

Matriarchs of Central Asia: Age Differences among Kyrgyzstani Women in Housework Participation

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Abstract

Younger generations are usually socialized in ways that promote more egalitarian gender scripts compared to older generations. This assumption about younger generations is extended to all spheres of human life and all cultural contexts. Yet do these assumptions of the life-course approach apply to housework participation in Central Asia? We analyze time-use diaries from the Life in Kyrgyzstan panel data, 2012-2013, to show that in Kyrgyzstan, gender performances in housework by age are contrary to the expectations laid out by the life-course approach. Among working age women, older women do less housework. These results reveal the effects of the *kainene-kelin* (mother-in-law and bride) relations on housework participation, when younger brides in households are expected to assume more housework than older women. Adjustments to the explanations around gender performance based on socialization and life-course perspective are offered.

1. Introduction

Among historically nomadic Kyrgyz, women hold both traditionally subordinate and matriarchal positions. On the one side, women are venerated as equals to men. Kyrgyz women of the nomadic age fought shoulder to shoulder with men, many women today also work as much as men do (Klycheva 2016). The images of the goddess *Umay*, protector of the Turkic people, women-warriors *Kanykei* or *kyz Saikal* from the Kyrgyz epos *Manas* epitomized strong Kyrgyz women of the nomadic past. During the Soviet era, the emancipation of women in Kyrgyzstan

continued as the USSR launched a social experiment aimed at improving the status of women. Soviet women were to become a productive work power on par with men.

On the other hand, according to Bekturganova (2009), country-level soviet experiments could not and did not change the traditional role of women and the expectations around these roles in Kyrgyz society. Kyrgyz gender scripts and expectations were formed over centuries of traditionalism and religious influences following the end of the nomadic lifestyle (Bekturganova 2009). The traditionalism resurfaced again after independence and the fall of the Soviet Union together with the increased prominence of religion in the everyday life of Kyrgyzstani people. Changes in the years of independence brought about the detachment from the gender ideals of the nomadic past and the Soviet era and reoriented the social values toward more traditional roles of women in households epitomized in the revival of the orthodox roles of *kelin*¹.

Therefore, two explanations as to the current position and expectations for younger women compared to older women are provided: historic (as the remnants of the Soviet past) and cultural (as direct results of the cultural expectations on *kelin*). In the present paper, we investigate which of the above arguments can provide better explanation, using the Life in Kyrgyzstan panel dataset. The purpose of this project is to examine age differences in the allocation of time to household labor among Kyrgyzstani couples. The study will address two principal research questions (1) whether younger people have more equitable division of labor in housework and (2) whether the differences in age are present for both modal genders.

2. Theoretical Background

¹ *Kelin* (pronounced as *geh-LIN*) - brides of (usually) youngest sons who co-reside with their husbands' families and take on most of housework responsibilities.

2.1 Generational Differences in Housework Participation

Women of different generations live through unique gender socialization experiences. The research in the global north unequivocally posits that younger generations are raised with more egalitarian gender attitudes and ideologies (Cichy et al. 2007; Davis and Greenstein 2009; Gershuny 2000; Marshall 2011). Because younger generations live and thrive in more egalitarian environments, younger women and men eventually become more egalitarian adults and elderly, creating a society with more women in employment and more men with housework and childcare duties. The assumption in the housework literature that gender attitudes of older and younger generations will reflect in their respective behaviors at home is bordering on dogmatic, mostly because the western research never presented a contradiction to this assumption.

The present paper produces the negation. Our contribution to the literature is to show that in contexts with high proportion of two- and three-generation households, co-residing extended family, and with strong cultural gender expectations, gendered behaviors may align with gender ideologies but not in the way that the literature assumes.

2.1 Age and Housework Participation in Central Asia

Age socialization of women and men in today's Central Asia worked through two main processes: historic and cultural. First, in former Soviet republics of Central Asia, the older generations have been raised under less traditional gender expectations where religion did not play a big role as it does nowadays in Kyrgyzstan. During the Soviet regime most religious activity was persecuted and outlawed.

In the years of independence, however, religion became a solace to the populace that suffered and continues to suffer from underemployment and lack of economic opportunities, especially in rural areas (Heyat 2004). Religious education often becomes the only career available to women

and men in rural areas where at times there are more mosques than schools or hospitals, due to financial and ideological involvement from neighboring Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States (Heyat 2004).

During the Soviet area, in order to increase the labor force and meet pressing demands of the rapid industrialization, the USSR took on a social experiment of forging women into working proletariat. The official state propaganda pushed on the media images of radiant women-revolutionaries, women building communism, women-construction workers, women-agrarian workers, among others. These images were ubiquitous, for instance, women could see them on the pages of popular women magazines such as *Rabotnitsa* ('Woman-worker') and *Krestyanka* ('Woman-agrarian'). Many traditional gender stereotypes were abolished, and women were actively expected to be 'real Soviet women': physically strong, fierce, and working on par with men (Atwood 1999).

