Impacts of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict on Migration from Central Asia

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Overview

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Military conflicts have profound impacts on migration patterns

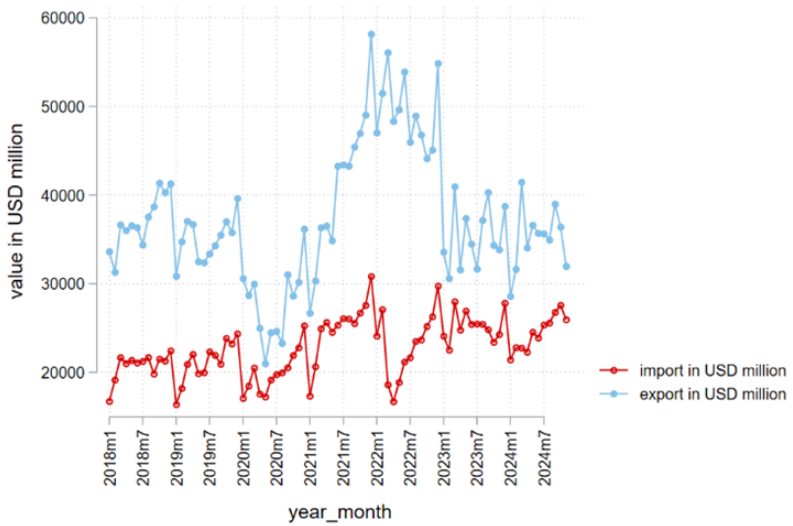
- **Disruption** of both migrant origin and destination economies
- **Social vulnerabilities** in destination/origin countries increase
- **Decision-making** calculus of potential migrants

$\Rightarrow$ Gendered dimensions of these impacts unexplored [Bircan and Yilmaz, 2023]
$\Rightarrow$ "Double disadvantage" of migrant women?
$\Rightarrow$ Lack of gender perspectives in migration policies [IOM, 2024]

Several channels could influence changes in migration patterns as a result of conflicts

- **Potential channels:**
  - Economic sanctions
  - War economy
  - Military draw of natives
  - Military draw of migrants
  - Move of economic activity to destination countries
- **Potential impact on migrants' outcomes:**
  - Return migration
  - Emigration flows
  - Labor market outcomes of those abroad
  - Remittances

Figure: Trade decrease due to sanctions



Source: Central Bank of Russia

Several channels could influence gendered impacts

- Occupational/sectoral sex segregation
- Military draw mainly affects men
- Compensation for lost income/reservation wages
- Literature shows gendered impacts of crises
  - Caregiver burden and COVID-19 [Alon et al., 2020]
  - Social norms [Annesley and Scheele, 2011]

This paper: Impact of Russia-Ukraine war on gendered migration patterns from Central Asia and their associated labor outcomes

- Central Asian (CA) countries are **among main senders** of migrants globally
- **Russia** is main **destination** country
- War-related shocks affected **different sectors** in Russia differently
- Labor migration from CA:
  - temporary and short term
  - heavy reliance on migrants' labor income
  - mainly low-skilled, young
  - Male migration is dominant, but still **significant share of females**
  - concentrated in construction (men); domestic work (women)

This paper makes a significant contribution to the economic literature

- **Gender dynamics in migration and labor market outcomes** [Pedraza, 1991, Enchautegui, 1997, Amuedo-Dorantes and Pozo, 2006, Lokshin and Glinskaya, 2009, Zaiceva, 2010, Mendola and Carletto, 2012, Aydemir et al., 2022, Amirapu et al., 2022]

