was opened in each *aiyl okmotu* (sub-district), and today citizens can easily obtain passports. Moreover, a range of social institutions – for example, general secondary schools – help senior school pupils to acquire passports, as passports (identity cards) are required for taking national university entrance examinations and obtaining certificates of education. Since 2018, the State Registration Service has been undertaking a pilot project in which registry offices and Ministry of Health maternity hospitals combine their databases on newborns. As a result, birth certificates are provided straight away in the maternity home.¹⁵

Unlike for Tajiks, the main reason for children not receiving birth certificates or passports among Kyrgyz respondents is, generally, negligence and misunderstanding among certain groups of citizens of the functional importance of documentation, because registration is applied for late. There are also difficulties providing the package of documents needed to obtain a passport (this is the case among many *kayrylmans*: ethnic Kyrgyz from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan or Afghanistan who have come to Kyrgyzstan to settle).¹⁶ Similar problems are typical for a group of women from neighbouring Uzbekistan who at various times in the past married Kyrgyzstani men and whose Uzbek passports are no longer valid, but did not receive at the time internal passports for Kyrgyzstan.¹⁷ The problems with documentation of these population groups in Kyrgyzstan, like in Tajikistan, leads to statelessness over several generations, despite the significant institutional mechanisms put in place to improve the situation in this area.¹⁸

14 Fond Sodeystviya v Tadzhikistane, *Pravovyye problemy: potrebnosti naseleniya v yuridicheskikh uslugakh i praktikuyemyye sposoby resheniya* [Legal Problems: The needs of the population for judicial services and practical means of resolution. IOO — Zerkalo, 2012, p.90.

15 <https://kloop.kg/blog/2017/12/26/s-novogo-goda-svidetelstvo-o-rozhdenii-rebenka-mozhno-budet-poluchit-v-roddome/>

16 According to the focus group respondents, resettled persons do not possess many documents that are essential for passport applications (such as birth certificates), and as a rule the states from which the *kayrylmans* came do not fulfil requests for the certificates to be reissued.

17 There are some citizens of the former Soviet Union who do not have a defined citizenship, as well as foreign citizens (*de facto* stateless) and children at risk of statelessness.

18 The existence of “invisible” citizens has become more prominent for the state over the last few years thanks to the efforts of civil society. As a result of this, a range of problems have been resolved, including opportunities to register. Under article 16(4) of the Law “On Internal Migration”, citizens without a fixed place of residence can register with the local government body in the area in which they are living.

LACK OF AWARENESS ABOUT RECEIVING SERVICES

Often, according to the respondents, non-documentation of civil status is the result of limited information and lack of channels for informing citizens. One of the participants at the Hissar and Yavan focus group of female migrants gave a typical example: *“In our area there are families who live in a non-state marriage, having had a Muslim nikah. They do not have marriage certificates. One girl received a birth certificate at the age of four. There is a child in this family aged one year nine months: recently a hutna was organized for her at the expense of the city administration: it turned out that she does not have a birth certificate. Apparently, the Jamoat issues documents for babies up to one year of age, and after a year the district does. I believe that this is insufficient and stems from ignorance. Not everyone lives near the Jamoat and is aware of all the requirements for obtaining birth certificates: they think that the child will go to school and receive all the documents there”.*

The lack of complete information among respondents often leads to the creation of myths and the spreading of stereotypes. Among the Kyrgyz respondents, imaginary obstacles were repeatedly articulated to obtaining documents establishing ownership of property, as well as marriage certificates and so on. *“My marriage is not registered with the state. Because I married a Russian citizen and am a citizen of Kyrgyzstan, we could not register here. And so we’re living without registration. That is, we have a common-law marriage, so to speak: we have children. But I had to give the children my surname.”* (Osh, family member of migrant, did not work in migration).

Discussions in focus groups revealed that mass labour migration is significantly affecting the documentation of citizens in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, if one of the spouses acquired citizenship of the Russian Federation or Kazakhstan while the other remains a citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic, additional bureaucratic procedures arise that complicate documentation of their marriages and registration of their children’s birth, and citizens often do not try to resolve these as they are sure there will be red tape and risks of corruption.

The most widespread problem of documentation in Kyrgyzstan relates to state registration of marriage, as in the last decade religious marriage registration (nikah) has almost universally “displaced” registration in registry offices. Interestingly, in their words the respondents from Kyrgyzstan recognized the importance of civil registration for the rights of women and children, but at the same time in practice nikah is dominant and culturally justified.

The issue of marriage registration is no less important in Tajikistan than in Kyrgyzstan, and many aspects of women’s vulnerability caused by absence of state registration of marriage were revealed both in focus groups and in field case studies. However, respondents from Tajikistan in general prioritized the issues of obtaining passports and birth certificates.

Meanwhile, some of the respondents in Kyrgyzstan testified about the advantages of not having state registration of a marriage for a migrant woman: if she gets Russian citizenship, for example, as a single mother she can claim more allowances and priority access to the education system. In addition, absence of official marriage registration allows a woman to take children with her across borders without notarized power of attorney from the father authorizing her to take the child out of the country.

GENDER DIFFERENCES AND SPECIFICS

Respondents from both countries noted that gender affects timely receipt of identity documents: for young men, timely documentation can mean “withdrawal” from conscription. **Participant 1:** *“Yes, with boys they sometimes want to get it done more quickly and for them to leave so they’re not called up to the army [noise among group members]. Because of this, boys are more active in this than girls. That’s my opinion”.* (**Khatlon, daughters of migrants**)

Another possible specific reason is linked with the model of “trial” marriages in the traditional format: **Participant 7:** *I think it’s because husbands are not sure about their marriage, and in case of divorce they don’t want to get into a court dispute about division of property between spouses or, for*

example, pay alimony and so on.” (**Gorno Badakhshan, women banned from re-entering the Russian Federation**).

Respondents from two different groups in Kyrgyzstan gave examples of gender differences in documentation. The first example revealed that in Kyrgyzstan as well as Tajikistan young men who did not want to serve in the army and migrating before reaching the age of 18 could give them the opportunity to avoid compulsory military service. The second example gives a specific reason for not documenting on time, based on cultural gender stereotypes: “There is another reason why many have not registered their marriages in the registry office. To register, the girl and the guy need to go together in advance to the *Ayil Okmotu* [local government building] to deposit their application. But before marrying our girls cannot go somewhere where everyone can see with a guy. So they don’t go and don’t register the marriage straight away. Then they forget after that.” (**Osh, daughters of migrants**)

REASONS FOR NOT GETTING DOCUMENTS

Trends of change on documentation can be seen as connected to the creation of negative stimuli. Though the advantages of unregistered marriages were only discussed in one focus group, in Kyrgyzstan, the situation appears to be symptomatic, and testifies to the high level of adaptability of labour migrants: “I found out later that if the marriage is not registered you don’t need a letter of authorization from the father when you take the children with you: no need for the additional costs and hassle”. (**Chuy, single women and girls, worked as migrants**). “And also there are benefits for single mothers in Russia: for example children can go straight to kindergarten without joining the waiting list, and the benefits are higher. That’s of course if they have Russian citizenship. Therefore, there are lots of single mothers among our Kyrgyz who have Russian citizenship: it’s financially advantageous and easier there”. (**Chuy, single women and girls, worked as migrants**).

MARRIAGE AND MARITAL STRATEGIES: FAMILY RELATIONS AND DIVORCE

The documentation situation reflects the environment: it is a formal indicator of changes in the status and situation of women and girls in the context of mass migration. In the respondents’ opinions, labour migration from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan has had its most significant effect on the institution of the family and marital relations in these countries. The Gender in Society Perception Study in Kyrgyzstan in 2016¹⁹ revealed that women and men returning from labour migration face similar problems in most cases: health deterioration, psychological problems, difficulties finding work, distance from children, and worsening relations with their spouses. Two-thirds of women (67.5 per cent) believe that migration worsens relations in the family.²⁰

Most of the respondents believe that divorces are usually initiated from the side of the husband and his close relatives, and are connected with their understanding that a woman can easily be kicked out with nothing after many years of her service to her family. Husbands without official marriage registration are particularly bold in this. One of the Chui focus group respondents noted that **women’s vulnerability in divorce is normative in nature**: “The most important issue is that when divorce happens property acquired in common is divided in half. In Turkey, for example, the woman receives everything on divorce. Men are afraid to divorce, so I like their law. It is right. If he goes to another woman, he leaves without anything, he will not get any property: he will be left on the street. Here our women need this kind of support. But our men are free to say ‘oh, I want to live with her, go wherever’.”

Changes in certain demographic indicators in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan suggest there have been change in marital and family-reproductive models of behaviour. A sociological survey conducted in Tajikistan and the Russian Federation in 2014 among Tajik migrants²¹ revealed that 9 per cent of Tajik labour migrants in Russia have suffered from sexually transmitted diseases in the past three years, and of these, in more than 11 per cent of cases venereal diseases have been diagnosed among members of

19 <http://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/04b5b8ac-3016-46ed-a7ec-750398c1aeb4.pdf>

20 Ibid.

21 Transformation of Sexual and Matrimonial Behavior of Tajik Labour Migrants in Russia. Asian Social Science; Vol. 10, No. 20; 2014 ISSN 1911-2017 E-ISSN 1911-2025.

their families in Tajikistan. According to a survey of labour migrants in Russia, 38 per cent have seen doctors with reproductive health problems recently. Their spouses in Tajikistan were less likely to seek medical services for reproductive health, at 23 per cent of respondents in this category. The researchers believe that “these facts indicate the topicality of the issue of reproductive health for labour migrants from Tajikistan and the changing sexual behaviour of migrants”.²²

For the purposes of the study, it was not possible to find actual statistics or studies on reproductive behaviour and migration in Kyrgyzstan. Nevertheless, a number of academic and media publications²³ have highlighted the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections among Kyrgyzstanis, especially stressing that the data on reproductive health of women are more alarming than those for men's health, but that the greatest risk is that the diseases are becoming increasingly widespread among 15-17 year old girls.

Changes to marital and reproductive behaviour among citizens of Kyrgyzstan are linked to the migration context and behaviour, conclude the authors of a report.²⁴ “...Having a desire to migrate increases the likelihood that the respondent will answer a question about possible marriage in the next two years positively. This may seem paradoxical, as a more expected consequence of solid migration plans would be deferring marriage. Nevertheless, in the case of the Kyrgyz population, marriage ... in fact can be seen as a consequence, or even as a precondition, for migration”. That is, for young men, especially in rural areas, marriage is seen as a kind of initiation that gives them a legitimate right to leave as labour migrants. Often it is associated with the pragmatic motive of bringing labour into the household during the period the labour migrant is away.

One of the important aspects of marriage and family relations is early marriages and early motherhood. Since 2006, there has been a steady increase in the birth rate among girls aged 15-17: from 4.4 children per 1,000 girls of this age in 2006 to 7.4 per 1,000 in 2014. The birth rate among women aged 18-19 is also increasing: from 75.5 children per 1,000 in 2010 to 92.7 in 2014. According to the 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey in 2014, approximately 12.7 per cent of women in Kyrgyzstan aged between 20 and 49 married before they reached adulthood. The Gender in Society Perception Study²⁵ set out several reasons for the growth of the number of marriages, such as: the desire of the girls themselves (23 per cent), increased poverty and the desire of the family to marry off the girl as early as possible (18 per cent), early sexual activity of young people (17 per cent), the growing influence of Islam and other religions that allow girls to marry at an early age (16 per cent), and the increased number of cases of abduction of minors for marriage (11 per cent).

In the opinions of our study's respondents, another important reason is men's perception that girls and young women are only chaste for a short period: this is fuelled by discourse about the “depravity” of girls and women engaged in migration.

Assessing their personal experience of migration, the respondents identified several varieties of marriage strategies for men and women in migration, and presented their views on the causes of these models. The opinions expressed by the focus group respondents about marriage and marriage strategies of migrants are presented in a schematic form (see Figure 1).

