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CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
Abstracts	1
Introduction	3
Remittances in North and Central Asian Countries: Enhancing Development Potential	
<i>By Anna Prokhorova</i>	<i>9</i>
Impact of Remittance Outflows on Sending Economies: The Case of the Russian Federation	
<i>By George Naufal and Ismail Genc</i>	<i>61</i>
Gender Dimension of Migration from Central Asia to the Russian Federation	
<i>By Anna Rocheva and Evgeni Varshaver</i>	<i>87</i>
The Economic Impact of Migration in the Russian Federation: Taxation of Migrant Workers	
<i>By Tatiana Karabchuk and Daria Salnikova</i>	<i>137</i>

Gender Dimension of Migration from Central Asia to the Russian Federation

By Anna Rocheva and Evgeni Varshaver¹

The article considers the relationship between migration from Central Asia to the Russian Federation and gender relations. In particular, the paper describes the age-sex composition of the migration flows from three countries of the subregion (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan) and discusses the case of Kyrgyzstan with its active female migration. Male migrants are more often employed in construction and are paid more than female migrants, who work mostly in trade and services. However, men and women show almost no difference in complying with migration laws, vulnerability in interactions with the state, relations with employers and apartment owners as well as transnational practices. The article also considers possibilities for family reunification, and gendered differences in inter-ethnic communication. The article concludes that further studies are required, and that assistance mechanisms are required for women who do not receive financial assistance from their migrant husbands. The article also finds that migrants' sexual and reproductive behaviour is characterized by limited access to information about risks and also requires thorough study.

Introduction

Gender is a significant factor in the migration experience worldwide (Carling, 2005; Boyd and Grieco, 2003; Lutz, 2010). Scholars have consistently shown that gender influences who will go to a new location and who will stay behind (Massey, 1986; Curran, 1995; Pittin, 1984; Monsutti, 2007; Cohen and others, 2008; Resurreccion and Ha Thi Van Khanh, 2007; Ni Laoire, 2001). In the context of international migration, gender shapes integration patterns in the destination country (Hagan, 1998; Franz, 2003), as well as transnational practices (Boehm, 2008), including remittance behaviour (De Jong and others, 1996); it also influences reintegration trajectories in the case of return to the migrant's country of origin (Guarnizo, 1996).

The gender approach in migration studies implies an outlook according to which gender is one of the categories constructing the opportunity structure for any individual (Mahler and Pessar, 2001). This approach, however, is not the same as studying women migrants, although research on female

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migrants became a necessary preliminary stage in the formulation of this method several decades ago (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). Surprisingly though, the gender approach is rarely applied in studies of migration in the area covered by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Rather, migration is still often perceived by default as a male phenomenon; thus, gender is an issue rarely taken into account in such studies. Meanwhile, the area encompassing the former USSR accounts for one of the world's largest migration systems, with a migrant stock of up to 8-10 million people in the Russian Federation (Chudinovskikh and Denisenko, 2014) as the main destination country and Central Asian States² as the principal countries of origin, which are highly reliant on remittances.

At the same time, it would be unwarranted to say that female migration in the republics that were once part of the former Soviet Union has not been studied at all. The first papers addressing women's experience of migration in that country – mostly the forced migration of Russian-speakers – emerged in the 1990s (Kosmarskaya, 1997; 1999; Pilkington, 1998; Britvina and Kiblitiskaya, 2004), while more recently researchers have studied economic migration in this area. A number of papers have been aimed at describing the general situation in this part of the world, defining the scale of specific social problems connected with female migration (Tyuryukanova, 2011; Florinskaya, 2012; UNIFEM, 2009) as well as addressing specific issues, such as transformation of gender relations (Brednikova, 2003), belonging (Brednikova and Tkach, 2010), sexual risks (Agadjanian and Zotova, 2011), plans to return home (Agadjanian and others, 2014) and strategies of migrants (Thieme, 2008; Kasymova, 2012). Notably, there are rare papers in which male migration was considered from the gender perspective (Reeves, 2013).

According to a survey of female migration from all members of the Commonwealth of Independent States³ to the Russian Federation, women from Central Asia were found to be the most vulnerable group: they endure the worst living conditions and face major problems in terms of gaining access to medical services, yet they send home the largest portion of their salaries as remittances (Tyuryukanova, 2011). Overall, knowledge in the field of gender and migration in the former Soviet Union in general and from Central Asia to the Russian Federation in particular is fragmentary. No paper, to the best of the authors' knowledge, comprehensively and on the basis of up-to-date information, compares the migration experiences of females and males from Central Asia to the Russian Federation.

2 Central Asia in general comprises five countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The most important migrant-sending countries are Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which are the focus of the present study. To a large extent, Kazakhstan is a receiving country whereas Turkmenistan with its visa regime is not an active participant in international migration.

3 The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) comprises Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. This survey also covers Georgia but excludes Turkmenistan.

The goal of the present study is to bring together available data and determine the role that gender plays in migration from Central Asia to the Russian Federation, namely highlighting and discussing the differences and similarities between female and male migration in this part of the overall subregion. To avoid the “add-women-and-stir” approach (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003), the study is designed to consider gender not as at the category “sex” used in quantitative data but rather to interpret gender in the framework of social relations arising in connection with ideas of masculinity and femininity. To do so, both quantitative and qualitative data are used in this study.

The empirical grounds of the study include three major blocks of data. The first source is statistics of the former Federal Migration Service⁴ of the Russian Federation as well as data of international organizations. The second block comprises data of projects conducted by the authors as part of the Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research (GMER) of RANEPa as well as the doctoral thesis of Rocheva (2016). These are Internet-based surveys of and qualitative interviews with migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, an offline survey of Kyrgyz migrants in Moscow and a series of qualitative interviews with Kyrgyz migrants both in Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation⁵. Internet-based surveys of migrants represent a new and promising method that has been used in other contexts (Pötzschke and Braun, 2016) offering the advantages of using multilingual questionnaires and contacting a difficult-to-reach migrant population in the Russian context when there are no ethnic neighbourhoods and no reliable data that could ground random sampling. However, this method has limitations which are connected with missing non-users of the Internet and social networking sites and those users of social networking sites who have no identifiable attributes tying them to specific countries. Finally, the third block of data is made up of published research on migration in the subregion. Owing to methodological issues⁶, overgeneralizations⁷ and vague definitions of migrants that characterize a considerable part of the existing research, the principal empirical blocks of data used in the article are from the first two sources described above. Data on citizens of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

4 The Service was dissolved in April 2016 and its functions passed on to the main Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

5 Data from several projects are used in the study: GMER 2013/14 is an offline survey of Kyrgyz migrants in Moscow (N=350) with a series of qualitative interviews (45). The resulting data and information were also supplemented with ethnographic fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan in the summer of 2015. GMER 2016 is an online survey of migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan who are living in the Russian Federation and countries of origin (N=2,412) and a series of qualitative interviews (160). GMER 2017 is an online survey of migrants from Uzbekistan (N=436) and a series of qualitative interviews (64). Two of the projects, GMER 2013/14 and GMER 2016, were conducted with financial support supplied by government order. GMER 2017 was conducted for the World Bank.

6 Few projects have detailed descriptions of the methodology used and even fewer took the time to discuss in separate papers the difficulties encountered. For exclusions, see Agadjanian and Zotova (2012) and Zotova and others (2016).

7 Overgeneralizations happen when researchers try to embrace a huge field, aggregating data excessively: either aggregating female migrants from various countries with drastically different conditions (Tyuryukanova, 2011) or neglecting gender aspects even for topics which require gender sensitivity, as in studies of sexual behaviour (Ryazantsev, 2014).

compiled from the GMER Internet-based surveys and data on ethnic Kyrgyz, independent of their citizenship, were compiled from the GMER offline survey. In this article, migrants are defined as people who come to the Russian Federation from Central Asia and whose native language is not Russian.

The article contains five sections. The first begins with a description of the post-Soviet migration system and the place Central Asian States and the Russian Federation take in it. The second covers a discussion of gender ratios of the migration flows from the three countries being studied to the Russian Federation, the gender-specific factors driving the migration and general characteristics of female and male migration. The third and fourth sections are devoted to the gender dimensions of integration in the destination country. Specifically, the third section is about the position of female and male migrants in the labour and housing markets and their relations with the State (structural integration), while the fourth section contains a discussion of the social ties that migrants create and maintain in the Russian Federation (social integration), as well as their ethnic identification. Finally, in the last part of the article there is a discussion about the transnational practices of migrants, including their remittance behaviour and transnational family maintenance, as well as the gendered influence migration has on the people staying behind.

Central Asia as part of the post-Soviet migration system

Central Asian countries are part of the post-Soviet migration system⁸ formed after the collapse of the USSR, a phenomenon that launched intensive migration flows between the newly independent States. This migration system includes member and associate member States of CIS which have a visa-free regime and share social, political and cultural space. It is based on ties that bind the States from the time they used to be part of one country: these ties include various means of transportation (railway, roadway networks and air traffic), the Russian language as the lingua franca and social ties between friends and even relatives. The main country of destination is the Russian Federation; it is the only former Soviet republic which despite large-scale emigration has recorded a positive net migration flow (Mansoor and Quillin, 2006). In the 1990s, the Russian Federation received people fleeing armed conflicts in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, including large numbers of Russian speakers (Tishkov and others, 2005; Heleniak, 2001). In the 2000s, with the oil boom in the Russian Federation, the country started attracting economic migrants from other post-Soviet republics, including those the native language of whom is not Russian. The demographic forecasts for the Russian Federation (Florinskaya and others, 2015) as well as growing gaps in economic development and living standards between the Russian Federation and sending States (UNDP, 2015) form the base for the maintenance of these migration flows.

8 The term originates from Ivakhnyuk (2012). For a discussion of the term, see Brunarska and others (2014).

In June 2017, citizens of the CIS States made up 85 per cent of the 10 million foreign citizens who were within the territory of the Russian Federation, and 96 per cent of those 4.2 million foreigners who indicated work as their purpose of travel (Gurevich and others, 2017, pp. 24-25). While migration from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine began to decrease recently (Gurevich and others, 2017, p. 25), Central Asian States have been gaining more and more importance as a source of migrants. In the mid-2000s, migrants from Central Asia represented about a third of all labour migrants (Tyuryukanova, 2011, p. 1,12); in 2015, the share of their citizens among those who explicitly indicated employment as their purpose of travel was about 66 per cent (Table 1).

Table 1 Number of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation

	<i>Number of foreign citizens who were within the territory of the Russian Federation on the dates indicated</i>				<i>Number of foreign citizens who in dicated employment as their purpose of travel in 2015</i>
	<i>(thousands of people)^a</i>				<i>(thousands of people)^b</i>
	<i>December 2012</i>	<i>2 April 014</i>	<i>6 August 2015</i>	<i>5 April 2016</i>	
Ukraine	1 383.2	1 604.8	2 631.6	2 487.4	587.4
Uzbekistan	2 333.2	2 404.8	2 125.9	1 755.8	1 331.6
Tajikistan	1 061.3	1 080.3	985.4	878.5	795.5
Kyrgyzstan	544.4	531.1	519	574.2	512.4
Azerbaijan	617.1	589.7	554.4	518.8	199.2
Moldova	529.5	575.4	535.2	478	305.5
Armenia	391.8	459.5	535.1	472	264.1

Source: official website of the former Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation. Available from www.fms.gov.ru/about/statistics/data/ (accessed 10 January 2013; 9 April 2014; and 25 August 2015); and from official website of the Ministry for Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. Available from http://xn--b1ab2a0a.xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/about/activity/stats/Statistics/Svedeniya_v_otnoshenii_inostrannih_grazhdan (accessed 1 May 2016). These data include the number of foreign citizens of all ages who appeared to be within the territory of the Russian Federation for a range of reasons. The data are on the citizens of all CIS States (except for Belarus and Kazakhstan) having the largest presence in the country.

^b Data obtained from an OECD publication prepared by Olga Chudinovskikh: *International Migration Report 2016: The Russian Federation*, OECD Continuous Reporting System on Migration. Available from <https://istina.msu.ru/download/34545597/1dzwrfjOx1BC7tVCCgQQshGtXEISE4k4Q/>.

