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Financial and Emotional Support in Close Personal Ties among Central Asian Migrant Women in Russia

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Abstract

This study advances research on the role of personal networks as sources of financial and emotional support in immigrants' close personal ties beyond the immediate family. Because resource scarcity experienced by members of immigrant communities is likely to disrupt normatively expected reciprocal support, we explored multi-level predictors of exchange processes with personal network members that involve (1) only receiving support, (2) only providing support, and (3) reciprocal support exchanges. We focus on an understudied case of Central Asian migrant women in the Russian Federation using a sample of 607 women from three ethnic groups—Kyrgyz, Tajik, Uzbek—who were surveyed in two large Russian cities—Nizhny Novgorod and Kazan. The survey collected information on respondents' demographic, socioeconomic, and migration-related characteristics, as well as characteristics of up to five individuals with whom they had a close relationship. Multi-level multinomial regression analyses were used to account for the nested nature of the data. Our results revealed that closer social relationships (siblings and friends) and greater levels of resources (income and regularized legal status) at both ego and alter levels were positively related to providing, receiving, and reciprocally exchanging financial and emotional support. Egos were more likely to provide financial assistance to transnational alters, whereas they were more likely to engage in mutual exchanges of emotional support with their network members from other countries. Personal network size and density showed no relationship with support exchanges. These findings provide a nuanced picture of close personal ties as conduits for financial and emotional support in migrant communities in a major, yet understudied, migrant-receiving context.

Keywords

personal networks; social support; migration; women; multi-level regression analysis; Russian Federation

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Introduction

Social network research has been generating important insights into migration and transnational processes including decision-making about migration and adaptation to and economic mobility in the receiving context (e.g., Bilecen, Gamper, & Lubbers, *forthcoming*; Massey et al., 1993; Palloni, Massey, Ceballos, Espinosa, & Spittel, 2001; Portes & Böröcz, 1989). Studies focusing on composition and structure of migrants' personal networks, i.e., social ties from the perspective of an ego, have been particularly valuable as they underscore the multidimensional role of these social connections for a variety of integration processes and outcomes (e.g., Herz, 2015; de Miguel Luken & Tranmer, 2010). The present study contributes to this body of scholarship by elucidating the role of close personal ties in migrant women's social support exchanges (in this study we use “migrants” and “immigrants” interchangeably). We focus on women's personal networks because women's migration experiences, and especially the diversity and patterning of social support among migrant women, have remained relatively understudied in quantitative research, despite the growth of ethnographic work on immigrant women networks (e.g., Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, 2003; Menjivar, 2000) and the broader literature on gender and migration in recent decades (e.g., Curran & Saguy, 2001; Donato & Gabaccia, 2015; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Mahler & Pessar, 2001; Massey, Fischer, & Capoferro, 2006). Yet, it is immigrant women's networks that create the foundations of immigrant communities and settlement (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994).

Migration and networks are dynamically interconnected: migrants' entry and integration into the host society is influenced by their networks, yet migration also shapes and transforms networks (Wierzbicki, 2004). Whereas migration imposes initial constraints on the choice of network members (e.g., family members or co-ethnics), migrants in host societies engage in goal-driven social interactions and develop new ties, which are activated in specialized support exchanges. Much of migration research has emphasized the role of weak ties (Granovetter 1973) as facilitators of migrants' access to jobs and economic mobility (de Miguel Luken & Tranmer, 2010; Gold, 2005; Portes & Böröcz, 1989), but close personal connections also provide critical contributions to migrants' everyday lives. In this study we investigated determinants of two distinct yet complementary dimensions of support that circulate through close personal connections (Walker, Wasserman, & Wellman, 1993) -- *financial support*, mainly in the form of interest-free lending of money, and *emotional support*, or “love and caring, sympathy and understanding and/or esteem or value available from significant others” (Thoits, 1995, p. 64). We focus on the characteristics of close ties *beyond* immediate family members such as parents, spouse, and children that are related to financial and emotional support exchanges. In our approach to these networks, we consider a mixed set of social ties comprised of individuals on both the receiving and sending ends of the increasingly transnationalized migration continuum (see Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007) to generate a more nuanced perspective on the role of close personal ties in migrant experiences (Gold, 2005; Glick Schiller et al., 2006).

This study makes two novel contributions. First, we explored predictors of varied directionality of support exchanges because resource scarcity may interfere with immigrants' ability to engage in normatively expected reciprocated exchanges of support (e.g., Menjivar,

2000). Specifically, we differentiated among support exchange processes with personal network members that involve (1) only receiving support, (2) only providing support, and (3) reciprocal support exchanges. Second, this study is also novel because it examines these processes among migrant women in the Russian Federation (RF). Although the RF has the second largest immigrant population in the world (Menozzi, 2016), relatively little migration research has been conducted in that country and, to the best of our knowledge, no studies have addressed the role of migrants' personal networks there.

Social Support in Immigrants' Networks: Functional Specificity and Resource Availability

To fully understand how immigrants' social experiences translate into a successful adaptation to the receiving context, we need to consider how their strong, i.e., close personal ties channel other critical support provisions beyond access to employment. Financial and emotional support are among these salient and complementary ingredients of support exchanges and they have been examined in a long-standing tradition of social support research, in addition to instrumental, informational, appraisal and companionship help (Cobb, 1976; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Weiss, 1974). Social support scholarship developed a *functional specificity hypothesis* positing that different ties provide different types of support that is matched to a particular stressor or challenge (e.g., traumatic events, loss of significant others, work stress, etc; Cutrona & Russell, 1991; Sandefur & Laumann, 1998; Wellman & Wortley, 1990). This notion has been empirically supported for social support in general (e.g., Berkamn, Glass, Brisstee, & Seeman, 2000; Walker et al., 1993; Wellman & Wortley, 1990) and in the context of migration. Specifically, financial support is more likely to be provided to immigrants by network members who have access to material resources (Gold, 2005), whereas emotional support is more likely to be acquired from those in close and intimate relationships or other immigrants going through similar experiences (e.g., Ryan, 2011).

