Journal of International Migration and Integration (2021) 22:907–928
https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-020-00781-2

Labor Migration and Its Impact on Families in Kyrgyzstan: a Qualitative Study

Filomena M. Critelli[1] · Laura A. Lewis[1] · Asli Cennet Yalim[2] · Jibek Ibraeva[3]

Published online: 3 September 2020

Abstract

Labor migration has surged in the former Soviet countries such as Kyrgyzstan because of multiple crises that the country faced since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Migration has produced broad impacts on most aspects of life in Kyrgyzstan and is transforming family life in myriad ways. Based on in-depth interviews with members of migrating families, this study explores the impact of labor migration on families from Kyrgyzstan and identifies issues that arise at the intersection of migration and family life. The experiences of migrants and their family members were examined (N = 20). The results revealed that decisions of who would migrate were made jointly among extended families and were driven by economic needs. Migration incurred number of trade-offs and challenges for families, especially separation of family members and additional responsibilities placed on those who remain at home. The study contributes to our understanding of the family level consequences of labor migration, providing a nuanced picture of the benefits and compromises for families.

Keywords Labor migration · Transnational families · Kyrgyzstan · Familyhood

✉ Filomena M. Critelli
fmc8@buffalo.edu

Laura A. Lewis
lalewis@buffalo.edu

Asli Cennet Yalim
asli.yalim@ucf.edu

Jibek Ibraeva
ibraevajibek@gmail.com

[1] University at Buffalo School of Social Work, 685 Baldy Hall, Buffalo, NY 14260, USA

[2] College of Health Professions & Sciences (CHPS), University of Central Florida School of Social Work, HPA I Room 240, Orlando, FL 32816-3358, USA

[3] Bishkek Humanities University, Chingiz Aitmatov Avenue, 27, 720044 Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Introduction

Labor migration, which involves crossing national borders to seek employment, is one of the key motivations behind international migration and is driven by the impact of economic, political, and environmental crises (Migration Data Portal 2019). In 2017, migrant workers accounted for about 59% of the world's international migrant population (International Labour Organization 2018). Labor migration has surged in the former Soviet countries such as Kyrgyzstan because of multiple crises that the country faced since the collapse of the Soviet Union including unemployment, lack of economic opportunities, and a loss of social safety nets within their nations' transitioning economies (Ryazantsev 2016). Since then, the former Soviet region has become one of the world's largest migration corridors with much of the flow departing from Central Asia to Russia. Migration has produced broad impacts on most aspects of life in migrants' origin countries such as Kyrgyzstan and is transforming family life in myriad ways. Because of barriers such as migration policies and financial constraints that limit the ability for families to migrate together as a unit, there has been a rise in transnational families. These families confront numerous challenges, including separation for lengthy periods of time, which have considerable psycho-social implications for the family as a whole (International Organization for Migration (2016). This study examines these psycho-social and family level impacts of migration in Kyrgyzstan. It explores the lived experiences of individuals and families who are enmeshed within current processes of migration and gives voice to their perspectives regarding the impact on their families and communities.

Labor Migration and Transnational Families

Labor migration and the concept of transnational families are the lens through which we examine the experiences of migrating families of Kyrgyzstan. Humans have been migrating to improve their lives throughout history, but there has been a marked increase numbers of people who are moving across their national borders since the 1970s (IOM 2018). Deep changes in the global economy and liberalization of free-trade policies have accelerated the volume of transnational movements of people in search of employment opportunities elsewhere (Cholewinski 2005; World Bank 2018). Globalization has also led to widening disparities of employment opportunities, incomes, and living standards across the globe. In some countries, globalization has adversely affected jobs and livelihoods in traditional sectors. Migration is also facilitated by linkages in international labor markets and advancements in information and communications technologies (ICTs) and transportation (World Bank 2018).

Labor migration generates benefits for migrants, their families, and countries of origin. The wages that migrants earn abroad can be many multiples of what they could earn doing similar jobs at home. In countries of origin, labor migration can relieve pressure on unemployment and can contribute to development through the channeling of remittances, transfer of know-how, and the creation of business and trade networks (IOM 2018). Within many developing countries, international labor migration flows have become an integral part of their economic life, as much as trade and investment flows (IOM 2018).

Labor migrants also play a vital role in the economies of wealthier countries. They often step in to fill the demand in low-status jobs with poor pay and dangerous conditions that native-born workers are unwilling to fill (IOM 2018). They are vulnerable to exploitive labor practices and human rights violations. Many labor migrants are concentrated in the informal sector or "underground economy." Most are not covered by national labor laws and can be subject to poor and unsafe working conditions, low wages, inadequate health care, and unsuitable housing (Leighton 2013; Cholewinski 2005). Foreign workers may be marginalized due to the uncertainty of their migration status which carries the risk of being detained or deported and deters them from claiming workplace rights (Ford 2019).

Prevailing migration theory prior to the mid-1980s strongly emphasized the role of the individual in the migration process. New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM), which emerged in the mid-1980s, is useful in understanding temporary labor migration and the role of family decision-making (Stark and Bloom 1985). NELM posits that migration is a decision taken by the entire household to maximize its well-being. The family pools its resources for this effort. Selected family members migrate temporarily rather than permanently with the goal of returning home. Migration is as an economic survival strategy to compensate for market failures and scarcities and to manage the financial risks stemming from unemployment, crop failures, and insufficient income (Stark and Bloom 1985; Porumbescu 2015). In many developing countries like Kyrgyzstan, access to insurance, capital, credit, and retirement benefits are limited or nonexistent so that these risks have to be faced by the household. Hence, migration is a strategy to raise income and to diversify risks. Remittances that family members send home from abroad enable families to accumulate cash for consumer purchases, homes, or productive investments or meet day-to day expenses (Ryazantsev 2016). Remittances are found to reduce the depth and severity of poverty in developing countries, and they are associated with increased household spending on health, education, and small businesses (De Silver 2018).

An outcome of global labor mobility has been the increase in transnational families. Transnational families are defined as families who live apart, even across national borders, but who create and retain a sense of collective welfare and "familyhood" (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). Mazzucato and Schans (2008) describe this phenomenon as "living apart together" whereby families adopt separate living arrangements in two or more countries but retain close links with their homeland. Transnational families are becoming an increasingly common family structure in many labor-sending countries. According to UNICEF (2007), approximately 25% of children in selected migrant-sending countries have at least one parent abroad.