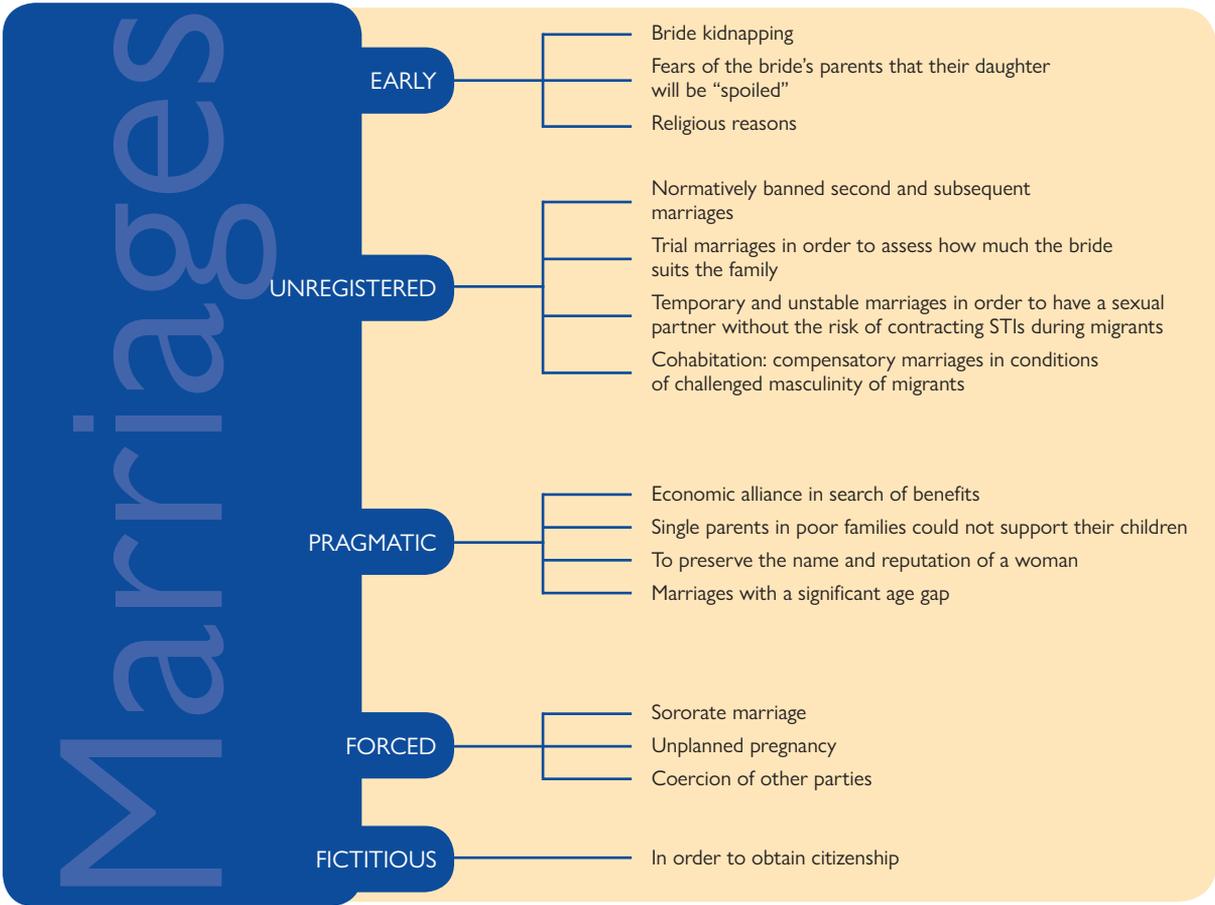
22 Ibid.

23 V Moskve rastet chislo migrantov s IPPP [In Moscow the Number of Migrants with STIs is Growing], <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/28582935.html>; Dinamika zaboilevayemosti IPPP v KR [Trends of STI Morbidity in Kyrgyzstan, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/v/dinamika-zaboilevayemosti-infektsiyami-peredavaemyimi-polovym-putem-v-kyrgyzskoy-respublike>

24 www.public.asu.edu/~agadjan/research/kyrgyz/report_unfpa_rus_draft.doc

25 UN Women Kyrgyzstan, Gender in Society Perceptions Study: Women and Labour Migration, 2016, at <http://kyrgyzstan.unfpa.org/en/publications/gender-society-perception-study>

Figure 5: Marriages



As can be seen from the diagram, most of the respondents noted ongoing social changes in the traditional societies of in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. And what is crucial here for marital relations and behaviour patterns in the two societies is that young women and girls in migration acquire economic independence, and can make independent decisions about marriage and marriage partners. Thus, women from Gorno Badakhshan stated: *“Young people decide about marriage, then they ask permission from their parents, and send money to the parents so that they can go to Russia as well, if the wedding is being held there”*.

In Kyrgyzstan, labour migration is becoming a reason for intensification of inter-regional marriages: this is linked to the more independent decision making by young people about getting married and creating families.

In families in which the young men and women had been married before migration, they often choose other partners for themselves during migration and do not hide this, considering these “temporary” marriages during migration as “natural” and in conformity with Islamic culture and traditions.

Researchers into the transformation of sexual and marital strategies of male labour migrants from Tajikistan to the Russian Federation noted that they had discovered a variety of practices for satisfying sexual needs: some men prefer turning to prostitutes, while others form more permanent relationships with certain women: a “temporary” or “guest” wife.²⁶ Patterns of sexuality in these variations differ: commissioning a “call girl” for the whole male group is popular to save money (35 per cent of respondents said that this is how they meet their needs, and even noted that sometimes the employer invites girls for workers as an incentive). Men who have “temporary” wives can live with them or live separately, meeting several times a month. The authors consider the widespread practice of polygamy at home and cultural acceptance of polygamous relations as the reason for the rife of temporary

²⁶ Transformation of Sexual and Matrimonial Behavior of Tajik Labour Migrants in Russia. Asian Social Science; Vol. 10, No. 20; 2014 ISSN 1911-2017 E-ISSN 1911-2025.

marriages. Data from the research on the transformation of sexual and marital strategies of behaviour among migrants from Tajikistan are also confirmed in Kyrgyz society, where according to the Gender in Society Perception Study, 21 per cent of female respondents considered it fine “if a man in a migration leads a second family, provided that he continues to take care of his first family.” Although the authors of the publication consider that guest wives are regarded as temporary under Islamic tradition, quite often this “marriage” leads to the collapse of the “permanent” family and becomes dominant in the labour migrant’s life. Focus group respondents gave testimony about such cases in Tajikistan.

Discussions on the theme of marital strategies in focus groups touched on the following themes:

1. **State registration of marriage: the attitude of respondents and the reasons for not having state registration.** Late state registration of marriage or its complete absence is common in both countries and is perceived by respondents as a rational choice for one of two reasons: either the very nature of the marriage is contrary to legislation (polygamous marriages, early marriages without judicial permission, and so on), or the spouse and his relatives intend to abstain from legalizing the relationship until they are convinced of the “prospects” of the marriage.
2. **Early marriages: the scale, causes and assessment of such marriages.** The range of respondents’ opinions included the following reasons: a) widespread belief in the natural depravity of girls, who are perceived as perishable goods (they start leading dissolute lives early, and even the internet and mobile phones are contributing to development of these inclinations); b) a fashion has developed for virgin girls who, unlike those with experience of migration, have not yet experienced the hardships and temptations of life; c) the fears of parents that daughters would not marry “on time” and could end up as spinsters “because there are more women than men in the country”; d) single parents are forced to marry their daughters off early to feed their other children; and e) acknowledgement of the role of Islamic ideology and dawaat missionaries in mosques promoting models of early marriage as correct from the perspective of Koranic teachings.
3. **Marriage and family relations in migration.** Discussions on this topic revealed significant gender specificity, built using auto-stereotypes and hetero-stereotypes. In particular, respondents (from both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) noted that in the households of labour migrants, who live in extremely cramped housing conditions with a high density of occupancy of rented apartments, a full-fledged intimate marital life is practically impossible. Moreover, given the practice of choosing a “home” close to work, some migrant spouses cannot live as married couples and are forced to meet infrequently (1-2 times a month).²⁷ With a few “national” variations, the scenario of “seduction” of “our” girls was also presented. Respondents from Tajikistan testified about the “dishonourable” attitude of men and their relatives to young Tajik girls, whom they officially wooed from a distance, performed the nikah with the help of parents and other close relatives and “sent away” to Russia. There, after living with them for a short time, they gave a talok divorce, having considered the relationship a trial marriage. In the Kyrgyz variation, usually the man’s relatives are not involved: the men “find” the women through social networks and “invite” them to Russia, promising to help them find work and somewhere to live. On arrival, they tend to offer to live together, and in practice form a common-law marriage.

Fictitious weddings are an important part of marital strategies. Respondents from Tajikistan discussed the prevalence of fictitious marriages with the aim of acquiring Russian citizenship among Tajik men, but discussion of such marriages demonstrated that the divide between fictitious and real marriages is rather unclear. Sexual relationships between labour migrants from Tajikistan and Russian women in general were very commonly mentioned in discourse, and respondents spoke about co-habitation of tenant Tajik men and Russian landladies. The argument invariably involved a stereotypical image of such Russian women: “Many landladies are unmarried, or their husbands drink and they are powerless in sexual relations and do not fulfil their marital duties, so they are happy to live with our husbands. Our men can also do all

²⁷ Participant 2: “Spouses go to work as migrants, but because of the situation they can not live together: it is not possible, so they live separately, and here the pitfalls can begin.” Participant 10: “A woman was working as a dishwasher, and the Azerbaijani head saw her and decided to seduce the married woman. As she and her husband worked different shifts and lived separately, she had a very hard time, having to hide behind cars until her husband came to work.” (Rasulov, women migrants)

the work around the house.” In the Kyrgyz focus groups, a new “marriage” trend among Kyrgyz people living in large Russian cities was discussed. The talk is of young men who cannot or do not want to work hard and earn money with heavy migrant labour, preferring to find an adult woman who has already “got up on her feet” and can provide not only for herself and her loved ones, but also for her partner. Such cases were particularly discussed among the younger focus group participants, who strongly condemned such relationships, calling the men lazy shirkers.

Finally, there is a variation of marital relations in migration that is characteristic of women. Some women (less often Tajik, more often Kyrgyz) found themselves new partners as migrants, who were often of a different ethnicity and citizenship, and spoke of a qualitatively new relationship with the man, about respect and beautiful courtship, that they have never seen from their husbands / partners in their homeland. That is, for these labour migrants, migration provided valuable opportunities to expand the national marriage market and chances for family happiness.

4. **The influence of migration on marriage: respondents’ assessments.** In general, migration is considered to be a positive phenomenon in economic terms but extremely negative socially and culturally. The economic aspect of migration’s influence includes obtaining important resources for the family that would not be possible without migration income: construction / buying one’s own house or flat; the possibility of paying off large debts (including bank loans); buying cars, furniture and household goods; opportunities for children to receive a professional education in prestigious educational facilities; and opportunities to open one’s “own business” and earn an income in the homeland.

In every focus group a similar story was told (whether citizens of Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan) in which a woman was able to rise from absolute poverty to become rich and influential in society, and to give her children chances of well-provided lives. Often such heroines at the same time resolved marital issues: after long years she meets a man who loves, appreciates and supports her.

The social and cultural costs of migration are described by respondents in terms of:

- a) increased conflict in the family and divorce (the initiators can be both women and men);
- b) the emergence of the category of abandoned wives who, with their children, are struggling with poverty, depression and poor health;
- c) stigma around women and girls with migration experience, despite their contribution to the household and community economy;
- d) broken lives of children who did not know what parental love and care mean, who falter in life and end up socially excluded;
- e) loss of health / loss of loved ones;
- f) loss of family traditions and the creation of large groups of women and men who no longer want to live in the same way, in the old ways of living and in their former communities; and
- g) loss of “local” and “national” roots: lack of desire / inability to maintain and follow cultural norms (including clothing and behaviour) of their ancestors.

