

Title: "Gendered migration trajectories and child well-being in Moldova and Georgia"

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Abstract:

Within transnational family studies, a growing body of literature has investigated how children in spatially-separated families function given the absence of their migrant kin, chiefly parents. Much of this literature has explored the potential consequences of parental migration for child psychological health and has largely emphasised the negative consequences of parental migration for children, who may report feelings of loss and abandonment (Parrenas, 2005; Tolstokorova, 2010), regard their migrant parents as strangers (Schmalzbauer, 2004; Moran-Taylor, 2008), or report higher levels of loneliness (Jia & Tian, 2010). In some countries, the study of the 'left behind' has occurred against a backdrop of negative public discourses about (female) migration, yet explorations of female mobility patterns and their connection to the family context are notably scarce. In this seminar, the relationship between gendered migration trajectories and child psychosocial health outcomes are explored in Moldova and Georgia, two post-Soviet countries that both experienced large-scale emigration following independence in 1991. Using data collected in 2011/12, binary and multinomial logit regression models are used to predict the migration propensities of men and women. Analyses reveal that—contrary to public discourse—women from Moldova are significantly *less* likely to migrate than men whereas women in Georgia do not have significantly different odds of migrating than men. In both countries, the factors that shape female mobility differ in marked ways from those of men, suggesting distinctly gendered migration selection processes. The selectivity of certain kinds of individuals into migration is likely to carry implications for the well-being of those children who are 'left behind' by their parents. As a second step, therefore, the psychosocial health of children with migrant parents are compared to those of children without migrant parents using probit models. Results suggest that the distinctly gendered nature of migration can carry different consequences for the children 'left behind' and that assumptions about the deleterious effects of female migration for children should be more critically examined.