Transnationalism results in new forms of family structures, caregiving strategies, and family dynamics (Baldassar 2007a; Kilkey and Merla 2014). The "feminization of migration" has great impact on family dynamics and the organization of family care arrangements. Women now constitute 48% of international migration globally and increasingly are migrating independently in search of jobs rather than as family dependents (Migration Data Portal 2020a).

Research regarding transnational families has given rise to debates about the benefits and costs involved, especially that of family separation. At one end of the continuum, it is viewed as beneficial to migrants and their families in that remittances lift families out of poverty and that migration leads to increased female participation in employment

and empowerment of women (Sørensen and Vammen 2014). At the other end of the continuum, studies emphasize the high emotional tolls on individual family members, potentially leading to family breakdown and ultimately to the breakdown of the social fabric of entire local communities (UNICEF 2007). A United Nations report also points to the "profound human costs of forcibly prolonged family separation" (United Nations Development Programme 2013).

Much of the research has concentrated on transnational mothers who leave their children and family behind to engage in paid work (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parrenas 2005; Dreby 2010). Children are enormously impacted by the absence of migrating family members, especially mothers (Baldassar, 2007b; Zimmer et al. 2014). It is unclear whether the benefits to children stemming from migration outweigh the social and psychological trauma caused by a parent's absence (Migration Policy Institute 2015). Some adverse effects such as child abuse, vulnerability to child trafficking, declining academic performance, school dropout, and psychological and emotional problems have been observed (Démurger 2015; MPI 2015; UNICEF 2007; Zhao et al. 2018a). On the other hand, the sacrifices of parents may translate into improved living conditions, educational opportunities, better nutrition, sanitation and medical services, access to essential goods, and in some countries a reduction of child labor (UNICEF 2007; Démurger 2015). Still, Ivlevs et al. (2019) concluded that although receiving remittances is linked with increases in life satisfaction, especially in poorer contexts, having household members abroad is associated with increased stress and depression for the left behinds, and remittances do not offset these conditions or relieve the pain of separation.

With the spread of ICTs, the experience of transnationality has undergone a radical transformation in recent decades. Emerging scholarship argues that the intensive use of internet-based communication, mobile phones, and social media can contribute to strengthening ties and intensifying the circulation of various cultural, emotional, economic, and social resources within transnational families and has made a different type of family organization possible (Madianou and Miller 2012; Baldassar et al. 2016).

Nevertheless, the migration of an economically active family member often creates a care deficit (Migration Policy Institute 2015; UNICEF 2007; Lam and Yeoh 2019). Families place children in the care of grandparents or extended family members including older siblings (Schapiro et al. 2013; Yarris 2017). Quite often it is aging grandparents who remain the main caregiver of the children (Földes 2016; HelpAge International 2008; Yarris 2017). Large-scale migration also diminishes the available care of elderly parents of migrating children (Baldassar 2007a; Földes 2016). The impact of migration on the elderly is an emerging area of research in transnational family studies (Baldassar 2007b; Fan and Parrenas 2018).

Background: Kyrgyzstan and Labor Migration

Kyrgyzstan is a land-locked country located in Central Asia with a highly mountainous terrain. The vast majority of Kyrgyz people live in rural areas. Kyrgyzstan became a Soviet republic in 1936 and achieved independence in 1991 when the Soviet Union (USSR) dissolved. The collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War with its rapid transition to a capitalist system ("shock therapy") resulted in profound and far-reaching

systemic changes in Kyrgyzstan that triggered a wave of out-migration of families seeking to satisfy their basic needs (Ryazantsev 2016). About 80% of all migrants from Kyrgyzstan are currently employed in Russia (Sagynbekova 2017). A distinguishing aspect of migration out of Kyrgyzstan is that these international migrants are people who have become so as a result of changes in borders and citizenship. Some movement took place prior to 1991, but relocating individuals would have been internal migrants as they were citizens of the USSR (Turner and Holton 2011). Labor migration that flows from Kyrgyzstan to Russia is facilitated by the historic socioeconomic relations between the countries of the USSR and cultural factors such as knowledge of Russian language which aids in the obtainment of employment (Ryazantsev 2016). Kyrgyzstan also stands out because it has a larger than average share of female migrants, with estimates that women comprise 59% of those migrating (Migration Data Portal 2019).

Migration is driven by the fact that Kyrgyzstan is one of the poorest countries in Central Asia with a weak economy and high unemployment, especially among the young (Migration Data Portal 2019). According to the Asian Development Bank (2020), 22.4% of the population lives below the national poverty line. Approximately 755,000 Kyrgyz citizens work abroad, comprising about 14% of Kyrgyzstan's total population (Migration Data Portal 2019). Many of labor migrants include those with education, but in spite of this, Kyrgyz migrants fill in low-skilled niches in the Russian labor market that are either unpopular among the local population or experience a significant lack of labor (Sagynbekova 2017).

Remittances comprise 30.4% of Kyrgyzstan's GDP, which places it as one of the leading nations in terms of remittances sent in proportion to their GDPs by labor migrants (De Silver 2018). Remittances are important to wellbeing of local households, especially in rural areas (Atamanov and Van den Berg 2010). A survey in southern Kyrgyzstan, largely a farming area, found that over half of the households relied on remittances as their main source of revenue (UNDP 2015).

Scarce statistics are available regarding the number of transnational families globally, as well as in Kyrgyzstan. Data are unavailable due to a lack of capacity to collect, process, and disseminate data on family migration across countries. Existing national statistical agencies and large-scale population censuses tend to focus on processes within nation-state borders and do not include information on family members living abroad. In addition, such data are difficult to collect because in countries of origin, family members may not be aware of the exact location of their migrants abroad or may hesitate to divulge such information in case migrants have not yet legalized their status abroad. In destination countries, migrant populations are often difficult to reach and may be distrustful of surveys asking information about their families in origin countries (Mazzucato and Dito 2018). Where data are available, it is often challenging to integrate and harmonize datasets of diverse origins because of inconsistent methodological frameworks (Migration Data Portal 2020b).

In Kyrgyzstan reports from NGO workers assert that some 80% of families are affected by migration (Toktonaliev 2014). Although research on transnational families and the family level effects of migration has been growing in recent decades, a majority of studies has focused on other regions of Latin America, Asia, and Europe. Extant approximate reports that indicate that in countries such as Mexico, Sri Lanka, Ghana,

and Moldova, as many as one quarter of children under 18 years of age lives without at least one parent due to migration (UNICEF 2006). Existing research has primarily been small-scale qualitative studies because of the previously mentioned challenges of studying families across nations and are mostly focused on the question of children left behind (Mazzucato and Schans 2011; Tyrrell and Kallis 2017; Zhao et al. 2017; Zhao et al. 2018b). However, there has been scant attention on other major global migrant streams such as Central Asia.