Thus, the study of respondents’ perceptions of the impact of migration on the marital behaviour of men and women from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan at home and in the country of destination for labour migration is mixed. On the one hand, the discourse includes the possibility of expanding the marriage market and increasing the chances of choosing a marriage partner or the possibility of preserving marriage and family by solving economic needs through migration; on the other hand, it highlights the inevitable and non-equivalent exchange by labour migrants of economic benefits for high social and cultural costs.

VIOLENCE IN THE FAMILY

Discourse on migration is traditionally closely intertwined with discourse of violence: this includes both issues of discrimination and violence against migrants in the host community (including forcible exploitation and nationalist attacks), and violence within ethnic diasporas (including gender-based violence by male migrant workers against female migrant workers from their countries). Meanwhile, the media is currently also discussing violence against migrant children who remained in their homeland without their parents.

Domestic violence affecting migrant workers abroad and other aspects of domestic violence in migration are still being studied less actively, due to the latency of trials and the complexities of gaining access.

During this research, the respondents raised the issue of violence in migration several times, and not just in the context of the workplace, but also in the family. In their opinion, the most vulnerable in the family were – and continue to be – young brides: their daily lives are difficult both in the homeland (after their husbands leave to earn money) and as migrants (if they travel as family members).

Thus, the focus group respondents in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, particularly young ones, said that the daughter-in-law actually lives in slavery in the husband's family, without psychological support from her husband or other family members: *"My relationship with my husband did not develop well: they threw me out several times, my husband beat me. Then I became pregnant and gave birth to a baby. He fell ill, cramps started, and he lost consciousness. In the hospital they told us that they would not be able to cure him: my husband then told me that he did not need a sick child, and a wife like me. So, I have been living with my mother for six years now".* (**Gafurov, single women**).

A multitude of evidence emerged about the negative role of mothers-in-law in reproducing domestic violence against daughters-in-law. They often use their symbolic power to set up husbands against their young wives, and to force them to use physical violence as punishment for disobedience or lack of efficiency: *"I can tell the story of my niece. Her future husband was in Russia, and had been there for two years. We did not know that he was a drug addict. He was 27 years old, and he always demanded that his mother send him money to Russia. There he had a wife and children. They courted my niece, and conducted nikah and had an official marriage. They did not tell us. Then we learned that he was a drug addict. There were incidents of domestic violence: he beat his wife and periodically left for Russia. The bride stayed with his parents, we often told her that she should put up with it, but he crossed all boundaries, began to beat her with an iron dog chain and a shovel handle. We realized that he ... that there was no human relationship in the family. There was domestic violence, and the parents as well... the mother-in-law poisoned her son, endlessly complaining about their daughter-in-law. He came back from Russia and beat his wife."* (**Hissar and Yavan, female migrants**).

During two focus groups in Tajikistan, older women took the position of supporting the mother-in-law who promoted violence and the expulsion of defenceless young women from their husbands' house. For example, respondents from Khatlon believed that their mother-in-law was right and fair, speaking against the daughter-in-law, and saying that daughters-in-law sometimes 'deserved punishment'. **Participant 2:** *Our neighbour, she was living married somewhere for two weeks and was brought home bruised, her husband is here, not in migration. He let her study: she studies in some college. It turns out she talked with her 'chevalier' on her friend's phone. So at first they trust such girls, then, when they find things out, they stop trusting. Of course mum will be right. Why should mum not tell the truth: she's been your mum all her life, while the wife's only been with you a year or less".*

One of the experts noted that most young women and girls in Tajikistan dream of being old women. An old woman is like a queen in the family: her children respect her, she commands her daughters-in-law and the success of her sons' and grandsons' marriages depend on her.

Traditionally Tajik and Kyrgyz girls, especially in rural areas, are brought up to be patient and not resist, recognizing the right of the spouse and his parents to punish her for improper behaviour. In traditional society it is believed that the young woman should not turn to her own family for help. However, often

Box.**Z***

She always dreamed of her own house. A house in which she would be the mistress. But until now fate has not been kind to her. Her mother, whose husband did not return from the civil war, was forced to marry a second time. Z* was born from the second marriage. But when Z* turned three years old, suddenly her mother's first husband appeared and took her mother to Russia. He did not allow her to take the daughter. Z* believes that the case reflects regional enmity - her stepfather is from Garm, and her father from Kulyab. Until she was 15 years old, however, she did not know the whole story: she grew up with her mother's sister family, and considered her aunt to be her mother. Z* only went to school for four years, then she had to look after her aunt's small children. She did live with one aunt all the time: her mother had four sisters and Z* spent her childhood wandering from sister to sister: everywhere she had to help with the housework and take care of the children. When Z* turned 15 years old, her mother visited for the first time and married her off. And the marriage was registered with permission from the court. As the girl says: "I was so exhausted, I did not want to keep living here and there any more: I thought I would marry and live in one place, and start my life." But a happy life did not work out: she only lived with her husband for four months, then he left as a migrant. After her husband's departure to Russia, she lived with her mother-in-law and brother-in-law and his wife for a year and eight months. About this time Z* says briefly: I was exhausted. Firstly, her husband's relatives rebuked her because she had neither father nor mother. Secondly, the brother-in-law, who turned out to be mentally ill, constantly harassed her and pursued her everywhere. Therefore, her mother-in-law allowed her to go to her husband. When she went to her husband in Moscow, it turned out that he had already found another woman. Three months of life in Moscow were filled with conflicts with her husband and violence. She did not even see Moscow: she was always in the apartment. After another beating, his sister bought her a ticket home. But her husband's relatives did not take her back. According to rumours, her husband was recruited by that woman into ISIL and left for Syria. For several years there has been no information about him. And Z* is living with her uncle, finding any day labour she can, doing everything around her uncle's house so that they do not throw her out and ... doesn't know how to live on. She tried to enter the vocational to learn a trade, but with only four years of schooling she was not accepted. Z* says: "It's not only hard for a single woman there, but also here at home. Though this is my home country, so police do not come to verify my documents and registration.... If my mother had not left me and gone away, my life would be different." Speaking of possible migration, Z* says: "I'm not afraid of work, I'm afraid because I'm young. There are many guys there, they can pester, anything can happen." Z*'s cherished dream is to meet a beloved one and marry him. She talks about this scenario: "This is the best. Live with your husband in your own home."

women have nowhere to turn in any case: either they do not have parents at home, their parents are migrants, or they grew up in single parent families, and a single mother is not seen as a full-fledged advocate for the rights of girls.

The apogee of violence against the daughter-in-law is often the process of divorce and her expulsion from her husband's parents' home. The husband's family usually does not want to keep the daughter-in-law and her children after the divorce, fearing they will claim part of the family's property. The problem of "abandoned" wives in Tajikistan is especially difficult because they have nowhere to live after leaving her husband's parents' house. Return to the parental home is not always possible. If the parents have died other relatives, including brothers, are not always ready to accept a woman, particularly with children. But continuing to live with violence in her husband's house is dangerous.

Sometimes, when it is not possible to hide from domestic violence from the side of the husband's family, the woman runs away from him as a migrant. A respondent from Tajikistan reported two such cases of women living with systematic domestic violence to a focus group. In these cases, migration to Russia was the only chance for the women to stop the violence. "Our second daughter; her husband had been drinking for twenty years. We hoped that everything would sort itself out. But every year it got worse. They have three boys. Last year, my daughter filed for divorce. She got a job here. But the son-in-law did not let her work: he went to her workplace and beat her. So she went to Russia, further from him." (**Asht, carers for migrants' families**).

Respondents in a Khatlon focus group spoke about the normalization of domestic violence and recalled several cases, widely reported in the media, in which young brides living with domestic violence had completed suicide and killed their young children. They also recalled a recent case in Soghd, when a father-in-law killed his daughter-in-law because she appealed to the elders with a request that she, with her children, be given a room to live in with her former husband's family after the divorce.²⁸

The case studies conducted for this study of women from Tajikistan allow us to say that for some groups of women there is a kind of chronic "exclusion" and the status of totally disenfranchised victim, which is passed down from generation to generation. The fate of these girls and women is bound up in everyday domestic violence and lack of rights. The life of respondent Z*, a 19-year-old daughter of a migrant from Bokhtar is one such sad story. In the interview, she admits she is tired of life, laments it, and does not see any prospects (see Box 1). Among the life stories of the women affected by migration, this story is no exception: it is almost "typical", despite all the drama.

28 <https://news.tj/ru/news/v-sogde-svekor-ubil-nevestku-plemyannitsu-na-glazakh-sovikh-maloletnikh-vnukov>

The vulnerability of Kyrgyz women in the family differs significantly from that of Tajik women. Focus group respondents noted that the relationship between mother-in-law and daughters-in-law has changed significantly, because among today's girls it is not so easy to find a daughter-in-law for a youngest son who is willing to live in a village with her husband's parents all her life.²⁹ Several sensational cases that resonated in the media in which daughters-in-law completed suicide and mothers-in-law were accused of the crime of "driving to suicide" have also played a role. As an elderly woman from Osh said in a focus group: *"The old-school bride is no more. Now we are afraid ourselves, no matter what happens with the daughter-in-law. Modern daughters-in-law leave almost immediately. If I have to I run around the house myself like a daughter-in-law. They are not healthy enough to work around the house. And if her husband is working abroad, then it's even worse, you have to do everything she wants so she doesn't leave, God forbid!"*

As much as the focus group respondents in Kyrgyzstan hid the practice of domestic violence, statistics and research in this area show that the scale of domestic violence is still massive.³⁰ Nevertheless, it is not seemly to talk about physical violence in Kyrgyz society: these facts are concealed, perhaps because most of the population understands the abnormality of such situations.³¹ Kyrgyz focus group respondents did not talk about cases of physical domestic violence against daughters-in-law, but several respondents testified about practices of economic violence. Thus, women spoke of how, when they were working as migrants and sending money to their husbands' houses, on their return they were completely alienated from the results of their labour: a house built on its migrant income, livestock acquired for transfers and so on were registered in the name of the father-in-law or mother-in-law, while she herself was deprived of the right to decide on expenditure.

The story of one woman from Jalalabad was quite typical in this context: after three years working in Russia a woman came home and saw that her money had been used to renovate her father-in-law's house and 10 bulls had been bought for fattening up. She spent another year tending the house and the bulls, dreaming that when the cattle was sold she and her husband would be able to invest in their daughter's education. But after a year her husband decided to fulfil the obligation of a Muslim son: she sent her parents on haj, and used the money received from selling the bulls. She recalled: *"The most interesting thing was that nobody even mentioned my work. All the mahalla praised my mother-in-law, that her son had sent her for haj, and no one even said thank you to me. And my kidneys are still ill after three years of hard work in the cold Russian climate. I lost my health for nothing"*.

Respondents from Kyrgyzstan actively discussed the issue of daughters' access to the family's property. One of the respondents in Chui described how the husband's family, without physical violence, deprived her of her legal accommodation and other property. The husband's family eliminate the chances of a woman receiving her share in case of divorce not through physical violence, but by regulatory means: *"Men try not to register the marriage because they do not want to have property problems in the event of a divorce: When I got married here in Naryn, we only registered the marriage when I gave birth to our third daughter. He jokes sometimes and says that if I did not give birth to her, maybe he would not have registered his marriage. And I was not in a great rush. For them it is the done thing: they put everything down in the father-in-law's name – for example, the car, the house in which they live. So my husband's younger brother divorced his wife after six years of living together. They have a state registration of marriage but she cannot get anything. Even the court will not help her. That is, they live cautiously. They live in the same house, they sleep and eat together, but not with all their heart. For me it's like.... after all, they have children are in common, is he really protecting his property from his own children?"*.

