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IJTIMOIY-GUMANITAR FANLARNING DOLZARB MUAMMOLARI

№ 8 (5) – 2025

АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ СОЦИАЛЬНО-ГУМАНИТАРНЫХ НАУК

ACTUAL PROBLEMS OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

TOSHKENT-2025

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Saidov Ulugbek Aripovich – filologiya fanlari nomzodi, dotsent, O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti huzuridagi Davlat siyosati va boshqaruvi akademiyasi.

12.00.00- YURIDIK FANLAR:

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Yusupov Sardorbek Baxodirovich – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Amirov Zafar Aktamovich – yuridik fanlar doktori (PhD), O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Sudyalar oliy kengashi huzuridagi Sudyalar oliy maktabi;

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Rahmatov Elyor Jumaboyevich — yuridik fanlar nomzodi, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

13.00.00- PEDAGOGIKA FANLARI:

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Ibragimova Gulnora Xavazmatovna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, professor, Toshkent davlat iqtisodiyot universiteti;

Zakirova Feruza Maxmudovna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, Toshkent axborot texnologiyalari universiteti huzuridagi pedagogik kadrlarni qayta tayyorlash va ularning malakasini oshirish tarmoq markazi;

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Bobomurotova Latofat Elmurodovna — pedagogika fanlari bo‘yicha falsafa doktori (PhD), Samarqanddavlatuniversiteti.

19.00.00- PSIXOLOGIYA FANLARI:

Karimova Vasila Mamanosirovna – psixologiya fanlari doktori, professor, Nizomiy nomidagi Toshkent davlat pedagogika universiteti;

Hayitov Oybek Eshboyevich – Jismoniy tarbiya va sport bo‘yicha mutaxassislarni qayta tayyorlash va malakasini oshirish instituti, psixologiya fanlari doktori, professor

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Mazkur jurnal Vazirlar Mahkamasi huzuridagi Oliy attestatsiya komissiyasi Rayosatining 2022-yil 30-noyabrdagi 327/5-son qarori bilan tarix, iqtisodiyot, falsafa, filologiya, yuridik va pedagogika fanlari bo‘yicha ilmiy darajalar yuzasidan dissertatsiyalar asosiy natijalarini chop etish tavsiya etilgan ilmiy nashrlar ro‘yxatiga kiritilgan.

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MUNDARIJA

07.00.00 – TARIX FANLARI

08.00.00 – IQTISODIYOT FANLARI

09.00.00 – FALSAFA FANLARI

10.00.00 – FILOLOGIYA FANLARI

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12.00.00 – YURIDIK FANLAR – LAW

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Article / Original Paper

A SOCIO-LEGAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVERYDAY TRANSNATIONAL LIVES OF UZBEK MIGRANTS IN RUSSIA

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Abstract. One of the key themes in this research field literature is migrants' legal transnationalism, that is, how migrants' pre-migratory cultural and normative repertoires influence their everyday lives and experiences in their host society. However, the existing studies on migrants' legal transnationalism largely focus on the case studies of immigrant communities in the West, whereas there has been little scholarly investigation of similar issues in the context of Russia that has become a "migration hotspot" after the fall of the Soviet Union, hosting large numbers of migrant workers from Central Asia. Another factor that adds to this lacuna is that we know relatively little on the gendered experiences of legal transnationalism, a research field that needs further empirical investigation. In this paper we aim to explore Central Asian migrants' legal transnationalism and how these experiences unfold in the life trajectories of male and female migrants. This paper is based on a multisited transnational ethnography of Uzbek migrant workers in Russia and in their home village in Uzbekistan, conducted between 2014-2019.

Keywords: Uzbek migrants, legal transnationalism, legal culture, post-Soviet societies.