With the fall of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan experienced a revival of interest in religion as well as return to more traditional customs and gender expectations. These were not only the effects of reversal to the traditional Kyrgyz family norms.² Similarly, globalization with Western ideals of female beauty and gender norms also palpably affected gender expectations, particularly in the northern part of the country. Yet, western gender expectations of the 90s were not on par with the more egalitarian position of women during the Soviet regime. As a result, younger generations of Kyrgyzstani women were socialized in a more traditional society and within more traditional gender expectations, putting a rift between the Soviet generation and the new generation of women. Moreover, with the return of more traditional expectations, younger men were expected to be more traditional than older men. Therefore, if the historical

² Traditional Kyrgyz here means Muslim, in today's interpretation, tradition and custom are often confounded with the Wahhabist gender expectations in rural areas (Heyat 2004).

development argument (transition from the Soviet Union gender norms to more traditional/religious norms) is accurate then within households, we should expect the following:

Hypothesis 1: Older women in Kyrgyzstan do less housework compared to younger women, whereas older men do more housework than younger men (the historical explanation).

On the other hand, the age socialization works in favor of older women also because of the local cultural traditions. In Kyrgyz customs, older women are highly respected within families, especially, by brides of younger sons. According to Kyrgyz traditions, it is the families of the youngest sons who are expected to stay at home and look after aging parents. Therefore, when younger sons marry, the burden of housework is traditionally shifted from mothers-in-law (*kainene*) to wives of the youngest sons (*kelin*) (Ismailbekova 2016). Overall, the cultural argument posits that the housework burden would shift from older women to younger women not due to historical change in gender relations but because of the continuation of the *kainene-kelin* relations in Kyrgyz families (Bekturganova 2009). If the cultural explanation is more applicable to the association between age and housework participation in Kyrgyzstan, then we expect the following:

Hypothesis 2: Older women in Kyrgyzstan do less housework compared to younger women, whereas there is little difference in men's participation in housework (the cultural explanation).

Through both historic and cultural processes, older women in Kyrgyzstan are expected to do less housework. There is, however, a difference in what should be expected in men's participation in the two arguments. If the gender relations changed as the result of the reversal to

more traditional norms (the historical argument), we should expect to see a comparable change in men's housework duties. If the cultural argument is more potent to explain the gender relations in Kyrgyzstan, then no such reversal should be evident among men dependent on their age.

3. Methods

We use individual panel data from the Life in Kyrgyzstan (LiK) project, 2012-2013 (Life in Kyrgyzstan Study 2018; Brueck and German Institute for Economic Research 2013; Brueck and SIPRI 2015). The LiK survey interviewed individuals in seven *oblasts* (administrative divisions) and two cities of Kyrgyzstan.

The sampling technique was the stratified two-stage random sampling. Sixteen strata represented Bishkek and Osh cities, urban and rural areas of seven Kyrgyz *oblasts* (districts). A set of population points were drawn proportionally to their population size from each stratum, then 25 households were selected from each population point. In the selected households, each non-migrant individual of and above 18 years of age was interviewed for the survey. The reserve samples were prepared in case of low response rates. The response rate for the initial sample frame was 73%, 27% of households in the data, therefore, came from the reserve sample frame.

The LiK covers a range of socioeconomic topics and is a panel data, where all individuals in selected households were interviewed and tracked over time. This feature makes LiK suitable for the analysis of couples. The LiK was first collected in 2010 for 3000 households and 8000 individuals. Out of the 8160 individuals in the first wave, 6558 were interviewed again in 2013. The attrition rate therefore, was 19.6% of the initial sample. However, the attrition rate of households estimated by the LiK team is a little lower and was at 18.6%.

In general, time use surveys provide more accurate estimations of people's daily activities, including contribution to housework, than stylized surveys (Kan and Pudney 2008) because people, especially men, tend to overestimate their participation in less enjoyable activities like housework due to the desirability bias. In time use surveys, where there are no direct questions about particular daily activities, respondents are less likely to overestimate their participation.

The final analytic sample was comprised in several steps. The main sample was restricted to married couples only, where both of partners have responded to surveys in 2012 and 2013 and were present in the household. Therefore, none of the spouses was a migrant at the moment of the survey. Additionally, age was capped at 60 years of age, which is the official age of retirement in Kyrgyzstan.

Because gender attitudes are important for gendered performances, we decided to include the variables measuring gender attitudes, which were only introduced in the years 2012 and 2013. Thus, the full sample for the present study is based only on two years – 2012 and 2013. The final total sample of weighted data includes 2,718 couples for the two years (see Table 1). Seventy-two percent report being ethnically Kyrgyz, 13% Uzbek, and 5% of the total sample report being ethnically Russian.

The sample consists of couples in household with average of about 6 people, 4 of them being adults. 12.8% households had at least one member who was a labor migrant. Sixty six percent of couples were in households with a child under 5 years of age.

3.1 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is represented by an aggregate measure of the time spent on three domestic tasks (which are traditionally associated with women): cooking, cleaning, and

shopping. The time use diaries for all activities, including housework activities, were collected in 30 minutes intervals starting from 4 am in the morning.

An average woman in Kyrgyzstan spends a little more than 4 hours a day on housework, which is one hour more per each day than an average American woman (Kolpashnikova 2017). An average Kyrgyzstani man spends only about 12 minutes a day on housework, whereas an average American man – about an hour and 20 minutes (Kolpashnikova 2017). Gender relations in Kyrgyzstan, on average, appear to be more traditional than in the US and in countries of the global north.

