

Introduction

The present research is devoted to the problems of internal labor migrants. We believe that firstly in the modern history of Uzbekistan this problem was identified in the general evaluation report submitted under this project. Indeed the problem of internal labor migrants was not important or visible to other researchers or the state, but the evidences of the last few years make the problem urgent and very problematic.

As we were illustrating in the general evaluation report during the last few years Uzbekistan has faced with severe economic problems first of all associated with irresponsible policy of the State and absence of any democratic reforms. According to many if not all international and local thinkers and observers of Uzbek policy, the economy moves toward criminally controlled economy, with no competition possible and strong criminal links with responsible state officials. In the situation of instability and total corruption the economy targeted to leave rather than being stronger. Businesses are not targeted to produce or multiply working places, businesses are corrupted with the state and doing the most destructing mission of repatriation of capital with very little intention for the change.

Indeed the state has elaborated or better to say diminished any opposition. Those few opposing are under the pressure, unfavorable and work with the risk to their lives and well being. People of Uzbekistan have faced with hopelessness and lack of any trust to authority which proved to be unable for the changes or care for people.

All above said facts have full illustration in the general evaluation report with maximum material possible for referencing. Truly, this is the real background for the process going in Uzbekistan where people do not know what future they might face with in the following years whereas poverty and unemployment having very threatening face.

Surely the problem we researching at the first instance applies to the rural population of Uzbekistan whereas 60 percent of Uzbekistan population lives. In this situation and in circumstances of heavy dependence on governmental support rural population is the most vulnerable group having no other option but to migrate both domestically or internationally. We

have to say that governmental policy in agriculture practically confiscating all the harvest for the symbolic price and thus characterizing itself with feudal state have made those people hostages of the whole system. Indeed those people are hostages because the same legal restraints to finding the better place to live even within the borders of the native state

Statement of the problem

Today people working in low paid and low qualified works, with minimum rights and on the temporary basis are defined as mardikors. However, historically mardikors were respectful people, since their services were valuable and they did the heaviest works. Those who were inviting mardikors were supposed to give the nourishing food. Previously mardicors were provided with tea and honey while they work although honey was not so cheap. The society was respecting those people and in consideration for the services do their best for their well being. These days we may observe how the situation in the economy and increasing levels of poverty has changed our views and diminished very many things including mardikors. Unfortunately, we observe the situation when oversupply of mardikors makes the situation really different devaluating the notion of “mardikor” as more and more people earn their living through this way. Furthermore, the term of mardicors is widened, now it includes women and minors. In accordance with the most basic law of economics – the law of Supply and Demand, oversupply of mardicors changed the price paid to their services and the attitude of people hiring them.

It must be emphasized most of the very basic rights of these people are breached and they have no social security or guarantees for the future. They have to face violence from employers and law enforcement. The life length of these people is shortening, however there is no statistical data available on that as the state does not recognize “mardicors” phenomenon.

Aims and Objectives

This is rather descriptive piece of work. We are not trying to identify the solution of the existing problems of mardicors but to show that problems indeed exist and through that to attract attention of the both local and international society to this phenomenon.

In the present research we are attempting to examine some important factors related to mardicors. Some analysis will be made towards identifying the causes of the increasing the numbers of mardicors and widening the term of mardicor itself.

We shall try to give as much as possible symbolic life situations and determine what is the past and the present of those who despite any problems and daily risk for health and life have decided to leave for big cities and tried to change their lives to the better. In fact, this understanding is not real true, and not all people of the cities have proper income suitable for minimum life expectation, however chances are better and obviously the life have all signs of prosperity and the hope for the better.

Methodology

The technique we used while implementation of the research was random interviews in the different parts of the city. Our main targets were low qualified and low paid people coming from the rural areas or small and middle size towns, having no papers to work permanently.

During the research we have paid maximum attention to the cases of violence both from state and from non state actors. Our main purpose was to reveal the roots of violence and what are the main risks for mardikors in the cities where do they work and trying to settle.

Moreover we were interested in what household they occupy and how they manage to survive themselves and be bread winners to their families. With this aim we estimated the minimum living standard and figure out how to afford the live in the city for such miserable incomes. Often we could not find an answer.