ROSSIYADAGI O‘ZBEK MIGRANTLARINING KUNDALIK HUQUQIY PLYURALISTIK HAYOTINING IJTIMOIY-HUQUQIY TAHLILI

O‘rinboyev Rustamjon
Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti professori v.b.,
Yuridik fanlar doktori (DsC)

Annotatsiya. Ushbu tadqiqot sohasidagi adabiyotlardagi asosiy mavzulardan biri migrantlarning huquqiy plyuralizmga moslashishi, ya'ni migrantlarning migratsiyadan oldingi madaniy va ijtimoiy normalari (huquqiy madaniyati) ularning kundalik hayoti va qabul qiluvchi jamiyatga qanday ta'sir qilishidir. Biroq, migrantlarning huquqiy plyuralizmi bo‘yicha mavjud tadqiqotlar asosan G‘arbdagi migrantlar jamoalarining holatini o‘rganishga qaratilgan bo‘lsa-da, Sovet Ittifoqi parchalanganidan keyin Markaziy Osiyodan ko‘plab mehnat muhojirlarini qabul qilgan "migratsiya o‘chog‘i"ga aylangan Rossiya sharoitida shunga o‘xshash muammolar bo‘yicha ilmiy tadqiqotlar kam o‘tkazilgan. Ushbu bo‘shliqni to‘ldiradigan yana bir omil shundaki, biz huquqiy plyuralizm va gender orasidagi bog‘liq ijtimoiy-huquqiy jarayonlar haqida nisbatan kam ma'lumotga egamiz, bu esa qo‘shimcha empirik tadqiqotlarni talab qiladigan tadqiqot sohasi hisoblanadi. Ushbu maqolada biz Markaziy Osiyolik muhojirlarning huquqiy plyuralizm tajribasi va bu jarayonlar erkak va ayol migrantlarning hayot trayektoriyalarida qanday aks etishini o‘rganishni maqsad qilganmiz. Ushbu tadqiqot 2014-2019-yillarda Rossiyadagi va O‘zbekistondagi o‘zbek mehnat migrantlari bilan o‘tkazilgan etnografik dala tadqiqotlariga asoslangan.

Kalit so‘zlar: O‘zbek migrantlari, huquqiy plyuralizm, huquqiy madaniyat, postsovet jamiyatlari.

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Introduction

Transnational migration has been on the agenda of social scientists for more than three decades (Schiller et al. 1992, Vertovec 1999, Levitt 2001a). Transnational migrants, living their lives across the border of two (or more) nation-states, continue to remain part of the fabric of everyday life and social relations in home country, while simultaneously becoming part of the socio-economic processes in their receiving country, thereby making home and host society a single arena for social action (Schiller et al. 1995, Portes et al. 1999). These transnational linkages are multistranded (e.g. economic, social, cultural, political, institutional, emotional) and entwined in the lived experiences of migrants and their left-behind families and communities (Levitt 2001b, Kelly and Lusis 2006).

One of the key themes in this research field is literature on migrants' legal transnationalism, that is, how migrants' pre-migratory cultural and normative repertoires (values, attitudes toward the law, entrenched behavioral patterns, accustomed social practices, and informal norms) influence their everyday lives and experiences in their host society (Menski 1993, Ballard 2006, Shah 2009, Kubal 2013a). However, the existing studies on migrants' legal transnationalism largely focus on the case studies of immigrant communities in "established countries of immigration" such as the United States, Australia, Canada, and Western European countries. Despite extensive research on migrants' legal transnationalism, there has been little scholarly investigation of similar issues in the context of non-Western migration hubs such as Russia that has become a "migration hotspot" after the fall of the Soviet Union, hosting large numbers of migrant workers from Central Asia. Given the "varied geographies of transnationalism" (Dunn 2010), it is reasonable to assume that migrant transnationalism is not the same everywhere, holding different meanings, forms and functional roles depending upon the socio-political context, legal environment, economic system and cultural factors. Another factor that adds to this lacuna is that we know relatively little on the gendered experiences of legal transnationalism, a research field that needs further empirical investigation.