Both functional specificity (Cutrona & Russell, 1991) and social resource (Lin, Dean, & Ensel, 1986) models of support posit that support tie activation presupposes availability of resources (e.g., money, information). In the context of migration, access to resources and ability to mobilize them are linked with such markers of successful incorporation as length of time residing in the destination country, educational attainment, income, language acquisition, and intermarriage (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). Indeed, these markers of incorporation have been related to instrumental and financial support acquisition for immigrants (Herz, 2015). With respect to emotional support (Thoits, 1995), gender differences have been noted in support exchanges, with women being more likely to fulfill the role of “helper” in their personal communities (Gold, 2005).

Reciprocal and Asymmetrical Support Exchanges in Immigrants' Networks

Social tie activation in support exchanges entails costs for accessing the resources in the form of *reciprocity*, or an anticipated return of help (Lin, Dean, & Ensel, 1986; Walker, et al., 1993). The key predictor of reciprocal support exchange in personal networks is earlier receipt of support from a community member (e.g., Plickert, Cote, & Wellman, 2007). In low-income communities, resource scarcity is likely, which tends to raise tensions and reduce propensities to engage in reciprocal support exchanges (Belle, 1983; Hogan,

Eggebeen, & Clogg, 1993; Roschelle, 1997). Similar dynamics characterize many migrant communities: Menjívar (2000), for example, showed that conflicts emerged and ties were even severed in networks of Salvadoran immigrants in the U.S. when newcomers overburdened scarcely resourced co-ethnic members with demands for support. This suggests that immigrant communities (similarly to other socio-economically vulnerable populations) may deviate from the norms of reciprocated support exchanges and exhibit a diversified patterning of support including asymmetrical support flows (i.e., ego only providing alter with support or ego only receiving support from alter). Thus, when studying immigrant support exchanges, it is critical to distinguish between the directions of these exchanges and examine characteristics of close personal ties that are differentially involved in reciprocal and asymmetrical support flows. For example, it is plausible that material resource scarcity may limit immigrants' ability to provide financial support to one another but may increase the likelihood of receiving support from their non-co-ethnic ties. Further, an increased understanding of and familiarity with migration-related challenges may enhance immigrants' disposition to provide emotional support to their co-ethnic network members (Sutor, Pillemer, & Keeton, 1995) and engage in mutual emotional support exchanges within their networks.

Role of Transnational and Cross-Ethnic Ties in Immigrant Support Exchanges

A key aspect of migrants' networks is their ties to individuals in sending contexts. Transnational ties are now viewed not only as channels of financial remittances and new cultural norms (Levitt & Jarworsky, 2007), but also as sources of emotional support, which contemporary migrants increasingly access via online communication (Herz, 2015). For example, a study of Estonian and Russian immigrants in Finland found that receiving support from transnational ties was protective against depressive symptoms (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2006). An ethnographic account of Ecuadorian domestic workers in Italy revealed that their transnational ties provided emotional support through shared nostalgia and social belonging (Boccagni, 2015).

Another important contribution of contemporary migration research has been in moving beyond a narrow co-ethnic lens to examine the role of ethnic diversity in social connections for immigrants' incorporation (Glick Schiller et al., 2006). Indeed, instrumental and companionship help is often provided through ethnically diverse networks (Herz, 2015). de Miguel Luken and Tranmer (2010) showed for immigrants in Spain that having connections with native Spaniards was positively related with material support. Also for Peruvian and Moroccan migrant women in Spain (Garcia, Ramirez, & Jariego, 2002) and Estonian and Russian immigrants in Finland (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2006), having a higher number of cross-ethnic ties was associated with better psychological adjustment. Whereas cultivation of ethnically diverse ties has been linked to positive immigrant integration outcomes across numerous contexts, having co-ethnic networks in the receiving context has also been beneficial for migrants because of shared norms and culture, familiarity, and solidarity (for review, see Gold, 2005).

Taken together, this evidence suggests that directionality in support exchanges among immigrants may vary as a function of the local vs. transnational or co-ethnic vs. inter-ethnic

nature of a tie. Specifically, whereas reciprocally exchanging and only receiving financial support are less likely within transnational and co-ethnic ties due to presumed resource imbalances, asymmetrical financial support provision is more likely to be directed towards alters in home countries in line with financial remittance patterns (Levitt & Jarworsky, 2007). On the other hand, greater rates of emotional support exchanges would be more likely within transnational ties, which are increasingly facilitated by online communication, and cross-ethnic ties in the receiving context as both types of ties enhance psychological adjustment.

International Labor Migration and Gendered Dimensions of Migration to Russia

The Russian Federation (RF) hosts the second largest number of international migrants after the U.S. (Menozzi, 2016). According to 2016 statistics from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, reported 14.3 million foreign nationals had obtained migration registration in RF. International migrants account for 10% of Russia's total population of 144 million people (MIARF, 2016). The majority of international migrants in the RF come from the countries that once were part of the Soviet Union, with the three nations of Central Asia—Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan—accounting for 6.1 million, or 43% of all foreign nationals registered in Russia (MIARF, 2016). Most Central Asians arrive in the RF, at least initially, as temporary labor migrants. Whereas Moscow, the Russian capital and largest city, has been a primary magnet for these migrants, the destinations of migration flows have been diversifying to include other large cities. Although citizens of the three Central Asian countries do not need visas to enter the RF (and citizens of Kyrgyzstan no longer even need work permits to work there after their country joined the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union in 2015), most of those who end up working in the RF do so in violation of some of the many immigration or labor regulations (Reeves, 2013a; 2013b). As a result, immigrants are often harassed and exploited by their employers and law enforcement officials. Central Asian immigrants' ethno-racial background (most are darker-skinned, with Asian facial features, often with poor command of the Russian language) and religion (most are Muslim) add to their economic and legal marginalization (Agadjanian et al., 2017; Adjami, 2006; Light, 2010).

Although labor migration from Central Asia began as almost exclusively male, women now constitute an increasingly large share of the migration flow. According to official Russian statistics, women now make up 39% of Kyrgyzstan nationals and 19% of nationals of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (FMS, 2016), and more and more women migrate independently from male partners (Tyurukanova, 2011). While Central Asian women and men may share many challenges in the RF, it can be argued that women are at a particular disadvantage, as gender inequality exacerbates the challenges inherent to migration status (Agadjanian et al., 2017). As immigrant women in other contexts (Menjívar, 2002; Valdez, Padilla, & Valentine, 2013), those from Central Asia may seek to mitigate their gendered vulnerabilities by drawing on support from their personal networks. Hence, studying the determinants of informal support is key to a better understanding of migrant women's incorporation in host societies.