Migration flows from the Central Asian countries are almost exclusively concentrated on the Russian Federation: this is the destination country for 95 per cent of migrants from Tajikistan, 83 per cent of migrants from Kyrgyzstan and 60 per cent of migrants from Uzbekistan (Denisenko and Chudinovskikh, 2012). These States, especially Tajikistan, rely heavily upon

remittances: in 2015, remittances comprised 28 per cent of GDP of Tajikistan, 21 per cent of GDP of Kyrgyzstan and 5 per cent of GDP of Uzbekistan.⁹

Overall, the axis of the post-Soviet migration system is now formed with the three Central Asian States as countries of origin and the Russian Federation as the country of destination. However, migration flows from these three countries have different gender patterns, as shown in the next section.

Female and male migration from Central Asia: trends and general characteristics

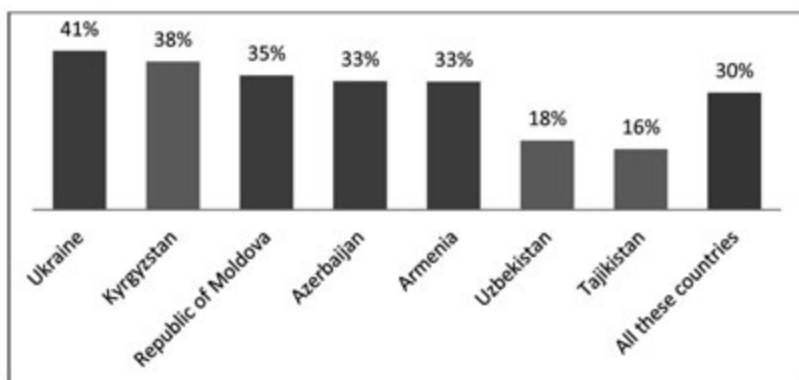
There are significant differences between the three countries in terms of the gender ratios of migration flows as well as between female and male migrants in their sociodemographic characteristics and migration regimes.

Female migration is much more widespread in Kyrgyzstan than in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In the flow of the citizens from Kyrgyzstan to the Russian Federation, the share of women is higher than average for the CIS-sending States whereas among citizens of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan the shares are lower than average (Note: Calculations are by the authors based on statistics of the former Federal Migration Service (April 2016). For persons 18 years old and older, Belarus and Kazakhstan are excluded as there are no reliable statistics for the former while the latter is not a significant country of origin of labour migrants for the Russian Federation. Strictly speaking, these data are on the wider population of foreign citizens than on migrants specifically and they include tourists and transit passengers etc. However, as other reliable statistics were lacking, these were used as the nearest proxy.). Similarly, women made up 31 per cent of labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan in 2015, 13.4 per cent from Uzbekistan and 9.6 per cent from Tajikistan, with the average for the CIS States being 15.7 per cent.¹⁰ Kyrgyzstan also has the highest share of women among holders of temporary and permanent residence permits in comparison with all other countries: in 2015, the share was 58 per cent while the average was 49 per cent. Among migrants from Uzbekistan with this type of document, 45 per cent were females; for Tajikistan, the figure was 34 per cent (OECD, 2016, p. 45).

9 Calculations are based on data on remittances from the Central Bank of the Russian Federation (www.cbr.ru/statistics/Default.aspx?Prtid=tg) and World Bank (www.vseмирnyjbank.org/).

10 Calculated as the number of work permits of all types. For details, see OECD (2016, p. 56).

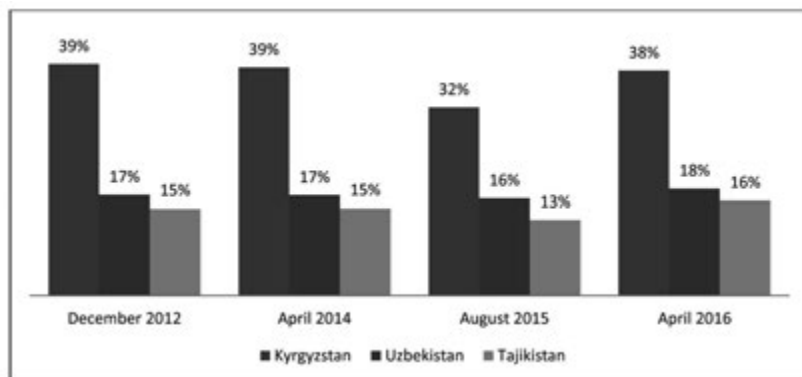
Figure 1 Share of females among foreign citizens from various countries in the Russian Federation, as of April 2016



Note: Calculations are by the authors based on statistics of the former Federal Migration Service (April 2016). For persons 18 years old and older, Belarus and Kazakhstan are excluded as there are no reliable statistics for the former while the latter is not a significant country of origin of labour migrants for the Russian Federation. Strictly speaking, these data are on the wider population of foreign citizens than on migrants specifically and they include tourists and transit passengers etc. However, as other reliable statistics were lacking, these were used as the nearest proxy.

There is evidence of feminization of migration from Central Asia to the Russian Federation in the 2000s (Khusenova, 2013; Laruelle, 2007) but in the last five years the data from the Federal Migration Service did not confirm this tendency: gender ratios in the flows from the three countries have remained the same, with a high share of females among citizens from Kyrgyzstan and much lower shares among citizens from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

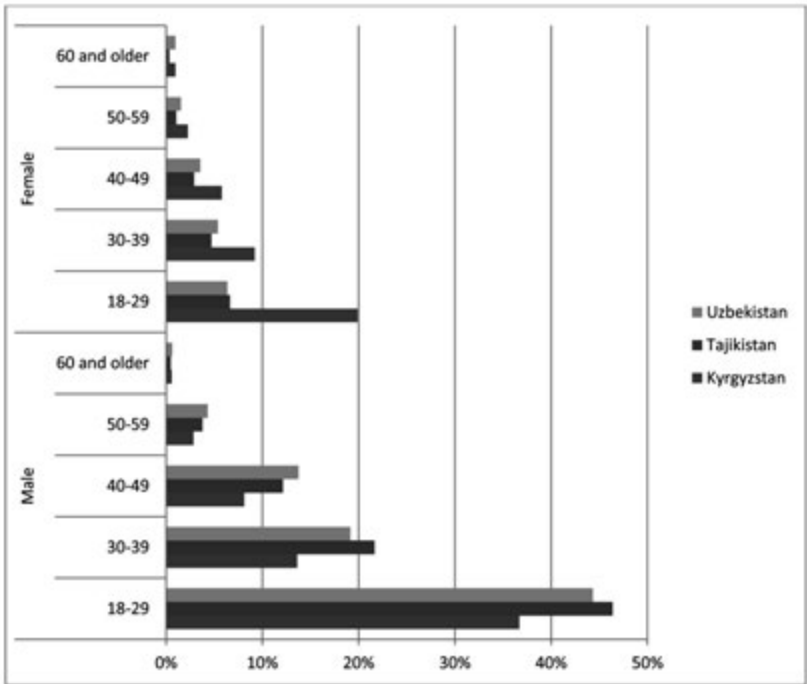
Figure 2 Share of females among foreign citizens from Central Asian countries in the Russian Federation, 2012-2016



Note: Calculations are by the authors based on statistics on persons 18 years old and older supplied by the former Federal Migration Service (April 2016).

Kyrgyzstan stands out from the Central Asian States because it has not only larger shares of female migrants but also larger shares of young females. Women under 30 years of age comprise 20 per cent of the citizens of Kyrgyzstan and only 7 per cent among citizens of Tajikistan (figure 3).

Figure 3 Share of females and males of various ages among citizens of Central Asian countries in the Russian Federation, as of April 2014



Note: Calculated by the authors based on statistics on persons 18 years old and older supplied by the former Federal Migration Service.

Together with gender-neutral factors, namely economic development and living standard gaps between Central Asian States and the Russian Federation, demand for a workforce in the framework of the negative population growth experienced by the Russian Federation, social networks, transport infrastructure and shared cultural and linguistic space, there are specific factors underlying female migration. First, the Russian service sector has been growing, which generates demand for a “female” workforce (UNIFEM, 2009; Laruelle, 2007). Employment in this sphere often requires some mastery of the Russian language, which is more often an ability of migrants from Kyrgyzstan than those from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In addition, citizens of Kyrgyzstan used to enjoy a facilitated naturalization procedure in the Russian Federation; moreover, they are now exempted from the necessity of obtaining a work permit or patent due to their country’s membership in the Eurasian Economic Union, which thus makes them

more attractive to an employer. Second, perceptions about female mobility are different in Kyrgyzstan than they are in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. A closer look at these differences will be pursued in greater detail below. Third, there are perception factors which play out at the household level. Females are seen as: a smaller loss for an agricultural household; more reliable remitters; more assertive in collecting their earned salary from their employers; and being less frequently harassed by police than males.

In coming back to the perceptions of female migration, it is necessary to note that large-scale female migration requires “social legitimacy” in the sending State. This legitimacy can be defined as a “set of norms that are conducive to women’s international migration” rooted in a number of factors, among which are gender equality, rural-to-urban migration, the legacy of women’s paid employment and feminization of the labour force (Oishi, 2002, p. 13). The social legitimacy of female migration and, more broadly, perceptions of female migration are closely connected with concepts of femininity and masculinity in the sending societies. Migration in Central Asia is tied to fulfilling a man’s ability to perform the roles of a good son, husband, father and neighbour even though it is “fraught with existential and emotional risks” (Reeves, 2013), whereas staying behind can challenge his masculinity. On the contrary, femininity is often connected with “staying put”. Even Soviet attempts to draw women into the echelons of higher education and the labour force in these contexts bore little fruit. In the Sokh valley, despite major efforts exerted by the Government of the USSR, few girls were allowed to leave villages for cities to get a higher education because of anticipated problems with their subsequent “marriageability”, which resulted in very low female migration rates (Reeves, 2013, p. 308). In Uzbekistan, researchers noted restrictions – even for local travel – on younger women (Romanova and others, 2017, p. 22-23). In the south of Kyrgyzstan, two neighbouring villages may differ in their perceptions of female migration and consequently in the ratio of female migration depending on whether the village is populated mostly with ethnic Kyrgyz or Uzbeks (Atam and Göpel, 2014; see also Reeves, 2013, p. 319). Overall, there seems to be a more favourable perception of female migration and more broadly fewer restrictions on women among Kyrgyz populations, rather than Tajiks and Uzbeks. This is reflected in the broader concept of gender order: among the three countries being studied it is Kyrgyzstan that has the highest Gender Development Index (0.967), which means that its gender relations are closer to equal than in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (0.946 and 0.930 respectively)¹¹, and this observation is supported by the ethnographic evidence (Ismailbekova, 2016; Hämmerle and others, 2008; Akiner, 1997; Megoran, 1999).

Nevertheless, even Kyrgyzstan is not homogeneous in terms of perceptions of migration of young females: qualitative data demonstrate a wide range of perceptions, ranging from those that are negative to those that accept such migration with or without special conditions. These three types – negative

11 For more details on the UNDP International Human Development Indicators, see <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>.

assessment, acceptance under specific conditions and total acceptance without any conditions – are based on the anticipated risks and profits together with ideas about femininity (Rocheva, 2016).

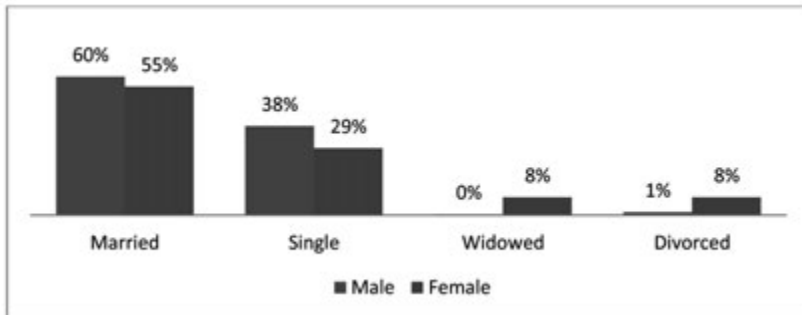
The first one is a negative assessment of female migration explained through multiple risks which are especially dangerous for women. These risks are mostly concerned with “morality”. In the words of a male informant in a Kyrgyz village who used to work in the Russian Federation, women are more difficult to “be returned to the road of good”, and thus it is undesirable for women to go to the Russian Federation. A recent household survey in Kyrgyzstan (UNFPA, 2016) showed that a considerable number of people connected migration with female “immorality”: 38 per cent of females and 45 per cent of males supported the view that “A woman in migration, working far from home, starts behaving immorally”. Young unmarried girls who come back to Kyrgyzstan can face difficulties when searching for a spouse in their home village where others would gossip about them; thus, they have to marry someone from another locality. However, according to a recent survey in Kyrgyzstan, the scale of such difficulties is not huge: 11 per cent of females and 5 per cent of males were found to have difficulties when searching for a spouse after returning from the Russian Federation (UNFPA, 2016).