Thus, based on the above considerations, in this paper we aim to explore Central Asian migrants' legal transnationalism and how these experiences unfold in the life trajectories of male and female migrants. More specifically, we will address the following questions in our study: What are the peculiarities of migrant legal transnationalism in the Russian migration context? How do these peculiarities play out in the lives of male and female migrants? What are the implications of the Russian migration context, combined with a focus on gender dimension, for migrant legal transnationalism scholarship, as well as for broader debates within migration studies? To address these questions, we utilise the cases of both female and male migrants originating from Uzbekistan. This paper is based on a multisited transnational ethnography of Uzbek migrant workers in Russia and in their home village in Uzbekistan. We collected the ethnographic material during 14 months of fieldwork in Moscow, Russia, and the Fergana Valley, Uzbekistan, between January of 2014 and November of 2019. These field sites were chosen because Moscow is the capital city and largest metropolis in Russia, featuring the highest number of migrant workers. Likewise, we chose the Fergana Valley because it is the primary migrant-sending region in Uzbekistan, given its population density and high unemployment rate. We, both authors, owing to our Uzbek origin and cultural competence, and language skills (Uzbek and Russian), had direct access to social spaces and daily life of Uzbek

migrant communities in Moscow and their left-behind families and communities in the Fergana Valley. The ethnographic material was primarily collected through observations and informal interviews. To ensure maximum anonymity, the names and whereabouts of informants have been changed, and only the most general information about the informants and fieldwork sites are provided.

Uzbek Labour Migrants in Russia

Russia is one of the main destinations for migrants in the world. In 2019, it stood fourth globally both as a destination (around 10 million migrants) and the country of origin amongst for immigrants (IOM 2019, p. 26). Migrants from Central Asia constitute the largest portion of the migrant workforce, mostly employed in unskilled jobs. Given the varying methods and purposes of registering foreigners, Russia's responsible agencies provide a range of figures on the number of economic migrants.

Labour migration from Uzbekistan to Russia started in the mid-2000s (Abashin 2013). According to statistics from December 2020, more than two million Uzbek citizens were present within the territory of the Russian Federation (Florinskaya and Mkrtchan 2020). The great majority of Uzbek migrant workers are young male with a secondary school education (Eraliev and Urinboyev 2020). Most of these migrants originate from rural areas, have secondary school education and possess a poor command of Russian language. Therefore, they are mostly employed in low-skilled and low-paid jobs. Owing to high accommodation costs and precarious working conditions, migrants rarely bring their spouses to Russia. They send the bulk of their earnings to left-behind families, leaving little for themselves to cover bare necessities. However, tendencies in recent years reveal a growing share of female migrants in Russian labour market. Women make up at around 15% to 20% amongst migrants from Uzbekistan (Rocheva and Varshaver 2017). Whilst construction sites, farms and similar areas where physical strength is required primarily employ men, female migrants can find jobs predominantly in trade (supermarkets and shops), catering (restaurants, hotels and food factories) and domestic (care) and cleaning services (Eraliev and Heusala 2021).

Accordingly, the aforesaid migratory trends reflect the social changes currently taking place in both Central Asia and Russia (Ruget and Usmanalieva 2008, Reeves 2012, Abashin 2014, Urinboyev 2018). Anyone walking along the streets of large Russian cities such as Moscow, Saint Petersburg, or Yekaterinburg quickly notices numerous Uzbek cafés and choyxonas. These cafés not only serve as eating places for Uzbek and other Central Asian migrants but can also be viewed as an indication of migrants' transnational place-making practices. These migratory flows also carry important implications for migrant-sending communities in Uzbekistan as millions of Uzbeks move for the first time (i.e., becoming a "nomad") to Russia, leaving behind their families and community. Historically, Uzbeks have always been the most sedentary population in Central Asia, preferring to earn their livelihood in their home country (Levi 2007). Even during the Soviet era, ethnic Uzbeks exhibited the lowest mobility rate among Soviet ethnic populations (Ilkhamov 2013). In the 1980s, experts attributed Uzbeks' reluctance to voluntarily migrate to a presumed innate and incorrigible cultural attachment to their families and mahalla (Abashin 2014). Hence, because of their settled lifestyle, Uzbeks successfully preserved their traditional structures and social hierarchies despite the Soviet Union's coercive strategies. This contrasts to nomadic nations in the region, such as the Kazakh and Kyrgyz populations, which proved more receptive to Soviet

modernization policies (Levi 2007). Rapid economic decline and the collapse of welfare state arrangements after the collapse of Soviet Union significantly shaped the mobility patterns and lifestyles in the region. It is no longer accurate to classify Central Asian nations strictly as either settled or nomadic. In contemporary Uzbekistan, both urban and rural communities commonly rely on labor migration as a standard livelihood strategy to support household needs. As a result, the Uzbek way of life has taken on a more transnational character, with many individuals navigating daily life and sustaining social connections across borders, particularly between Russia and Uzbekistan.