This study, although limited in generalizability by its small sample size, attempts to fill this void by examining the impact of migration in the understudied nation of Kyrgyzstan. An exploratory, qualitative design was selected in order to gain preliminary insights and familiarity with the issue in the context of Kyrgyzstan. In-depth interviews are an effective approach for obtaining rich descriptive accounts of the migration experience. The limited number of participating respondents is reflective of the challenges of gaining access to the population and the sensitive nature of the subject matter, as well as available resources. However, a strength of the study design is that it includes various family members in the transnational spectrum such as migrants, youth, and caregivers left behind. It explores the micro-family level effects of migration from these multiple perspectives. The study provides a deeper, nuanced understanding of the micro-dimensions of the issues and challenges confronted by family members of Kyrgyz migrant workers and the wide-ranging impacts on migrants, family members, and the communities involved. The research was guided by the following questions: What does the migration decision-making process look like in transnational families? What are the psychosocial aspects of labor migration for transnational families? How does migration and family separation impact family life?

Methods

Sample

This study explored experiences of migrant workers and their family members in the origin country using qualitative research methodology. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with twenty individuals. Purposive and snowball sampling was used to identify study participants. Family members and migrants were recruited through outreach to community centers and schools. Those who expressed interest in participating were asked to refer other potential participants. The inclusion criteria were (1) being over the age of 18 and (2) being a migrant or a relative of someone that was currently a migrant. The experiences of six individuals that migrated and fourteen relatives of persons that have migrated were examined. Participants, 16 women and 4 men, ranged in age from 21 to 28 years old. Four participants were categorized as migrants and were living abroad. Sixteen participants were individuals that had relatives living abroad. Of this latter group, two participants had once been migrants themselves. All participants were from Kyrgyzstan. Russia was the primary destination country apart from one migrant in Europe (country unspecified), the relative of one participant living in Europe (Germany), and another in Kazakhstan (see Table 1).

Data Collection

Qualitative research methods enabled the researchers to obtain rich descriptions and capture the perspectives of research participants. Approval was obtained by the Institutional Review Board and respondents provided informed consent. An interview protocol consisting of semi-structured and open-ended questions was used to help structure the interviews. As interviews progressed, new questions were posed relative to the interview content. The interviews were conducted by a Kyrgyz member of the research team located in country in Kyrgyz, the national language. Research procedures entailed either a face-to-face meeting with participants or a phone interview. Interviews ranged from 30 to 90 min.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and translated into English. They were then reviewed by the team that consisted of two US born researchers and a US researcher of Turkish background, in addition to the team member located in Kyrgyzstan. Data were analyzed using a consensual qualitative methodology (Hill et al. 2005). Consensual qualitative analysis (CQA) is similar to the grounded theory and the phenomenological approach is that it instructs the interviewer to ask probing questions and explore more fully with participants the meaning of their lived experiences. The transcripts were read closely and coded line by line in order to identify the salient themes and concepts. The next phase of analysis involved developing connections and relationships between the codes to construct the overarching themes and categories that corresponded with the questions on the interview guide. Over the course of the analysis, the research team came together to discuss the themes and categories, to compare the data across cases, and to clarify the sociocultural meanings within the material in order to the enhance reliability and validity of the findings.

Results

Theme 1: Migration as an Economic Necessity/Family Decision-Making

The most common theme was that of migration as economic necessity and the inevitability of migration for people to sustain the family. This family decided that the adult children would migrate and the 71-year-old mother of the migrant who lives in rural Kyrgyzstan explains why and how this decision was made:

> What we could do! We cannot all sit here and dream! You want to work, but there is no work.

People are willing to endure hardships associated with migration in order to attain a standard of living that even one generation ago was within their reach. Another elder mother from the rural area whose two sons migrated to Germany and Russia

recalls a time before the economic collapse propelled people to leave to find employment:

> I worked as a farmer. It was very nice there. We had a garden, cattle, birds, bunnies. We had everything. When the (economic) collapse happened, everything was destroyed. There was no hay. There was nothing.

Families who choose to make what they hope are short-term sacrifices through temporary migration in order to attain a basic standard of living for their families. This 66-year-old mother, whose two daughters are still in Russia after five years, describes:

> …it is hard for us…but we want our children to get on their feet - at least a bit so that they can live like all other people. We used to live here all together, crowded. We want everyone to start living on his or her own.

A majority of participants, eighteen of the twenty, cited employment as the primary reason for migration. Two participants identified education as their primary objective. In this family, it was determined that the men would be best suited to generate income for the family. One 29-year-old sister of a migrant, who migrated to Kazakhstan and then Russia for 5 years, explains how one of the main reasons of the migration was to pay off loans and own a house:

> Well, at some point we had some plans – buying a house and…But with the conditions in Kyrgyzstan, it was impossible to pay the loans, even the monthly ones. Also, my brothers had some loans, so it was important to pay back the loans. In order to solve the problems, my brother first went to Kazakhstan and later to Surgut.

The following mother of a migrant, for example, acts as caregiver for her granddaughter who needed a critical surgical procedure. Her mother works in Russia as a seamstress to pay for the loan to cover costs of medical care:

> She couldn't pay for the interest rate from her earnings; she didn't work. We only had our pension but we helped a bit. We came to one decision. She left. By working there and sending money every month, she paid off her loan this year. (The granddaughter) was born with an illness. Since her fourth month, this girl has been sick. She and her mother, they were always in hospital.

For young adults, migration may present the only path to achieving economic independence from their parents and decreasing their financial burdens. According to this 30-year-old male migrant who worked in different places including Turkey, Moscow, and Siberia:

> (The) goal of my leaving was that I needed to work - not to be on (my) parents' neck. (I wanted) to find money on my own, to provide (for) myself on my own.

Theme 2: Trade-offs, Challenges, and Hardships for Migrants

In spite of their relatively high levels of education and skills, participants were employed in low-skilled labor sectors as caregivers, construction workers, dishwashers, and cleaners. This loss of status makes adjustment to the new setting challenging physically and emotionally. The following 47-year-old female migrant who returned from Russia 2 years ago and now works as a teacher in Kyrgyzstan describes her difficult experience with low-skilled manual work:

> "...it always involved manual work, to stick it we had to use glue, tape. When you do it for the first time, for example, when I went there for the first time, I took 15 boxes. I was working to finish those 15 boxes until early morning on my first day. Other people would finish 110, 100 ones."