Table 1. Main Variables, LiK 2012-2013

Variables	Description	Mean (Women) N=2,718	SD	Mean (Men) N=2,718	SD	Diff. in Means
Domestic Tasks	Domestic tasks combined (min.)	249.94	(2.747)	12.04	(0.985)	237.9***
Age	In years, between 15-60	39.41	(0.188)	42.657	(0.181)	-3.247***
Income transfer	(-1,1) -1 – dependence, 1 – providership	-0.416	(0.012)	0.416	(0.012)	-0.832***
Paid Work	Min spent on paid work on the diary day	113.12	(3.863)	257.406	(5.016)	-144.286***
Leisure	Time spent watching TV and surfing the Internet	129.33	(1.638)	186.95	(2.036)	-57.62***
Personal Income	In Kyrgyz som, per month	2466.36	(87.330)	6961.26	(153.10)	-4494.9***
Education (years)	Education of respondent in years	12.03	(0.042)	12.06	(0.042)	-0.03
Gender Attitudes	1- Less patriarchal, 4 – more patriarchal	1.714	(0.052)	3.066	(0.011)	-1.352***
Household size	people	5.75	(0.043)	5.75	(0.043)	0
Adults	people	3.603	(0.030)	3.603	(0.030)	0
Migrants	%	12.8%		12.8%		0
Children under 5	%	66%		66%		0

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (adjusted Wald test and χ^2 test for proportions)

3.2 Independent and Control Variables

Table 1 also summarizes the descriptive statistics for the independent and control variables. The income transfer variable tests the *relative resources* argument (Brines 1994; Sorensen and McLanahan 1987). The relative resources argument in housework research posits that a spouse

with higher relative resources is expected to do more housework. Income transfer is defined as $(\text{personal income} - \text{partner's income}) / (\text{personal income} + \text{partner's income})$. The measure ranges between -1 and 1, where -1 is the highest level of dependency and +1 – the highest level of providership (being a sole breadwinner). Because our sample consists of couples, married to each other, the income transfer average for women is the mirror opposite of the average for men, -0.416 for women and 0.416 for men.

The *autonomy approach* (absolute resources) (Gupta 2007) is tested by personal income in Kyrgyz som, per month. The autonomy approach argues that it is not relative resources define housework participation but the absolute resources and is often measured by personal income. The *time availability* argument, claiming that a spouse with more time does most housework, is tested using time spent on paid work and leisure time. Paid work, as the main economic time constraint variable, represents time spent on paid work. As expected, men on average spend more time on paid work than women (see Table 1). Leisure time is mainly represented by screen time: TV and internet surfing, as well as reading and listening to the radio.

Unlike many time diary datasets, the LiK dataset also allows us to measure the effects of gender attitudes. Gender attitudes in LiK are measured using seven items: (1) ‘Important decisions should be made by the husband rather than the wife’; (2) ‘A man’s job is to earn money; a woman’s job is to look after the home and family’; (3) ‘A woman is really fulfilled only when she becomes a mother’; (4) ‘A working woman can establish just as warm and secure of a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work’; (5) ‘A husband’s career should be more important to the wife than her own’; (6) ‘A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl’; (7) ‘Both the husband and the wife should contribute to the household income.’ The answer choices were in the Likert scale ranging from (1) ‘strongly

disagree' to (4) 'strongly agree'. The item (4) was reverse-coded. The higher values in the scale represent more traditional gender attitudes. The Cronbach alpha for the aggregate scale is 0.65 in 2012 and .0.67 in 2013. Women, on average, were less traditional men (mean for women = 1.7, for men – 3.1, see Table 1).

Because there are usually considerable differences in diaries depending on the day of the week the diary was collected on, we also control for whether the diary day was completed for a weekday (1=weekday, 0=Saturday or Sunday).

3.3 Time Use of Kyrgyzstani Women and Men on Weekdays and Weekends

Tempograms, presented in Figures 1-4, reveal what activities are prevalent in the lives of Kyrgyzstani women and men and show small changes in the activities from 2012 to 2013.

Figures 1-2 summarize activities of women and men on weekdays. Housework takes up most of the average daily activities among women. Men work considerably more than women, however, their work time decreased in 2013 compared to 2012. This is the effects of the economic difficulties and high unemployment rates that Kyrgyzstan faces. Although the paid work time decreased for men the increase in housework time appears to be smaller than time spent on watching TV and other leisure activities. Both women and men spend considerable amount of the evening time from 18:00 to midnight watching TV and other screen time. Other noticeable difference is that women spend considerably more time throughout the day on care activities, whereas men spend more time on farming activities. Kyrgyzstan remains heavily agrarian countries, where more people are involved in agriculture.