The Current Study

We build upon prior research to examine the role of close personal ties as sources of support by examining how the composition and structure of networks among Central Asian migrant women in RF are related to exchange of two types of support – financial and emotional. Because resource scarcity experienced by members of migrant communities is likely to disrupt reciprocal support exchanges (Belle, 1983; Hogan, et al, 1993; Menjívar 2000; Roschelle, 1997), we explored predictors of diverse patterning in the directionality of social support exchanges. Based on ethnographic and quantitative evidence, we posited that due to resource scarcity encountered by immigrants, reciprocal support exchanges, despite being normatively expected, may not always be viable. Thus, we explored what ego and alter characteristics predict reciprocal and asymmetrical support exchanges. Network research suggests that cumulative disadvantage processes lead to the clustering of low-resourced individuals thereby amplifying social inequality (DiMaggio & Garip, 2012). Accordingly, we focused on the associations between the egos' levels of resources and resources distributed among their alters as predictors of support. Considering a wide range of material resources (e.g., those determined by age, education, income, employment, legal status, length of time spent in Russia, and being in a stable partnership) as markers of successful integration into the receiving context, we hypothesized that egos and alters with higher levels of resources would be more likely to engage in reciprocal financial support exchanges (H1.A), whereas individuals who have lower access to resources would be more likely to unidirectionally receive financial assistance from their networks (H1.B). On the other hand, individuals who have access to greater resources were expected to unidirectionally provide financial assistance to their networks (H1.C).

Next, we examined whether the types of ties that provide financial vs. social support differ. Based on the functional specificity hypothesis and prior research on the gendered nature of different types of support (Thoits, 1995; Menjívar, 2000), we hypothesized that they do. Specifically, we expected that financial support exchanges would be more likely to asymmetrically occur with male alters (i.e., ego received support) (H2), whereas emotional support exchanges would be more likely to reciprocally and asymmetrically occur among females (H3). We hypothesized that having siblings, relatives, and friends among network members would be positively related to provision of both reciprocal financial and emotional support because these relationship types imply closer and more intimate connections as compared to neighbors and co-workers subsumed under “acquaintance” type (H4). In regards to same-ethnicity ties, we anticipated that being of same ethnicity would be positively related to reciprocal emotional support provision (H5) because experiences shared through similar ethnic background tend to increase empathy and emotional connection (Gold, 2005; Sutor et al., 1995). Yet, several ethnographic accounts suggest that co-ethnic networks may not always be a source of support and assistance for migrants (Mahler, 1995; Menjívar, 2000), while cross-ethnic ties may, in fact, facilitate psychological adjustment in the receiving context (e.g., Garcia et al., 2002; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2006). Therefore, we also proposed an alternative hypothesis that a higher prevalence of cross-ethnic ties would be positively related to emotional support provision (H5 alternative). We anticipated that greater frequency of contact (i.e., number of days met in person, frequency of phone conversations) would predict reciprocal and asymmetrical financial and emotional support

exchanges because it serves as a means of tie mobilization (H6). We also examined how transnational ties were predictive of differing types of financial and emotional support exchanges. Consistent with financial remittance pattern (Gold, 2005), we expected that egos would be more likely to provide (H7.A) and less likely to receive (H7.B) financial support from their transnational ties. We expected that emotional support would increasingly come from transnational alters (H8; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2006).

Finally, we examined how network size and density were related to support. Personal networks research suggests that, in general, larger and more densely connected networks are linked with greater provision of emotional support and less densely connected ties are associated with greater provision of financial assistance (Hurlbert, Haines, & Beggs, 2000; Haynes & Hurlbert, 1992; Walker et al., 1993). However, recent research on migrants' networks has shown that network size was positively related to companionship and negatively related to emotional support, whereas network density was unrelated to provision of support (Herz, 2015). Given the mixed results on the association between the structural features of a network and support provision, our last goal is exploratory: to examine the relative importance of the nature and content of ties in a personal network vs. network size and density for provision of support (cf. Wellman, 2007).

Methods

Study Sites and Participant Recruitment

We use a survey of 607 migrant women aged 18-40 from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in two large Russian cities: Nizhny Novgorod ($n = 303$) and Kazan ($n = 304$). The two survey sites are among major destinations of Central Asian migrants in Russia and are similar in many ecological, socioeconomic and cultural aspects. The two cities, located in the European part of the RF some 350 km from each other, are of comparable size (Nizhny Novgorod, 1.3 million, and Kazan, 1.2 million: the fifth and eighth largest Russian cities, respectively), and in both the migrant population has been growing rapidly. However, Kazan, which is the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, an autonomous administrative entity within the RF, has traditionally had a strong Muslim presence (ethnic Tatars, the eponymous group of the Republic, who constitute about one-half of the city's population, are predominantly Muslim). A comparison of the two cities allows us to control for how their distinct ethno-religious environments may affect the reception of Muslim migrants and consequently those migrants' use of their personal networks for support exchanges.

Participants were recruited using respondent-driven sampling (RDS) and interviewed by a female interviewer of matched ethnicity in the language of respondent's choice. During the preliminary stage of the project the research team contacted experts and associations of Central Asian immigrants to recruit potential interviewers of matching ethnicities and identify seeds for RDS. For each group (Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek) in each city five migrant women were identified who resided in different parts of town and were of different age and occupation. Each of these 30 seed interviewees (15 in Nizhny Novgorod and 15 in Kazan) completed the interview at the project office and received compensation of 550 RUR (USD 17 at the start of data collection)¹. After the interview, the seed interviewees were given three serially numbered coupons for recruitment of three peers who were women of the

target age range (18-40 years) and who were of the same ethnic background and did not reside with the respondent. The recruited women were subsequently screened to confirm eligibility to participate in the study and were interviewed if their eligibility was confirmed. After completing the interview, each seed was given three numbered coupons to recruit three of her co-ethnics; three coupons were also given to each subsequent participant to ensure continuing recruitment. The recruiters received additional compensation of 150 RUR (USD 5 per each of the three recruits) after those whom they recruited came to the project office and were approved for an interview. Data collection in Nizhny Novgorod occurred in January–June 2014 and in Kazan between June 2014 and September 2016. The project was approved by Arizona State University's Institutional Review Board.