During the research we faced with horrible notion of women mardikors. We have worked out special questionnaires and policy approaching their family issues. We were interested how the police is tough and their attitude. Do they see any danger and risk for the security of the city from women working in the capital?

Surely we were interested in every sphere of mardikors live and were trying to find the most obvious stories from themselves or direct witnesses to those situations.

During the process of interviewing and talking to people we identified some new sides to the problem and were introducing necessary changes to the research. One of such “surprises” for the researchers was division of the places (were mardikors are gathering on so called “labor exchanges”) between different groups, and how that self governed regulatory systems works. We

were interested in the role of police and what tools police apply to keep people under the control and at the same time what corrupted practices police officers might be able to apply.

In fact the most important part of the research was devoted to the relationships with the police and sheriffs monitoring the places mardikors live and work. We have got a lot of examples how the system works and what money are necessary to keep people in uniform blind to the presence of an individual working and living in the city. Surely, wrong doing practices of police are not rare, however at the same time we heard the stories of good police officers who understand the problem existing and passively help to mardikors. We did not insert that part to the present study, since those examples are rare and do not constitute the general picture of what is going on but could not amiss to note that good minority officers exist.

At the same time our research was very much educational for the people we have met and explained why we do that. We were telling about our organization and that despite the fact of limited capabilities people can always rely on our support or advice.

Finally we would like to say that this research disclosed deepest roots for intra society tensions and misunderstanding prevailing between the people of the same nationality and origin. The main outcome of our research is that society is in deep crises unable to form their claims and coordinate the dialogue with the authority which has very little attention to this problem.

Background of the Problem

Feudal state

As we determined in the introduction to the present case study, Uzbekistan has got very much common with the symbols of feudal state. According to the theory of feudalism people were allocated with the piece of land and were obliged to surrender some portion of their harvest to the principal. The same practice exists in Uzbekistan. People living in rural area are supposed to harvest the cotton every year and surrender for miserable price to the state, which has monopoly on export, resale and anything else with respect to the cotton. Simply said, the state heavily dependent on cotton confiscating and often does not pay a penny. In fact, people are working for nothing and poverty and level of incomes are lowest in the world with much fewer then a dollar per day.

Historically, Uzbekistan revolutionary changed its state system from feudal to socialism, avoiding necessary evolution – passing to pure capitalism first.

Development of Infrastructure

So-called progress and prosperity applies only to the big cities of Uzbekistan. The state has nothing to do with industrialization in rural areas, there are no incentives known to increase employment of people in rural areas and change the policy of purely agricultural state. Instead from year to year people have less understanding what is going on and why the freedom of entrepreneurial activity minimizing under irresponsible fiscal policy and corruption. Nowadays Uzbekistan gives very little chances to independent and low budget businesses. There is well known proverb in Uzbekistan saying: “*it is cheaper to do nothing*”.

Infrastructure in rural areas is very much underdeveloped. Considering that more than 60% of the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan lives in rural area one can conclude how much this is a problem. Worsening economic conditions cause regress in all other spheres of life. People living in rural area have almost no access to adequate education and health services.

Corruption and inadequate legislation suppress entrepreneurial spirit both in rural and urban areas, however, in rural places it is worsened by dramatic levels of poverty. It is well known that for any business activity entrepreneur must have certain amount of stature capital which is not possible due to poverty; available system of micro financing is not sufficient and yet underdeveloped. The credits available through microfinancing will be enough for buying one cow or two-three sheep, this could be hardly sufficient for one family survival, but definitely not further expansion of the business. Even if this will be considered as an option – it will lead back to the natural economy.

Certainly the natural economy itself could be an option for rural families, however, there are some more issues arising. Having a cow or garden in the backyard provides many families with a minimum for survival. Perhaps, by now reader is thinking that private farming could be much more convenient way of earning for living. Indeed, in some cases it is. However, the same corruption and unlimited repressive power of the governmental structures is a serious obstacle for farmers to do their business. (Example with rice) It should be also considered that the development is not equally spread in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Mardicors mostly come from the least developed areas of the country.