The second type of perception is social acceptance of migration under specific conditions: a woman is supposed to be married _ or have been married _ and optionally have become mother of at least one child. In this normative framework, young unmarried girls should not go to the Russian Federation, whereas after marriage they can go there with their husband or sometimes without him. These norms, together with widespread male migration and females’ fear of losing a husband in the Russian Federation, leads to the emergence of what may be called a biographical scenario of “working daughter-in-law”. It means that a young girl is supposed to marry, follow her husband to the Russian Federation to earn money, become pregnant in 1-3 years after marriage, come back to Kyrgyzstan to give birth to the couple’s first child and, once the child is about a year old, join her husband because the wife is responsible for the marriage and it is believed that it is very easy to “lose” a husband in the Russian Federation (Rocheva, 2016).

Finally, the third type of perception is social acceptance of migration of even young unmarried girls. Social networks of Kyrgyz migrants and more broadly Central Asian migrants in the Russian Federation have reached such a high level of saturation that almost everyone has someone living in the Russian Federation. Thus, a young girl usually lives with a relative already in the Russian Federation. Migration is seen as an economic strategy that can even cause postponement of marriage, but judging by the qualitative data this is mostly the case with migration from Bishkek and other northern cities of Kyrgyzstan and thus does not refer to a major portion of the migration flow (Kroeger and Anderson, 2012).

What are the differences between female and male migrants in terms of their sociodemographic characteristics and migration regime? First, there are differences in marital status: there are consistently more divorced and widowed and fewer single people among women than men, and this is true for all three countries (figure 4-6). For widowed and divorced women, migration can be one of their few survival strategies to rebuild their lives (Brednikova, 2017; Reeves, 2011; Abashin, 2015).

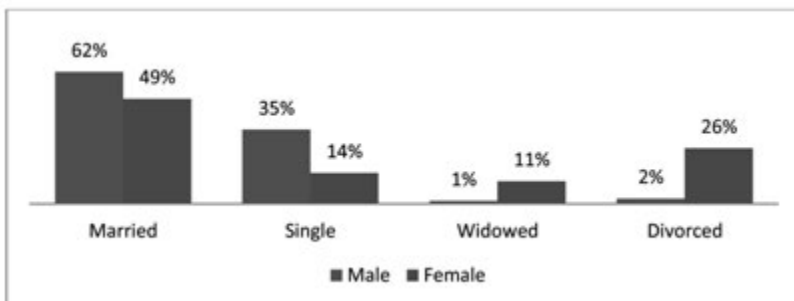
Figure 4 Distribution of Kyrgyz migrants



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2013/14).

Note: The percentage distribution is according to marital status and sex (N = 344, chi square = 24.690 and $p \leq 0.001$).

Figure 5 Distribution of migrants from Uzbekistan

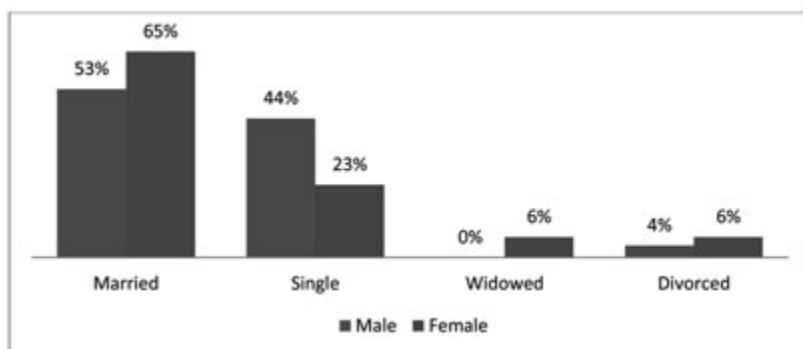


Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2016).

Note: The percentage distribution is according to marital status and sex (N = 627, chi square = 114.328 and $p \leq 0.001$).

Females more often than males have family members in the Russian Federation. Among those who are married, women have been found to stay in the Russian Federation with their spouse much more often than men: 87 per cent of Uzbek females and 38 per cent of Uzbek males (GMER 2017),¹²

¹² N = 143; chi square = 22.437; $p \leq 0.001$.

Figure 6 Distribution of migrants from Tajikistan

Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2016).

Note: The percentage distribution is according to marital status and sex (N = 270, chi square = 19.537 and $p \leq 0.001$).

70 per cent of Kyrgyz females and 50 per cent of Kyrgyz males (GMER 2013/14)¹³ have a spouse in the Russian Federation. Taking children to the Russian Federation, which is usually evidence of family migration, requires additional resources and is less common. Only 32 per cent of Tajik and Uzbek migrants who have children bring them to the Russian Federation (GMER 2016), among Kyrgyz migrants the share is lower: 27 per cent (GMER 2013/14). Men more often than women leave children in their country of origin: 69 per cent of males compared with 56 per cent of females among migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (GMER 2016)¹⁴. Similarly, female Kyrgyz migrants have children with them in 37 per cent of the cases compared with 21 per cent among males (GMER 2013/14)¹⁵.

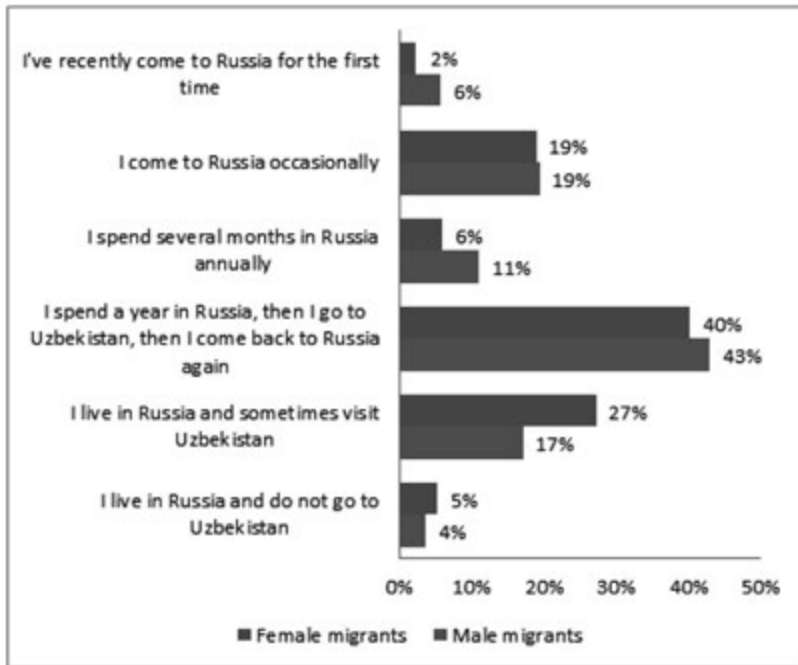
As far as the migration regime is concerned, there are no statistically significant differences between females and males among Kyrgyz migrants and migrants from Tajikistan. The majority of Kyrgyz migrants (89 per cent) come to Moscow temporarily and less than 10 per cent live there permanently (Varshaver and others, 2014). As for migrants from Tajikistan (GMER 2016), more than a third (36 per cent) were found to live permanently in the Russian Federation while 43 per cent came for a year, 9 per cent came for several months, 9 per cent did not have any regularity in this regard and 4 per cent had recently come but did not yet have any specific regime. However, women coming from Uzbekistan more often than men indicated that they live in the Russian Federation permanently whereas men more often come for a year or for a season (figure 7).

13 N = 188; chi square = 12.475; $0.001 \leq p \leq 0.01$.

14 N = 415; chi square = 5.736; chi square significance = 0.057

15 N = 188; chi square = 5.407; $0.01 \leq p \leq 0.05$.

Figure 7 Distribution of female and male migrants from Uzbekistan,
by survey answers



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2016).

Note: The percentage distribution is according to migration regime (N=1,060, chi square = 15.824 and $p < 0.001$).

Thus, there are significant differences between migration flows from the three Central Asian States in terms of sex ratios as well as between female and male migrants from these States living in the Russian Federation. Kyrgyzstan stands out because it has a much larger share of females and notably those younger than 30 than does its neighbours. Moreover, its share of females is larger than the CIS average. Female migration is driven by both gender-neutral “pull” factors, such as demand for labour and long-lasting ties between the countries, as well as by gender-specific “pull” factors, such as the demand for “female” workers to be employed in the growing services sector. Such employment often means preferences for Kyrgyz females due to their relatively higher level of Russian language facility and simplified documentation requirements. At the same time, gender relations in the localities of origin regulate whether females will respond to these demands. Overall, perceptions of women’s mobility among Kyrgyz people are more conducive to female migration than among Tajiks and Uzbeks. Among the important differences observed between females and males are marital status and migration regime. There are more single men and more divorced, widowed and married women among migrants. Among those who have children, women more often take the children with them to the Russian

Federation. Among migrants from Uzbekistan, females more often live in the Russian Federation permanently.

Structural integration: gender dimensions

This section is devoted to gender-specific relations of migrants with the receiving State, positions that migrants take in the labour and housing markets, as well as their experiences with discrimination.

International studies show that female and male migrants have different experiences pertaining to relations with receiving States (Salcido and Menjívar, 2012). As for the case of Central Asian migrants in the Russian Federation, no comprehensive research on this aspect has been carried out. Some studies show that among undocumented migrants in the Russian Federation the share of widowed and divorced women is higher (Grigor'eva and Mukomel', 2014). To check whether male or female migrants are more vulnerable with regard to the receiving State, whether they break migration laws more often and have stronger anti-law attitudes, the data gathered in 2016 through an online survey of migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will be addressed. However, before focusing on these questions, some preliminary comments are required regarding Russian regulations concerning migration.

To enter the Russian Federation, citizens of CIS countries do not need visas; thus, an "illegal" border crossing would be an extreme exception. On entering the Russian Federation, a foreign citizen fills out a migration card indicating the purpose of travel; the migrant then is obliged to get "registered" within a specified time frame¹⁶, which involves additional costs. Once the migrant has undergone "registration", if he or she does not intend to work, the citizen of a CIS country can spend up to three months in the Russian Federation, after which time the migrant would have to leave the Russian Federation for the next three months. This is the so-called 90/180 rule, which implies that foreign citizens cannot live in the Russian Federation for more than 3 months (90 days) within a 6-month (180-day) period unless they have obtained special documents enabling them to do so, such as a work permit, documents proving that they are pursuing studies or have a temporary/permanent residence permit. Thus, temporary family migration, with one of the members staying at home in the Russian Federation – which is more characteristic for female than male migrants – is formally impossible. The authors' fieldwork would suggest that stay-at-home migrants facing this situation would apply for a work permit, look for informal agreements with State bodies or remain undocumented. The situation is the same with the children of migrants who have patents: their

16 The baseline time frame is seven days; however, the time frame depends on the specific country of origin and certain conditions. A citizen of Kyrgyzstan as a State-member of the Eurasian Economic Union is supposed to undergo registration within 30 days whereas this deadline is 15 days for a citizen of Tajikistan. Special conditions can be applied due to events in the Russian Federation: for example, during the FIFA Confederations Cup 2017 and the 2018 FIFA World Cup all foreigners are supposed to undergo such registration on the first day of their entrance into the Russian Federation.

position and registration rules are not settled under federal laws. Such rules are established only for participants in programmes for highly skilled professionals, usually “expats” who are generally citizens of non-CIS countries.