29 In Kyrgyz tradition, the right of patrilineal ultimogeniture – inheritance by the youngest son – is maintained. However, this tradition is undergoing changes, and today's generation of young people increasingly lives far from their parents, with the generation of parents is increasingly living in an "empty nest", something that has never happened in former times. For more details on these changes, see *The Impact of Migration on Elderly People: Grandparent-headed households in Kyrgyzstan*, at https://www.auca.kg/uploads/Migration_Database/Impact%20of%20migration%20on%20elderly,%20rus.pdf

30 In 2017 1,603 women appealed to crisis centres or aksakal courts, while 3,272 women sought medical assistance from health care facilities. Interior Ministry figures for 2017 show that 7,323 restraining orders were given to persons who committed acts of domestic violence. See <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/gendernaya-statistika/>

31 This research does not cover the opinions and positions that have appeared in the media space in the last year. According to media discourse, domestic violence is more often committed by parents against children, including mothers against daughters whose behaviour does not conform to cultural norms. Media reports of so-called "honour killings" in this sense are a very disturbing sign. One such murder occurred in 2018 in Osh Oblast. See https://24.kg/proisshestvija/91157_opozorila_semyu_vnookate_mat_ubila_doch_rodvshuyu_rebenka_vne_braka/

Violent practices also do not stop in families of migrants in the countries of destination. A report on labour migrants in Kazakhstan cites the following testimonies: “A worker at the IOM shelter in Osh told the mission about a couple who was caught in slavery in Kazakhstan and lived in terrible conditions: “The boss would start pouring drinks for the husband, who then forgot about his children, his wife. It was like the boss and the husband were on one side and the wife and children were on the other. And he withheld money on holidays, which only the husband took part in.” When they returned from slavery back to Kyrgyzstan, the husband would repeatedly beat the wife right in the shelter”.³²

Research on domestic work in migration,³³ and also expert interviews for this study³⁴ have highlighted the high risk of violence against female labour migrants in the home.

This and other research has found that daughters-in-law are not the only vulnerable category in families. In the context of mass labour migration, often adolescent girls and unmarried women, and even older mothers, become more vulnerable. This situation is linked to the increased workload because at the homes of the labour migrants’ parents in the homeland there are several small children who require care during their parents’ migration. The respondents highlighted that in some families the female household head sometimes needs to care for up to 7-10 grandchildren of various ages. Daughters-in-law in the focus groups even expressed resentment about this, saying that according to tradition, the children of daughters should not be brought up by her parents, but in practice mothers want to help their daughters to improve their material life and take care of their children themselves.

According to a study by Help Aid International, in nine out of every ten families in Kyrgyzstan where both parents have migrated, grandparents play a major role in the raising of children. Despite transfers from children and other close relatives working abroad, the elderly still rely on their pensions to feed and educate their grandchildren. For many, this care greatly worsens their already difficult living conditions, and more than 10 per cent of these poor, multigenerational families go to bed hungry.³⁵

Although cases of physical violence against older people are even more closed to the community than violence against daughters-in-law, some evidence still suggests new forms of vulnerability. Thus, one of the adult women in a Chui focus group stated that she was experiencing difficulties as a result of becoming entangled in the conflicts of the children of her son and daughter, who left the children and migrated to Russia. The woman says: *If I want to judge the disputes and fights of the children of my son and daughter fairly, I see how my daughter-in-law looks at me expectantly. And I know that if I don’t take the side of the son’s children, there will be another scandal. That’s how in my own home I ended up not in charge. And I feel sorry for my daughter’s children: they are growing up without a mother”.*

In a gender survey for the Bai Alay project, a specific new form of vulnerability was identified: that of older women who have always been active public and state employees. Now their sons are exerting psychological pressure on them and insist that they “conform to the cultural norms” of the local area and sit at home and take care of the grandchildren whose mother is abroad working. In effect, these women are denied the freedom to choose their way of life and even movement, because often childcare prevents them from attending various public events.³⁶

Thus, the institutions of marriage and family are undergoing significant changes as a result of migration. The changes include new forms of family-marriage relations, including distant families, families with guest wives, trial marriages / families, while at the same time the practices of early marriage, polygamous marriages are strengthened, and there are still violent practices of abductions and even forgotten historical forms of marriage.³⁷ Most of the “new” forms of marriage are associated with the pragmatic, sometimes even commercialized interests and needs of men. Women’s interests

32 FIDH et al, Invisible and Exploited in Kazakhstan: the plight of Kyrgyz migrant workers and members of their families, Report 713, June 2018.

33 For more details, see <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2015/0661/tema01.php> [in Russian]

34 Interviews with experts: academic in Tajikistan and researcher in Kyrgyzstan.

35 <http://www.helpage.org/russian/resources/resources/publications/> Assessment and mitigation of the seasonality of poverty in vulnerable households in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan 2017-2018.

36 Helvetas, Gender Survey Study “Bai Alai” Small Business and Income Creation Programme in Alai and Chon-Alai, 2015.

37 Sororat is a custom under which a man marries simultaneously or in sequence several of his wife’s siblings or cousins. Such a marriage is concluding either during the marriage, despite the wife still being alive, or after her death. [Wikipedia, in Russian].

and needs rarely become formative in marriage. The system of family relations is in the middle of a crisis transformation, the signs of which are increased frequency and levels of violence, and reduced emotional ties between spouses, parents and children.

TRENDS OF (RE)INTEGRATION

For this study, the integration of labour migrants from Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic in countries of destination, as well as reintegration following return migration, is key and of practical importance.

Respondents to our expert survey voiced critical opinions on a number of aspects of integration of migrants from the agenda in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Russian Federation. For example, an academic from Tajikistan, noted the following problems of integration:

- The leaving of labour migrants from Tajikistan to the Russian Federation has real gender specifics: women and children who travel as family members of labour migrants cannot regulate their status in this capacity and not only automatically fall into a grey zone, but also suffer increased dependence on the breadwinners (men). That is, the failings of the legislation in the receiving state inevitably produce women who are violating the migration regime, on the one hand, which dooms them to limited mobility, along with discrimination and violence from law enforcement agencies; while on the other hand it creates grounds for violence and discrimination against female members of the migrant's family from the host population and members of her own family.
- The lack of language ability in the new generation of labour migrants from Tajikistan radically differentiates them from the first wave of labour migrants to Russia, who began to leave after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This difference is often not objective, but it is used as an instrument to apply political pressure against migrants and indirectly against the sending countries. In reality, *"many people work in areas in which Russian is not required at all: that is, if you work at a certain place, you can quickly learn the general terminology and work. In this regard, there are a lot of immigrant networks and you can work in teams with relatives who know the language and help you."*³⁸ *...In the Czech Republic, there are Vietnamese who were brought 40 years ago, and many of them do not know Czech language, but they work quietly and live peacefully with a settled status. Well, they are citizens but do not know the language. Thus, in this regard, the problem is discrimination and chauvinism, and the fact that the police can do anything they want against people who do not know Russian language; the problem is the attitude of the local community towards people who do not speak the titular language. The main problem is the attitude of Russian services to migration, which also largely depends on the attitude of the society itself towards migrant workers".*

The position put forward by the expert from Tajikistan is consistent with the research findings of V. Malakhov, which includes the statements:

1) **integration of migrants is made into an issue by political interest groups for political purposes.** The author of the book on integration of migration says: *"Operating in the field of politics, the term 'integration' is a part of politics. And politics is an area in which there is a struggle for power, including for power over 'names', for a monopoly on naming. Should one consider an individual / group of people worthy of equal treatment or, on the contrary, deny that person/them full access to social resources on the basis of 'insufficient integration'? The answer to this question depends not so much on objective indicators of integration as on subjective assessment: it is different for different participants in the political process".*³⁹

2) use of the terms **migrant** and **immigrant** (and even more so "illegal immigrant") uncritically **implies homogenous masses**. However, in reality it is not possible to divide everyone into analytical and practical categories of "ours" and "outsiders".

3) **absolutely integrated and absolutely non-integrated migrants do not exist.** Malakhov states: *"From the point when an individual ends up in the territory of one country or another, that person already is to some extent integrated: in the economic web, in the circle of relatives and friends, in the "ethnic network"*

³⁸ Interview with academic in Tajikistan.

³⁹ http://www.liberal.ru/upload/files/Malahov_pp1-40.pdf (p.38).

or a network of those from a certain territory, in the system of social support from the state or NGOs (if the discussion is of refugees) and so on".⁴⁰ That is, the discussion is of which fields and social systems the migrant is included in and excluded from.

Malakhov sums up Western countries' experience of implementing integration policies by saying that the effectiveness of such a policy can be assessed by looking at the functional involvement of migrants in four main elements of society: employment, social protection, housing and education.

The experiences of the survey respondents reveal the considerable difficulties they face as labour migrants in social protection, housing and access to education, despite the fact that education legislation in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan is supportive of labour migrants. Recent active discussion in the Russian media about the possible creation of rural settlements inhabited compactly by Tajiks or Kyrgyz is symptomatic of this. In general, discussion on this topic took place from a perspective of risks to the state and society of Russia from the creation of ethnic enclaves, and accusations of a desire for territorial expansion and the creation of little Kyrgyzstans and Tajikistans in the Russian Federation. The discussion was caused by two cases of compact resettlement of Tajik⁴¹ and Kyrgyz⁴² migrant groups, most of whom had already become Russian citizens and rescinded their Kyrgyzstani citizenship.⁴³

With regard to the area of employment, the functional involvement of labour migrants from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in this field was metaphorically classified by Romadanovsky, the former head of the Federal Migration Service, as three Ds: difficult, dirty and dangerous.⁴⁴ However, today the key definition of the labour market for Central Asian migrants is more and more the precariousness of labour, and its extreme non-sustainability, insecurity and instability.

The assessments made can be summarized as follows: at the state level in the destination countries, de facto preconditions for successful integration of labour migrants are not in place, and this is not because of lack of intentions and desire for migrants to adapt and integrate into the receiving country, but because of lack of preparedness for structural integration of migrants.

Focus group participants expressed the opinion that even given the unsupportive nature of the state's integration policy, the wider marriage market can "detain" and adapt women migrant workers in Russia or facilitate a further cycle of mobility: "Why do women and girls migrate or remain? **Participant 1:** Well, if the girl does not have her other half here, and she finds him there, then why come back? If she has a family there. Seeing how she married there, she should be there. **Participant 9:** Marriage. If, for example, she marries a Russian [laughter]. **Participant 8:** Not a Russian: a Turk or an American. And then she will go there. (**Focus group, Bishkek, wives of migrant husbands**).

The discussions in the focus groups and several interviews to examine cases revealed that for certain categories of labour migrants the integration process begins in one of the functional areas and contributes to changes in cultural conditions and values, and the introduction of new culture and behaviour.

For other categories of labour migrants, changes observed during migration are perceived with apprehension and a desire to protect their cultural identity, while at the same time using a normalization mechanism that is applied with regard to "not being effectively integrated" as well: **Participant 5:** It's bad that when living among Russians you learn their habits and forget about your family responsibilities. Take my neighbour Shahnova: she has two children, she and her husband are divorced, but he only thinks about his needs, and she is raising the children herself, with no help from him at all. **Participant 10:** They are interesting anyway. Why? For example, you come from Russia and

40 Ibid.

41 <https://mir24.tv/news/16293374/tverskaya-derevnya-stala-vtorym-domom-dlya-desyatkov-tadzhikskih-semei>; <https://www.kp.kg/daily/26795.4/3829624/>; <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3534121>; <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/26845044.html>

42 <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2018/07/18/77196-esli-mordoy-ne-vyshli-tak-i-skazhite>; <http://www.tsn24.ru/postoronnim-vxod-nezhelatelen-v-tulskoj-oblasti-stroitsya-monoetnicheskaya-derevnya.html>; <https://www.kp.kg/daily/26836.4/3876719/>; <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/kyrgyzstan-russia-village-houses/29354390.html>; <https://ru.sputnik.kg/migration/20180518/1039233931/moskva-kyrgyzy-selo-ala-too-1-stroitelstvo.html>

43 In the case of citizens of Tajikistan they can at the same time be citizens of the Russian Federation: dual citizenship between Russia and Tajikistan is allowed in law.