The necessity to turn to natural economy makes people leave their so much needed for society jobs. Therefore, in the rural areas there is huge scarcity of the qualified medical personnel, teachers and engineers. Reader can see that we came to the closed circle of the problems – evil's circle, where one created by another and to solve the second you have to eliminate the first.

In this situation many people from rural areas find that the only option to survive is migration to other states or at minimum to big cities of Uzbekistan whereas service industry still exists and there is some demand for low qualified and low paid work.

One of the very interesting findings of this research is that mardikors are not only people from the rural areas but also from more or less developed cities. Highly qualified teachers, engineers, medical personnel have to leave their underpaid job and look for other options.

The same kind of conclusions we have got from the randomly conducted interviews on the streets of Tashkent city. Every questioned individual working in the capital was saying about next to nothing opportunities to earn money in the home village. Every interviewed individual has confirmed our observations and knowledge that life in the city have much more risks for there security but at the same time gives more opportunities to have work and in most of the cases to send up to 30 dollars back to their families. Having analyzed our data polls and interviews we conducted with mardikors more or less successful of them are able to allocate about a dollar a day for the aims they have come to Tashkent.

These are the main characteristics we would like to point out and see what are those histories and life situations are.

The legal framework of the problem

As we were writing in the general evaluation report the problem of internal migration was imposed and institutionalized in the Soviet Era. At that times big cities were supposed to demonstrate the developed socialism and prosperity, whereas beautiful architecture and modern symbols of the big cities could be damaged with extensive inflow of people looking for the better life, and cause problems with full and guaranteed employment so widely marketed in the Soviet propaganda. At the same time the life in rural area was also quite tough with fewer chances for

self realization and well paid educated future. Indeed the soviet era was characterized with high level of concentration in the cities owing to the rural area.

The same understanding prevails in modern Uzbekistan with much lower life standards and much unbearable attitude of police. These two features make the situation very difficult to overcome on the background of unsolicited laws and regulations leaving no possibility to settle legally.

Thus according to the By-laws contradicting to the Constitution guaranteeing the freedom of movement, any individual born on the certain territory and thus settled and registered on some permanent place of residence is allowed to medical, security, education, real estate ownership rights, on the territory where he/she were born. No secret those laws were introduced or maintain it activity from the soviet era, to keep people on the ground and give no possibility to be legal and conduct the proper and rightful activity.

For example the same By-law limiting the rights of an individual to be employed on the certain territory without being temporary or permanently registered on the territory. Such registration can be obtained through possession of the real estate or in some other cases. However the purchased and sale of the real estate is prohibited to the people having not the registration in that territory. So, whatever an individual is doing he faces the same problem. No need to say that such laws were introduced to limit until certain extent the inflow of people form the places contributing the state monopolized economy with cheap cotton, other agricultural products and raw materials .

Thus the individual moved to the Tashkent city is supposed to receive “propiska” or registration in the capital. The body responsible for granting the rights to settle in the city is Tashkent city Major office. However the office of the Major is acting not to consider and grant such rights but to limit undesirable and spare number of people. I was informed during an interview with the officer of that committee, they have an oral order not to grant the status but in case of direct order from the government interested state agency or other exceptional circumstances. As we found out while implementation of the research those exceptional circumstances usually believed to be corrupted practices.

In this situation corruption becomes unbelievably widespread. People are ready to surrender anything to be legal and be legally employed for better salary. One of the interviewed Mr. Tahir

has said: “I was applying for the temporary registration in Tashkent city for the four times. In comparison to other people coming from the villagers I do really qualified and employer was really eager to employ me legally. That was good for me, since I could expect pension fund contributions, medical treatment and future for me and my family. I could freely walk on the streets without being scarred with arbitrary questionings, passport control raids by the police. Then he says that: “Proper documents could save much money going to bribe the sheriff of his district. All of that could be possible if I were able to pay 2000 USD as a bribe to the people in the commission under the Tashkent Major”.

These were the words of the individual who was not poor as other villagers and who was qualified and had normal employer ready to form legitimate labor contract. However the normal labor migrants who is called “mardikor” is different with less qualification and less opportunities to have such an employer ready for formal legitimate labor relationships and which is ready to support an individuals request for the temporary registration in Tashkent city.