Data Collection Procedures

Upon providing consent, each respondent was interviewed by a female interviewer of matching ethnicity in the language of respondent's choice (Kyrgyz, Tajik, Uzbek, or Russian). The survey interviews lasted 60-90 minutes and were administered through CAPI using tablet PCs. The survey interview focused on respondent's demographic, socioeconomic, and migration characteristics; personal networks; physical and sexual health-related behaviors.

Each participant was asked to provide first names (real or pseudonyms used for differentiation of alters during the interview) of up to five individuals with whom she has close relationships (excluding their parents, spouse, and children). Seven percent of egos reported three alters, 3.3% of egos reported four alters, and 89.8% of egos reported five alters. If a participant was recruited into the study by one of her network members, she also identified her recruiter in the list of network members (recruiters constituted only 44 out of 3035 alters). Attribute and relationship data on these alters were removed from analyses to ensure that ego and alter only appear in the data once and therefore the data are more in line with assumptions of multi-level modeling (Snijders et al, 1995), but the alters were taken into account when calculating ego's network size and density. After providing the names of close individuals, women answered a series of questions about each of the alters and their relationship with them. Finally, to measure personal network density (e.g., Lubbers, et al., 2010), participants were asked to report on the likelihood that alters interacted with one another without ego. Tie likelihood was recoded as 1 if participants responded that alters were “very” and “rather likely” to interact without ego present, tie likelihood was coded as 0 if ego responded that the tie was “not likely”, “definitely unlikely”, and “not sure”.

Measures

Ego attributes—Participants reported their ethnic background (Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Uzbek), age in years, level of education (coded 0 = *secondary school or below*, 1 = *above secondary school*), legal status (0 = *no residency permit*, 1 = *Russian citizen or legal resident*), employment status (0 = *unemployed*, 1 = *employed*), income relative to needs (1 = *sufficient to live and save*, 0 = *not sufficient to live and save*), whether they had a permanent partner, and number of years they have lived in the city (Nizhny Novgorod or Kazan).

¹The RUR-USD exchange rate changed considerably during the fieldwork and the participant compensation was adjusted accordingly.

Alter attributes—For each alter, women reported on alter's gender, type of relationship (sibling, relative, friend, and other), age, education level, same ethnic background (coded as 1 if alter was of the same background as ego, otherwise 0), regularized legal status (1 = *Russian citizen or legal resident*, 0 = *no residency permit*), and whether alter resided in the same Russian city (1 = *local tie*, 0 = *not local tie*), or a different country (1 = *transnational tie*, 0 = *not transnational tie*).

Tie attributes—To assess frequency and modes of contact for each of personal ties, egos were asked information on (1) the number of days they met in person in the last month and (2) frequency of phone conversations (0 = *almost never*, 1 = *1-3 times per month*, 2 = *once per week*, 3 = *2-3 times per week*, and 4 = *every day*).

Support exchange in personal ties—To assess social support exchanges, for each of their alters the participants were asked two questions: (1) In the last 12 months, has this [alter] helped you by <...>?, and (2) In the last 12 months, have you helped this [alter] by <...>? Each of these questions focused on the following types of support (a) lending an approximate equivalent of 100 USD without interest and (b) providing emotional support. The survey used a binary response scale to answer each of these questions. From the responses to the questions on two-directional support exchanges of each kind (alter → ego, ego → alter), we created three separate binary variables: (1) *reciprocal support* (coded as 1, when alter → ego = 1 and ego → alter = 1), (2) *provided support* (coded as 1, when alter → ego = 0 and ego → alter = 1), and (3) *received support* (coded as 1, when alter → ego = 1 and ego → alter = 0). From these variables, we created a nominal variable for financial support and another one for emotional support, with the following categories: reciprocal support = 3, provided support = 2, received support = 1, and no support = 0.

Network characteristics—We calculated network size by summing the number of alters with whom participants reported to have close relationships and network density by calculating a proportion of the possible ties in a personal network that were actually present.

Data Analysis

We start with descriptive analyses and then use multi-level multinomial regression models. We examine ego, alter, and network attributes as predictors of three types of financial support (reciprocal, provided, and received) and three types of emotional support (reciprocal, provided, and received). These multivariate analyses were performed using GLMM command in STATA 13.1 (StataCorp, 2013). Because we examine multi-level predictors of support exchanges, we did not utilize RDSAT weights that account for differences in the recruitment as a function of individual's network homophily and size at the level of an individual (e.g., Rudolph et al., 2011) and not alters who are nested in egos as in the present data.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for socio-demographic characteristics of our sample as well as proportion of ties providing emotional and financial support. The patterns of support exchanges generally conform to findings of past research on the diversity of support provided through personal ties, in which emotional support was shown to be more common and more likely to be mutual (Wellman & Wortley, 1990; Wellman, 1992, 2007).

Table 2 presents the relative frequency of alter characteristics among supportive ties with regards to financial and emotional help. Consistent with our expectations regarding greater contributions of strong ties to provision of emotional support (e.g., House, 1987), the highest proportion of support (both financial and emotional) came from other females, those who are legal residents and citizens, and those who reside in the same Russian city as the ego. Considering contributions of transnational ties to support provision, we observed that over a quarter of mutual emotional supportive exchanges occur within transnational ties.

To provide insight into variability in resource distribution that was present in migrant women's personal ties as a function of the target women's characteristics, we examined group mean differences in the proportion of resourceful ties by the target's woman's (a) education level, (b) legal status, and (c) binary-coded income to needs ratio using a series of t-tests (Table 3). We used proportion of ties who had post-secondary education level, same ethnicity, regularized legal status, local and transnational ties as proxies for resourcefulness level. We found that women with post-secondary education had a significantly higher proportions of alters with postsecondary education and regularized legal status and that they did not differ with regards proportion of alters of the same ethnic background, local, and transnational alters. Using another series of t-tests, we found that women with regularized legal status in the RF had a significantly higher proportions of alters with postsecondary education, those of same ethnic background, and those with regularized legal status in the RF. Women without regularized legal status in the RF had a marginally significant higher proportions of transnational alters. Another series of t-tests showed that women who reported that they have sufficient income for their needs had a marginally higher proportion of alters in the same Russian city and marginally lower proportion of transnational alters. No differences were found for proportions of alters with post-secondary education, same ethnicity, and regularized legal status with regard to their sufficient income-to-needs status.