If a foreigner from the subregion would like to work in the Russian Federation, he/she has to apply for a “patent” (work permit) during the month following entry into the Russian Federation. The application process is complex, requiring a number of documents involving high costs and strict time limits. The overall cost together with purchasing tickets from a Central Asian country to the Russian Federation makes the initial “investment” in migration very expensive. A patent requires that monthly payments be made, which are considered advance tax payments, the amount of which is determined by each internal region of the Russian Federation. However, citizens of Kyrgyzstan as well as other countries that are members of the Eurasian Economic Union do not need a patent.

Analysis points to the vulnerability of migrants in their interactions with State bodies and their limited legal protection (Troickij, 2016); in this regard, migrant status is more important than whether the migrant is male or female. Indeed, analysis of survey data shows no statistically significant differences between male and female migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in terms of: the documents they have (18 per cent have only registration, 58 per cent have registration and a patent, 15 per cent have a temporary or permanent residence permit and 9 per cent do not have any of the aforementioned documents); their attitudes towards migration laws (84 per cent say that when one is within the Russian Federation, it is absolutely necessary to have all the proper documents, 13 per cent say it is desirable but impossible and 3 per cent say it is permissible if one does not have all the proper documents); and their knowledge of migration laws, such as rule “90/180”, which are largely misunderstood or unknown to migrants (Varshaver and others, 2017b). However, women migrants were less inclined to break migration laws (or to have revealed doing so in the survey). Of the 11 options concerning the breaking of migration laws during the two years preceding the survey, there are statistically significant differences between men and women in 6 of them, and in all cases figures for females were smaller than for males. On the contrary, more females than males selected the option “none of this happened to me in the last two years” (Table 2).

Access to social and medical services depends on citizenship, except for kindergarten and school which have been declared free for all. Starting from 2015, all medical services (apart from emergency services) are provided to foreign citizens only if they have medical insurance. Otherwise, they have to pay for medical services, buy drugs at the pharmacy, return to the country of origin or simply endure their illness. Transformations which the medical system has recently undergone have been especially difficult for female migrants who were pregnant and gave birth in the Russian Federation (Rocheva, 2014). Citizens of the countries that are members of the Eurasian Economic Union, upon obtaining an employment agreement, can acquire State-funded medical insurance just as citizens of the Russian Federation do.

Table 2 Distribution of situations involving the breaking of migration laws during the two years preceding the survey among female and male migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the Russian Federation, according to survey answers

	<i>Male migrants (percentage)</i>	<i>Female migrants (percentage)</i>	<i>Chi square</i>
I crossed the border and came back to Russia at once or sent the documents to the border	32	26	2.9*
My entrance into Russia was banned	3	1	2.7*
I was working after I had applied for a patent but it was not ready yet	13	8	3.1*
I worked in Russia when the patent was not paid for or had expired	3	1	4.2**
I worked without a formal contract	11	4	7.1**
I did not have a patent and spent more than 90 days in Russia	3	0	4.97**
None of this applies	45	54	4.9**

Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2016).

* $0.01 \leq p \leq 0.05$.

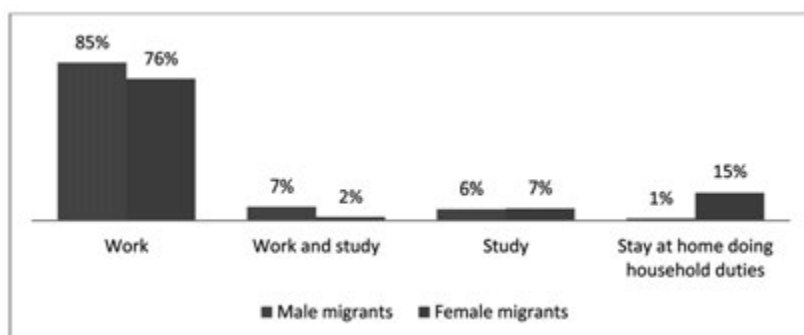
** $0.001 \leq p \leq 0.01$.

*** $p \leq 0.001$.

Most migrants from Central Asia actively participate in the Russian labour market. Data from the survey of Kyrgyz migrants (GMER 2013/14) showed no statistically significant differences between females and males: 92 per cent of them work, 6 per cent work and study whereas students and homemakers each make up less than 1 per cent. According to the online survey of migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (GMER 2016), both female and male migrants from these countries were mostly in paid employment but women much more often than men would stay at home and do housework (figure 8).

Female and male migrants differ in terms of sectors of employment. The consensus picture emerging from the literature is that men work mostly in construction, manufacturing and transport whereas women mostly work in trade and services (Tyuryukanova, 2011, p. 27; Mukomel, 2013, p. 26). Some researchers have noted country-specific employment of women migrants, namely women from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan work mostly in cleaning whereas women from Uzbekistan work in trade (Tyuryukanova, 2011, p. 28). An Internet-based survey of migrants from Uzbekistan conducted in 2017 showed that the most popular sectors of employment for migrants from that country are construction and restaurants. Notably, construction is a “male” sector, while restaurants and cafes are mostly “female” spheres of employment (figure 9).

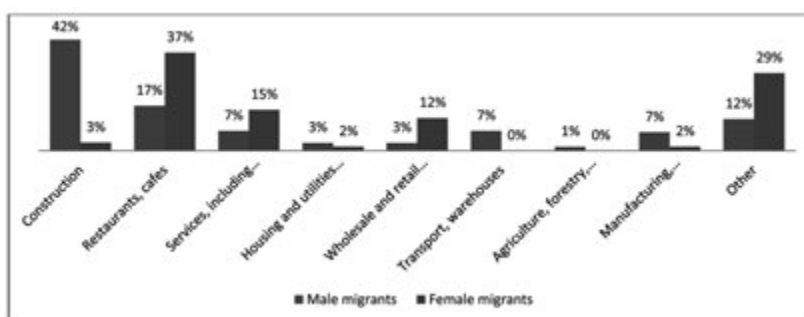
Figure 8 Distribution of female and male migrants from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, according to types of activity, 2016



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research (2016).

Note: N = 1,117; chi square = 87.951; $p \leq 0.001$.

Figure 9 Distribution of female and male migrants from Uzbekistan in various spheres of employment



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2017).

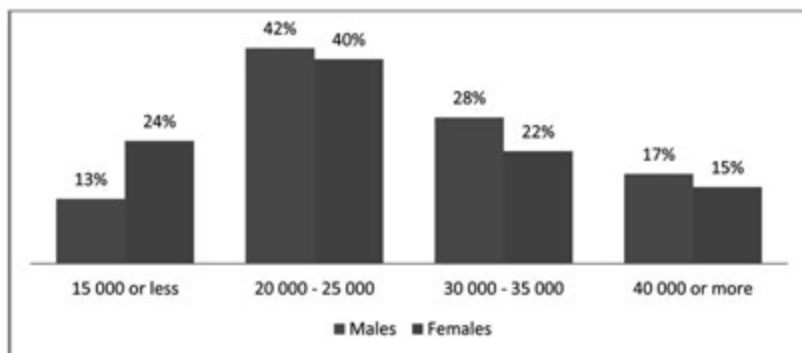
Note: N = 266; chi square = 61.037; and $p \leq 0.001$.

A specific domain that has been actively growing recently in Russian megalopolises and attracting mostly female internal and international migrants is domestic work (Karachurina and others, 2014). Central Asian migrants are a minority in this sector so far, and they are less paid in comparison with migrants from Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (Karachurina and others, 2014, p. 52). Compared with migrants employed in other sectors, domestic workers have higher levels of education, speak better Russian than other migrants and receive higher salaries (Tyuryukanova, 2011, p. 159).

Nevertheless, female migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan receive lower salaries compared with male migrants. Among migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, more women than men earn 15,000 roubles or less per month (figure 10).

Figure 10 Distribution of female and male migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, by monthly earnings

(Roubles)



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2016).

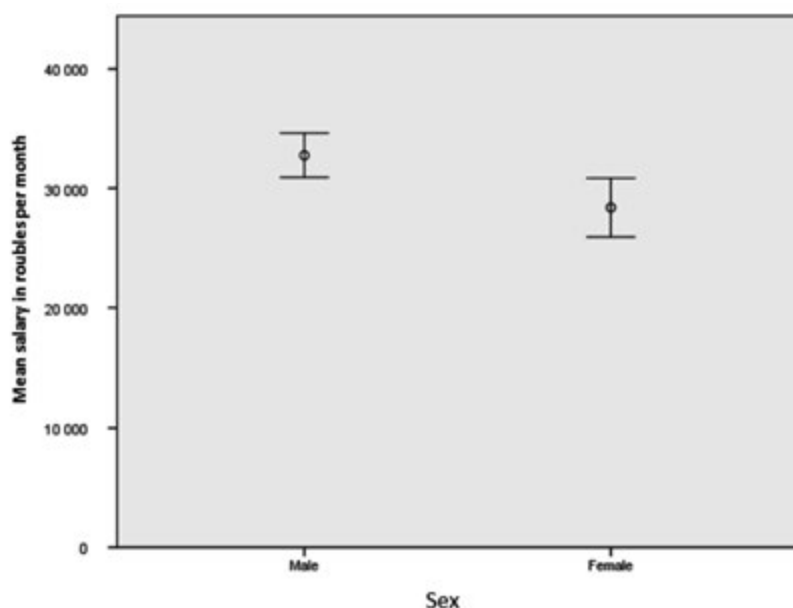
Note: $N = 786$; $\chi^2 = 9.696$ and $0.001 \leq p \leq 0.01$. US\$ 1.00 is equal to about 58.8 roubles.

According to the 2017 online survey of migrants from Uzbekistan, females earn lower hourly rates and monthly salaries than males. The mean monthly salary of males is 32,780 roubles whereas for females the amount is 28,875 (figure 11). The mean hourly rate for males is 134 roubles whereas for females it is 114 roubles. There is no statistically significant difference between females and males from Uzbekistan in terms of the number of hours worked per day as well as the number of days worked per month: the mean figures are 11 hours per day and 26 workdays per month.

Other studies have shown that the salary gap between female and male migrants grows with time; the salary gap is 1,000 roubles for those who came to the Russian Federation less than a year previously, growing to 2,500 roubles among those who came to the Russian Federation 10 years previously or earlier (Denisenko and Varshavskaya, 2013, p. 14).

The gender pay gap can be explained by the distribution of females and males in various sectors of employment: work in trade ("female" employment) was found to be paid at a lower rate than that in other spheres (Denisenko and Varshavskaya, 2013, p. 14). This is demonstrated with the data from the 2017 online survey of migrants from Uzbekistan. Information on the main position held by a respondent was coded according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO); after aggregation of categories with few respondents, four main categories were formed. Females and males were equally present in two categories: specialists with high and low qualifications, and managers, as well as unqualified workers; however, there were differences in the two other categories. Females were concentrated in the category of employees in trade and services, whereas males were mostly in the category of qualified workers (this category was coded in such a way as to embrace mostly those

Figure 11 Comparison of means: monthly salary of female and male migrants from Uzbekistan



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2017).

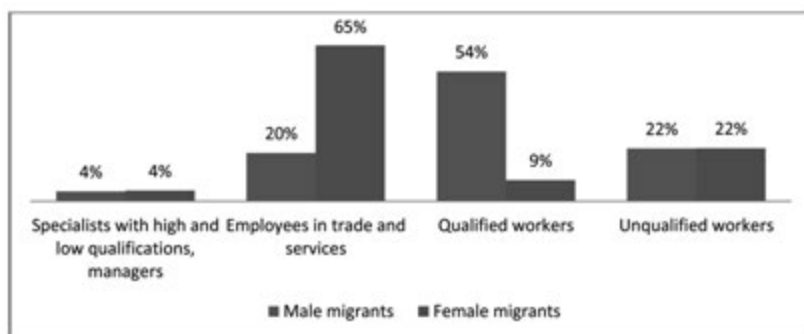
Note: Levene's test of significance = 0.045; equal variances not assumed; significance = 0.016.

employed in the construction sector) (figure 12). There are statistically significant differences in the hourly rate between the two main ISCO categories aggregated: employees in trade and services received a lower hourly rate than qualified workers: 105 vs. 133 roubles per hour¹⁷. At the same time, there were no statistically significant differences between the salaries of females and males within the category of employees in trade and services.