Moreover Tahir has told us a story of his relative who came to the city and despite very modest savings has borrowed some 1000 USD to pay for the registration in the city. However the fact of having money does not guarantee the registration since his relative did pay requested amount but has not get the registration. When he started complaining and asking for his money back, the officer of the municipality has returned just a half and said that there were some expenses Tahir’s relative must to reimburse. It was obvious that the officer was lying.

Other such examples we heard from Mr. Arsen, 25 years old fellow who came to Tashkent from Almalyk town. His parents used to be engineers at the biggest mining enterprise in that city, and these days when social security and funds allocated by the state is not sufficient they have collected all their money and send their son to Tashkent. They knew that live in the city is easier but at the same time needing much money to manage the papers of their son. Nowadays Arsen is illegally working in the brigade installing air conditioning equipment. He did not manage his papers, even though his parents gave him some money, since the person who was responsible for negotiations and getting through the office has disappeared with the money. Arsen is saying that the man “consultant” he paid for the papers was known in the office and at the beginning their were easily opening the doors of respected officers, but as soon as the “consultant” got all money requested Arsen could not find him anymore. Afterwards Arsen was told that this is quite usual staff for the city and the fact of collusion of people in eh office and those middlemen.

Absolutely the same stories we know from our own experience when to the office of LAS came the young man of age 24 who was seeking for the remedy for paying the bribe for the registration without the actual result. He said us the story that once he was in the office on registration with the municipality he met a person who promised him to push through the municipality his application. But when the guy has paid for the services of that middleman, the man refused to give money back and complete the registration.

Obviously this situation becomes possible with indirect assistance of authorities to construe impassable rules and rigid regulations. Today very few people have access to the capital registration papers. Most of people feel themselves aliens in the capital of their country, forced to bribe and looking for any possible solutions or leave the place. In our opinion authorities known for establishment of police state, are governed with the only idea to criminalize the society. The society paralyzed with the threat to be arrested, or asked for the documents or threatened to death for harmless question of the documents and place they were born, cannot really influence or demand or request for rights. People who are threatened are much more easy stuff to govern and manageable in such a miserable life like it is in Uzbekistan.

While conducting the interviews with people employed in the different parts of the city and employed on the low qualified and low paid positions without legally formed labor relationships we have identified that about 95 percent of all of them have never applied to authorities for proper registration documents. As we were told they are very much aware of the rates requested or high requirements for registration to pass through. Usually they argument there passive attitude with no employer ready to burden some extra expenses associated with hiring the staff subject to extra taxes and the fact that they don't see many opportunities to overcome the obstacles stipulated on the way of legalization.

Thus, we see the majority who do not see the ways to improve the situation or seek for cooperation and dialog with authorities. The situation reminds the deadlock in no way comparable with negligence of villagers but their disbelieve to authority and willingness to help.

The other problem we were often told were labor contracts and the same work permitting issues. Almost every mardikor we were talking with was complaining that usually people hiring them do not pay them as much as it was agreed. Sometimes they don't even pay them at all. I was told the story of Khasan and his brother Khusan who were together working on the building of the big house. At the end of hard working three months period they we were paid almost nothing due to

the fact of claimed low quality and late deadlines for their and other people services. The company which hired Khasan and Khusan did not pay a penny. No legal remedies are possible since brothers did not have valid papers and labor contracts. In our opinion, when people are working for the meals and have no guarantees that at the end of the day their services will be paid, and at the same time having no freedom to sue their employer very much reminds us the slavery. Isn't it the case, when mardikor is not allowed to go to the police because there is no justice, there is no morality and first they would ask is for their documents and at the same time the place they came prevailing the feudal norms picking out their harvest next to nothing.

The other interesting problem we have identified is absolute misunderstanding of the process going on the lives of people we have interviewed. The most interesting and at the same time dangerous phenomenon is that people have no understanding what is right and what is wrong, and what kind of their rights the state has abused. Almost every interviewed person could not pronounce what of his/her rights or freedoms are violated by means of registration. No one was aware of what is wrong with such strict regulations, and no one of them was able to express what must be changed or what changes they want to see in the future.