$\Rightarrow$ *Most papers focus on outcomes in home country*

- **Shocks on migration dynamics:** interaction between migration and economic shocks [Gröger, 2021, Caballero et al., 2023], employment shocks [Zabel, 2012], economic transitions [Fidrmuc, 2004], exchange rate shocks [Yang, 2006, 2008], and environmental shocks [Kubik and Maurel, 2016, Gröger and Zylberberg, 2016, Kleemans and Magruder, 2018, Bertoli et al., 2022, Pavel et al., 2023].
- **Return migration** [Djajić and Milbourne, 1988, Galor and Stark, 1991, Borjas and Bratsberg, 1994, Chiquiar and Hanson, 2005, Dustmann and Weiss, 2007, Constant and Massey, 2003, Dustmann, 2003, Bijwaard and Wahba, 2014]
- **Impact of sanctions** [Crozet and Hinz, 2020, Felbermayr et al., 2021, Sedrakyan, 2022, Gaur et al., 2023, Flach et al., 2024]

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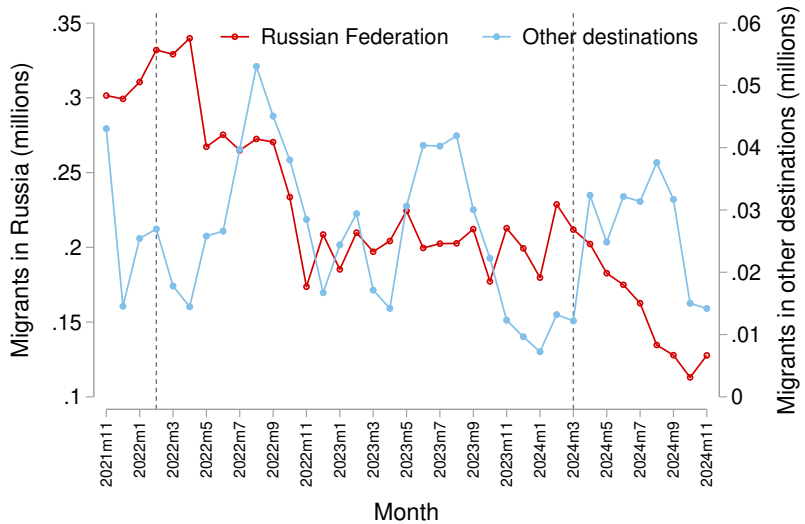
This paper uses a modified difference-in-difference strategy

- Groups with different levels of historical migration share
- Monotonic effect assumption: impact greater in magnitude for those with a higher dependence on migration abroad prior to shock
- Two cutoffs: outbreak of war; terrorist attack
- Extensive migration household survey of Kyrgyz Republic

Figure: Current migrants from Kyrgyz Republic in Russia vs. other destinations



Source: L2K

Equation of modified DiD strategy

The estimated equation is specified as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{i,t} = \alpha &+ \beta_1 \text{War}_t + \beta_2(\text{HisMig}_i \times \text{War}_t) \\ &+ \beta_3 \text{TerroAttack}_t + \beta_4(\text{HisMig}_i \times \text{TerroAttack}_t) \\ &+ \phi_i + \phi_t + \phi_{g,s} + \epsilon_{i,t} \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

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The war significantly alters women's and men's labor market response

- Men overall **reduced migration**
  - Returning home
  - Switching to other destination
  - Fear of joining the army
- Women **increased migration**
  - Negative effect of economic sanctions offset by defense economy
  - Labor shortages
  - Compensate for the reduction of remittances after return migration

Table: Impact of Russia-Ukraine war and the terrorist attack on migration to Russia

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dependent variable: being a current migrant in Russia						
Sample	Men			Female		
HisMig x War	-0.0794***	-0.0366**	-0.0387**	0.0526***	0.0520**	0.0499**
	(0.0205)	(0.0158)	(0.0152)	(0.0155)	(0.0218)	(0.0218)
HisMig x TerroAttack	-0.1217***	-0.0393**	-0.0394**	0.0313	0.0539	0.0536
	(0.0203)	(0.0173)	(0.0176)	(0.0299)	(0.0325)	(0.0325)
Gender-age-edu-region FE	Yes			Yes		
Individual FE		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Age-specific season FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Urban/rural season FE			Yes			Yes
Education-specific season FE			Yes			Yes
Gender-specific season FE			Yes			Yes
Observations	79,977	78,081	78,081	82,860	80,890	80,890
R-squared	0.0605	0.4797	0.4798	0.0297	0.4300	0.4301