Migrants are vulnerable to labor exploitation and reluctant to claim their workplace rights. Respondents openly discussed various violations (e.g., unregulated long working hours, hazardous working conditions) and found they had to "get used to" such conditions. This migrant's wife shares her story about her husband who was working in construction and was a victim of wage theft:

> For example, they went to work at one place – they did renovation and the employer didn't like and pay – such times also happened to them. They cannot do anything! To whom can they tell that he didn't pay? Such situations happened to them many times.

Living conditions vary depending on their financial opportunities and type of employment (i.e., live in caregiver). A 21-year-old female migrant who worked in Russia previously described inadequate living conditions and overcrowded apartments:

> I lived for a year [abroad]- 37 persons lived in two rooms, we divided by 15. There were also Moldovans, who lived in the kitchen. We were never late with rent fee! We were paying always on time! Everyone has his own food. One would get a place in a fridge. You lie down on one side and you will wake up on the same side and leave [for work].

Ethnic discrimination and abuse by authorities were often cited. Persons from Central Asia are easily identifiable. Fear of police, including extortion, is a threat to security. Women experience double vulnerability to sexual harassment and exploitation. Another young woman, 28-year-old, whose female cousin migrated to Russia elaborates:

> She had difficult times. She worked in a café by washing the floor. She said that she couldn't leave anywhere, she didn't have a citizenship, Tajiki young men would always threaten. She came back because of fear of these Tajik young men. She said that there were different kinds of men, who could also assault; because of them she returned back. She had good salary but they didn't let her go anywhere. The men who were coming to the café would always threaten. Then my cousin left from there.

Theme 3: Separation and Stresses on Entire Family

Family separation added emotional challenges for all members of that family network. Unsurprisingly, children experience separation from parents deeply with a range of reactions: feelings of abandonment, sadness and crying, or becoming distant from their parent(s). Explaining parental absence, especially to younger children, is difficult. This 30-year-old aunt describes the impact of separation on her niece when the child's parents left for Russia to work:

> The kid was very worried, really worried. Because it is very difficult to explain the situation to a kid. In her mind, if the parents left, they abandoned her. [So, if they called, she would not come to the phone] She refused, and it was very difficult for us to explain the fact that she did not want to talk.
> Separation presents emotional distress for the migrating parent, a 30-year-old mother, as well:
> In the beginning [of our separation], if I cried over there, my daughter was crying here. My mother-in-law was scolding at me 'when you call, don't cry! Don't miss! Try to overcome!' I tried not to cry, but you miss and worry. I cried anyway, most of the times. From time to time, I was stressed. Then, I had an anger outburst.

In many cases, the separation can be prolonged which affects attachment to parents. These elderly grandparents have been raising their grandchildren since they were toddlers. From their perspective, the children have adjusted and no longer feel the loss of their parents. A 71-year-old grandmother whose daughter works in Russia explains:

> No, these ones have got used to. If comparing to them, they are closer to us.. I am saying… Their mother left during the first grade and since that time, she has been at our place. (respondent's husband started answering as well). That girls say sometimes 'I haven't had their love; I have got parents' love from you' [he said with a smile]. She says 'You brought me up'. For 8 years, she has been under our care. When we tell them [their parents] 'Now (your) children don't need you anymore.

Respondents illustrated the added burdens and responsibilities placed on those who remain. Responsibilities even fall on children, especially on adolescent girls who help with household chores or care for younger siblings. Some respondents alluded to concerns about adequate supervision of youth. Caregivers are grandparents in most cases, and they may have trouble related to the upbringing of children, especially adolescents. A 43-year-old female respondent whose husband is in Russia shares her observation about lack of supervision:

> There are children who don't listen to their parents. They won't listen to others. Therefore, I think if mother or father could stay. Such cases are happening. Parents leave with grandparents or even unknown people.

Spouses remaining in Kyrgyzstan, especially women, take on additional responsibilities to provide care for the family and experience challenges controlling anger, frustration, and feelings of loneliness. This 23-year-old wife of a migrant who lives with her two daughters and her parents describes her frustration:

> If something happens, you wouldn't be able to openly to talk to someone. I was worried on my own, not getting used to. Now I got used a bit, but if he was here, it would be good... I can say that there were psychological changes. Before I used to be more… Now I cannot stand after 1 or 2 wrong words. I also started crying a lot...

Fear of martial dissolution is another source of stress for women. Some fear that their migrating husband will marry another woman and never return to his family. These worries are reinforced by the reports they hear from people around them. The same respondent explains:

> I only hear that someone's husband or wife left abroad and got married to other ones or started living with someone else – I hear a lot such stories. They tell me and ask 'For how many years has your husband been away?' I say half a year and they say 'he started to live with someone else', 'he got married to someone else'. During such times, I start feeling very offended.

Migration is reshaping the way that family obligations are carried out and reduce the availability of hands-on family support. This particularly impacts the elderly who would traditionally rely on adult children to help care for them, especially those in rural areas where tasks of daily living are more labor intensive. This 78-year-old widow from a rural area explains:

> Well… on the one hand, it is very bad because I am alone. If something happens, nobody can even serve me a cup of tea.
> This elderly woman downplays her own health issues so that her children will not worry:
> Don't pay attention to your health issues! I for example always say that I am healthy and that nothing hurts. Even if it, I always say nothing hurts.

This 64-year-old grandfather longs for the family to be together. He voiced a common sentiment that it was preferable that families remain together, but that without more local development, migration is the best hope for them:

> If here system was built, government, party, our government worked well, and if like those big factories were opened, maybe, people wouldn't leave. If life here was fine, one could earn enough money, they wouldn't go. If in case of life difficulties, not being able to find money, they probably leave because of such conditions, with a hope.

Theme 4: Coping with Separation and Maintaining Sense of "Familyhood" Coping Mechanisms

Respondents acknowledged the many difficulties and risks resulting from the long periods of separation, yet this was expressed with a sense of resignation and stoicism by most respondents. In describing their situations, family members focus on the material gains and their ability to provide a better future rather than on the emotional costs of the separation. This 66-year-old grandmother explains why they bear the difficulties:

> All this hardship- I endure is all for that my daughter could buy a house somewhere and live on her own.

Families minimize and downplay their concerns. Denying or not dwelling on problems serves as a coping mechanism. Both migrants and those remaining described how they regulated the content of their communication to spare loved ones from worry and sadness. This 30-year-old sister of a migrant explains how they as a family sometimes hide news from her brother not to make him sad:

> You know, when you are away, it does not really matter what is going on here. You always keep it in your heart and a small news from home can turn in a really big issue for you. So, it is very important to be careful with the words.