Other scholars have argued that the status of a foreign citizen in the labour market is a more significant factor for salaries than the person's sex. When comparing monthly salaries of the four groups constructed according to sex and citizenship (female-male, Russian citizens and foreign citizens), Mukomel' (2015) concluded that the salary gap between female and male migrants is smaller than between female and male Russian citizens whereas the "citizenship" gap is more considerable than gender gaps in both groups.

¹⁷ N=211; Levene's test of significance = 0.235; equal variances assumed; and significance = 0.003.

Figure 12 Distribution of female and male migrants from Uzbekistan, by selected ISCO categories



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2017).

Note: N = 287; chi square = 58.078 and $p \leq 0.001$.

Overall, migrants in the Russian Federation take vulnerable positions leaving them legally unprotected and possessing insufficient knowledge of migration laws, rights and obligations; in this regard, a migrant's sex loses its significance. According to the online survey of migrants from Uzbekistan (GMER 2017), 18 per cent were not paid for their work; 20 per cent were paid less than had been agreed; 24 per cent faced ethnic discrimination when trying to find work; 15 per cent were offended on the grounds of their ethnic origin; 1.5 per cent faced physical violence in the workplace, that is, they were beaten or forced to have sex. In these aspects, there are no statistically significant differences between female and male migrants. The only difference is in situations when respondents were taken from the workplace to the Federal Migration Service, which happened to 23 per cent of male migrants and 8 per cent of females¹⁸. Agadjanian and others (2017) showed that 34 per cent of female migrants from Central Asia had faced ethnicity-based harassment.

As for the housing market, the position of migrants is also vulnerable: apartment owners are often guided by ethnic stereotypes and refuse to rent out a flat to migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus – even to Russian citizens from the North Caucasus. Migrants in the Russian Federation do not settle in ethnic neighbourhoods but are spread out across cities (Vendina, 2012) so there are no places to avoid discrimination in the “mainstream” housing market (Agadjanian and Zotova, 2011). There are no data to compare the experience of females and males on the Russian housing market but from the existing studies it is known that accommodation is one of the most sensitive topics for female migrants from Central Asian States (Agadjanian and Zotova, 2011). A series of qualitative interviews with Kyrgyz and Uzbek migrants in 2013 enabled the delineation of three main

¹⁸ N = 261, chi square=6.515; and $0.01 \leq p \leq 0.05$.

models of accommodation (Rocheva, 2015): (a) renting a one- or two-room apartment by a group of relatives or people coming from the same location; (b) renting a room in an apartment flat from a live-in owner; and (c) renting an apartment with consequent sublease of beds to people who are not always acquainted with one another. The qualitative data did not highlight any gender differences, except for the third model. There are often arrangements according to which the rooms are marked: some rooms are for men; other rooms are for women and couples. Such arrangements are set up to avoid sexual harassment.

Tyuryukanova (2013) noted that Central Asian female migrants had the worst living conditions among all females from CIS countries: they were less likely to rent the whole flat or house but more likely to share flats with other people (Tyuryukanova, 2011, pp. 110-111). Agadjanian and Zotova (2011) showed that among female migrants from Central Asia, Kyrgyz migrants faced the worst living conditions: on average, there were 14.7 other people in the same flat as the Kyrgyz respondents, 5.6 other persons in the same flat as Uzbek migrants, and 5.3 people for Tajiks. Moreover, 4.9 other people would sleep in the same room as the Kyrgyz respondents; the figures were 3.2 other people for Uzbek females and 2.9 others for Tajik females.

Overall, for a large portion of the aspects of structural integration, whether a migrant is male or female does not play such a significant role as the migrant's status. Female and male migrants do not differ considerably in their vulnerability in interaction with receiving State bodies, employers and apartment owners. Nevertheless, there are important gendered differences in labour market positions, with women being employed mostly in services and trade, collecting less pay than men who work mostly in construction. Moreover, females speak of breaking migration laws much less often than males; however, they do not differ from male migrants in the documents they had to obtain as well as their attitudes towards migration laws. Judging by migration legislation, the State would seem to view migrants employed in the Russian Federation (possessing a patent) as single people; it should be mentioned that there is no legal option for long-term stay for an unemployed family member, who, in the case of Central Asian migrants, are more often women than men.

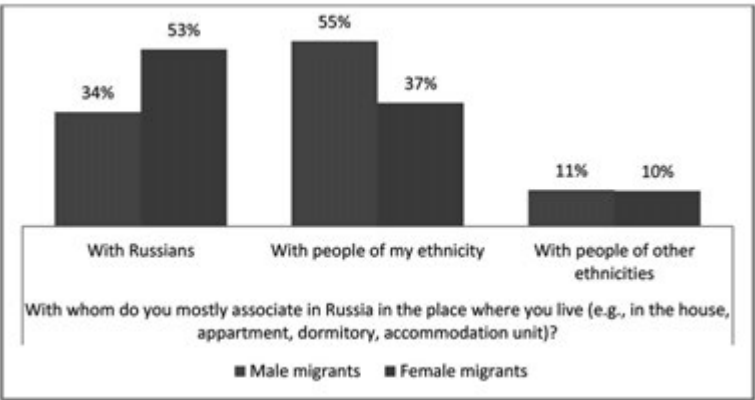
Social integration and identification: gender dimensions

In this section, social ties that migrants maintain and obtain in the Russian Federation are discussed, as well as ethnic identifications and violence that females face stemming from them.

The workplace is a crucial setting for the formation of migrants' new social ties, including ties with Russians, and in this way it functions universally for both men and women. According to the online survey of migrants from Uzbekistan (GMER 2017), more than half (62 per cent) of females and males associate mostly with Russians in the workplace (Varshaver and Rocheva, in print).

However, there are statistically significant differences when it comes to association in the place of accommodation and when at leisure: in such settings, females socialize with Russians or people of other ethnicities more often than males (figure 13 and 14).

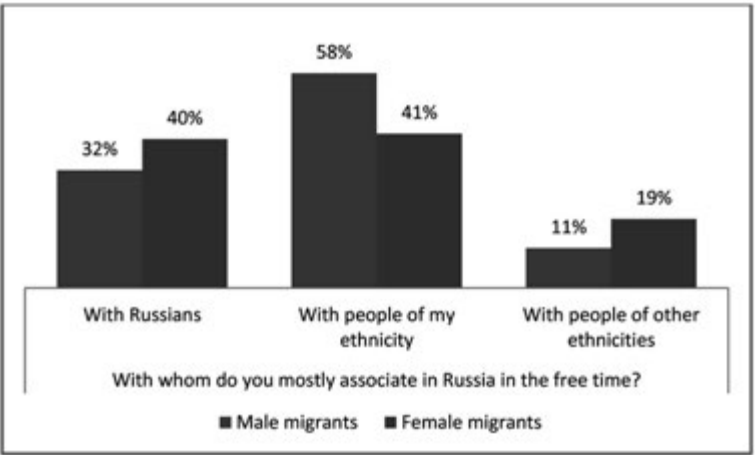
Figure 13 Distribution of female and male migrants from Uzbekistan, by survey answers on social ties in their place of residence in the Russian Federation



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2017).

Note: N = 322; $\chi^2 = 10.096$; and $0.001 \leq p \leq 0.01$.

Figure 14 Distribution of female and male migrants from Uzbekistan, by survey answers on social ties in free time

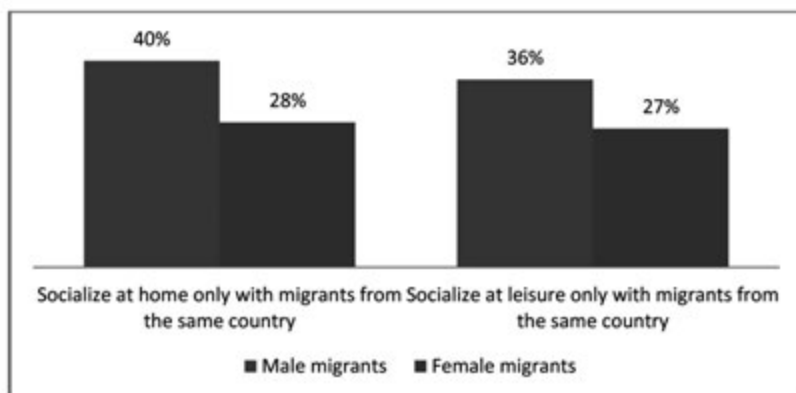


Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2017).

Note: N = 266; $\chi^2 = 6.102$; and $0.01 \leq p \leq 0.05$.

In a similar vein, according to another survey (GMER 2016) females from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan socialized exclusively with migrants from their country when at home and during leisure time less often than males (figure 15) whereas the workplace does not demonstrate any statistically significant difference.

Figure 15 Distribution of female and male migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, by survey answers on social ties at home and at leisure

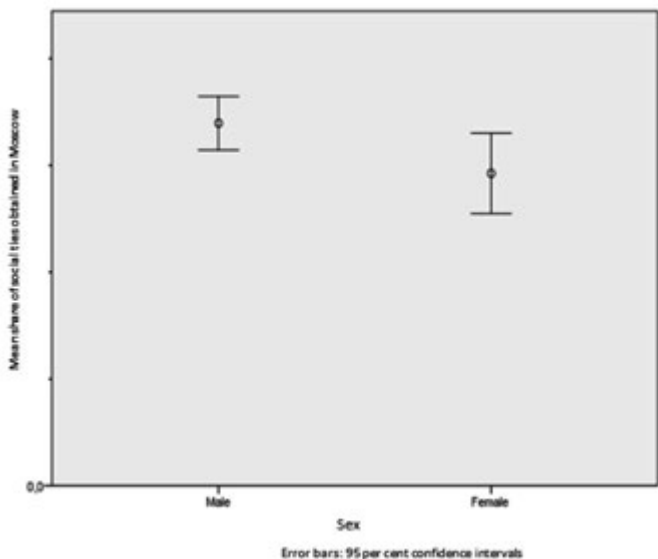


Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2016).

Note: At home: N = 947; chi square = 7.354; and $0.001 \leq p \leq 0.01$. At leisure: N = 944; chi square = 4.819; and $0.01 \leq p \leq 0.05$.

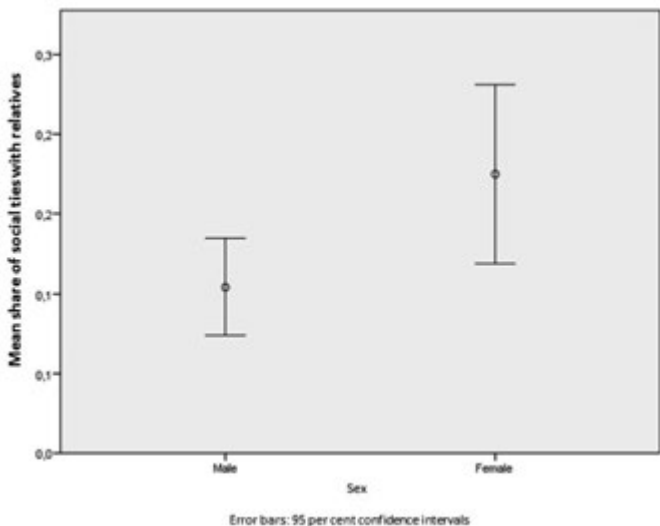
Interestingly, results of the offline survey of Kyrgyz migrants in Moscow (GMER 2013/14) showed that females were more likely to “stick” to their relatives and those people whom they got to know in Kyrgyzstan, while males on the contrary had more social ties which they had developed in Moscow. Respondents were asked to characterize five people with whom they socialized the most: to name their sex, place of birth and current residence, place of their acquaintance and whether they were relatives. Calculations demonstrated that for male migrants, the mean share of social ties which they obtained in Moscow was 0.679 while for females it was 0.585; at the same time, the mean share of social ties with relatives for males was 0.104 and for females 0.175. The difference is not that large, but it is statistically significant (figure 16 and 17).

Figure 16 Comparison of means: share of social ties developed in Moscow among the five most intense ties of female and male Kyrgyz migrants



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2013/14).
Note: Comparison was done by t test; Levene's test of significance = 0.015; equal variances not assumed; significance = 0.041.