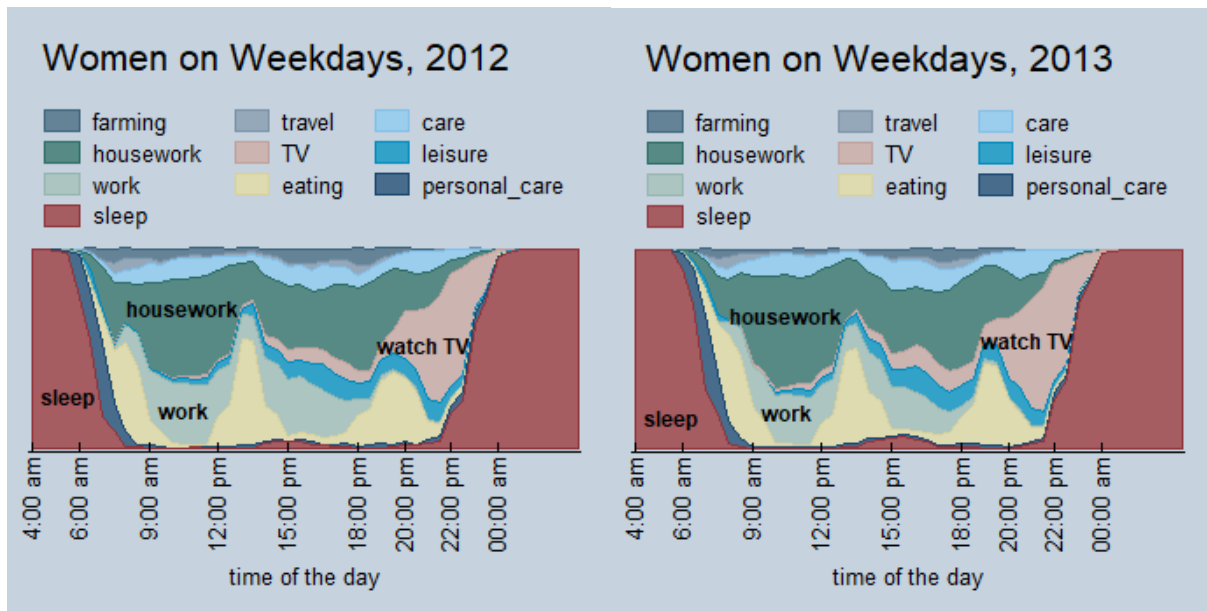


Figure 1 Time Activities of women on weekdays

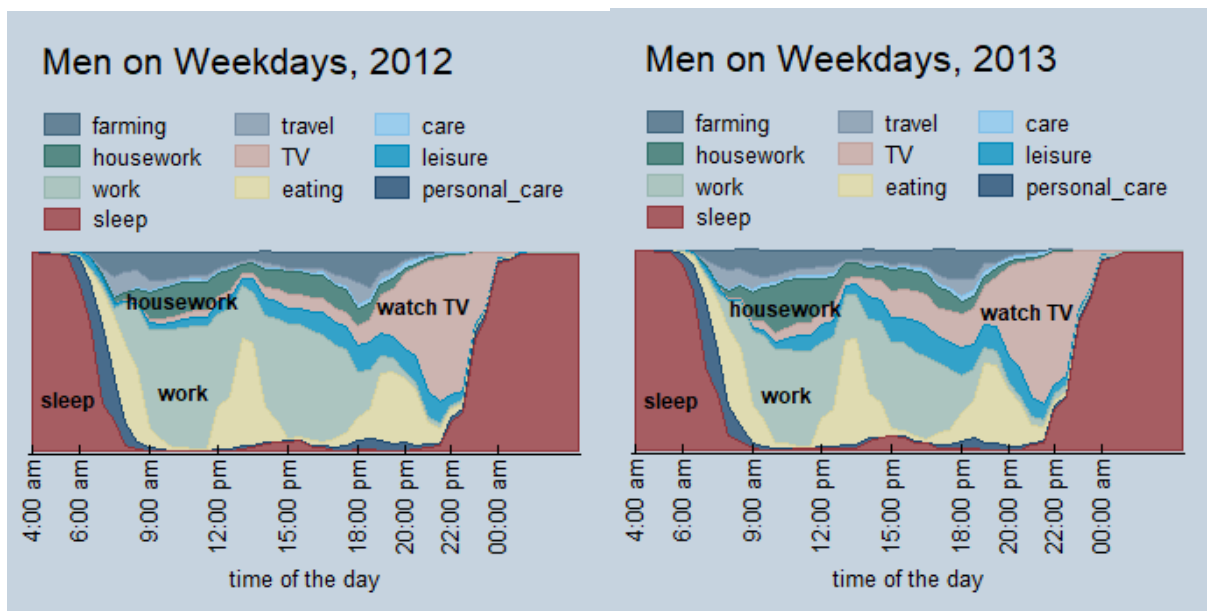


Figure 2 Time Activities of Men on Weekdays

The activities on weekends do not seem to be much different from the activities on weekdays both for women and men (Figures 3-4). Most of the day time women spend on housework, whereas men on paid work and leisure. We also see that working patterns for men are quite similar regardless of whether it is weekday or weekend. This reflects the structure of the Kyrgyz

labor market, where there is a paucity of fixed five-day 9-to-5 office jobs with higher rates of unemployment and self-employment.