One of the more challenging aspects of migration for caregivers is managing children's distress and helping them understand the circumstances of parental separation. The same respondent explains how she tries to shield children from painful truths:

> When they miss her or cry about her – What I can do! I would hug them, give a kiss on their face, somehow deceive them. I tell them 'She will come. Wait a bit! She left because she wanted to find some money for you, to bring you up. Therefore, she is over there". That's how I act.

Adults also minimize or rationalize the loss or risks to children as a way of coping. Optimism and future orientation keep them focused on their goals and anticipated outcomes and downplay the potential long-term effects of prolonged parental absence:

> I think it will be fine. If they finish their house; they enter it; the children stay in front of her; her husband stays with her – it will be fine. What else? That they live altogether; that they stay happy and friendly.

Maintaining Family Bonds and Solidarity

Kyrgyzstan is a collectivist, family-oriented culture where people have traditionally shared in frequent family rituals and celebrations involving extended family and community members. These connections are highly valued. Out-migration is eroding

many aspects of the traditional family structures and relationships. This 30-year-old female respondent describes the Kyrgyz family structure as:

> You know we, the Kyrgyz, we like to be together. It was very sad to let them go and it had a profound impact on the psychological atmosphere in the family.

What are hoped to be temporary separations often extend for years, and in some cases, those migrants who can obtain permanent status do not return. Return visits are difficult due to cost of travel, lack of proper documentation, and the desire to save as much money as possible. This respondent's family was separated for three years:

> But they would visit us periodically. But every time they visited us, it was becoming more and more difficult. First of all, since it involved crossing a border. Second of all, the police were persecuting them and it was very difficult to earn money. Moreover, police raided their homes regularly.

In the last few years, availability of ICTs has vastly improved in the region, transforming the ways that families can interact, stay connected, and support each other. About half of the respondents come from remote, mountainous, or rural areas where connectivity was especially difficult. Technological advancements continue to make long-distance contact easier and eliminate the need to travel to a town for an hour or more to make calls or use the internet. According to a 55-year-old mother of a migrant:

> Back then we had to go to the city. We had to go to the telegraph. After making an order we talked. Then after some time these cell phones appeared.

With improved technology and social media platforms such as Facebook, Skype, and WhatsApp, families are in contact more frequently and affordably than in the past. Multimodal interactions through text messages and voice messages, voice and video calls, and the ability to share images, documents, and other media enable family members to have a deeper and detailed sense of each other's daily lives and a sense of being together. A 22-year-old female whose mother has migrated explains today's different uses of the technology to connect with family members:

> There were barriers before. Internet, WhatsApp, odnoklassnik [(Russian popular social media network like Facebook) were not so popular, when I was in my first year. In addition, her mobile [she refers to her mother's]…it was not a mobile with access to internet. During those days, we just called each other. Ten minutes cost 50 phone credits. I couldn't tell much about things happening here. I just asked about her work and she would ask about my studies here. We briefly talked to each other. Now, thanks God, WhatsApp is free. There, as she has free wi-fi, she is daily in internet.

In spite of these improvements in virtual connectivity, some family members feel that physical presence in family life is not replaced. Maintaining family relationship's long distance means sacrificing essential aspects of relationships, especially being present through critical developmental periods of children's lives. This aunt of a migrant's children explains:

> The distance – it always has a bad impact. Despite the fact that you are trying for the sake of your child, sometimes you have to spend time with your kid. Because if you can't establish proper relations with your kid now, why would you need the money anyway?

A few respondents reported that the separation, although not optimal, gave them a new perspective and helped them value their relationships all the more.

> We realized how much we love each other, how much we need each other. We always thought that it would be nice if they could be with us in certain situations or at certain times. Again, going back to the issue of the Kyrgyz family, it is not common to articulate your love. You just quietly feel it inside yourself. But the distance really helped us to comprehend each other, to talk to each other. For example, now I have very close relations with the middle brother. Now we have a lot to talk about it. We have a lot in common and even when it comes to work … overall, it was the distance that strengthened our family. But I have to say that it is not a tool or an opportunity to strengthen family ties.

Discussion

Kyrgyzstan has become a country of departure that is vastly affected by labor migration. Consistent with NELM theory, temporary labor migration is a carefully considered decision made by the family as a whole with the goal of maximizing economic security. Families view migration of one or more family members as the most promising option to cope with unemployment or lack of adequate income to fulfill their economic needs. This study highlighted the multiple social-psychological aspects of labor migration. It is difficult to characterize these impacts as solely positive or negative. Rather, the migration experience involves a series of trade-offs and benefits and losses in the realm of family and community life that must be understood through an intersection of the social, economic, and cultural context of Kyrgyzstan and factors such as age, gender, and other individual and family circumstances.

Our study findings suggest that migration enables families to improve their income; increase their access to better housing, education, or health care; and is viewed as helping families to provide better prospects for their children. However, remittances mainly support household consumption, not investment in businesses or other long-range income generation strategies in Kyrgyzstan. Limited opportunities at home lead to family dependence on the remittances to meet their day-to-day needs, so that a number of respondents expressed difficulty in reaching family goals.

There are multiple impacts on family members at all points of the migration chain that reverberate within the entire family system. Migrating family members find employment opportunities, independence, and the satisfaction of contributing toward the families' increased well-being. As they strive to improve the conditions for family back home, they are exposed to risks to their own health and security in the country of destination. Kyrgyz migrants are among the poorest of the migrant groups in Russia and most marginalized (Anichkova 2012). Most respondents were employed in menial,

low-paid jobs that Russians do not accept, toiling on construction sites, sweeping streets, and hauling heavy loads at city superstores and markets or service sectors, in spite of their levels of education. They experienced work rights violations and exploitive working conditions. Other reports corroborate our findings, pointing out that over 60% of Kyrgyz migrants engage in undocumented work. Access to health care also presents additional challenges. Our respondents revealed that they tended to avoid hospitals, because of both the high costs of medical treatment and fear of being deported. Migrants live in cramped and crowded quarters in complexes considered undesirable by Russian citizens. A number of respondents also described discriminatory and abusive treatment by the authorities such as the police. These conditions were presented as sources of stress and worry for the entire family. Still, these hardships and risks were still preferable to the minimum subsistence provided by the wages within Kyrgyzstan, even for skilled and specialized workers. In 2011, the average monthly salary in Russia was 4 times the average salary in Kyrgyzstan at 23,693 rubles or $764 USD (FIDH, 2016; Sagynbekova 2017.)