Impact of Russia-Ukraine war and the terrorist attack on various migration outcomes

VARIABLES	(1)	(2) Migrant in Russia	(3)	(4) Migrant elsewhere	(5) Migrant (all)	(6) Work in Russia	(7) Return from Russia	(8) Return from elsewhere	(9) Send remittances	(10) Log of remittances	(11) Work in KGZ	(12) Private work	(13) Work in gov.	(14) Look for job
Panel A: Male sample														
HisMig x War	-0.0316**			0.0024	-0.0292*	0.1108***	0.0250***	-0.0473***	-0.0580***	-0.4644***	-0.2175***	-0.1327***	-0.2386***	0.0475**
	(0.0156)			(0.0052)	(0.0144)	(0.0296)	(0.0080)	(0.0086)	(0.0140)	(0.1267)	(0.0778)	(0.0478)	(0.0178)	(0.0220)
HisMig x TerroAttack	-0.0400**	-0.0156	-0.0077	0.0168*	-0.0233	-0.0454**	-0.0027	0.0052	-0.0197	-0.1903	0.1950***	0.0581	0.0831***	0.0117
	(0.0179)	(0.0189)	(0.0181)	(0.0094)	(0.0201)	(0.0211)	(0.0076)	(0.0061)	(0.0150)	(0.1400)	(0.0388)	(0.0444)	(0.0215)	(0.0230)
HisMig x Sanction		-0.0618***												
		(0.0170)												
HisMig x Military mobilization			-0.0841***											
			(0.0122)											
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Age-specific season FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Observations	78,081	78,081	78,081	78,081	78,081	77,749	78,081	78,081	78,081	78,081	74,647	78,081	78,081	78,081
R-squared	0.4802	0.4803	0.4805	0.3479	0.4751	0.3679	0.0672	0.3938	0.4061	0.3978	0.4489	0.3780	0.4046	0.1841
Panel B: Female sample														
HisMig x War	0.0510**			0.0011	0.0521**	0.0565***	0.0045	-0.0079*	0.0069	0.0855	-0.2421	-0.0636	0.0163	-0.0025
	(0.0227)			(0.0076)	(0.0216)	(0.0143)	(0.0044)	(0.0044)	(0.0121)	(0.1101)	(0.1685)	(0.0516)	(0.0748)	(0.0301)
HisMig x TerroAttack	0.0681**	0.0276	0.0457	-0.0130	0.0550	0.0231	0.0257*	-0.0003	0.0396	0.3923	0.3639***	0.0641	0.2509***	0.0724**
	(0.0302)	(0.0281)	(0.0297)	(0.0093)	(0.0340)	(0.0266)	(0.0148)	(0.0054)	(0.0286)	(0.2819)	(0.0727)	(0.0726)	(0.0377)	(0.0317)
HisMig x Sanction		0.1030***												
		(0.0243)												
HisMig x Military mobilization			0.0786***											
			(0.0258)											
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Age-specific season FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Observations	80,890	80,890	80,890	80,890	80,890	80,784	80,890	80,890	80,890	80,890	77,014	80,890	80,890	80,890
R-squared	0.4273	0.4275	0.4274	0.3452	0.4213	0.3006	0.0596	0.3569	0.3576	0.3425	0.4832	0.3293	0.4400	0.1748

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Military conflicts result in gendered patterns of migration outcomes - migration policies require a gender lens

- **Summary of results**
  - Distinct migration patterns for men and women
  - Men experiencing heightened economic pressures and risks associated with deployment; women compensate for labor shortages and remittances
- **Policy implications**
  - Dependencies of origin countries on destination countries can be complex
  - Migration policies require a gender lens
  - Collection and analysis of gendered migration data is critical
- **Future research**
  - Crises as an opportunity for women to step up?
  - Are increased migration flows by women desirable? A necessity? An opportunity (e.g., change in social norms)?

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