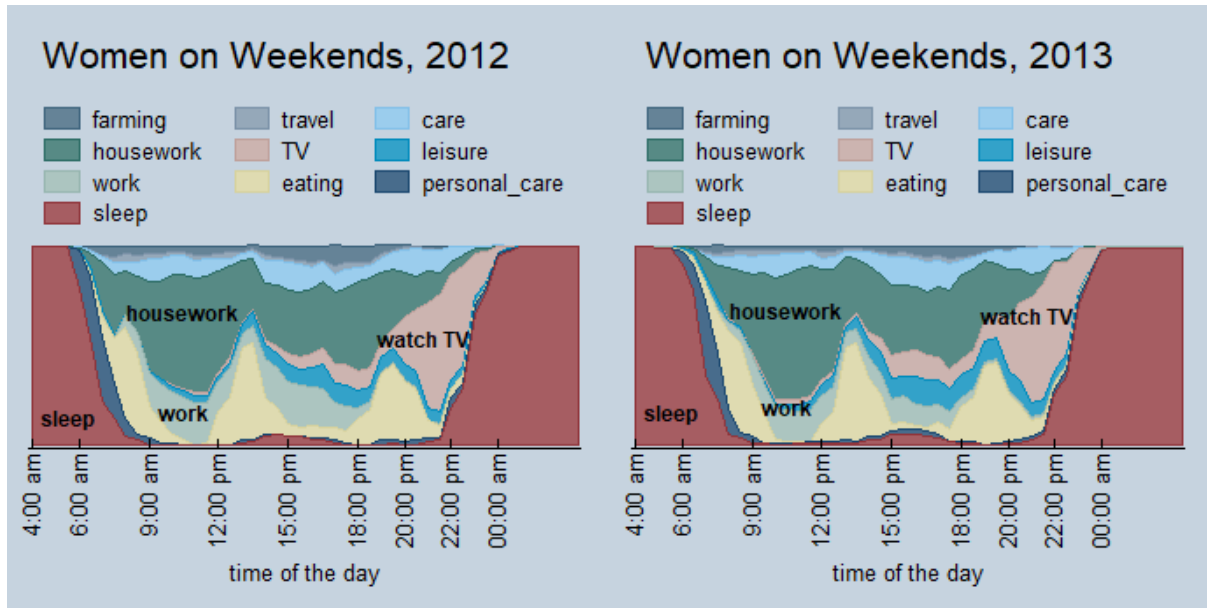


Figure 3 Time Activities of Women on Weekends:

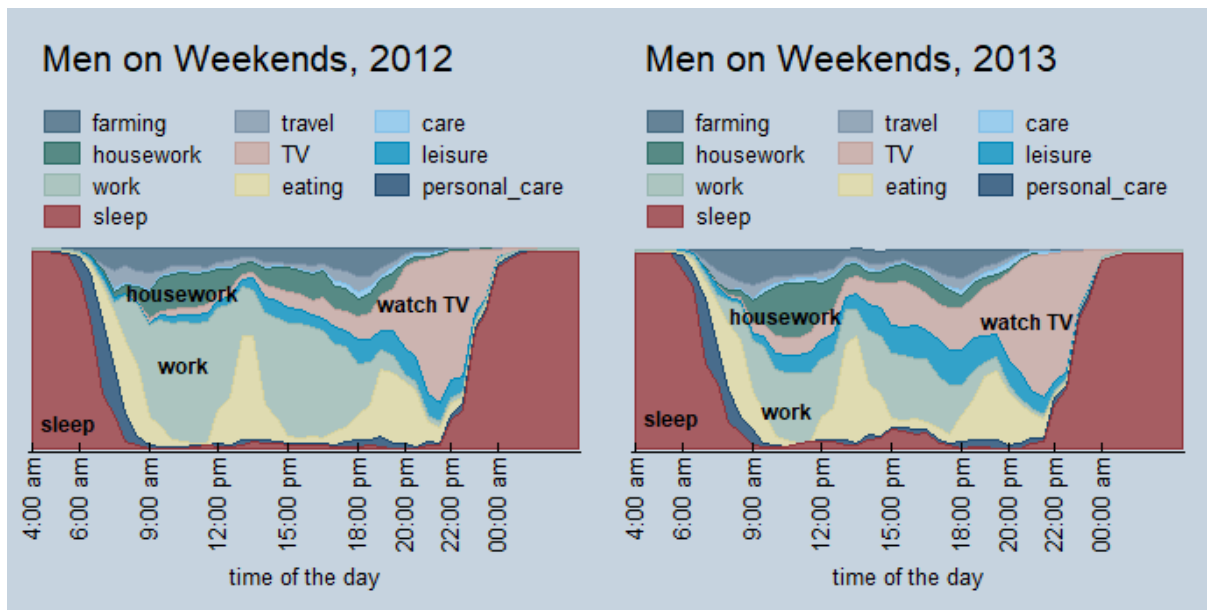


Figure 4 Time Activities of Men on Weekends

3.4 Regional Differences among Women

There are cultural differences within the country as well. The northern Kyrgyzstan with the capital Bishkek is culturally considered more progressive, including in gender issues, and more industrialized. On the other hand, the southern regions with Osh city, considered the capital of the south, are culturally considered to be more traditional and conservative.

The analysis of housework by Kyrgyz regions shows that women in central regions are more likely to do more housework. Figure 5 summarizes the average housework by 7 different regions of Kyrgyzstan and two cities: Bishkek and Osh. In Talas and Issyk-Kul regions women on average do more housework than in other regions. The average time spent on housework is the lowest in the capital, Bishkek, where women spend 195 (3h15) minutes a day on average.