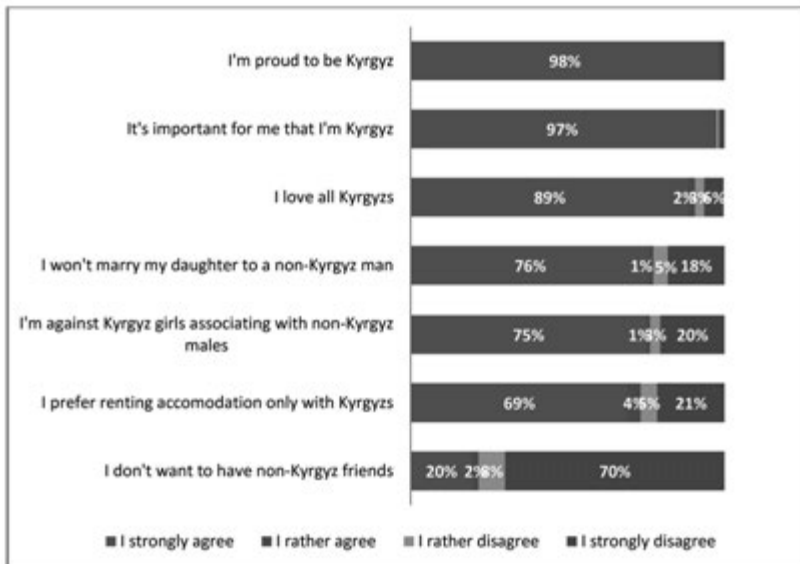
Figure 17 Comparison of means: share of social ties with relatives among female and male Kyrgyz migrants, 2013/14



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2013/14).
Note: Comparison was done by t test; Levene's test of significance=0.000; equal variances not assumed; significance = 0.030.

A possible explanation of the differences between Kyrgyz migrants on one hand and migrants from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on the other is the stronger ethnic identifications among the former group¹⁹. According to the 2013/14 survey, Kyrgyz migrants tended to be proud of their ethnic identification, attached particular importance to it and had strong attitudes towards monoethnic marriages as well as against relations between Kyrgyz women and non-Kyrgyz males (figure 18).

Figure 18 Distribution of Kyrgyz migrants, according to their agreement with survey answers on ethnic identification



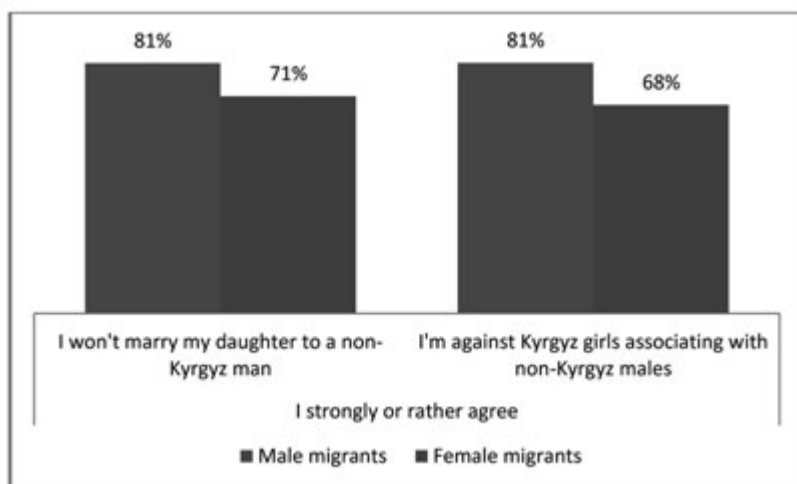
Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2013/14).

Note: Number of respondents for each sentence: I don't want to have non-Kyrgyz friends = 342; I prefer renting accommodation only with Kyrgyz = 341; I'm against Kyrgyz girls associating with non-Kyrgyz males = 342; I won't marry my daughter to a non-Kyrgyz man = 327; I love all Kyrgyz = 342; It's important for me that I'm Kyrgyz = 346; and I'm proud to be Kyrgyz = 348.

¹⁹ Another possible explanation concerns the methodology of the surveys: the online surveys (GMER 2016 of migrants from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and GMER 2017 of migrants from Uzbekistan) targeted potential respondents on social networking sites, while the offline survey of Kyrgyz migrants (GMER 2013/14) reached respondents on randomly selected metro stations. As the latter survey shows, respondents who used social networking sites had more acquaintances which they had developed in the Russian Federation, whereas those people who did not use those sites socialized mostly with people whom they got to know in Kyrgyzstan. This does not necessarily mean that they became acquainted on those sites, but online surveys with social networking sites might imply bias towards those who tend to socialize more with new people in the Russian Federation. However, this matter still needs further investigation.

Of the seven statements suggested for testing ethnic identifications and attitudes, females and males differed only in three of them, two of which are connected with limitations for Kyrgyz women: males more often tend to be opposed to Kyrgyz women associating with non-Kyrgyz males as well as those women entering into mixed marriages (figure 19). Apart from this, these statements are usually supported by respondents with lower levels of education and poorer Russian language skills, who are more likely to come from southern and rural areas of Kyrgyzstan (Rocheva, 2016).

Figure 19 Distribution of female and male Kyrgyz migrants, according to their agreement with two survey answers on ethnic identification

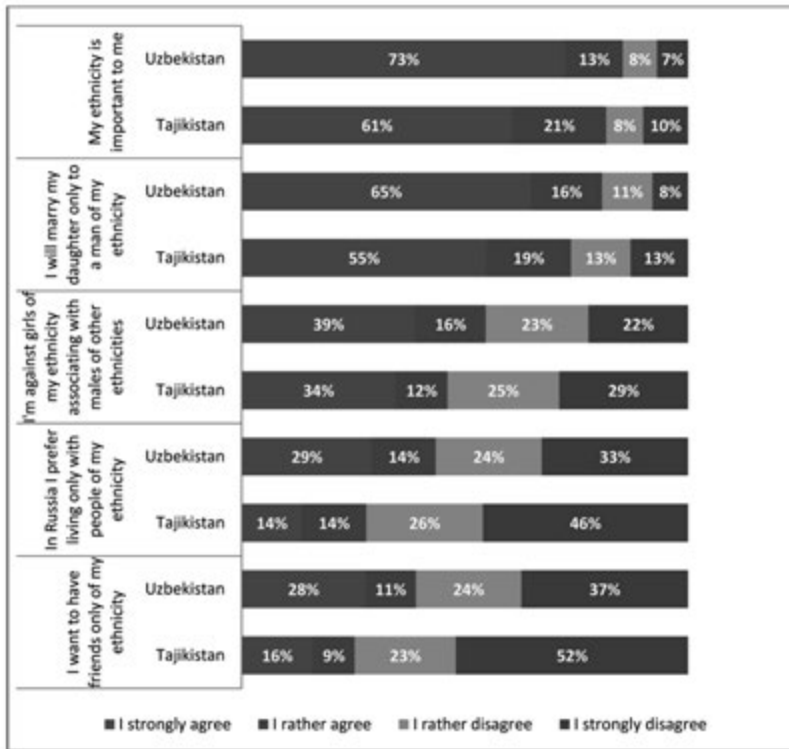


Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2013/14).

Note: First statement: $N = 327$; $\chi^2 = 4.914$; and $0.01 \leq p \leq 0.05$. Second statement: $N = 342$; $\chi^2 = 8.265$; and $0.001 \leq p \leq 0.01$.

The online survey of migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (GMER 2016) also contained similar questions. Bearing in mind the differences in the research design of the offline and online surveys, a cautious comparison would suggest that migrants from those countries have weaker ethnic identification than Kyrgyz migrants (figure 20). Analysis did not reveal any statistically significant gender differences among migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan with regard to these attitudes. Interestingly, the differences between ethnic identification and attitudes of Kyrgyz migrants on one hand and migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on the other are reflected in the factual behaviour of family formation. According to data from the Russian census, the share of mixed couples among ethnic Kyrgyz is about one fifth, whereas the figure among ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks is more than half (Soroko, 2010).

Figure 20 Distribution of migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, according to their agreement with survey answers on ethnic identification



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2016).

Note: The statistically significant difference is between migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in four of the five statements, except for the statement: "I'm against girls of my ethnicity associating with males of other ethnicities".

The strong ethnic identification of Kyrgyz migrants, which implies limitations on females' communication with non-Kyrgyz males, is reflected in the support of nationalist organizations which "look after" the "moral ways" of Kyrgyz female migrants: according to a recent survey of households in Kyrgyzstan, 51 per cent of females and 55 per cent of males expressed support for such organizations (UNFPA, 2016). This factor explains the appearance of the people who call themselves "Patriots of Kyrgyzstan" engaged in public harassment of Kyrgyz women whom they accused of having relations with non-Kyrgyz men²⁰. However, threats of physical violence to Kyrgyz women also come from men who do not claim membership in this group. The danger of being beaten and being shown in

20 For an example of the many instances of such harassment, see Asanov B. Vyhodki _patriotov_ prodolzhaitsja [Excesses of "Patriots" go on]. *Radio Azzatyk*, 27 February 2012. Available from http://rus.azattyk.org/content/kyrgyzstan_patriots/24658140.html (accessed 10 May 2015).

a video on the Internet were reiterated in several interviews together with stories of the rebukes from Kyrgyz males – acquainted with the informant or not – because of contacts with non-Kyrgyz men. One of the women, aged 24, who was from Bishkek, told a story in her interview about how she was harassed by Kyrgyz males – whom she did not know – when she rode in an unregistered taxi with an Uzbek driver; in addition, she told another story about her Kyrgyz female co-worker who was a waitress in a café – her co-worker had been chased by Kyrgyz males because she was in a romantic relationship with an Uzbek cook. The woman reflected upon the influence that these episodes had on her choices; she said that now she would not consider having any relationship with a non-Kyrgyz male – although she would like to – out of fear of harassment by such groups as the “Patriots of Kyrgyzstan”.

Such harassment of Kyrgyz females reflects particular processes connected with nation-building, which imply specific understanding of manhood and womanhood, where a woman is constructed as the “symbolic bearer of the collectivity’s identity and honour” (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 45) and considered responsible for the reproduction of the nation in both biological and cultural dimensions (Yuval-Davis, 1997, pp. 23-49).

Overall, Central Asian migration to the Russian Federation involves not only international mobility but also rural-to-urban mobility; living in Russian megacities with no ethnic neighbourhoods means encountering people of other descent. The workplace is also likely to lead both female and male migrants to have mixed connections, while leisure pursuits and accommodations are settings where females are more likely to become acquainted with new people from countries other than their country of origin. These possibilities are, however, limited by the gendered violence that stems from strong ethnic identification, which seems particularly pronounced among Kyrgyz migrants. Even when females have not faced such violence on their own, the knowledge of such risks serves as a limiting mechanism.

Transnational ties and transformations in countries of origin: gender dimensions

Having discussed integration of migrants in the destination country, the focus of the present study is turned to the transnational practices that embrace both receiving and sending countries, including financial, intimate and family relations that emerge and are maintained at long distance. However, before doing so, a look will be taken at the plans migrants have for the future in order to consider whether this transnational migration is a desired way of life.

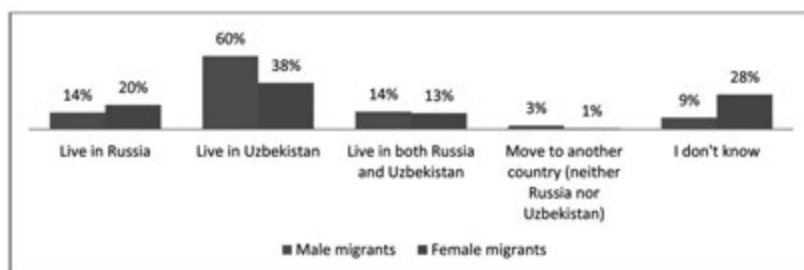
There is considerable contradictory evidence about the plans of migrants in the Russian Federation in general and female migrants in particular. A 2010 survey of female migrants from the CIS countries living in the Russian Federation showed that almost half (46 per cent) wanted to “come and go”, that is, to come to the Russian Federation, earn money and then “go”, that is,

leave for their country of origin. Another 25 per cent said that they would like to stay in the Russian Federation and live there permanently, while 21 per cent said that they would like to live in the Russian Federation for several years and then return home permanently (Tyurykanova, 2011, p. 155). Among them, females from Uzbekistan more often wanted to “come and go” (66 per cent) and were the least willing to apply for Russian citizenship (70 per cent of them did not have such plans) (Tyurykanova, 2011, pp. 155-156). Contrary to these findings, another survey of Central Asian female migrants in the Russian Federation showed that 70 per cent of them had firm plans to return home (Agadjanian and others, 2014).