Having situated in two transnational social fields, Uzbek migrants bring their "legal baggage" (Kubal 2013b)—their attitudes toward the law, moral codes, religious values, established behavioral patterns, and the accustomed social practices that they internalized prior to their migratory experiences—and capitalize on it when organizing their daily life in host society. At the same time, they also adapt their behavioral norms and practices to the conditions in their host society. Therefore, when trying to examine Uzbek migrants' everyday experiences and adaptation strategies in Russia, there is a need to provide the reader with the contextual information on Uzbek legal culture.

The everyday social order in traditional Uzbek society—including social positions, gender roles and hierarchies, kinship groups, and community— stems largely from patriarchal norms and collectivistic values, whereby an elder man decides the most important family and community affairs (Kandiyoti and Azimova 2004). In a traditional family in Uzbekistan, men are considered the head of the family and, as such, are responsible for winning the bread, whilst women are viewed as homemakers and, thus, responsible for bearing children and taking care of household chores. The eldest male is delegated the authority to make most of the decisions, which become obligatory to other family members. The prevalence of traditionalism and gender hierarchies most likely results from the fact that Uzbekistan features a Muslim majority (nearly 90 percent of the population) and represented the "heartland" of three Sharia law–based independent states (Khiva and Kokand Khanates and the Emirate of Bukhara) until the late nineteenth century (Louw 2007, Khalid 2015). Whilst the Russian empire, which conquered the Central Asian khanates in the late nineteenth century, did not interfere much in the internal structure of these states, the Soviets carried out intensive modernisation projects impacting all aspects of life (Martin 2001). Along with economic modernisation, Soviets' atheism and women's emancipation policies deeply affected the social organisation of the Central Asian republics (Northrop 2004, Edgar 2006). However, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, nation-building policies in each Central Asian country to some degree were accompanied by the partial reestablishment of traditional Islamic norms, influencing the social structure of society, especially the position of women (Peshkova 2014).

Accordingly, the aforesaid behavioral imperatives, gender hierarchies, expectations, and social sanctions emanating from the "collectivistic culture" (Triandis 2018) shape the basic parameters of everyday life and social relationships in Uzbek society. These cultural and normative repertoires remain crucial both locally (in Uzbekistan) and transnationally (in Russia). Uzbek migrants import and adapt their premigratory cultural and normative repertoires to Russia, especially when they work and live under the conditions of an undocumentedness and informal employment (Urinboyev and Polese 2016). These processes become particularly visible when observing how Uzbeks deal with the cumbersome

bureaucracy, legal ambiguities, arbitrary law enforcement, informal labour relations and economic insecurities. As we will empirically demonstrate in the next sections, these experiences are gender-sensitive, meaning that they play out differently in the case of male and female migrants.

Case studies

The first part of the empirical data focuses on the experiences of two female Uzbek migrants in Moscow. In the second part, we will present the case study of Uzbek male construction workers and their transnational experiences. These cases were selected because they provide empirically significant examples of how gender shapes the experiences of vulnerable migrant groups, while also highlighting key aspects of migrants' legal transnational practices. The first case is of Munira, whose life trajectories were adversely affected by her "legal baggage" that led to unfavorable legal outcomes in the host society. The second case tells the story of Farida who was a victim of rape and had to become an underage mother of two children. The third case centers around the transnational lives and experiences of male migrants who work in Moscow's construction sector. We use pseudonyms for all of these four migrants and other individuals that appear in their life stories.