44 "Ekspluatiruyem, pri etom nenavidim [We exploit, while hating]", Migratsiya 21 Vek, No. 1, July 2010.

already have other ideas, a different outlook, a better style of clothing than the old one, life is better. **(Focus group, Penjikent, women who have been banned from re-entering the Russian Federation); Participant 6:** You know, some become cold-hearted, in Russia there are old people's homes and they put their parents there, it's the same with us. Men have become more callous, showing disrespect to their own parents. **Participant 1:** They are now being brought up like the Russians, with Russian culture, and that means that they don't have to travel: you send money, for example, and if other problems occur in the family, all the more so. **Participant 5:** If you noticed in Russia, they live with one for one week, and then with another for another week, the same tendency is beginning to emerge here, one of us divorced her husband with two sons, returned, and married a married man." **(Focus group, Rasulov, women migrants).**

CHAPTER 2. THE INFLUENCE OF MIGRATION INFRASTRUCTURES ON THE FATE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM TAJIKISTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN AFFECTED BY MIGRATION

THE TRAJECTORY OF A MIGRANT'S FATE: PREDETERMINED BY INFRASTRUCTURE OR DETERMINED BY THE PERSON HERSELF?

The world of girls and women in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan before migration is very much “tied up with” the family and the local community, and is often limited by them. As in any patriarchal culture with the gender regime of the Kyrgyz and Tajik societies, “preservation of reputation” is of great importance. It is especially important when it comes to women. And by this term it is customary to understand the conformity of the behaviour and image of a woman or man to ideal gender roles. Any deviation from the norm is fraught with stigma and social isolation. In this study, respondents from Tajikistan repeatedly spoke about their reputation: for example, an orphaned woman, without education and on the verge of divorce from her husband; or a labour migrant who dreamed that if her migrant mother had not left her she would have been able to attain an education, gain a profession, work and feed her family. And, most importantly, preserve her reputation.

As noted in an article on gender relations in the Tajik family by Russian scholar A. Temkina, the structures that organize the lives of women and men in Tajikistan are consistently patriarchal, including gender segregation of adolescents and children, the arranging of marriage by the older generation, and strict control over women by elders and men.⁴⁵ The validity and relevance of the findings of Temkina’s study, conducted 14 years ago, are confirmed by the Asian Development Bank’s (ADB’s) 2016 Country Gender Assessment for Tajikistan which argued that “despite changes in gender roles in migrant families, there is no doubt that most authority in the household remains in the hands of men”.⁴⁶

The Gender in Society Perception Study in Kyrgyzstan in 2016⁴⁷ gives evidence of significant socio-economic inequality between urban and rural women and girls, and a high proportion of households in which traditional gender norms dominate.

The respondents to our research frequently highlighted the deficit of their own power in their families, acknowledging that they could not independently make decisions about their future and, in particular, about migration out of the country. As one of the focus group respondents in Osh city (wives of husbands who left as migrants) said: “If [a woman] is married, then her husband decides; if she is not yet married her parents are responsible for her and decide if she should go or not”.

The trajectory of migrant destinies can arise from the “iron grid” of necessity: some even cannot choose their destination, and do not want to migrate – life turned out like that and society did not offer another way.

There are also other ways of getting from one country to another; and another Tajik or Kyrgyz woman may choose the shortest route by air, business class, while a third woman may get to the border of the destination country ride by ride, and cross the border points herself on foot. Each way has its time and cost, and has different levels of comfort and security and its own experience. For example, those who fly from one country to another business class pass through the “green” corridors, are met by correctly behaving border guards, “entry facilitation services” and top-range cars waiting especially for them. It is no coincidence that the American researcher Lassen called such migrants the “aeromobile elite”.⁴⁸

45 “Podchineniyem starshim” vs razrusheniye patriarkhata: zhenskaya seksual’nost’ v brake (Severnyy Tadzhiqistan) [“Subordination to the Elders” against Destruction of the Patriarchy: Female sexuality in marriage (Northern Tajikistan)], Zhurnal issledovaniy sotsial’noy politiki. 2004 No. 4, p. 439.

46 <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/212096/tajikistan-cga-ru.pdf>, based on research on Tajikistan: The role and situation of women in migrant households.

47 <http://kyrgyzstan.unfpa.org/en/publications/gender-society-perception-study>

48 Lassen, Claus. Aeromobility and work. In: Environment and Planning A, Vol. 38, No. 2, 2006, p. 301-312.

Impoverished migrants, who choose the “cheapest” ways to move from country to country face other realities at the crossing points: long queues waiting to cross the border, run-ins with the requirements (legitimate or not) of border officials, law enforcement, customs and other structures, and risks of corruption, discrimination and violence, as well as, in extreme circumstances, the possibility of being separated from accompanying loved ones and/or not being allowed into the country of destination (returned from the border or after perfunctory “court procedures”). Thus, the crossing points themselves (border posts at airports, land and seaports) serve as a selection tool and determine mobility opportunities and even the future strategies of the migrants passing through them.

For the vast majority of focus group respondents, discussion of everyday routes around the city and the risks associated with them for labour migrants turned out to be a very pertinent and worrying topic. Women said that metro stations or public transport stops often also turn into their own type of transition point: from a more risky space to the less risky area closer to their accommodation, which provides certain degrees of security.

The way of “functioning” of the transition points (the state border in this case) is determined by a whole range of factors: existing norms and procedures of law, practice, application of law, political context, the values and norms of specific officials, knowledge of their rights, the solvency of the migrant, and so on.

This research identified and analysed six different components of migration infrastructure and their impact on migration flows and mobility opportunities, as well as on the integration prospects of women and girls who are labour migrants in the host community:

- **Regulatory (components of) infrastructure.** These can be defined as disparate institutions, policies and discourses that turn migration into a “static policy object”.⁴⁹ This infrastructure comprises state apparatus and procedures for documenting, licensing and training, among others. This includes not only state actors, but also a wider range of participants. The extent to which they differentiate the migration person for different genders, the extent to which they are oriented towards the needs of different groups, will determine whether female labour migrants from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will formulate a category, and determine the regime for their time as migrants.
- **Commercial (components of) migration infrastructure** appears in places where there is not enough physical infrastructure, and relatively well-paid work is abundant, where potential benefits exceed costs. This infrastructure primarily comprises recruitment agencies, including private ones, individual intermediaries to find work or housing, a house renting fund and landlords. Migration brokers do not just sell opportunities to migrate abroad, but also deal with various components of infrastructure. These include, for example, collecting documents, organizing medical tests or training before leaving. All these have far-reaching regulatory consequences for the future. Involving female labour migrants in the activities of migration brokers and increasing their security and protection of their rights are possible at this level.
- **Technological (components of) infrastructure** is the most obvious element of migration infrastructure. This includes communications and transport infrastructure, which play a key role not only in facilitating the recruitment of migrants, but also in changing the connections between migrants and their relatives and networks. Often development of regulatory infrastructure is accompanied by development of technological infrastructure. For example, the introduction of biometric documentation standards inevitably leads to the creation of a data storage system and the exchange of such data at international level, as well as facilitating migration procedures and strengthening opportunities to control female labour migrants from Central Asia.
- **Humanitarian (components of) infrastructure** is created as a result of transnational networks of interaction and financing for the dissemination of human rights norms, appeals to official structures to protect rights and advocacy through the discourse of the sufferers. These infrastructural components include human rights and other NGOs and international organizations working to protect the rights of migrants and counter trafficking in human beings. Often, the

49 Biao Xiang, Johan Lindquist. Migration Infrastructure. International Migration Review. Volume 48 Number S1 (Fall 2014): p. 123.

media are also involved here, and called to draw attention to and demonstrate abuses against migrants, stimulating a juridical response to them. Sites such as <http://jerdesh.ru> that provide services for finding work, housing, relevant medical clinics, and so on allow female labour migrants to more effectively adapt and integrate into different spheres and spaces in the host community.

- **Cultural (components of) infrastructure** is determined by traditions and legitimate practices, allowing the mobility of some categories of migrants and determining the nature of relations and their connections with other categories of migrants and non-migrants remaining in their homeland. Thus, in a number of segments of the labour market of domestic workers in Tatarstan and Bashkiria, the demand for Muslim domestic workers was higher than for candidates with other religious identities. Therefore, a significant number of women migrant workers were encouraged to brand their appearance as Muslim believers (wearing hijab, for example).
- Finally, **social (components of) infrastructure**, including networks and families of migrants who work to ensure control, protect migrants and so on, and help to secure access to healthcare and educational services in ethnic clinics, kindergartens and so on.

It is important to note that these types of infrastructures are in fact not clearly fixed and delineated structures, but a closely interacting and interwoven logic of actions, and in their interaction they determine the trends of migratory behaviours and practices. For example, as the number of rules and regulations grows in migration policies and practices in the destination country, the costs for labour migrants of employment and legal residence there increase. For example, the closure of the Russian Federal Migration Service in 2016 and the transfer of its powers to the Main Directorate for Migration at the Interior Ministry led to a fourfold increase in violations of migrants' rights, believes human rights activist Valentina Chupik.⁵⁰

The increase in costs is due to the springing up of a number of intermediaries that offer the opportunity of mitigating or circumventing some rules and complex procedures. One example of such mediators, for example, is the private employment agencies in the source countries of labour migrants. The nature of the proposals and the service quality of the private employment agencies varies with changes in the regulatory field both in the destination country and the source country. The higher the unemployment rate and the demand for work in the source country, the higher the economic benefits of intermediation. The less that qualified employees intend to migrate in response to labour market demand,⁵¹ the more that commercial intermediaries - legal and physical, legal and illegal - begin to mediate to recruit migrants to go abroad.⁵²

The lack of a housing market that provides the documents and services required by law leads to the setting up of various intermediary schemes and structures of. In Russia, for example, intermediaries may be Russian citizens, former compatriots of labour migrants who sublet "bed space" in a rented apartment, while receiving economic benefits (in the form of a "cash" profit or by receiving their own "paid-for" sub-let "place of residence"); this may also be finding areas that are not on the radar of the state bodies, where one can live one's own way of life (one of the respondents said how a whole group of Kyrgyzstani citizens had lived for more than six months in an abandoned tuberculosis dispensary building in Krasnoyarsk), or it could be initiatives by employers who the desire to maximize their profits by increasing the working day to the limit with the exploited workers living right on the job (for which the employer can also cut back on wages). The Russian researcher V. Peshkova⁵³ notes in her work "The formation of commercial migration infrastructures in response to problems with

50 <https://www.svoboda.org/a/29352834.html>

51 If the demand is for skilled workers, then the candidates' knowledge and skills of allow them independently, without intermediaries, to use technological means to find the employers.

52 The same tendency has developed in other countries. One example is Indonesia. Although the receipt of brokerage money for the employment of women as domestic workers abroad did not precede the departure of the migrant and created the risk of non-payment, the pressure of unemployment against the backdrop of the economic crisis led to an increase in the number of licensed recruiting companies and informal brokers. In 1995, there were fewer than 50 licensed recruiting companies, which every year sent approximately 200,000 workers abroad. By 2007, 500 recruiting companies sent around 700,000 workers abroad every year (the vast majority to Malaysia and Saudi Arabia). In other words, the number of licensed recruiting companies has grown three times faster than migration itself. For more details see Biao Xiang, Johan Lindquist. Migration Infrastructure. International Migration Review. Volume 48 Number S1 (Fall 2014): p. 128-129.

53 Peshkova V. "Infrastrukturа trudovykh migrantov v gorodakh sovremennoy Rossii (na primere migrantov iz Uzbekistana i Kirgizii v Moskve) ["The Infrastructure of Labour Migrants in the Cities of Modern Russia: The example of migrants from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in Moscow]". Mir Rossii. 2015. No. 2, pp. 129-151. <https://mirros.hse.ru/article/download/4937/5302/>

access to housing for migrants from Central Asia”: “Over the last three to four years, the market for intermediary services has also been supplemented by migrant-oriented real estate agencies. Some Kyrgyz real estate agencies grew out of the activities of a single migrant who found accommodation for himself, and then his compatriots, which led to a client base being formed and real estate agencies created”.

Studying the way this commercial infrastructure operates allows one to see the links between human mobility and immobility, and the power relations that unequally decide a migrant’s mobility. Labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in Turkey do not live in such a boring way: the regulatory infrastructure itself is defined by a different regime: a significant proportion of female labour migrants from Central Asia go as domestic workers and find work with a place of residence: this is determined by the labour regime and the values of the employers, and the requirements of the employer’s liability law. However, even labour migrants in other fields of work cannot create “elastic” flats in Turkey to save money, because rented flats are located in condominiums, in which every tenant exercises oversight over housing resources. In the service sector in Turkey, there is another form of legal residence of labour migrants: they stay at the hotels where they work.