Overall, some of the greatest family costs due to migration stemmed from the heavier burdens placed on those who stay behind. The remaining family members adapt to the changes and do their best to fulfill their newfound family responsibilities. They do it with stoicism and hope that it is temporary and will result in positive outcomes for the family unit. The most adversely affected by migration are those most vulnerable within families and society such as children and adolescents, as well as women and the elderly (Whitehead and Hashim 2005; Rojas et al. 2013). Older children, grandparents, or members of the extended family who are usually raising their own children at the same time were overburdened with full-time caregiving, management of the home, and supervision of schooling.

The most pronounced reactions to family separation occurred among children. The long-range effects of these separations are unclear. However, migration of parents, especially mothers, are known to produce a variety of adverse psycho-social effects on children, including feelings of abandonment, less quality of care and supervision, and risk of abuse and neglect and loss, all of which were described by our respondents (Whitehead and Hashim 2005; Cortes 2007). Our respondent caregivers devised strategies to help children cope and did so without much guidance and support from any larger systems such as schools or social services. They usually avoided direct discussion of the length of the separation or the children's feelings about it. While caregivers try to maintain the psychological presence of absent family members, these relationships cause ambiguity among family members that is associated with negative outcomes for its members (Boss 2007; Solheim and Ballard 2016). For children, migration of parent(s) leads to weakening of parental bonds, emotional deprivation and psychological trauma caused by parental absence, lack of adequate care and supervision, and increased workloads for older siblings in the family (Castañeda and Buck 2011; Cortes 2007).

Our findings also call for greater attention to the challenges facing the elderly, especially elderly caregivers. Another survey of Kyrgyz labor migrants indicates that the majority (78%) of respondents' children had remained in Kyrgyzstan when they migrated. Most children remained with grandparents (76%), while some stayed with the remaining parent (12%), with other relatives (8%), or alone (4%) (Sagynbekova 2016). The family, usually adult children, has traditionally cared for the elderly (MPI

2015). Migration is reshaping these traditional cultural expectations and filial obligations.

This study draws attention to the importance of context and recognition of diverse familial contexts and traditions in research on migration and transnational families (Zentgraf and Chinchilla 2012). Migration impacts on the family are complex, multi-faceted, and context dependent. These are affecting a significant proportion of the population in Kyrgyzstan and are reshaping traditional family structure, socialization, emotional support, and family connections.

The availability of ICTs enables family connectivity across distance and has transformed the ways that kinship and caring relations are practiced through regular, synchronous forms of communication, and Kyrgyz families are embracing them. This allows for continuous updating of migrants' critical sense of cultural, social, and political belonging (Nedelcu 2013). Some researchers now challenge the presumption that strong relationships require face-to-face interactions and that caring and "being together" or "co-presence" can be reproduced at a distance (Baldassar et al. 2016; Montini 2018).

These assertions warrant further investigation into the significance of these changes and losses for families and communities in the context of Kyrgyzstan where there is a strong traditional and collectivist culture. Families are forced to make choices between their consumption needs and family and cultural connection. Our respondents spoke about the great significance of extended family and the importance of togetherness as part of Kyrgyz cultural identity. A sense of loss permeated the interviews, especially regarding missing migrating family members' participation in the numerous family and community celebrations of life cycle events that are a hallmark of Kyrgyz culture. Respondents expressed the hope that one day there would be jobs in Kyrgyzstan so that families could remain together. Further studies are needed to establish the impact of these cultural changes as well as the long-term effects of parenting from a distance so that the emotional state of left-behind children's outcomes can be more accurately assessed.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Governments and international policymakers must consider the role of the entire family in the migration process and develop comprehensive rights-based policy approaches for the family as a whole in sending and receiving countries. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948) and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (UN 2003) focus on the rights of all family members, including rights in the workplace and rights to an adequate standard of living and necessary social services, as well as protection from discrimination.

Remittances serve as an important lifeline for families. The devaluation of the ruble in Russia caused a 17% decline in the value of remittances from labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan (Sagynbekova 2016). Economic downturns challenge the assumption that remittances alone can be relied upon to stimulate lasting economic development in lieu of investment in sustainable, local economies (De Haas 2012; De Silver 2018). Social safety nets and employment opportunities in Kyrgyzstan are also necessary.

Within Kyrgyzstan, policies and programs must also be developed to bolster social protection for the most vulnerable groups impacted by migration, particularly children and elderly left behind. Several migrant-sending countries have begun adopting family-oriented policies that might be replicated. In Ecuador, the government developed a comprehensive framework for migration based on a human rights and gender perspective in their 2008 constitution (Rojas et al. 2013). The European Union, in cooperation with the governments of Moldova and Italy, sought to minimize the negative impact of migration on families by providing social and legal services to migrants in Italy (National Committee for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2013).

According to our results, social services are still limited and not widely available in Kyrgyzstan. NGOs, international organizations, and universities can assume a stronger role in addressing the social welfare and emotional needs of such families. Training of local psychologists, social workers, and teachers who work with migrants, children, and families left behind is also recommended. These professionals can then take a more active role in addressing children's psycho-social needs and educating and supporting family members that are responsible for children's care and upbringing. Additionally, providing services for elderly caregivers on child physical and emotional development can improve psychological outcomes of children and foster relationships between caregivers and children left behind.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical Approval Approval was obtained by the Institutional Review Board and respondents provided informed consent.

Appendix

Table 1 Participants' demographic information

ID	Gender	Age	Place of living (urban/rural)	Relationship with migrant	Destination	Education	Marital status	Living arrangements	Employment
1	F	66	Rural	Relative/mother	Russia	Secondary	Married	Husband	Retired
2	F	55	Rural	Relative/mother	Russia		Married	Extended	Housewife
3	F	78	Rural	Relative/mother	Russia and Europe	Pedagogue school	Widow	Single	Retired
4	F	47	Rural	Migrant	Russia	Higher	Married	Husband	Teacher
5	F	30	Urban	Relative/sister	Russia	Higher	Single	Brother's family and mother	NGO worker, cloth designer
6	M	25	Urban	Migrant	Europe	Higher	Single	Single	International organization
7	M	42	Urban	Relative/Husband	Russia	Secondary	Married	Wife and 3 children	Trade driver
8	F	29	Urban	Relative/wife	Russia	Secondary	Married	2 daughters	Housewife
9	M	25	Urban	Migrant	Russia	Technical Institute	Single	Brother and friend	Technician
10	F	28	Urban	Relative/Niece	Russia	Vocational school	Married	Husband, brother-in-law, younger brother at aunt's place	Cook
11	F	22	Urban	Former migrant/daughter	Russia	Higher	Single	Her aunt's family	Unemployed/student
12	F	21	Rural	Former migrant/daughter, sister	Russia	Secondary	Married	husband, baby, and nephew	Unemployed
13	F	38	Urban	Relative/wife	Russia	Secondary	Married	4 children	Unemployed
14	F	43	Rural	Relative/wife	Russia	Secondary	Married	4 children	Unemployed