Case studies of female migrants

The first case revolves around the experiences of Munira Usmonova, a female migrant from an eastern region in Uzbekistan. Munira, an orphan raised by impoverished grandparents, remained unmarried into her early twenties—a situation viewed as dishonorable by many traditional Central Asian families. She agreed to become the "second wife" of Umid, who was already legally married to another woman and had a child with her. Facing financial hardships, Umid left for Moscow to work and brought Munira there in 2013. Before their first child was born, Munira lost her passport. Umid convinced her to use his surname, Razzakova, when interacting with hospital staff. He later provided the hospital with a forged document, supposedly from the Ryazan police department (a city 200 km from Moscow) and Moscow's Chertanovo district police, certifying the loss of identity papers for "Munira Razzakova," including a passport and work permit. Strikingly, the document claimed she was a Moroccan citizen. Consequently, the maternity ward issued the birth certificate listing the mother as "Munira Razzakova," a Moroccan citizen, instead of Munira Usmonova from Uzbekistan. Munira and Umid continued living together, paying little attention to replacing her documents. Meanwhile, their second child was born. In 2018, Umid was stopped by police for an ID check, revealing his overstay in Russia without proper documentation, which led to his deportation. Initially, he promised to send money to help Munira recover her documents and return to Uzbekistan but eventually ceased all contact. Munira was left in Russia without legal documents or sufficient means to support herself and her children.

At first, some friends and supporters living with her helped cover rent and food costs, but over time Munira was left without any assistance. After being evicted from several rental apartments, her situation attracted attention from Uzbek-language media, sparking intense discussions on Uzbek social media platforms. With backing from the Uzbek Women's Committee and support from the Uzbek Embassy, Munira managed to regain her own identity documents and later those of her children. This process required many visits to various organizations in Russia over several months, assisted by a pro bono lawyer. Finally, thanks to

funds raised through social media, Munira was able to leave Russia with her children in mid-March 2020, just before the COVID-19 lockdowns began in both Russia and Uzbekistan.

The second case focuses on the story of Farida, a female migrant from Uzbekistan, who became a mother of two children at the age of 16 and was herself raised in a single-parent household by her mother. Desperate to find a job, her mother went to Russia, taking 11-year-old Farida with her. In Russia's Lipetsk city, because they were living in a shared apartment with other tenants, another migrant raped the then 12-year-old Farida when her mother was at work. The rapist was sentenced to jail, but Farida became pregnant and decided not to abort, thus giving birth to a child at the age of 13. Since Farida herself was a minor, her mother was listed as the mother of the newborn child on the Russian birth certificate. Farida's mother juggled temporary low-paid jobs and, when Farida turned 15, she decided that her daughter should marry someone who could sustain her. Because Farida was still a minor, her mother decided that a *nikah,* a religious marriage ceremony not recognised by state authorities, was sufficient in order for her and another 35-year-old migrant to live together. Farida was 16 when she gave birth to her second child. At this point, both her mother and her husband had abandoned her. Farida now found herself in a trap: she had neither a place to live nor documents to return to Uzbekistan. First, it would be extremely difficult without her mother's presence to obtain a passport from the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Moscow. Second, even if she managed to leave, she would not be able to travel with her older child, who is legally her mother's daughter. Technically, it would be possible to obtain travel documents if Farida's mother applies for her passport and signs a power of attorney for the child to travel with Farida. But Farida does not know her mother's whereabouts.

The case study of male migrants

This section presents a case of Uzbek male migrants who work in construction sector in Moscow. Our case revolves around Misha, a workteam leader, and his brigada (a team of construction workers) and their experiences of legal transnationalism.

Misha is a pioneer Uzbek migrant who brought many of his co-villagers and acquaintances (around 200 by 2014) to Moscow. He arrived in 2002 when labour migration was still a new phenomenon in Uzbekistan. At the time of fieldwork, he worked as a posrednik (middleman) in the construction sector, acting as an intermediary between migrant workers and Russian employers. Misha's main role is to find well-skilled migrant construction workers, take full responsibility for the quality of the construction work, and address migrants' daily concerns (e.g., accommodation, food) and legal problems (e.g., police problems).