A system of registration delineates migrants into those with regulated status and violators of the migration regime. One survey respondent⁵⁴ explained why she and her colleagues were forced to remain in an undocumented migration situation for their whole time in Russia: “When you have no money, how can you process documents in one day? However many times we go, we don’t have documents. We ask the bosses: first give us the money, then we will get the documents, then deduct it from the salary. No, on the second day we were taken to the militia to pay a fine of 4,000 roubles. Then the Georgian was forced to pay a fine. We had worked with him more than a year and brought him profit. Every year we came and worked with him. He sent us money for a ticket”. Another respondent⁵⁵ explained that it is possible to appear in the re-entry banned list despite not breaking the law: **Participant 1:** “At the moment, the championship is being held in Russia and they are deporting without cause.” **Moderator:** “Without any cause? All the documents are in place?” **Participant 1:** “Sometimes all the documents are in order or in other cases 2-3 days are left before the documents expire”.

Creation of an arbitrary system for documentation of migrants in the receiving country and barriers to law-abiding and legal labour migration has led to an alternative documentation system being created in the migrants’ homelands as an adaptation mechanism. When they return to their homeland, migrants from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan who for various reasons were banned from re-entering the Russian Federation (or less often Kazakhstan), change their given names and family names, as well as all the documents proving their identity. In both countries, intermediary structures have been established that organize the process of changing names and documents. In Tajikistan, according to respondents, this process is on a massive scale and is quasi-legalized, bringing additional funds to the state budget (the Ministry of Education changes its certificates, the registry office reissues marriage certificates, and passport offices provide new birth certificates and passports). The process of re-documentation that has been developed is in practice better than the primary (legal) documentation: this is conditioned by the readiness of persons who apply for documents in different names to pay for these services. Therefore, the pattern of behaviour of undocumented migrants from both countries must be understood on the basis of the availability of such commercial infrastructure and the inability to regulate the status of migrants in the country of destination through legal means. As one of the experts notes: “Deportation of Tajiks often develops an instrumental relationship: those for whom it is important to go back repeatedly know about the possibilities for circumventing the ban, while those who are not going to go soon do not think about the issue at all. The latter category includes, in particular, grandmothers who travelled to their children and grandchildren in Russia and were deported.”

During the focus groups, respondents in Tajikistan stated that they had been given opportunities for repeat migration thanks to this component of the infrastructure, and they intended to seek this kind of assistance: “I was deported. Now I need new documents, to change to my parents’ surname or that of one of my relatives. Now I need a lot of money to change my documents”.⁵⁶

54 Focus group, Hissar and Yavan, women migrants

55 Focus group, Bokhtar, single women migrants

56 Ibid.

Box.

Excerpt 2. The case of R*: a story of successful cultural colonization

R*, 35 years old, originally from Osh city, has already run a salon business in Bishkek for six years. She presents her experience of long-term family migration to Moscow exclusively in positive terms. R* believes that three things can characterize her successful career in migration: 1) all her life was full of well-ordered events, her professional experience in her homeland had been deliberate to prepare her for migration to Russia, because she worked in a passport office and dealt with documentation issues; 2) she was lucky and is lucky in life, but her luck is deserved because she is sociable, literate and – most importantly – she speaks Russian very well, without an accent; and 3) in appearance, in her opinion, she and her husband do not look like Asians but have fair skin. An onlooker could also add: R* does not have a Russian-sounding name either...

R* believes: "First of all it is appearance. [laughs] No, it's just that I'm fair. And the rest of, yes... First they look at your appearance, then they start talking with you. To understand who you are."

Like most of our migrants, R* found her first job through compatriots. She recalls that in 2006-2007 it was still difficult for Kyrgyz citizens to apply for any professional positions, and despite having a higher education diploma and experience working in commercial banks she was prepared to start working as a shop cleaner. However, at the interview she was able to please the manager and so she got a job as a cashier. During six years of work in Moscow, with breaks for the birth of her children, R* was able to acquire many new professional skills: including bartender, beauty salon administrator and manicurist.

Now, looking back, R* and her husband remember only the best things: it seems that she and her husband had no hard times in their past as migrants. R* believes that she did not experience any problems of adaptation and integration in Russia.

They had to survive the real difficulties of integration on return: the opening the business required interaction with corrupt state bodies. The staff she employed were ungrateful and lazy. And also, the speed of life: Moscow is the "capital of the world", where life runs fast, competition is frenzied, while the capital of her country is Bishkek – a "big village" where nothing happens. And the standard of living cannot be compared: heaven and earth. On returning home, R* and her husband did not return to Osh, but settled in Bishkek. They changed a lot during the migration. For example, they decided not to support the traditional forms of interaction with relatives, the *sherina* (R* called such gatherings pointless).

R* says that the Moscow is calling her, and she dreams of returning there one day with her whole family. They are waiting...

The most frequent problems faced by labour migrants included the dishonesty of employers, difficult working conditions and labour exploitation, and the lack of support within labour migration for family migration and migration of women (gender-differentiated practices in renting and letting). Despite the prevailing problem of Russian language proficiency, most of the respondents did not mention issues of study and testing, and there were only complaints once in a focus group about the non-recognition of vocational education diplomas issued in Tajikistan. The rationality for these perceptions becomes clear given the range of jobs offered that do not require qualifications and knowledge, and also often the ability to perform unskilled work without knowledge of the Russian language. At the same time, during in-depth interviews (interviews for case studies in Kyrgyzstan and with an expert in Tajikistan), an important trend emerged reflecting the adaptation and adaptability of labour migrants to the cultural environment of the receiving country.

Some migrant workers believe that urban educated women from Bishkek or Dushanbe have more chances. They meet the expectations of citizens of the destination country that they should come already culturally assimilated, erasing their national identities, already transforming themselves in their homeland into a "cultured" migrant, so that they will not stand out in a crowd. Assimilation of this expectation and following it is regarded as a recipe for success for a migrant. Thus, one of the respondents in Bishkek spoke about her migration experience as the most successful and least problematic stage of her life: she explaining this as luck, based on the fact that she "doesn't look Kyrgyz", dresses in fashionable clothes and speaks Russian without an accent. Another Bishkek respondent was also very proud of being a *mestizo*: she doesn't look Asian and in Russia she was often mistaken for a local.

Despite the prominence of media discourse on the rights of migrants and their protection by human rights defenders and NGOs, the migration infrastructure component is not yet significantly developed. It is noteworthy that there is no government humanitarian infrastructure. In this context, discussion of the so-called ethnic enclaves in Russia is symptomatic: there is a media dispute over a "Tajik" village in the Tula Oblast and even the "Kyrgyz" village of Ala-Too in Tver Oblast that has not been built. Media channels provide diametrically opposed positions, speaking on the one hand of the inevitable stage of "solidarity" of ethnic minorities and on the other hand recognizing the benefits of collective forms of adaptation to a foreign cultural environment. The position of Russia's government (in any case, local administrators) can be seen in its actions and inaction. However the governments of the Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are not visible on protecting land and property rights of their citizens in the Russian Federation. All these practices are combined into (lack of) trust in various actors in sending and receiving countries and reproduction of the labour migrant as "fitting" and safe.

ETHNIC NETWORKS AS A COMPONENT OF MIGRATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

The migration strategies for Kyrgyz and Tajik girls and young women are different: Kyrgyz may go alone, with relatives, friends, acquaintances, while Tajiks only travel with their mother or both parents, close relatives, brothers or older married sisters in the family, etc.). More distant ties are not considered “guarantors” for preserving the honour and reputation of Tajik girls, and are not recognized by the community as legitimate.

As migrants, girls and women from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan generally end up in distinct ethnic spheres, in which social capital is reproduced through mechanisms:⁵⁷

- the expectation of support from “one’s own” group (“feeling of belonging”), influencing the behaviour of the labour migrant and strengthening group norms and values;
- the consequences of having social capital – in the form of privileged access to information and other resources; and
- social networks – the context of resources and influence.

Analysis of these networks helps to define types of social capital: (1) **linking** for members of the network with a common identity seeing each other as similar (for example, strong family ties based on trust and reciprocity); (2) **connecting** people who know about their dissimilarity of status or identity.⁵⁸

Life in migration allows labour migrants to combine linking and connecting social capital, through the reproduction of communication, interaction with their own ethnic group and establishing contacts and interaction with the ethnic groups of the host society. Generalized statements from the respondents to the focus groups and interviewed experts on the changes in the nature and quality of interaction with “their own” and “other” groups, as well as the resources obtained from such interaction, are summarized in the table below.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/v/sotsialnyy-kapital-kak-kontsept-i-fenomen>

⁵⁸ Putnam R.D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

⁵⁹ The appendix provides a table containing all the citations from the focus group discussions and interviews in which the respondents characterize the categories of relations presented.

Table 2. The social capital of migrants

Linking social capital		Uniting social capital			
Ethnic contacts with the homeland	Participation in activities / organizations of ethnic groups as migrants	Social resources from ethnic groups	Ethnic contacts with host population	Participation in activities / organizations with the host population	Social resources from the host population
The family always supports – the home ties of migrants are strong if they have parents and birth sisters	Regionalism and tribalism in social networks: systematic “activities” organized for network members.	Support for compatriots in migration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for money • disingenuous (documentation: risks of deportation because of falsification) • promises of assistance from compatriots = deceit 	Discrimination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the workplace, impossibility of being valued for services • prohibition of communicating in native language in public spaces • in access to services = like a barrier to integration in the host society • risks of corrupt encounters with the police 	Forced participation and imitation of the behaviour of citizens of the host society as a strategy to achieve equality in workload and fair assessment of labour contribution	Representatives of the host society are unselfish and charitable (unlike compatriots) when helping migrants who find themselves in difficulty
Negative Price of migration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffering of children without parents • Loss of the child (physical or moral), • Inability to support networks, • Breakdown of relations with parents and spouses 	Ethnic marriage market in migration can be advantageous for the family / lead to loss of women Marriage as the initiation of men and the reason for leaving as migrants The role of mobile communication in the breakdown of marital relations Mobile communication as an additional channel for control and public pressure	Free services to promote search for employment / housing - ethnic relations / neighbours / relatives Structures to protect migrants' rights in case of violation: embassies and civic activists	The most integrated with the host community break their ties with compatriots Unhindered access to medical and judicial services, work and honest labour relations Lack of access to services, to freedom of labour and justice		Not possessing the host country's language even assistance can turn into a catastrophe for the migrant

Research into the specifics of unifying social capital reveals that:

- contacts with the host population are generally discriminatory, limited and often associated with corruption. In addition to direct discriminatory practices – such as insulting nicknames from colleagues and management, unequal valuing of migrant labour in the workplace, extortion and violation of the legal rights of migrants to pay – there are also symbolic forms of violence: a ban on communication in the migrant’s mother tongue in a public space, the giving of Russian names to migrants for the convenience of the local population, and so on;
- interaction with the providers in the host population is never clear cut: even when there are legitimate reasons for receiving services and assistance. In official structures everything depends on the individual and the degree of subjective tolerance to the multicultural aspect of labour migration;
- labour migrants are almost never included in the activities of the surrounding host population, except for limited forms of imitating the behaviour of the host population. One of the objective barriers is the lack of competence in the language of the host population;
- small groups of labour migrants who manage to integrate into the host community tend to completely abandon their previous ties and lifestyle; and
- there are several pieces of evidence of disinterested help and kind-hearted behaviour by citizens of the host country towards persons from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan finding themselves in difficult circumstances.