Next, we examined whether variability in resource distribution that was present in migrant women's personal ties was associated with the target women's ethnicity (Table 4). These analyses were conducted using a series of one-way ANOVAs to compare the differences in the resourcefulness levels across the three ethnic groups. For each model, we examined whether the data complied with homogeneity of variance assumption using Levene statistic, and in cases when this test indicated a significant departure from homogeneity of variance, we used Welch's robust test of equality of means and Games-Howell post hoc comparisons. These analyses revealed that the proportion of alters with postsecondary education was significantly higher for Uzbek women than Kyrgyz and Tajik. Next, the share of co-ethnic alters was significantly higher for Kyrgyz women than for Tajik and Uzbek. There was a

also significant difference in the proportion of alters with legal status with Kyrgyz women reporting to have a significantly higher proportion alters with regularized legal status compared to their Tajik and Uzbek counterparts. We found that Uzbek women had a significantly higher share of network members who resided in the same Russian city compared to Kyrgyz and Tajik women. Finally, we found significant ethnic group differences in the proportion of transnational alters by ethnicity indicating that the proportion of transnational alters was the highest for Tajik followed by Kyrgyz and Uzbek women.

Finally, we conducted bivariate correlational analyses to examine the associations among the number of years in the Russian city and the proportion of ties with proxies for resources. The number of years that the ego resided in the Russian city was positively associated with the proportion of alters who have postsecondary education ($r = .13, p = .002$), proportion of alters who were legal residents or citizens in the RF ($r = .18, p = .00$), and negatively correlated with the proportion of transnational alters ($r = -.11, p = .008$). The length of residence in the Russian city was unrelated to the proportion of alters of the same-ethnic background ($r = .06, p = .14$).

Multivariate Analyses

To test our hypotheses about the determinants of financial and emotional support provision net of other factors, we employed multi-level multinomial regression (Snijders et al., 1995; Snijders & Bosker, 2011). We used the multi-level approach because of the two-level structure of our data: alter and tie characteristics (compositional and relational properties, respectively) are level 1 and ego characteristics and network properties are level 2. Because the outcome is a nominal categorical variable with the following levels: reciprocal support provision = 3, ego provided = 2, ego received = 1, and no support = 0, we used random intercept multinomial models that also accommodated the nested data structure.

Our main analyses focused on predictors of financial (Table 5) and emotional (Table 6) support exchanges in migrant women's personal networks. As anticipated (H1.A), network members with regularized legal status, as a proxy for resource access, were more likely to engage in reciprocated as well as asymmetrical financial support provision with egos. Surprisingly, alters' post-secondary educational levels were not associated with financial support exchanges (H1.A). Considering ego's characteristics that represented proxies for resources as predictors of providing asymmetrical financial support, as expected, older women were more likely to provide it (H1.B), whereas, contrary to our hypothesis on the role of resources (H1.C), being employed and having a regularized legal status was negatively related with likelihood of providing support to personal network members.

In line with the functional specificity and resource models, we documented that financial support exchanges were more likely to asymmetrically occur with male alters such that women were more likely to receive financial support from their network members who were males (H2). As anticipated, emotional support exchanges were more likely to reciprocally and asymmetrically occur with female alters (H3). Next, we considered the role of closeness of a relationship with an alter as a predictor of support exchanges (H4) and documented that having siblings as network members was positively associated with all three directions of

financial support exchanges compared to acquaintances. Furthermore, in line with H4, we found that women were more likely to engage in reciprocal financial exchanges with their friends than acquaintances. Having siblings, relatives, and friends among network members was also positively related to reciprocal emotional support exchanges as well as egos receiving emotional support. It is noteworthy that having network members who were in close relationships was not related to asymmetrical emotional support provision from ego to those alters. Next, consistent with main H5, we found that having co-ethnic alters was positively related to reciprocal emotional support provision (H5). Considering the tie mobilization hypothesis (H6), as expected, we found that a greater frequency of phone conversation was positively associated with reciprocal and asymmetric financial and emotional support provision. Moreover, more frequent in-person meetings were also positively associated with engaging in reciprocal financial support and ego receiving financial support from their alters (H6). As anticipated based on the previously documented patterns of financial remittances, migrant women were more likely to provide financial support to their transnational ties (H7.A). We did not find support that egos were less likely to receive financial support from their transnational ties (H7.B). As expected, migrant women were increasingly likely to reciprocally exchange emotional support with their transnational alters (H8). Finally, consistent with the emerging body of evidence suggesting that structural features of networks were less critical for support provision as compared to their compositional characteristics (e.g., Wellman, 2007), our analysis did not document that network size and density were related to financial and emotional support exchanges in migrant women's networks.

Finally, both the financial and emotional support models point to some significant variations in the effects of two control variables – city of residence and ethnic background. For example, we documented that Tajiks, as compared to Uzbeks, were less likely to engage in all three types of financial support and reciprocated emotional support. Additionally, women who resided in Kazan (compared to Nizhny Novgorod) were more likely to engage in reciprocated financial support with their alters. Whereas these results do not yield a coherent and readily interpretable pattern, they call for further investigation of the role of both migrants' ethno-cultural background and the specifics of receiving settings.

Discussion

The present study contributed to the growing research on personal networks in migration and transnational processes by documenting the role of close personal ties as conduits of support exchanges for Central Asian migrant women in Russia. Focusing on personal ties allowed us to shed light on the role that the web of personal connections beyond the immediate family plays in shaping support exchanges that are vital parts of immigrants' everyday lives. As such, this work extends existing migration scholarship, which has largely focused on the significance of weak ties as facilitating access to resources and integration processes (Gold, 2005; Portes & Böröcz, 1989). Two contributions of our study are to be emphasized.