Table 1 (continued)

ID	Gender	Age	Place of living (urban/rural)	Relationship with migrant	Destination	Education	Marital status	Living arrangements	Employment
15	F	38	Rural	Relative/sister	Russia	Secondary	Divorced	Mother, daughter, and migrated sister's children	Employed (not specified)
16	M	64	Rural	Relative/father	Russia	Secondary	Married	Wife, daughter, and her child	Retired
17	F	40	Urban	Relative/wife	Russia	Secondary	Married	4 children	Cleaner
18	F	71	Rural	Relative/mother	Russia	Secondary	Married	Husband, grandchildren, daughter-in-law	Unemployed
19	F	23	Rural	Relative/wife	Russia	Higher	Married	Parents and children	Seller
20	F	30	Rural	Migrant	Russia	Secondary	Married	Husband, daughter lives with her husband's mother	Enterprise owner

References

Anichkova, D. (2012). *Central Asia's migrant headache. Carnegie endowment for international p*eace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/2012/06/21/central-asia-s-migrant-headache-pub-48574

Asian Development Bank (2020). Poverty data: Kyrgyz Republic. Retrieved from https://www.adb.org/countries/kyrgyz-republic/poverty

Atamanov, A., & Van den Berg, M. (2010). *Determinants of remittances in Central Asia: evidence based on the household budget survey in the Kyrgyz Republic*. MGSoG. Retrieved from https://ssrn.com/abstract=1609732

Baldassar, L. (2007a). Missing kin and longing to be together: emotions and the construction of co-presence in transnational relationships. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 29*, 247–266. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860802169196.

Baldassar, L. (2007b). Transnational families and aged care: the mobility of care and the migrancy of ageing. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 33*, 275–297.

Baldassar, L., Nedelcu, M., Merla, L., & Wilding, R. (2016). ICT-based co-presence in transnational families and communities: challenging the premise of face-to-face proximity in sustaining relationships. *Global Networks, 16*, 133–144.

Boss, P. (2007). Ambiguous loss theory: challenges for scholars and practitioners. *Family Relations, 56*, 105–110.

Bryceson, D., & Vuorela, U. (2002). *The transnational family: new European frontiers and global Networks*. Oxford: New York.

Castañeda, E., & Buck, L. (2011). Remittances, transnational parenting, and the children left Behind: economic and psychological Implications. *The Latin Americanist, 55*(4), 85–110.

Cholewinski, L, (2005) Protecting migrant workers in a globalized world. Retrieved from: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/protecting-migrant-workers-globalized-world

Cortes, R. (2007). *Children and women left behind in labour sending countries: an appraisal of social risks*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund.

De Haas, H. (2012). The migration and development pendulum: a critical view on research and policy. *International Migration, 50*, 8–25. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2012.00755.x.

De Silver, D. (2018). Remittances from abroad are major economic assets for some developing countries. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/29/remittances-from-abroad-are-major-economic-assets-for-some-developing-countries/

Démurger, S. (2015). Migration and families left behind. IZA World of Labor. Retrieved from: https://wol.iza.org/uploads/articles/144/pdfs/migration-and-families-left-behind.pdf

Dreby, J. (2010). *Divided by borders: Mexican migrants and their children*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fan, Y. K., & Parrenas, R. S. (2018). Who cares for the children and the elderly? In V. Ducu et al. (Eds.), *Childhood and parenting in transnational settings*. New York: Springer.

Földes, I. (2016). Elderly parents, adult children and the Romanian transnational family: An intergenerational solidarity approach. *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai - Sociologia, 61*, 77–107. https://doi.org/10.1515/subbs-2016-0004.

Ford, M. (2019). *From migrant to worker: global unions and temporary labor migration in Asia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

HelpAge International (2008). *Grandparents and grandchildren: impact of migration in Moldova.* Retrieved from http://www.helpage.org/silo/files/grandparents-and-grandchildren-impact-of-migration-in-moldova-helpage-project.pdf

Hill, C. E., Knox, S., Thompson, B. J., Williams, E. N., Hess, S. A., & Ladany, N. (2005). Consensual qualitative research: an update. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 196.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. &, Avila, E. (1997) "I'm here, but I'm there". *Gender & Society, 11*(5), 548–571.

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families Trilling, D. (2010). Labor Migration Creates Danger of "Skipped Generation" in Kyrgyzstan. Retrieved from: https://eurasianet.org/labor-migration-creates-danger-of-skipped-generation-in-kyrgyzstan

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (2016). *Women and children from Kyrgyzstan affected by migration: An exacerbated vulnerability*. Retrieved from https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/rapport_kyrgyzstan_uk-2-web2.pdf

International Labour Organization (2018). *ILO global estimates on international migrant workers – Results and methodology*. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_652001/lang%2D%2Den/index.htm

International Organization for Migration (2016). Kyrgyzstan: extended migration profile 2010-2015. Retrieved from https://iom.kg/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Migration-Profile-ExtendedKyrgyzstan-Eng-2010-2015.pdf

International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2018). *World Migration Report*. Retrieved from https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/china/r5_world_migration_report_2018_en.pdf.

Ivlevs, A., Nikolova, M., & Graham, C. (2019). Emigration, remittances, and the subjective well-being of those staying behind. *Journal of Population Economics, 32*, 113–151. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-018-0718-8.

Kilkey, M., & Merla, L. (2014). Situating transnational families' care-giving arrangements: the role of institutional contexts. *Global Networks*, (*2*), 210–229. https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12034.

Lam, T., & Yeoh, B. (2019). Parental migration and disruptions in everyday life: reactions of left-behind children in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 45*(16), 3085–3104.

Leighton, (2013). Labour migration and inclusive development: setting a course for success UN chronicle

Madianou, M., & Miller, D. (2012). *Migration and new media: Transnational families and polymedia*. London: Routledge.

Marat, E. (2009). *Labor migration in Central Asia: implications of the global Economic crisis, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program*. Washington. Retrieved from:https://www.silkroadstudies.org/publications/silkroad-papers-and-monographs/item/13089-labor-migration-in-central-asia-implications-of-the-global-economic-crisis.html.