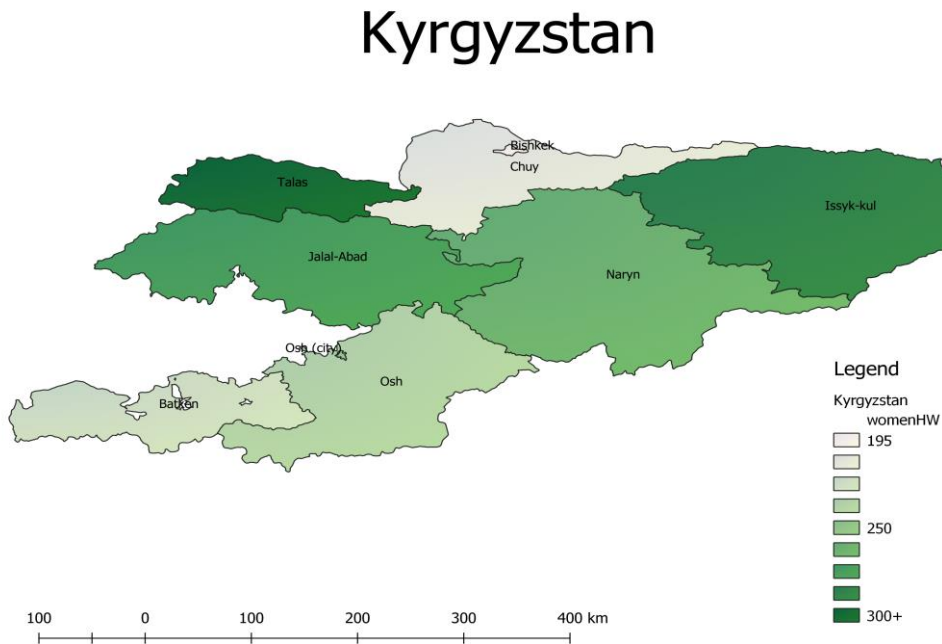


Figure 5 Average Housework Time by Regions

However, the biggest differences between older and younger women are in areas close to two main cities: Bishkek and Osh. Figure 6 summarizes regional differences between the averages for older women and younger women in housework participation. Thus, the differences in

housework time between women of 40-60 years of age and women of 20-30 are more striking in regions around big cities, as well as in Batken and Jalal-Abad regions. The gap is widest in Osh, where it reaches 130 (2h10) minutes on an average day.

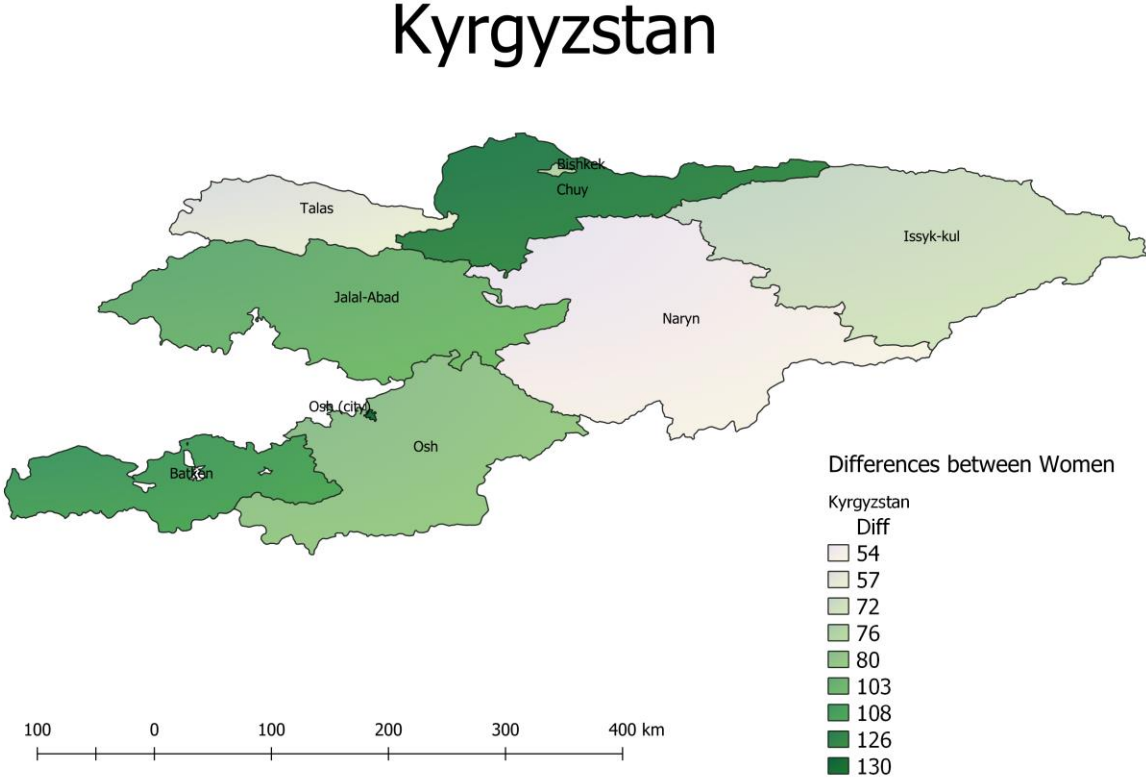


Figure 6 Average Differences between Older and Younger Women

4. Results

The models in Table 2 estimate the effects of age on housework performance in Kyrgyz Republic using the panel data OLS regression with year- and regional fixed effects. Models 1 and 2 test the relationship between age and housework without control variables for women and men. Models 3 and 4 include other independent variables for women and men, respectively. These latter models control for the time availability framework (time spent on paid work and

leisurely activities), education in years, respondent's gender attitudes, personal income (PI) quartiles, level of dependency on the spouse (the income transfer variable), household size, number of children under 5, ethnic identity, and weekday. The model used to plot the marginal effects (Model 5) also controls for respondent's gender and interactions with age and its quadratic term. We added quadratic interactions to check whether the relationship between age and housework time is not linear and because quadratic predictions provide more precise approximations than linear ones.