Our first major contribution to migration scholarship consists in investigating the characteristics of close ties as predictors of two complementary and crucial types of support – financial and emotional. Overall, consistent with past research showing gendered nature of

support provision (Gold, 2005; Menjívar 2000; Thoits, 1995), we observed that migrant women were more likely to engage in mutual as well as asymmetrical provision of emotional assistance, but not of financial exchanges. However, for each of the two types of support, our results also indicated that the support exchanges between Central Asian migrant women and their personal networks operate in line with other documented patterns of support exchanges in general and in the context of migration, in particular. Specifically, supporting the functional specificity hypothesis (Cutrona & Russel, 1990), we found that financial and emotional support was increasingly likely to be exchanged with alters who had close relationships with ego (i.e., friends and siblings vs. acquaintances). Moreover, the finding that mutual emotional support was more likely to be exchanged with co-ethnic network members seems to conform to the notion that similarity of background and experience may facilitate empathy and encouragement (Suitor et al., 1995). Our findings also highlighted the important role that frequent phone and in-person communication plays in how migrant women develop and mobilize their personal ties to obtain and provide support (e.g., Menjívar, 2000).

The second major contribution of this study involves examining diverse directions of support exchanges including reciprocated support as well as asymmetrical support provision to and receipt from the network members. Whereas past research has focused on the social network constituents of reciprocated support (e.g., Plickert, Cote, & Wellman, 2007) or on receiving support from personal network members (Herz, 2015), no studies have provided a comprehensive test of varied directions of support exchanges. Examining such support imbalances and their predictors is imperative for providing an accurate depiction of immigrants' experiences because, due to resource scarcity, immigrant populations, not unlike many nonimmigrants living in conditions of poverty, may be unable to engage in reciprocated support exchanges. Moreover, increased expectations of support from under-resourced community members have been linked to rising tension, conflict, and even social tie termination (Belle, 1983; Menjívar, 2000). Although our cross-sectional data do not permit examination of tie maintenance and termination as a function of resources, they did enable us to examine predictors of differential directions of support flows in the immigrant population under study.

Because resource availability and their distribution in social networks shape the social support processes (Lin, Dean, & Ensel, 1986) and is potentially consequential to asymmetries in support exchanges, we considered whether resource clustering (i.e., highly-resourced individuals affiliate with those who have similarly high levels of resources, and under-resourced individuals – with those with lower levels of resources) was occurring in our sample of migrant women, as it would be suggested by cumulative advantage mechanism (DiMaggio & Garip, 2012). Accordingly, our bivariate analyses indicated support for such clustering whereby migrant women with post-secondary education and regularized legal status were more likely to associate with those who had the same education level and legal status. However, when we examined predictors of diversified patterns of financial and emotional support exchanges in multivariate models, our results, surprisingly, did not support the expectation that such markers of greater resources as education level, sufficient income-to-needs, and regularized legal status increased the likelihood that migrant women would unidirectionally provide financial support to their network members. In fact,

the opposite was true: employed women and those with legal status were less likely to share financial support with their alters pointing to a possibility that despite their greater access to resources, they might be overburdened with requests for help and therefore less likely to provide monetary assistance. Alternatively, due to the clustering effect, it is possible that individuals in their networks need less help than individuals in the networks of less resourceful women. We found that women with regularized legal status were less likely to receive unilateral financial assistance from their networks. These results suggest certain imbalances in terms of consequences of regularized legal status: egos with regularized legal status were less likely to provide and receive support from their network members. On the other hand, all women, regardless of their own legal status, were more likely to reciprocally exchange financial and emotional support with their alters who had regularized legal status, possibly anticipating a subsequent reciprocation of assistance from these alters as their regularized status implied better access to resources.

In addition to legal status, gender and age emerged as predictor of support imbalances. Network composition with respect to gender appears to be related to imbalance in support type and direction – in line with past research (Gold, 2005; Thoits, 1995), having female network members is positively related with all types of emotional support exchanges, whereas male network members were more likely to provide financial support to the women, a finding that can be linked to gender ideologies that may increase women's vulnerability to sexual and other forms of abuse (see Menjívar 2000). Next, ego's age was also associated with support imbalances with respect to mutual support, providing and receiving support. Specifically, we found that older egos were more likely to provide financial support to their personal network members whereas younger egos were more likely to receive emotional support from their personal network members. Older alters were increasingly likely to provide financial and emotional support.

The most striking pattern of support imbalances emerged when we considered transnational ties. Our finding that migrant women were more likely to send financial support to their personal network members who resided in another country is consistent with financial remittance pattern (Gold, 2005). Interestingly, and also in line with a growing body of evidence (Boccagni, 2015; Herz, 2015), we found that emotional support is likely to be exchanged with alters across national borders, especially as phone and online communication becomes increasingly affordable. These findings thus provide a more nuanced picture of personal ties as conduits for informal support in migrant communities, which is simultaneously shaped by resource access and scarcity, engaging with co-ethnic and transnational ties.

Finally, our analysis of multi-level determinants of support provision showed that compositional and relational properties of personal networks had a stronger predictive power for support provision compared to structural properties, such as network size or density. This contradicts findings from some studies on personal networks of both non-immigrant (e.g., Haynes & Hurlbert, 1992; Wellman & Wortley, 1990), and immigrant (see Author X, *this issue*) populations but it is in line with evidence from a relatively limited role of structural constituents of social support in other non-migrant (Walker et al., 1993; Wellman, 2007) and immigrant (Herz, 2015) communities. Given these discrepancies, future research should

examine individual, network-specific, and broader receiving context factors that could elucidate the conditions under which the structural features are relevant for support exchange processes.

Whereas our focus has been on the role of close personal ties in support exchanges, we acknowledge that networks play important roles in migratory processes, but also sustaining inequalities, constraining opportunities, and even generating conflict and strain (Gold, 2005; Menjívar, 2000). Nonetheless, examining how the composition of networks among Central Asian migrant women in Russia is related to support exchanges sheds important light on migration dynamics and, consequently, inform our understanding of the multi-faceted place of networks in the processes of migrant incorporation. Some limitations of our study should be noted. For example, our data are limited to women and do not allow us to draw gender comparisons. The sample comes from only two Russian urban sites. We only focus on cross-sectional associations between personal networks and social support, whereas future research will be wise to consider these dynamics longitudinally (Lubbers, Molina, Lerner, Brandes, Avila, & McCarty, 2010; Wellman, Wong, Tindall, & Nazer, 1997). These limitations notwithstanding, our findings offer guidance for future work focused on social support exchange among migrants in diverse contexts, which are consequential for their integration outcomes.