Assistance from ethnic networks in finding work and accommodation

Ethnic networks are the first and most important migration intermediaries for labour migrants, both men and women. The relationship between the ethnic networks and individual migrants, and the proximity of ethnic networks are crucial in relations with the migrant. Networks of relatives are the most trusted. The mere fact of close relatives in migration was the reason for many study respondents to migrate themselves. As one of the respondents said: *“Two of my sisters were working there. They called and said there is a good job, ‘can you come? We will not find you hard work. We will look after you, you’ll work... I left, and life has improved a lot. I solved all my problems.”* (**Focus group, Penjikent, women on the re-entry banned list**). The same experience was voiced by another respondent: *“My brother [went] first, in 2010. He worked for two years and said: ‘There is work here, you can earn – come.’ I went and worked well. But there is trust there, your own blood, he will not deceive you, not leave you in the street. I was sure that he would meet me and arrange things.”* (**Focus group, Kant, women and girls who worked as migrants**).

Even distant ethnic relations are an effective way to organize assistance in the search for accommodation and/or to provide short-term places to live. *“... in Moscow I lived at first with relatives: they already have their own homes here, they long since moved here for good. I lived with them for a long time, almost a year. Then it was time for me to move on, already they were not concealing that they didn’t want me there.”* (**Focus group, Bishkek, wives of migrants**). *“Some have property, rent out flats. For example, relatives help, brothers help each other until they find a place to live.”* (**Focus group, Penjikent, women on ban list**). *“They go to the market. There are lots of Tajiks. They say ‘we need this and that!’”* (**Focus group, Gafurov, single women**).

Despite the fact that most respondents from both countries interact with their “own” ethnic groups to register and settle their migrant worker status, this comes in for a lot of criticism. In almost all focus groups in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan women talked about the unreliability of ethnic networks on documentation issues, saying that they are largely commercialized and based on deception: *“You pay for the services: there are people – Uzbeks or Tajiks – who present themselves as the managers of this company or from this store, but they are also migrants, they don’t even have citizenship, so they help, and they take money for it. They will say at the beginning [how much to pay].”* (**Focus group, Rasulov, women migrants**).

Ethnic networks are still very effective at providing assistance with finding homes or providing short-term places to stay, as well as finding jobs. “... in Moscow I lived at first with relatives: they already have their own homes here, they long since moved here for good. I lived with them for a long time, almost a year. Then it was time for me to move on, already they were not concealing that they didn’t want me there.” **(Focus group, Bishkek, wives of migrants)**. “You fly into Moscow and they give you a migration card, and within seven days you go to the Federal Migration Service. There is an intermediary, who can trick you as well, and make money out of it. Usually everyone does that: we arrive, give money, and they trick us. It’s easier that way. But when you go yourself, you are running around when you should already be at work, you have no money. Kyrgyz trick other Kyrgyz, in short [laughs]” **(Focus group, Kant, single women and girls who worked as migrants)**.

Emotional and practical support from ethnic networks

The respondents particularly value the emotional component of family ties. **Participant 1:** “The attitude towards relatives and parents changes. That is, if you leave here, you feel sort of mischievous; you return and understand the value of your relationship with them. The fact that they are not far away. They cannot be replaced. Your attitudes to others change.” **Participant 6:** When we come to Kyrgyzstan, we understand what it’s worth. Even our native water is more precious: we miss our water. And our parents. Our patterns of thought change.” **(Focus group, Kant, women and girls who worked as migrants)**.

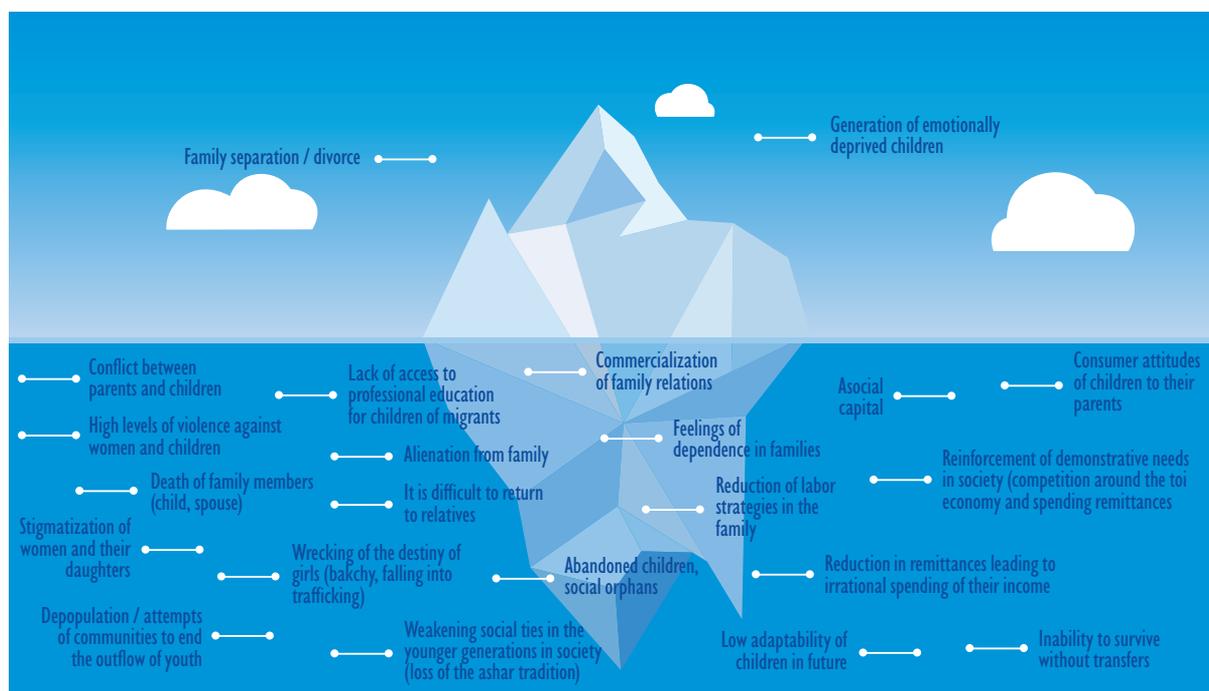
Particularly important for respondents is the role of the family in multiplying the results of migrant labour, and the family’s contribution to rational use of transfers in the interests of the respondent herself. “Find that person who would start building a house in your absence and that person is a brother, or a father-in-law and mother-in-law”; “I sent them money, but they did not even spend it, they did not take anything for themselves. My father built my house. I thought that I was helping them, and they said that they were living better, and when I returned my house was built.”

Often, respondents’ assessments coincide with stereotypical expectations about “norms” of family relations. Thus, most often the respondent’s “own” parents appear as disinterested and unconditionally loving, sacrificial people who put their daughter’s interests above their own, while “his” (the spouse’s) parents on the contrary are mercantile, unfair, and not interested in taking into account the needs of the migrant girl, their daughter-in-law who is earning money for their family. Only a single respondent portrayed her mother-in-law, father-in-law and other close relatives of her husband as loving and caring, really “family”: “The children cried on the phone, my mother-in-law was like my mother, she even cried every time and asked me to come back. My husband said that she was my mother, not his. Look, she’s so upset for you, but not bothered about me at all. The children’s hearts were melting every time.” **(Focus group, Gafurov, single women)**.

At the same time, migration has a negative effect on family networks and in these networks, the frequency and intensity of interaction and trust may gradually be lost. For example, several respondents acknowledged that their relationships with their families had become more distant, given that not being able to participate in significant family events separated the family from the labour migrant and vice versa. “I am already distant from my parents. When you become distant, you become like an outsider. Not an outsider, but not so close, because you are far away and for a long time.” **(Focus Group, Kuntuu village, 5)**.

According to the respondents, in the societies of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan discussion of two key aspects of the negative impact of labour migration on family relations (the increased number of divorces and the increased number of emotionally deprived children) reflects only the tip of the iceberg (see Figure 6). In fact, these consequences have multiple impacts on both family members and broader community groups. Thus, remittances sent by respondents can lead to a feeling of dependency in the family, family members may not understand the value of the money earned by migrant labour and start competing in the community to organize traditional toilor (celebrations) and ashtar (memorial gatherings for dead relatives) events: this can lead to frustration among the migrants themselves and a gradual reduction in the amount of money sent.

Figure 6. The iceberg of negative consequences of labour migration for the women of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan



Leaving as a labour migrant makes it impossible to participate actively and intensively in the life of the family and other relatives, and in the life of the community at home. Some respondents found this restriction particularly difficult for them: **Participant 7:** *I did not attend my mother’s funeral. Because I had to work as a migrant. We weren’t at my father’s funeral either.* (**Hissar and Yavan, wives of migrants**).

TRUST AND SOCIAL CAPITAL OF MIGRANTS: TRANSFORMATION OF TRUST IN MIGRATION NETWORKS

One respondent from Tajikistan believes that where the rights of labour migrants are being violated government representatives and civic activists can provide real assistance, but that migrants just lacked information about how to find them. *“There is a place there like an Embassy. You go there, and our representatives are working there. One of them was called K* S*, I went there. I processed the documents there, with K* S*. My son knew a lot. He was accepted there in his second year of medical school. After four months of study, my son was deported, they deported a student. I was worried to death. We paid a lot of money for his studies. An acquaintance gave me K* S*'s number. What I’m saying is that all people should know their rights: I went to him twice. They provided me with a lawyer and advocate, and I annulled the deportation of my son. He is now studying there. Many of our compatriots are illiterate. They shouldn’t sit with arms folded after deportation: they need to fight for their rights. They can help us in the Embassy of Tajikistan in Russia. Our Tajiks don’t know about such places.* (**Focus group, Penjikent, women on the re-entry banned list**).

Among Kyrgyz respondents there was not even a single mention of a case in which state structures or non-governmental organizations and civic activists provided assistance to protect the rights; while not one respondent gave a favourable assessment of the activities of embassies, consulates or diasporas.

One of the important conclusions that can be made when studying ethnic ties as a source of social capital is that they are predominantly negative and “one’s own” ethnic group is often not trusted. At the same time, it has been established that establishing ethnic networks in the countries of destination is a regular pattern of behaviour for newly arrived migrants. Doubt in the good intentions in the assistance offered by compatriots does not prevent such behaviour. Perhaps every newly arrived migrant hopes for luck in that particular case and besides, having arrived without reserves of money, without knowing the

procedures and rules for obtaining registration⁶⁰ in a short period of time, the migrant has no guaranteed alternative. That is, in a situation of uncertainty, lack of control and insecurity, access to networks with low potential for confidence seems rational, as it at least allows for traditional social relations to be stabilized in the ethnic migration environment.

Gender aspects of (lack of) trust and gender networks

The constructed networks may also not be so strong and close: the existence of Kyrgyz cafes, for example, makes the “our own” groups as broad as possible, and therefore links do not have the same force of pressure as related networks in their homeland. For example, one of the older respondents complained that because of migration, in large cities of Russia it is not possible to influence the behaviour of young women and girls: they do not follow the norms of traditional morality and do not listen to the advice of their elders: *“There are lots of Kyrgyz cafes (belonging to Kyrgyz), young girls dressed up all the time sitting there with men, having fun. You could go every day and see them every time.”* (**Focus group, Jalalabad, women and girls who migrated with their husbands / relatives, but did not work**).

In every focus group without fail there were people who stated that migration had radically changed the traditional networks of relations of Kyrgyz or Tajiks and that “there” you shouldn’t trust anyone, that the migrant has to take care of herself/himself, and should not expect relatives or acquaintances to come and help out in difficult situations.

Tajik and Kyrgyz migrants’ experience of mobilizing social capital

The overwhelming majority of Tajik and Kyrgyz respondents, who were mainly from rural areas, dreamed as migrants about their “own home”. During prolonged or seasonal labour migration, they worked to buy a plot of land, to build their own house, every day getting closer to their goal. Aside from realising their practical gender needs, Tajik women did not voice their goals, although achieving these goals according to the respondents would make them deserving of public recognition. As the woman said (**Bokhtarsk focus group, single women, worked in migration**): *“Then I would have a good reputation”*.

Sometimes the women said that they themselves would supervise the construction of a house in their homeland. But where women had close male relatives (fathers or brothers), they automatically trusted them to use the money they earned to supervise construction of their home. Respondents stated how important it would be on arrival to become part of the community and they were prepared to “invest” into social networks as much as possible. Women talked about the challenges of reintegration, that all returning migrants are treated as wealthy people: *“If I go to the pharmacy, I will pay three times as much for any medicine, and teachers will require much more in school fees than they do from others”*. Most respondents found it difficult to cite examples of successful migration of women.