According to the GMER surveys, Kyrgyz migrants, both female and male, were the least willing to stay in the Russian Federation (2.4 per cent), while 41.6 per cent said they would like to come back to Kyrgyzstan, and the rest (56 per cent) wanted to live in both countries (the “come and go” regime) (GMER 2013/14). Among Tajik migrants (GMER 2016), again with no significant difference between the sexes, there were more respondents who wanted to live in the Russian Federation (29 per cent); 24 per cent said that they would like to come back home; 34 per cent would like to move back and forth between the countries; 9 per cent did not know; and 4 per cent said that they would like to move to another country.

However, females and males from Uzbekistan demonstrated different plans for the future (GMER 2016). Males much more often expressed willingness to return to Uzbekistan while females much more often expressed their lack of specific plans (figure 21).

Figure 21 Distribution of female and male migrants from Uzbekistan, according to survey answers on their plans for the future



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2016).

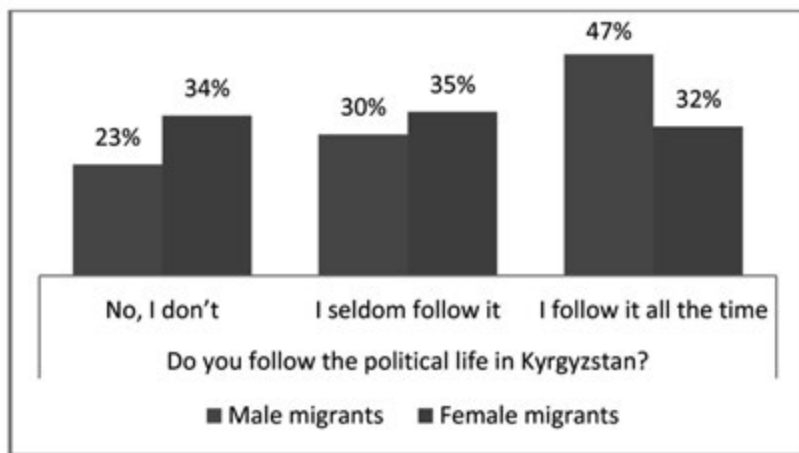
Note: N = 635; $\chi^2 = 36.250$; and $p \leq 0.001$.

In line with the migrants' unpredictable plans for the future, persistent financial needs and the developed “culture of migration” (Kandel and Massey, 2002) in Central Asia (Ablezova and others, 2008, p. 27), migrants from all three Central Asian States were found to keep very close transnational ties with their countries of origin: they visit home, socialize with family members and friends who stayed behind, exchange parcels, send remittances, track news at home and create businesses embracing both

countries of origin and destination. In the last 10 years, cell phones and Internet connections became cheaper, which together with the emergence of various Internet technologies (“Voice over Internet Protocol” as well as various instant-messaging services, such as Skype and Imo) make it much easier for migrants in the Russian Federation to keep in touch with people back home in Central Asia.

More than half of Kyrgyz migrants are involved in the exchange of parcels with Kyrgyzstan: in the year preceding the survey (GMER 2013/14), 58 per cent of respondents sent at least one parcel to Kyrgyzstan and 52 per cent received a parcel from their home country. As a result of this intensive exchange, special delivery companies have emerged, with trucks shuttling back and forth between the Russian Federation and Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, less than 2 per cent of migrants did not have conversations with people staying in Kyrgyzstan in the month preceding the survey, and almost half talked daily with people in their home country. In terms of parcels and such communication, female and male Kyrgyz migrants do not differ. However, male migrants more often say that they remain involved in the sociopolitical reality of Kyrgyzstan as well as the daily life of their home village or city (figure 22 and 23).

Figure 22 Distribution of female and male Kyrgyz migrants, according to survey answers on their interest in political life in Kyrgyzstan

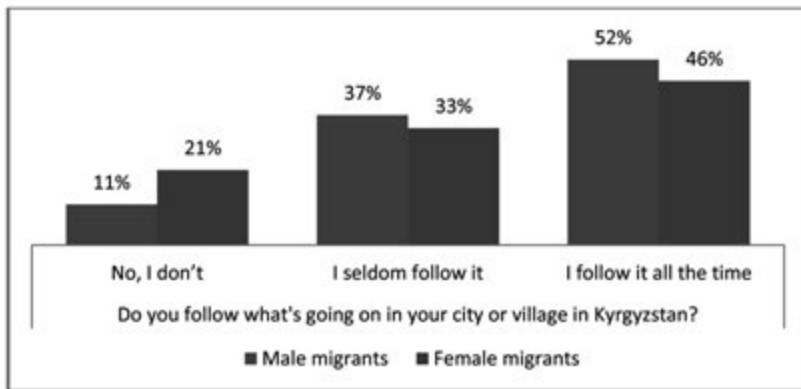


Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2013/14).

Note: $N = 347$; $\chi^2 = 5.943$; and $0.01 \leq p \leq 0.05$.

Among migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (GMER 2016), females and males differ in terms of the intensity of contacts they maintain with people who stayed behind. Female migrants tend to polarize: on one hand, they may communicate daily and on the other, almost never or seldom. However, almost half of male migrants socialize several times a week with those who stayed behind (figure 24).

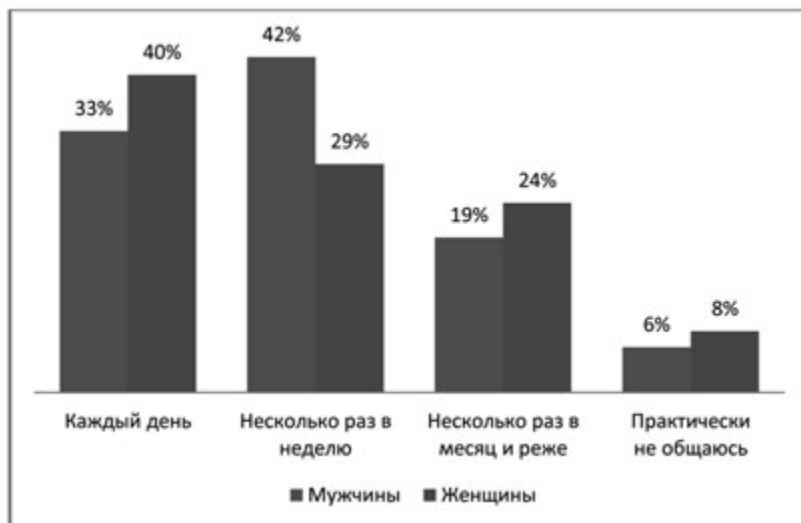
Figure 23 Distribution of female and male Kyrgyz migrants, according to their interest in everyday life in Kyrgyzstan



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2013/14).

Note: N = 48; chi-square = 8.461; and $0.001 \leq p \leq 0.01$.

Figure 24 Distribution of female and male migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, according to survey answers on their socialization with people staying behind



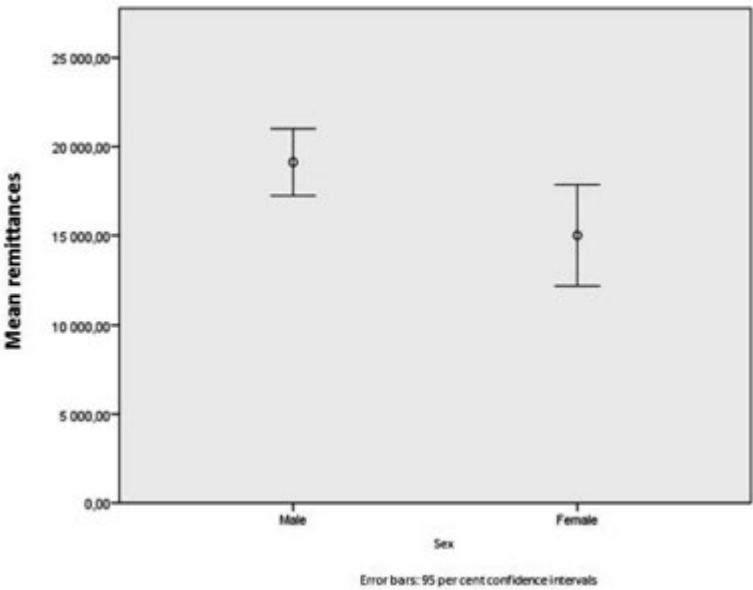
Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2016).

Note: N = 951; chi-square = 9.195; and $0.001 \leq p \leq 0.01$.

One of the ways to maintain transnational ties, which has high significance for sending countries, is remitting. International studies show that females are considered more reliable remitters and that their remittances, smaller in amount but more regular, are more important for the development of migrant-sending countries (Le Goff, 2016). However, little is known about the remittance behaviour of female and male migrants from Central Asia. There is evidence that female migrants from Central Asia, in comparison with female migrants from other CIS States, are more likely to remit (about 74-76 per cent female migrants from Central Asia send money to their countries of origin) and send a larger share of their earnings (Tyuryukanova, 2011, p. 143).

According to the GMER 2017 online survey of migrants from Uzbekistan, about 80 per cent of migrants sent remittances in the previous several months, and there was no statistically significant difference between females and males. However, there are differences in the quantity of the remittances sent: if the average monthly remittance from male migrants was 19,123 roubles, from females it was lower and equal to about 15,000 roubles (figure 25). However, females, as shown above, receive smaller salaries; thus, calculation of the shares of the remittances within the total earnings of women and men are equal: on average, women and men remit 64 per cent of their salary.

Figure 25 Comparison of means: remittances of female and male migrants from Uzbekistan, 2017

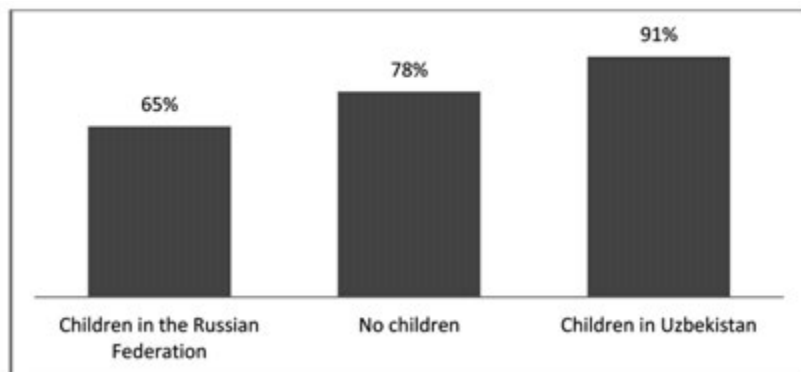


Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2017).

Note: Levene's test of significance = 0.147; equal variances not assumed; significance = 0.02; N = 224.

In line with expectations, an important factor connected with remittance behaviour is children. If a migrant has children in Uzbekistan, she/he is most likely to send money home; the least likely to send money home are those who have children in the Russian Federation. Migrants without children are located in the middle in terms of remittances (figure 26).

Figure 26 Distribution of migrants from Uzbekistan sending remittances, according to survey answers on the presence/absence of children



Source: Group for Migration and Ethnicity Research survey (2017).

Note: N = 287; chi-square = 10.546; and $0.001 \leq p \leq 0.01$.