In summary, by contrasting financial vs. emotional realms of social support and distinguished three types of directionality within each of these two dimensions our study identified several individual and compositional aspects of ties that shape support exchanges. Our findings contribute to the literature on immigrant women social networks by disentangling the beneficial role transnational ties for reciprocated emotional support exchanges. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to examine informal support processes among migrants in Russia, and as such it offers guidance to further research on a critical dimension of migrants' incorporation in that vast and understudied receiving context.

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Highlights

- We examined close personal networks as sources of support in migrant communities
- 607 migrant women—Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Uzbek—were surveyed in Russia
- Ties to siblings, friends, and greater resources predicted financial and emotional support
- Financial help was provided to transnational alters
- Mutual exchanges of emotional support occurred with alters from other countries

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Ego Attributes				
Age	28.86	6.99	17.91	42.51
Post-sec. education	0.50			
Income/Needs	0.23			
Employment	0.60			
Permanent Partner	0.59			
Years in Kazan/NN	3.62	4.43	0.00	35.00
Regularized legal status	0.30			
Kyrgyz	0.32			
Tajik	0.32			
Uzbek	0.36			
Alter Attributes				
Female	0.86			
Sibling	0.22			
Relative	0.13			
Friend	0.33			
Acquaintance	0.29			
Age	29.34	8.84	16.00	80.00
Same Ethnicity	0.31			
Post-sec. education	0.25			
Legal status	0.61			
Tie Attributes				
Days Met in Last 4 weeks	9.73	12.29	0.00	28.00
Phone Contact	1.97		0.00	4.00
Financial support: Reciprocated	0.07			
Financial support: Provided	0.04			
Financial support: Received	0.06			
Emotional Support: Reciprocated	0.31			
Emotional support: Provided	0.04			
Emotional support: Received	0.05			
Local Tie	0.67			
Transnational Tie	0.26			
Network Attributes				
Size	4.83	0.53	3.00	5.00
Density	0.64	0.35	0.00	1.00

Notes: NN = Nizhny Novgorod

Table 2
Relative frequency (%) of alter characteristics among supportive ties ($n = 2,776$)

	Financial				Emotional			
	Reciprocated	Provided	Received		Reciprocated	Provided	Received	
Female	83.50	83.50	69.93		88.88	85.20	84.72	
Sibling	28.16	28.16	32.03		28.54	17.39	21.53	
Relative	9.22	17.48	14.38		13.10	17.39	19.44	
Friend	39.32	33.98	21.57		38.36	40.00	32.64	
Acquaintance	16.11	19.61	26.32		19.06	25.22	25.69	
Post-sec. education	32.63	37.36	32.82		30.73	32.38	34.15	
Same Ethnicity	47.09	36.89	35.95		43.63	30.43	36.81	
Reg. legal status	84.44	75.00	69.92		66.76	71.57	62.18	
Local Tie	83.01	72.55	67.11		68.76	73.04	57.04	
Transnational Tie	13.11	24.27	24.18		26.43	21.74	34.97	

Table 3
Mean Differences in Resource Distributions in Personal Networks by Education, Legal Status, and Income-to-Needs Ratio (ANOVA)

No Postsecondary Education <i>M (SD)</i>	Postsecondary Education <i>M (SD)</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Proportion of alters with Postsecondary Education				
.07 (.17)	.43 (.40)	590	-14.36	.00
Proportion of Co-Ethnic Alters				
.29 (.41)	.33 (.38)	608	-1.07	.29
Proportion of Alters with Regularized Legal Status				
.56 (.39)	.68 (.36)	559	-3.54	.00
Proportion of Local Alters				
.65 (.40)	.68 (.36)	600	-1.184	.24
Proportion of Transnational Alters				
.28 (.35)	.25 (.33)	604	1.318	.19
No Regularized Legal Status	Regularized Legal Status	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Proportion of Alters with Postsecondary Education				
.21 (.34)	.36 (.39)	588	-4.93	.000
Proportion of Co-Ethnic Alters				
.27 (.39)	.40 (.39)	603	-3.77	.000
Proportion of Alters with Regularized Legal Status				
.56 (.39)	.76 (.31)	559	-5.95	.000
Proportion of Local Alters				
.66 (.40)	.68 (.32)	599	-.675	.500
Proportion of Transnational Alters				
.28 (.36)	.22 (.28)	603	1.89	.059
Insufficient Income to Needs Ratio	Sufficient Income to Needs Ratio	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Proportion of Alters with Postsecondary Education				
.26 (.36)	.23 (.35)	590	.833	.405
Proportion of Co-Ethnic Alters				
.30 (.39)	.33 (.39)	605	-.751	.453
Proportion of Alters with Regularized Legal Status				
.62 (.38)	.61 (.39)	560	.296	.767
Proportion of Local Alters				
.65 (.38)	.72 (.38)	609	-1.840	.066
Proportion of Transnational Alters				
.28 (.33)	.21 (.34)	605	1.920	.055

Table 4
Ethnic Group Differences in Resource Distributions in Personal Networks (ANOVA)

Kyrgyz <i>M (SD)</i>	Tajik <i>M (SD)</i>	Uzbek <i>M (SD)</i>	<i>df</i>	Welch statistic	<i>p</i>
Proportion of alters with Postsecondary Education					
.22 (.33) <i>a</i>	.22 (.34) <i>a</i>	.32(.39) <i>b</i>	(2, 392.24)	4.71	.009
Proportion of Co-Ethnic Alters					
.78 (.30) <i>a</i>	.08 (.16) <i>b</i>	.09 (.18) <i>b</i>	(2, 382.47)	4.78	.000
Proportion of Alters with legal status					
.69 (.37) <i>a</i>	.59 (.37) <i>b</i>	.59 (.37) <i>b</i>	(2, 372.60)	4.07	.020
Proportion of Local Alters					
.64 (.36) <i>a</i>	.61 (.39) <i>b</i>	.74 (.37) <i>c</i>	(2, 396.26)	6.65	.003
Proportion of Transnational Alters					
.28 (.33) <i>a</i>	.32 (.35) <i>b</i>	.19 (.32) <i>c</i>	(2, 397.83)	8.16	.000