Overall, the results show that age socialization works differently in Kyrgyzstan than it is expected by the conventional theories explaining the link between housework and gender socialization. Thus, older women in Kyrgyzstan do less housework than younger women. The association remains significant with the inclusion of control variables ($b = -3.506, p < .001$). This is a unique cultural feature of Central Asian countries, where older women are less likely to do housework than younger generations of women.

Two processes are responsible for the phenomenon. First, cultural norms in Kyrgyzstan and neighboring Central Asian countries dictate that in households, younger women take responsibility for most housework. Considering that households in Kyrgyzstan usually include two generations and have, on average, more members of immediate and extended family co-residing, it is likely that most households will have both older and younger women living together under the same roof. The average household size is almost 6 people (see Table 1), whereas in the US and most countries of the Western world – it is only 3 people (Kolpashnikova 2017). In Central Asia, there is a cultural expectation for younger women to do the share of older women's housework perpetuating the tradition of the *kainene-kelin* relations.

Table 2. Panel Data OLS Regression Outputs for Time Spent on Housework

	Model (1) Women	Model (2) Men	Model (3) Women	Model (4) Men	Model (5) Total
Age	-4.382*** (0.300)	0.113 (0.105)	-3.506*** (0.253)	-0.015 (0.111)	1.360 (1.970)
Woman					226.052*** (50.343)
Woman x Age					1.876 (2.546)
Age x Age					-0.022 (0.023)
Woman x Age x Age					-0.066* (0.031)
Paid Work Time			-0.415*** (0.017)	-0.050*** (0.005)	-0.166*** (0.008)
Leisure Time			-0.297*** (0.027)	-0.055*** (0.011)	-0.196*** (0.015)
Education			1.499 (1.206)	0.964* (0.488)	0.121 (0.720)
Gender Attitudes			-4.871 (3.600)	-0.629 (1.722)	-0.143 (2.217)
1. Lower PI Quartile			Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
2. 25-49th PI Percentile			24.887* (11.735)	0.838 (5.237)	-9.239 (6.821)
3. 50-74th PI Percentile			1.990 (8.355)	1.104 (3.576)	-25.008*** (4.699)
4. Upper PI Quartile			-5.593 (10.723)	4.848 (3.943)	-11.918* (5.510)
Income Transfer			-5.929 (4.648)	-2.253 (2.240)	-5.779* (2.875)
Household size			-8.305*** (1.227)	-0.603 (0.536)	-4.534*** (0.756)
Children under 5			-15.067*** (3.396)	0.139 (1.477)	-3.935 (2.140)
Urban			10.558 (6.731)	10.886*** (2.925)	7.499 (4.160)
1. Kyrgyz			Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
2. Russian			-27.209* (10.748)	2.250 (4.800)	-13.295 (6.803)
3. Uzbek			19.911** (7.717)	11.676*** (3.259)	19.945*** (4.742)
4. Other Ethnicity			-8.418 (8.182)	-0.214 (3.591)	-1.232 (5.125)
Weekday			-4.281 (4.701)	-3.889 (2.183)	-8.872** (2.827)
Year of 2013	9.667* (4.326)	2.115 (1.968)	6.774 (3.913)	0.315 (2.009)	0.481 (2.329)
Region (<i>Oblast</i>) FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	460.075*** (14.802)	4.337 (5.436)	557.066*** (23.143)	23.699* (10.823)	139.351** (42.560)
Within R ²	0.001	0.001	0.255	0.045	0.116
Between R ²	0.190	0.015	0.525	0.080	0.763
Overall R ²	0.131	0.008	0.441	0.062	0.667
N	2718	2718	2718	2718	5436

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Note: PI – ‘Personal Income’
Source: 2012-2013 Life in Kyrgyzstan Survey

Second, the historical Soviet heritage socialized older generations in a more egalitarian fashion. Women who grew up in the Soviet era were socialized differently than younger generations, who experienced revival in religion and traditions.

On the other hand, for men the association of age with housework participation is not on a statistically significant level. Men's participation in housework does not change with age. Together with the results for women, these findings provide evidence for the Hypothesis 2. The results also do not show that younger men do more housework than older men, which would signify a generational shift, argued for by the historical explanation. Therefore, we do not find support for the Hypothesis 1.

The findings of the present paper, therefore, suggest that the cultural explanation is more apt for the association between age and housework participation in Kyrgyzstan. Gender traditionalism among Kyrgyzstani women reflects not in their own housework duties, as it is in the West, but in the cultural norm of transferring those duties to younger women. The results clearly show the prevalence of traditional *kainene-kelin* relations between older women and younger women's participation in housework.

Additionally, the results show that for both women and men, time availability is important. More time spent on paid labor or leisure is associated with less housework time. For men but not for women, the results in Table 2 show that higher levels of education are significantly associated with housework participation. Better educated men are more likely to spend more of their time doing housework than men with lower levels of education.

There are also significant differences by ethnicity, especially among women. Ethnic Russian women are less likely to spend as much time on housework as Kyrgyz women. On the other hand, ethnically Uzbek women are more likely to spend more time on housework than Kyrgyz

women. These results are also tied with the regional differences. Ethnically Russians are more likely to reside in bigger cities in the northern Kyrgyzstan, particularly Bishkek. Urban citizens are in general less likely to do as much housework as the rural population.