However, migrants bringing up children in the Russian Federation, as shown above, is a rare event, but migrants do perform parenthood functions as well as other family roles over long distance, a situation that creates a specific form of transnational family (Baldassa and others, 2014). Transnational families are often face problematized; migrants have been accused of being irresponsible parents (Zentgraf and Chinchilla, 2012). The heaviest accusations are directed towards female migrants (Keough, 2006); for example, children left behind in Poland by their migrant mothers are designated as “euro-orphans” in the framework of moral disciplining of female migrants (Shinozaki, 2008). In Central Asia, there is no unanimous opinion on the effect that migration has on children left behind. Although there is evidence that remittances provide better access to education and health care, limited contact with parents might have negative impacts on the development of children (FIDH, 2016, p. 58; Ablezova and others, 2008, pp. 25-28). In some ethnographic studies, it has been argued that transnational parenthood functions performed through contact via mobile phones and the Internet are not stigmatized, although transnational motherhood requires more effort than similar forms of fatherhood (Borisova, 2016). Studies in Kyrgyzstan have also shown that caring is still assigned primarily to mothers, and that this role does not change much with migration (Thieme, 2008).

Together with relationships between parents and children, migration transforms relationships between spouses. With predominantly male

migration, wives who stay behind live in fear of losing their husbands to women in the Russian Federation and thus also losing economic support and social status in the extended family as well as in the community; whether a divorce occurs is considered the responsibility of the wife. The Russian Federation is seen as a space of freedom (Brednikova, 2017) where husbands can learn expectations about the role of a wife which contradict the role model of a wife in Central Asia; thus, women feel that they are in competition with “Russian wives” (Cleuziou, n.d.; Reeves, 2011; 2013). It is difficult to estimate the number of “second families” which male or female migrants have in the Russian Federation²¹; according to ethnographic studies, the realities of migrants’ lives in the Russian Federation do not allow time and other resources for romantic relationships, and the number of “second families” is “probably considerably fewer than the densely circulating rumours ... implied” (Reeves, 2011, p. 567). Having a “second family” in the Russian Federation is seen as normal – for a man – by a quarter of respondents in Kyrgyzstan (22 per cent of females and 26 per cent of males) (UNFPA, 2016). The fear of the husband having a second family in the Russian Federation may lead women to have more children in order to guarantee a tighter family connection (Olimova and Bosk, 2003) or to facilitate coming along with her husband. Even when both spouses migrate to the Russian Federation, this does not ensure that the marriage will last; facing the challenge of a lack of intimacy due to crowded accommodations, some spouses get divorced (Kalandarov, 2012).

At the same time, it would be incorrect to equate a migrant’s “second family” in the Russian Federation with abandoning the family in the country of origin. First, divorce can transpire without the existence of a second family, following long-lasting separation and/or a lack of tight connections between the spouses. For example, many marriages in Tajikistan are arranged, and because the husband goes to the Russian Federation soon after the marriage the young spouses do not have the time or opportunity to develop such close connections (Kalandarov, 2012). Second, maintaining two families – in other words having a “polynuclear family” (Rahmonova-Schwarz, 2012, p. 195) – is an option.

In attempts to assess the number of women who were abandoned by their husbands who left for the Russian Federation, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provided a figure of one third of all wives in Tajikistan (IOM, 2009, pp. 6-7). This proportion includes those women who receive \$500 per year or less in remittances. Not all these women are, however, divorced or actually abandoned by their husbands – but they are certainly those who face troubles in their life. Approaching State bodies for assistance is precluded by the women’s unwillingness to reveal that their husbands have abandoned them as this might lead to the loss of their status in the community. This is also a result of their inability to provide the authorities with official papers owing to the fact that religious marriages account for a high share of the total number of marriages (IOM, 2009). Researchers have pointed to the lack of legal mechanisms to provide such

21 For a description of the case of such a family, see Brednikova (2003).

families with protection (Turakhanova, 2013) as well as the lack of State services made available to migrants' family members who stay behind (FIDH, 2016).

Sexual relations of female and male migrants in the Russian Federation seem to differ. During a season of work in the Russian Federation, an average Tajik male migrant who has come to the country without his wife may have 2-3 sexual partners (Olimova and Bosk, 2003, pp. 98-99) who may be sex workers (Weine and others, 2008), including female migrants from Central Asia (Weine and others, 2013). However, studies of female migrants show a different picture. Central Asian female migrants on average have 1.3 sexual partners in their entire lifetime (Agadjanian and Zotova, 2011). Overall, according to the survey of female migrants from the CIS States, migration to the Russian Federation does not lead to multiple sexual partners; among those women who are married or cohabit, 81.3 per cent have sex with their husband, 1 per cent have another permanent sexual partner, 0.5 per cent have different partners, while 15 per cent do not have any sexual partner when in the Russian Federation (Tyuryukanova, 2011, p. 63).

Researchers attract attention to the migrants' limited awareness in the sphere of sexual and reproductive health (Ryazantsev and others, 2014, p. 174; Amirkhanian and others, 2011; Yevsyutina, 2015). Female migrants from Central Asia face difficulties if they insist that a permanent partner use condoms (Agadjanian and Zotova, 2014). Limited awareness, in its turn, might lead to sexually transmitted infections, which are also brought back to the countries of origin (Renton and others, 2006), and to unwanted/unexpected pregnancy. Pregnancy out of wedlock contradicts the norms of the Central Asian societies; thus, it results either in abortion or in unwanted children being left in the maternity clinic. According to Moscow statistics for 2012/13, 40 per cent of all such children were left by citizens of Kyrgyzstan, followed by citizens of Tajikistan, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan; in 2012, 308 children were left behind in the clinics of Moscow. Of that number, 85 were left by foreign citizens; in the first 6 months of 2013, the figures were 136 and 47 respectively (Florinskaja, 2013). Nevertheless, possibilities to raise awareness about sexual and reproductive health are often impeded by "traditional values", a situation which implies that such information is not required as sex occurs only within wedlock (FIDH, 2016, pp. 50-51).

Migration, whether of men or women, brings about changes in the countries of origin, and those changes are also gendered. One of the central questions in this regard is how does migration change the positions of those who stay behind – as the majority of migrants from Central Asia are men; the question then is mostly about women. Does male migration lead to females' empowerment? There is no easy answer to this question, and there is contradictory evidence.

Overall, male migration can lead to either an increase or decrease in gender inequality (Thieme, 2008) depending on the age and position of the woman in the household (Ismailbekova, 2014), as well as the number of children, household characteristics and living arrangements, that is, living with in-

laws or not (Reeves, 2011). Male migration leads to a shortage of marriageable men, which drives an increase in the number of second wives whose position is more vulnerable (Cleuziou, n.d.). A wife may not have any access to remittances because the funds might be sent to her husband's parents or brothers (OSCE, 2012, p. 5), or she may have limited decision-making power over how to spend the money. Moreover, the level of social control over a woman in the absence of a husband can even increase; as a daughter-in-law (*kelin*), she is not considered to have many rights (Reeves, 2011), a situation that can sometimes can even lead to physical violence and eviction from her place of living (OSCE, 2012).

At the same time, in case of a nuclear family a woman can willingly or unwillingly take on more "male" responsibilities on her own. These include hard physical labour, paid employment, starting a business (primarily selling agricultural products in the market) and participating in local politics through the operation of local communities (*mahallas*) (Olimova and Bosk, 2003; Malyuchenko, 2015; Kikuta, 2016). Situations when women take up activities which are considered "male" might lead to conflicts both in local communities and within families. When male migrants return home after their wife has become household head, conflicts over the redistribution of household tasks and activities are possible (ILO and EU, 2010).

An example of the contradictory consequences of male migration is feminization of agriculture in Tajikistan (IOM, 2009): as of 2016, 75 per cent of females and 42 per cent of males were employed in the agricultural sector of that country (Khitarishvili, 2016, p. 8). Such employment is seasonal, difficult and low-paid. At the same time, remittances enable women to rent more land (Shahriari and others, 2009) and thus become wealthier. This is even more important as women in Tajikistan rarely own land; when they do own land, their land plots are smaller than those of men (Khitarishvili, 2016, p. 13).

There is still no consensus on whether women participate more actively in the labour market when men leave for the Russian Federation. There are contradictory findings on the influence of male migration on the gender gap in labour force participation. Some studies have shown that male migration contributes to shrinking of the gender gap (Abdulloev and others, 2014) while others indicated that women in households with migrants are less likely to be in paid employment (Justino and Shemyakina, 2012).

To sum up, females and males do not differ in terms of their plans for the future, which are quite volatile judging by the contradictory results of the studies. Women from Uzbekistan, however, are less likely to have specific plans; when they do have them, the women are less likely to come back to Uzbekistan. Among all migrants from Central Asia, going back and forth between the Russian Federation and their country of origin is a popular and desired way of life. This phenomenon stems from highly developed transnational practices – the sending of remittances and developing familial, intimate and other ties that the migrants maintain in both countries. Females and males do not differ significantly in this regard. The only exclusion can be sexual relations: according to the very limited existing data, men's sexual

behaviour is riskier in the sense that they have a larger number of sexual partners. There are disturbing data on the migrants' limited awareness about sexual and reproductive health, which might lead to the spread of sexually transmitted infections and having unwanted/unexpected pregnancies. Bearing in mind the strong transnational ties that exist, it can be hypothesized that this factor can take a toll on the countries of origin. There is contradictory evidence concerning the influence that migration has on the position of women who stay behind: it may range from increased wealth and more powerful positions in the local communities stemming from the remittances and the necessity/opportunity to take up "male" activities, to the situations of a daughter-in-law who has no access to the remittances sent by her husband and lives in a subordinate position in her in-laws' household or even more so, who has been abandoned by her husband and loses her accommodation with her former in-laws.

Conclusion

Migration from Central Asia to the Russian Federation is bound to be the main axis of the migration system that was formed after the dissolution of the USSR. As in other settings, it is highly gendered, being tightly connected with ideals of masculinity in the subregion, which is reflected in the dominance of men among migrants. However, the gender order of Kyrgyzstan, which is characterized by much better positions of women, is conducive to more gender-balanced migration, with women making up almost half of the migrants and many of them being under the age of 30. On the contrary, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have much stricter norms for women's mobility; correspondingly, migration from these two countries is mostly male, with less than a fifth of women being in the migration flows.

Following the demand of the Russian service sector for a "female" workforce, female migrants from Central Asia are employed first of all in this sphere and in trade, whereas the main "male" sector is construction. As a consequence of this situation, the salaries of female migrants are lower than those of males; as a result, women remit less in absolute amounts although the proportions of remittances from their earnings are the same.

Compared with the labour market, the sex of migrants is less significant in relations with the receiving State, where all migrants are vulnerable and have limited legal protection. However, there is an important gendered consequence of the State's vision of labour migration, which is the lack of legal grounds for the labour migrant's family members to stay with him/her long term. The so-called 90/180 rule does not permit stays of more than three months unless the migrant possesses a patent (work permit), residence permit or other special documents. This situation leads to even more limited opportunities for migrants to bring their families with them, and usually the family members who have to stay behind are women. When women do come to the Russian Federation, they have to either pay for a patent or seek informal agreements with State bodies; the only other choice is to remain undocumented. This legal omission requires attention from the side of legislators in the Russian Federation.

A disturbing issue is the gendered limitations to get new social ties outside the circle of co-ethnics, which is particularly evident among Kyrgyz migrants. Strong ethnic identification among Kyrgyz migrants coincides with negative attitudes towards mixed marriages and relationships between Kyrgyz women and non-Kyrgyz men, which together result in attempts by Kyrgyz men to impose restrictions on Kyrgyz women; the sanctions for their violation can result even in physical violence. These tensions could be decreased with integration practices based on an intercultural framework and contact theory (Varshaver and others, 2017a). However, at the moment there are no centralized attempts to contribute to the social integration of migrants; yet, this is an issue that needs to be addressed.

As there are less strict norms for males having romantic relations with other women in the Russian Federation, such permissive standards might lead to the creation of “second families” and sometimes to the abandonment of families back in the countries of origin. Mechanisms of assistance to such families are lacking; the range of livelihood strategies is scarce. These issues should be addressed by the countries of origin.

Last but not least is the issue of migrants’ sexual and reproductive health. The few studies in this field show that migrants do not have full access to information and services in this regard and thus may face various risks. The opportunities for raising awareness are hampered by “traditional” values according to which sexual relations are possible only between spouses; thus, knowledge about contraception and sexually transmitted infections is not required. Raising awareness is a goal to be achieved with the concerted attempts of the countries of origin and destination, as well as international organizations.

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