Notes: Post-hoc comparison of mean levels was done with Games-Howell test. Means with different subscripts are significantly different from each other

Table 5
Results of multi-level multinomial regression analysis predicting financial support

	A. Reciprocal			B. Ego Provided			C. Ego Received		
	Coef.	S.E.	p	Coef.	S.E.	p	Coef.	S.E.	p
Ego Attributes									
Age (years)	0.03	0.03		0.08	0.03	*	0.02	0.03	
Post-sec. education	0.01	0.32		-0.25	0.40		0.21	0.35	
Income/Needs	0.63	0.33		0.74	0.41		0.16	0.37	
Employment	-0.34	0.32		-0.96	0.39	**	-0.52	0.34	
Permanent partner	-0.15	0.33		0.13	0.42		-0.63	0.35	
Years in Kazan/NN	0.02	0.04		-0.03	0.05		0.02	0.04	
Regular legal status	-0.73	0.40		-1.25	0.53	**	-1.16	0.43	***
Kyrgyz	0.37	0.46		-0.32	0.64		-0.37	0.52	
Tajik	-0.85	0.40	*	-1.04	0.47	*	-0.84	0.41	*
Kazan	1.28	0.43	***	1.34	0.51	***	1.82	0.45	***
Alter and Tie Attributes									
Female	-0.51	0.33		-0.44	0.44		-1.14	0.32	***
Sibling	1.39	0.37	***	1.21	0.52	*	0.97	0.41	**
Relative	0.56	0.43		0.95	0.56		0.65	0.44	
Friend	0.63	0.31	*	0.60	0.45		-0.13	0.38	
Age	0.02	0.02		0.02	0.02		0.04	0.02	*
Post-sec. education	-0.19	0.33		0.12	0.42		-0.40	0.34	
Same ethnicity	0.34	0.37		0.12	0.56		0.51	0.42	
Reg. legal status	1.37	0.37	***	1.39	0.46	***	0.78	0.39	*
Days met	0.02	0.01	*	0.01	0.02		0.03	0.01	*
Phone contact	0.46	0.10	***	0.58	0.14	***	0.24	0.11	*
Local Tie	1.16	0.60		2.17	1.13		-0.17	0.57	
Transnational Tie	0.70	0.69		2.54	1.18	*	0.15	0.63	
Network Attributes									
Network size	0.01	0.45		0.07	0.48		0.40	0.51	

	A. Reciprocal		B. Ego Provided			C. Ego Received		
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	p	Coef.	S.E.	p
Network density	0.38	0.48	0.34	0.60		0.90	0.54	
Constant	-8.66	2.47	-11.65	2.94	***	-8.28	2.78	***
Level 2 Variance	2.81	0.62			***			
Log likelihood	-872.91							

Notes:

- * p < .05;
- ** p < .01;
- *** p < .001 (all two-tailed).

Reference Category: financial support = 0. Relative excludes spouse, parents, and children. NN = Nizhny Novgorod. Regularized legal status: Russian citizen, permanent or temporary legal resident.

Table 6
Results of multi-level multinomial regression analysis predicting emotional support

	A. Reciprocal			B. Ego Provided			C. Ego Received		
	Coef.	S.E.	p	Coef.	S.E.	p	Coef.	S.E.	p
Ego Attributes									
Age (years)	-0.02	0.02		-0.01	0.03		-0.08	0.03	***
Post-sec. education	0.67	0.29	*	0.78	0.37	*	0.51	0.38	
Income/Needs	-0.96	0.33	***	-0.25	0.40		-0.50	0.41	
Employment	-0.03	0.30		-0.31	0.38		0.44	0.38	
Permanent partner	-0.66	0.30	*	-1.05	0.38	***	-0.95	0.37	**
Years in Kazan/NN	0.05	0.03		0.10	0.04	**	-0.03	0.05	
Regular legal status	-0.67	0.39		-1.23	0.48	**	-0.16	0.47	
Kyrgyz	0.02	0.42		0.51	0.58		0.43	0.58	
Tajik	-0.70	0.34	*	0.11	0.43		-0.10	0.44	
Kazan	-0.57	0.38		0.46	0.48		0.27	0.49	
Alter and Tie Attributes									
Female	1.12	0.27	***	1.14	0.46	**	0.85	0.41	*
Sibling	1.57	0.30	***	0.82	0.48		1.73	0.47	***
Relative	1.20	0.31	***	0.70	0.46		1.35	0.45	***
Friend	0.86	0.24	***	0.67	0.36		0.82	0.39	*
Age	0.02	0.01		0.01	0.02		0.06	0.02	***
Post-sec. education	0.19	0.25		-0.29	0.37		0.09	0.35	
Same ethnicity	0.84	0.31	***	0.43	0.46		0.74	0.48	
Reg. legal status	0.70	0.26	***	0.85	0.39	*	0.62	0.42	
Days met	0.00	0.01		-0.03	0.01		-0.02	0.02	
Phone contact	0.86	0.09	***	0.74	0.13	***	0.54	0.12	***
Local Tie	0.79	0.46		0.56	0.64		0.20	0.60	
Transnational Tie	1.02	0.49	*	0.72	0.72		0.46	0.66	
Network Attributes									
Network size	-0.25	0.32		-0.17	0.43		0.49	0.65	

	A. Reciprocal		B. Ego Provided		C. Ego Received	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Network density	0.26	0.43	0.81	0.56	-0.37	0.55
Constant	-4.04	1.80	-6.47	2.48	-7.81	3.46
Level 2 Variance	4.62	0.77				
Log likelihood	-1328.2					

Notes:

- # p < .10;
- * p < .05;
- ** p < .01;
- *** p < .001 (all two-tailed).

Reference Category: emotional support = 0. Relative excludes spouse, parents, and children. NN = Nizhny Novgorod. Regularized legal status: Russian citizen, permanent or temporary legal resident).