It is not so easy to find skilled, reliable migrant construction workers who will perform their tasks in accordance with state standards and not steal construction materials. Kinship is more important than reputation in this case, but workers' reputation is also key factor when Misha selects workers for his brigade. When Misha approaches someone who is not from his village, or at least his district, they rarely agree to work under him. Coming from the same village creates not only a social bond but also social responsibility in the workers' mind. Both the family of the middleman and the workers share a territory and interact daily to the point that non-compliance with the agreed obligations from either side would trigger a chain reaction with the workers' families putting direct pressure on the middleman's family in the village, a thing that might not happen if the two men's families lived far from one another.

Thanks to this mechanism, Misha's *erkakcha gap* (literally "man's word") is enough for his workers, and he allows migrants to work without any documents. The work of a middleman in the Russian construction sector is largely informal. An amount is agreed upon and paid gradually as the construction project progresses. There is no written agreement between Misha and his co-villagers, and they rely on *ko'cha qonunlari* (laws of the street) and *erkakchilik* ("manliness") rules to get things done. Misha receives payment from Russian middlemen and then distributes the money to his workers, taking a *dolya* (share) of between 10–15 percent of each workers' salary. As other studies have demonstrated, the embeddedness of work and social relationships generate mutual dependence and a long-term reciprocity relationship that all parties are happy to continue. This relationship exists on two levels, the local and the transnational, reinforcing the relations not only between actors but also their families in their home village.

At the time of fieldwork, Misha's brigada consisted of 12 migrant workers, and their main job was installing new windows in mid-rise and high-rise buildings. On average, the brigada worked 10–12 hours per day, without taking any days off. They endured harsh conditions, working on the 17th floor despite the freezing cold weather (the outdoor temperature was –25C). They only took a day off in exceptional circumstances, such as when supplies were delayed or in case of an emergency. Misha usually purchased food, and the brigada cooked meals for themselves. This means every day one migrant, on a rotating basis, could be assigned to prepare lunch and dinner for everyone. In this kind of relationship, there is no clear boundary between work and non- work activities in the brigada's daily life.

Moreover, the line between workers and supervisors is blurred. Misha cares for those dependent on him, believing that content workers perform better. He sometimes does small favors for his workers, like buying cigarettes or sending money home on their behalf, even if it means temporarily using his own money. This dual role as both an older brother figure and a line manager gave him greater influence. His workers trusted that they could rely on him, and he knew they would be willing to help him if needed. Similarly, the brigada members were part of a complex web of relationships. In Moscow, they worked under Misha's leadership, respected his authority, and referred to him as "elder brother" regardless of age differences. Though they had little choice but to trust him to pay their wages, support them in difficulties, and assist with paperwork, this trust was rooted in the understanding that, because of their family ties, it would be too risky and costly for Misha to betray them. Any short-term financial gain from cheating would be quickly offset by village-level consequences and retaliation.

Nearly all members of the brigada owned smartphones and frequently used platforms like Odnoklassniki and Telegram Messenger to stay updated with the latest news, browse photos of Russian girls, and send instant messages to their families and local mahalla networks. These new technologies enabled them to maintain close, almost real-time communication between the village and the workers in Moscow. Stories about the brigada's experiences in Moscow were a favorite topic of conversation back in the village. Misha's ability to support his fellow villagers not only elevated his status in Moscow but also boosted the reputation and prestige of both him and his family in Shabboda village. Since Misha provided employment opportunities to many villagers in Moscow, his family held a high social standing. At weddings, Misha's father was always seated at a prominent table and served promptly. The parents of the brigada members especially praised Misha for offering jobs and caring for their sons.

Despite his high social status, Misha's prestige is surprisingly tenuous. As long as he is perceived as bringing more benefits than troubles, he will be supported by his brigada and mahalla. However, when this comes into question, or the benefits are not tangible, any kind of allegations might be used to attack him. In April 2014 tensions within the brigada emerged. The brigada had completed half of a window installation job in Moscow but had not been paid since January. Two workers left and others were considering it. The issue was both local, they need money to eat and survive in Moscow, and transnational, since all their families were expecting remittances money. Misha took a clear stand, insisting that he, too, was a victim of circumstances, blaming Russian middleman and the construction firm's representative.