Mazzucato, V., & Dito, B. (2018). Transnational families: cross-country comparative perspectives. *Population, Space and Place, 24*(7), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2165.

Mazzucato, V., & Schans, D. (2008). *Transnational families, children and the migration-development nexus. SSRC Migration and development conference paper no. 20*. New York: Social Science Research Council.

Mazzucato, V., & Schans, J. (2011). Transnational families and the well-being of children: conceptual and methodological challenges. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 73*, 704–712.

Migration Data Portal, (2019). Labor migration data. Retrieved from: https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/labour-migration

Migration Data Portal (2020a). Gender and migration. Retrieved from https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/gender

Migration Data Portal (2020b). Family migration. Retrieved from https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/family-migration

Migration Policy Institute (2015). *Children left behind: the impact of labor migration in Moldova and Ukraine*. Retrieved from https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/children-left-behind-impact-labor-migration-moldova-and-ukraine

Montini, C. (2018). Parenting from a distance: the shifting topology of care in the net era. In V. Ducu et al. (Eds.), *Childhood and parenting in transnational settings* (pp. 119–136). New York: Springer.

National Committee for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2013). *EU helps hundreds of Moldovan families address the effects of migration at home and abroad.* Retrieved from www.antitrafic.gov.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=94&id=235&t=/Press/News-and-Events/EU-HELPS-HUNDREDS-OF-MOLDOVAN-FAMILIES-ADDRESS-THE-EFFECTS-OF-MIGRATION-AT-HOME-AND-ABROAD.

Nedelcu, M. (2013). (Re)thinking transnationalism and integration in the digital era: a shift towards cosmopolitanism in the study of international migrations. In O. Soderstrom, D. Ruedin, S. Randeria, G. D'Amato, & F. Panese (Eds.), *Critical mobilities* (pp. 153–175). Abingdon: Routledge.

Parrenas, R. (2005). *Children of global migration: transnational families and gendered woes*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Porumbescu, A. (2015). Defining the new economics of labor migration theory boundaries: a sociological-level analysis of international migration. *Revista de Stinte Craiova, 45*, 55–64.

Rojas, S., Saab, R., & Taylor, C. (2013). *Transnational families in the context of international migration. Family, Migration & Dignity Special Issue*. https://doi.org/10.5339/qproc.2013.fmd.23.

Ryazantsev, S. (2016). Labour migration from Central Asia to Russia in the context of the economic crisis. Retrieved from http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/valday/Labour-Migration-from-Central-Asia-to-Russia-in-the-Context-of-the-Economic-Crisis-18334

Sagynbekova, L. (2016). *The impact of international migration: process and contemporary trends in Kyrgyzstan*. New York: Springer.

Sagynbekova, L. (2017). International labour migration in the context of the Eurasian Economic Union: issues and challenges of Kyrgyz migrants in Russia. Retrieved from https://www.ucentralasia.org/Content/downloads/UCA-IPPA-WP-39%20International%20Labour%20Migration%20in.pdf

Schapiro, K., Weiss, S., & Brindis, L. (2013). Separation and reunification: the experiences of adolescents living in transnational families. *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care, 43*, 48–68. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cppeds.2012.12.001.

Solheim, C. A., & Ballard, J. (2016). Ambiguous loss due to separation in voluntary transnational families: Ambiguous loss in transnational families. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 8*, 341–359. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12160.

Sørensen, N. N., & Vammen, I. D. (2014). Who cares? Transnational families in debates on migration and development. *New Diversities, 16*, 89–108 Retrieved February 13, 2020, from http://newdiversities.mmg.mpg.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/2014_16-02_07_Sorensen_Vammen.pdf.

Stark, O., & Bloom, D. (1985). The new economics of labor migration. *American Economic Review, 75*(2), 173–178.

Toktonaliev, T. (2014). Kyrgyz migrants' children left behind: experts warn of psychological impact of prolonged parental absence. *Institute for War & Peace Reporting*. Retrieved from: https://iwpr.net/global-voices/kyrgyz-migrants-children-left-behind

Turner, B. S., & Holton, R. (2011). *The Routledge International Handbook of Globalization Studies*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Tyrrell, N., & Kallis, G. (2017). Children in transnational family migration. In C. Ni Laoire, A. White, & T. Skelton (Eds.), *Movement, mobilities, and journeys. Geographies of children and young people*. Singapore: Springer.

UN General Assembly (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved from: http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html

UN General Assembly (2003). International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Retrieved from https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-13&chapter=4

UNICEF. (2006). *Promoting the rights of children affected by migration: UNICEF report following the HLD on international migration and development*. New York: UNICEF.

UNICEF (2007). Children and migration. Global forum on migration and development. Retrieved from https://www.gfmd.org/unicef-children-and-migration

United Nations Development Programme (2013). *Human development report.* Retrieved from http:/hdr.undp.org/en2013report

United Nations Development Programme (2015). Labour migration, remittances, and human development in Central Asia. Retrieved from: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/CA%20M&R%20HD%20paper%20FINAL.pdf

Whitehead, A., & Hashim, I. (2005). Children and migration. Retrieved from https://childhub.org/en/system/tdf/library/attachments/dfid_05_child_mig_bac_0408.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=18153

World Bank. (2018). *Moving for prosperity: Global migration and labor Markets. Policy research report*. Washington: World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1281-1.

Yarris, K. (2017). *Care across generations: Solidarity and sacrifice in transnational families*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Zentgraf, K., & Chinchilla, N. (2012). Transnational family separation: a framework for analysis. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 38*, 345–366. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2011.646431.

Zhao, C., Wang, F., Li, L., Zhou, X., & Hesketh, T. (2017). Long-term impacts of parental migration on Chinese children's psychosocial well-being: mitigating and exacerbating factors. *Soc Psychiatry Epidemiology., 52*, 669–677 Retrieved from: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28439622/.

Zhao, C., Egger, H., Stein, C., & McGregor, K. (2018a). Separation and reunification: mental health of Chinese children affected by parental migration. *Pediatrics, 142*(3), 1–4. Retreived from: https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/3/e20180313. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-0313.

Zhao, C., Wang, F., Zhou, X., et al. (2018b). Impact of parental migration on psychosocial well-being of children left behind: a qualitative study in rural China. *International Journal for Equity in Health, 17*, 80. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-018-0795-z.

Zimmer, Z., Rada, C., & Stoica, C. A. (2014). Migration, location and provision of support to older parents: the case of Romania. *Journal of Population Ageing, 7*, 161–184.