The explanation for the above lies not only in that urbanites tend to be more egalitarian, in general, but they also have more access to modern technology even as basic as water pipes and electricity, which decrease the total time needed for any housework. Although Kyrgyzstan has developed its economy considerably over the course of its history, many rural areas still have limited access to electricity and water, or electric appliances such as washing machines and dishwashers (LiK 2013).

Furthermore, Model 5 show that in the pooled sample, both women and men are significantly less likely to do housework on weekdays and spend more time on it on weekends. This fact was also evident from the tempogram summaries (Figures 1-4), which show that women and men do more housework on weekends, especially in 2013.

The models summarized in Table 2 also confirm that the tested factors can explain housework participation of women better than that of men (R squared is larger for models among women rather than men).

Figure 7 summarizes marginal effects of the association between age and participation in housework for women (upper curve) and men (lower curve). The gender gap in Kyrgyzstan decreases with age, and most of the decrease occurs because older women decrease their daily housework time. The gender inequality in Kyrgyzstan is narrower among older people than among younger people. Based on the results of the models in Table 2, this is illustrative of the cultural norm of respect to older people and the *kainene-kelin* relations in Kyrgyzstan, where most housework is shifted from older women to younger ones.

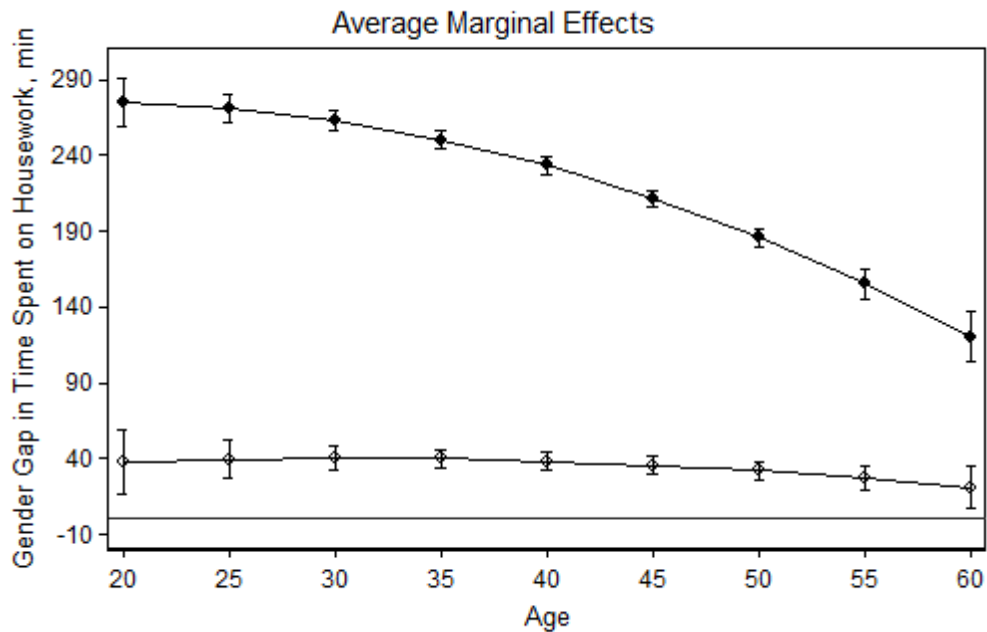


Figure 7 Average Marginal Effects: Age and Participation in Housework
for Women (upper curve) and Men (lower curve) in Kyrgyzstan

The results also confirm that women in Kyrgyzstan spend more of their time on housework and it comprises a greater share of their daily life than American women (Kolpashnikova 2017). This implies that gendered association of housework with ‘women’s work’ is still strong in Central Asia and that most of the traditional gender expectations around housework burden younger women.

Furthermore, the association between age and participation in housework is opposite to that among countries of the global north. Without the knowledge of the local context, it would be wrong to assume that the association for older women signifies the reversal to traditionalism in Kyrgyzstan, it is the result of the culturally preserved *kainene-kelin* relations. Older women in households, being more traditional, oversee that the custom continues. There is no reversal among men, their participation in housework does not change with age.

5. Conclusions

The one-size-fits-all approaches to age socialization, based on the assumptions that older generations are less egalitarian and that their attitudes would linearly reflect in their actions must be taken with a grain of salt. Often, the opposite is evident in countries where cultural norms assign higher social status to older people, women and men alike. One of these societies is Kyrgyzstan. Most households in Central Asia are multi-generational where older women and men co-reside with younger generations.

Due to the strong social pressure to abide by the cultural norms, *kelin* (younger brides) are expected to take on responsibilities about the house and help their *kainene* (older mother-in-laws). As the result, on the aggregate level, we find that older women do less housework than younger women.

However, it would be wrong to assume that this occurs only because of the historical shift from the Soviet rule with its more egalitarian gender norms to independence and re-Islamization in Kyrgyzstan. The precedence for the underlying process is within the cultural explanation. The gender inequality in Kyrgyzstan has its unique expression. It realizes through family and societal pressure on younger women by older women. It does not mean that women become more egalitarian with age, quite the contrary. The older women expect younger women to do most housework and therefore, are complicit in perpetuating the traditional gender expectations on younger generations of women.

One policy implication of these findings is that implementation of gender programs should aim at the involvement of intergenerational communication and shared experiences between older and younger women. The future research could benefit from developing theoretical frameworks for explaining participation and the gender gap in tasks that are culture-dependent.

The modeling of the processes of gender socialization with actions should avoid being limited to linear narratives.

6. References

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