Among the Kyrgyz respondents, one can note the diversification of positions towards social networks. One category of respondents sought to improve the rural lives of their families as much as possible. These respondents admitted that it would be very difficult to return to the former non-settled way of life but wanted to address with migrant income issues of access to key infrastructures, such as sanitation, water and comfortable housing. Respondents in this category stressed the importance and cost of the re-establishing their membership of the community, but firmly believed in their success. Another category of respondents was critical of the idea of reproducing membership in social networks and generally had “reconsidered” traditional values. Thus, in one focus group in Osh, critical assessments were made that relatives and friends at home could not understand the hardships of migration, and that they were wasteful in spending hard-earned money. Several respondents admitted a sense of alienation, emotional distancing even to their own parents, never mind distant relatives (Osh, Bishkek, Chui oblast). Almost a third of respondents in Kyrgyz focus groups spoke of their reluctance to return to their native villages. A symbol of success in their environment, they recognized the possibility of buying a flat and moving to the city (Osh, Jalalabad or Bishkek). Respondents from Kyrgyz focus groups more often said that they would not like to support traditional social ties that

⁶⁰ And other documents for citizens of Tajikistan.

they believe to be burdensome and not productive. As one of the respondents in Bishkek (who moved after migration to Bishkek, and had previously lived in Osh) said: “We do not even go to our relatives’ sherine.⁶¹ It is pointless”.

A case is worth mentioning: a woman from Chui oblast was building a large house in her native village for several years, and had dreamed of it for many years. But when she returned, she realized that she did not want to live there. The reasons for this are complex: she wanted to be closer to service providers in the centre - “It’s more convenient to live in Bishkek: you can go to any doctor, the children study at the university - they need a place to live here. I do not know why I built a house in the village. and I cannot sell it at a decent price”.

61 Sherine are cheerful meetings, which are arranged in turn by members of a fixed group (usually 20-30 people). Members of the sherine treat each other in turn; and occasionally guests are invited. The menu is varied. http://kghistory.akipress.org/unews/un_post:8309

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research on the vulnerability and needs of women and girls in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan affected by migration, has led to the following conclusions:

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE CURRENT STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THEIR FAMILIES AND SOCIETY IN TAJIKISTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN, AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THEIR MIGRATION STRATEGIES AND NEEDS

1. Documentation of children and women is a component of the regulatory migration infrastructure that provides the starting conditions for (in)equality, and becomes a factor of multisectoral inequality (sex, social class, citizenship and ethnicity).
2. In Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan the situation and level of vulnerability of girls and women on issues of documentation differs, as does the subjective perception of the problem of documentation among women themselves: in Tajikistan study respondents prioritized problems receiving birth certificates and passports, while in Kyrgyzstan women were more likely to discuss problems of state registration of marriage.
3. The barriers to documenting the civil status of young girls and women in Tajikistan are not only the general problems of the high cost of passport services and bureaucratic red tape, but also the gender preferences of the family in preferring to document sons because of limited financial possibilities and family interests, and cultural stereotypes that registering documents for children and women is the prerogative of the man of the family. Vulnerable categories of women and girls in Tajikistan include women who have not graduated from high school, orphans or social orphans left in the care of relatives, girls who married early, and young women from neighbouring countries who married citizens of Tajikistan – so-called “border wives”. Children born at home are also often vulnerable.
4. Despite the fact that the procedures for obtaining birth certificates and passports for Kyrgyzstani citizens are considered the most simplified in the post-Soviet space, barriers to documentation in Kyrgyzstan include: the grown up children of the previous generation of labour migrants whose parents for various reasons did not have birth certificates or passports issued for them; women who married citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, but did not change their citizenship at the time (so-called “border wives”), and children of current migrant workers who only have birth notification documents from the maternity hospital.
5. Trends in documentation include the testimonies of respondents that in recent years a “fashion” for family migration has developed among Tajik families, which has led to a reduction in the proportion of undocumented women.
6. For women and girls in Kyrgyzstan, state registration of marriage is seen as the most important issue, given public discourse about the lack of rights of women and children in unregistered marriages in cases of divorce.
7. Some respondents from Kyrgyzstan who obtained Russian citizenship perceive not having state registration of marriage as an advantage in Russia: they argue that single mother status confers preferential access to children to the educational system and higher child benefits.
8. Migration from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan is changing the models of the institution of the family and marital relations:
 - a. The traditional marriage market is expanding for labour migrants, especially for Kyrgyzstanis.
 - b. There are new forms of marriage for Kyrgyzstanis and Tajikistanis: “temporary / guest”, “unequal marriages” and fictitious; and new forms of family-marital relations: distant, transnational families, and abandoned families (wives and children). Forms of marriage and family such as early marriages, polygamy, and marriage between persons from different regions of a country have become more widespread, and the number of inter-ethnic marriages is also growing.
 - c. In the perception of respondents and in the reflection of media discourse, the level of violence in families and in the migrant environment is increasing, and most often the target of violence is a woman. The share of social orphans – children of labour migrants – is growing, along with a generation of emotionally alienated families.
9. Physical, economic, psychological and symbolical violence, and labour exploitation are typical of the life of rural brides in Tajikistan, who stay with the relatives of the husband who left as a labour migrant. However, the share of “newly vulnerable” categories of women is increasing everywhere:

mothers of labour migrants who are under a pressure of workload and economic burden because of taking care of their grandchildren (the children of labour migrants).

Preparation for migration, motivation and departure

- a. Age and family status are criteria for legitimization or stigmatization of women's labour migration. Thus, labour migration of widowed, divorced middle-aged and older women is culturally accepted here, while the migration of young women and girls without family accompaniment is not welcomed, and in certain regions can lead to cruel stigma.
- b. The supply and demand conjuncture in the labour markets in the main destination countries for labour migration is a key component of migration infrastructures. The growing demand for domestic workers, labour in the service sector, the garment industry and in agriculture in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan is promoting the growth of women's migration from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and also the labour migration of girls.
- c. The spontaneity of migration behaviour of women and girls and limited awareness of labour migration issues, lead to risks of discrimination and violence during migration, financial and reputational costs and health risks, including for children left in the homes of family members.
- d. Family support for providing care for children of labour migrants is an essential component of migration infrastructures.
- e. The migration strategies of women and girls, and in particular the choice of the country of destination or the specific destination of migration, largely depend on their social ties.
- f. The existing official channels for information about the regimes for the stay of migrant workers in the country of destination, including finding work and housing, are generally not included in the "radius of trust", and so in general women and girls who arrive as labour migrants are guided by rumours and limited information from relatives and friends with experience of migration.
- g. Respondent women with personal experience of migration or members of families of labour migrants who remained in their homeland in both countries were not informed about the projects and programmes for pre-departure training, and do not know which stakeholders can provide such services.
- h. The family responsibilities, roles and needs of the migrant family members left behind - women and girls – are restructured significantly. However, the labour and needs of the remaining members of the migrant's family remain invisible.
- i. As a result of the migration of relatives, members of their families who remain in their homeland face multiple deprivations. These include: limited food security (especially in so-called "abandoned" families), restrictions on access to education for children, increased workload, emotional alienation of parents and children, and social exclusion.

Life in migration

- a. De jure, the conditions of stay for Kyrgyzstani citizens in labour migration in Russia and Kazakhstan is very different than that of Tajikistanis, because after Kyrgyzstan entered the EAEU, labour migrants from that country have advantages in the documentation status, while those from Tajikistan still suffer tough demands of migration legislation. However, the labour and life of migrants depend not only on legislation, but also on the "hidden" attitudes of some of the authorities regulating migration.
- b. An important difference in life in the migration of female migrant workers is the individual nature of employment, in contrast to the group / brigade employment of male labour migrants. This fact plays a decisive role in the protection of the rights of migrant workers, as it is easier for a group / brigade of men to fight against violations of their human rights.
- c. The vulnerability of women from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to migration is different: Tajik women in migration predominantly follow the strategy of "being a housewife, making life easier for the migrant husband", while migrant women from Kyrgyzstan are generally active in autonomous work.
- d. Housing for migrants is particularly unfavourable and unsupportive to family migration infrastructure. For this reason, many migrant workers are characterized by a change in the conceptual attitude to the concept of "home".

- e. Social capital for labour migrant girls and women from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is reproduced through expectations of support from “one’s own” (primarily ethnic) group: this influences the behaviour of the labour migrant, and reinforcing group norms and values; and also through receiving privileged access to information and other resources through social (ethnic) networks.
- f. The main aspects of changes in traditional relations include: narrowing the “radius of trust”, which is especially true for ethnic groups, but sometimes even for family members; “aggravation” of mistrust of female labour migrants, due to reduced ability to monitor their behaviour in migration; and manifestation of greater mistrust towards private employers than state officials.
- g. Human rights organizations often do not disaggregate appeals for support by sex, and therefore it is not possible to objectively judge the gender specifics of awareness of migrant rights protection.

Return and reintegration

- a. Even in conditions of an unfavourable state integration policy, the extended marriage market can “retain” and adapt women migrant workers or promote a further cycle of mobility.
- b. The idea of reintegrating migrant workers on return at home is based on the assumption that before migration the citizen was integrated in the community. In cases of female labour migrants who are divorced, widowed, or from poor families, this assumption is doubtful at best.
- c. The stigmatization of women and girls who have been migrants is higher in rural than urban areas, higher in Tajik society than Kyrgyzstani society, and higher in some regions than others.
- d. The stigmatization of women returning from labour migration significantly complicates the possibility of the women reintegrating into their communities. In Kyrgyzstan, in cases of “successful” migration the returnees, particularly women and girls, try to return not to their home communities but to an urban environment. Therefore the issue not of reintegration, but of integration of what are already internal migrants, should be on the agenda.
- e. The return of women migrant workers and young migrants of both sexes can cause objective difficulties in their interaction with traditional networks and the entire community. This may be because of a change in values and preferences, way of life and, most importantly, the experience of empowerment.
- f. Successful reintegration of labour migrants is directly proportional to the volume (“investment”) in social networks and in the community and indirectly proportional to the level of empowerment. Labour migrants need to contribute and restore their membership of traditional forms of solidarity organization.
- g. The effectiveness of integration policy in the destination country and the reintegration success of a labour migrant – woman or man – in the homeland depends on that person’s functional involvement in four main fields of society: employment, the social protection system, the housing sector and education.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

One of the key areas of work of the state and civil society should be support for girls and women from families of labour migrants who remain in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

- In particular, it is important to train the target group of migrant children left in their home country on communication skills; to provide them with psychological support to help them to overcome emotional deprivation; and to organize self-help groups based in youth clubs, local-self government facilities, and schools.
- Parents and other carers of children of labour migrants should be trained in parenting skills, teaching a culture of non-violence, and overcoming emotional deprivation. It is also important to train these target groups on food security skills and to provide humanitarian assistance in cases of extreme poverty.
- Wives of migrant workers who have lost contact with and support from their husbands (“abandoned” wives) should be educated on their human rights; advocacy should be conducted to protect women’s rights, including their right to property; and income-generating programmes should be offered. These groups of women should receive technical support for social mobilization and promotion of social entrepreneurship in partnerships/solidarity groups.
- The state, civil society and the media should intensify public dialogue on the importance of women’s contribution to development, and the importance of recognizing the successes of women migrant workers. These activities should be aimed at empowering women migrant workers and supporting their reintegration into the community.
- In order to improve the effectiveness of the migration policy of the sending countries of migrant workers, and thereby protect the rights of migrants, it is important for states to conduct targeted and comprehensive communication and information activities. As part of these activities, information should be widely disseminated (for potential labour migrants) on the infrastructure for protection of rights and the rules of stay in the main countries of destination.
- Transnational human rights projects should be conducted to protect the rights of migrant workers across the borders of national states (in sending and receiving countries). Work to protect the rights of labour migrants should mainly be conducted in the form of joint case management, with broad media support provided.
- It would be advisable to introduce a gender-sensitive approach into the work of human rights organizations protecting the rights of women migrant workers, including the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data.