As the brigada was in daily contact with their families and mahalla, the problems in Moscow quickly travelled to Shabboda village. Relatives of Misha's workers started putting pressure on Misha's family, by spreading gossip at *guzar, choyxona*, and weddings where people gather and talk. This raised rumors in the village about Misha's exploitative behavior and emboldened many fellow villagers to confront him through his family. Misha, in the villagers' view, was supposed to secure the brigada's salary irrespective of the circumstances. After all, the brigada trusted him and worked hard during the cold winter. This was based on an understanding that a person must never assume *posrednik* role if he cannot keep his word. Tempers flared and some villagers went as far as to accuse Misha of human trafficking. He was held responsible for the brigada's undocumented status in Russia and the possibility that, if caught, they would be banned from re-entering Russia for five years.

Religion was also invoked. Misha was portrayed as a bad Muslim who earns money through *harom* (sinful) means. The brigada's families regularly visited Misha's house and told neighbors about the situation. Moreover, the *oqsoqol* (mahalla leader) and *imom* (leader of the mosque) interfered and warned Misha's parents that the details of the dispute would be made public during Friday prayers if Misha refused to pay his fellow villagers' salaries. Misha's family was under siege, facing daily barb on the village streets. Misha's father's situation was particularly bad since he could no longer attend *guzar*, *choyxona*, and other social events. Eventually, mahalla pressure forced Misha to make a decision and prioritize the well-being of his family over his personal situation. He borrowed money to pay the brigada's salaries. Thus, the extension of village-level norms and sanctions across borders proved to be an enforcement mechanism of the informal labour relations in Moscow's constructions sector.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

This paper examined the specificities of the formation of transnational legal spaces for labour migrants in Russia from the gendered perspective. In so doing, we explored the divergent experiences of migrants' legal transnationalism in the daily lives of female and male migrants. As we have shown in our empirical case studies, the "legal baggage" that migrants brought with them to their host country have an identifiable impact on the outcomes of many practices that migrants engage with.

As we have discussed earlier, transnationalism studies scholars maintain that migrants remain connected to several places simultaneously. These connections are carried out through ideas, values and practices amongst others. In this regard, migrants—both male and female—carry their values and understandings of traditions from the home society to the host society. As Kubal (2013b: 68) notes, migrants respond to the legal environment of a host society in a plurality of ways, reflecting differences in values and attitudes towards law, different

understandings and interpretations of it and, finally, different patterns of behaviour vis-à-vis law at the level of their respective societies.

Our study contributes to these transnational migration and legal culture debates by providing empirical insights on the gendered experiences of migrant legal transnationalism. In the case of female migrants, we found that female migrants' pre-migratory legal culture did not serve as a resource in their host society but rather became a hindrance to their adaptation and further exacerbated their unequal position. For instance, the reader may not understand why Farida chose to keep her child when she became pregnant despite she was an underage person. Islam importantly influences women's and men's decisions related to multiple aspects of reproductive, as well as maternal and child health, in the Uzbek context (Barrett 2009). Given that Islam prohibits abortions, it is quite possible that religious norms might have played a rather important role (whilst not ignoring the combination of other factors known only to Farida and her mother) when she decided to continue her pregnancy. Our empirical findings are somewhat understandable given the prevailing gender and social hierarchies in female migrants' home country that was further extended to Moscow.

In the case of male migrants, migrants' pre-migratory cultural and normative repertoires served as an alternative means of enforcement and dispute settlement. Although male migrants physically reside in Russia, they remain strongly influenced by the collective expectations and norms of their home villages. At the same time, villagers become "socially situated" in Russia through their growing involvement in the daily lives and economic activities of the migrants. Because Russian and Uzbek authorities struggle to effectively regulate the labor migration market, village-level norms and sanctions have developed into a transnational system of enforcement, helping to resolve disputes that arise within Russian territory. These findings indicate that pre-migratory legal culture had empowering effects in the case of male migrants, whereas they limited the agency of female migrants. Thus, based on the empirical material presented in this paper, we highlight the need for the gender-sensitive analysis of migrant legal transnationalism which may provide more nuanced insights into the transnational lives and diverse experiences of migrants.

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