For example, nearly no one we have interviewed did know the practices in other states of the world and what progress the mankind has achieved. All their observations and feelings were toward unfair requirements imposed by the law. For examples Otabek Yuldashev, has said that: "Even during the Soviet era the same requirements have been observed". He said that for the same reason his parents could not settle in the city and after graduation of the Irrigative Institute were returned to their home places. In his opinion the rights and freedoms in the Soviet era were much more liberal. Indeed, people living in much worse conditions then before, glorifying the past with much sympathy to the communist. In hundred percent other cases people were willing to come back and live in the past rather than understand or believe in some future progress. Surely, we are not in the position to judge them, but in our opinion this is the main achievement of the State, that people have lost confidence in ability to survive independently without decision making in Moscow.

Groups of illegal migrants working in the capital

While collecting the data for the research we have identified the thing we did not expect to see. There are few the most popular places in the capital whereas low qualified working migrants are available and have more chances to get more work or services to render. One of the most popular

places are farmer markets requires much labor force and associating a lot of an additional services. To make food shopping is very popular at such kind of places therefore a lot of works and services required. Often migrants are employed the wholesale departments of such markets, to loading or securing the goods. At the same time, some of them are assisting ordinary people to make bigger shopping and deliver their fruits and vegetables to the cars. Simply said, people working on the farmer's market have always an opportunity to get paid and apply his/her services.

However, as we were told by Komil Tashmatov the villager from Kashkadariya region of Uzbekistan, not the every one is allowed to work on that territory. He says that in order to be on that place you have to be favorable to police bribing those migrants regularly and what is more important to people representing the opinion of the majority and protecting the market from overflow of migrants. Komil has told the story that in order to be there and work on the market he was presented and invited by one of his good friends, who is supporting him. He says that there are thousands of other people ready to work and be on that place however the police in cooperation with the majority of old migrants do not allow others to be there.

At the same time, Komil is saying about the different markets in the capital and says that there is few the most popular among the migrants and which attracts very many people.

The same story we heard from the migrants having some special place to offer their illegal building and reconstruction services. They confirmed our understanding that not the every one is allowed to be the new person on the place and increase competition among the people came earlier. For example, Zokhid Ganiev of 17 years from Bukhara region, said that before occupied the pace on the labor exchange, he worked as an assistant to the senior mardikor. Zokhid worked in his brigade and was doing the most unpleasant and hard works next to nothing. He gave the major profits to the senior guy, and thus was trying to settle and got some support in his future independent searchers for the employer. Today Zokhid is senior himself and does not need any support. He said that other people from Bukhara region supporting him, and that he is not alone. However to the question: "Is he loyal to the newcomers coming to the labor exchange?" he says "No, I don't need extra competition and people bustling around".

Surely, often self regulatory becomes assault and battery. Mardikors have not the best chances to be employed regularly and daily, therefore in the view of limited demand for their services, extra supply make their weak position even weaker.

Moreover there are very many other less popular places where prices are lower. For example many migrants are saying that gatherings of illegal migrants “labor exchanges” in the suburbs are less popular. Especially with this idea we carried out about ten interviews on out of town wholesale market “Urikzor”. That place is known for the “first hand” prizes for construction materials such as: cement, sand, brick and other primary goods. Surely, there are always need for manual loaders or workers to be brought to the construction. Our investigation has proved that prices for mardikor services are lower significantly. For example: in the center of the city, the price for mardikor sevices per day is about 6 dollars all included (transportation to and from, lunch etc) but the out of town market the same services are about 2-3 dollars.

No need to say that most of them are exhausted and young people and with the only idea to earn and survive. Their clothes and complexions make believe that diseases and hard labor are killing them. One of them Matyakub from Horezm believed to be a good worker. He says that historically house builders from Horezm were better trained and accurate. Therefore his services are always requested. Matyakub has said the story of his recent past. He said that before coming to Tashkent he worked for a year in the neighboring Turkmenistan. He said that there are no well trained workers, and therefore demand for Uzbeks from bordering Horezm is high. However the house builders to the end of the building the house get rid off the Uzbek by applying to the police. The police come to the construction site and arrest Uzbeks for violating migration laws and absence of work permits and documents. Thus Matyakub has spent three months in the police detention waiting for Uzbek consulate to liberate him. At the same time Uzbek diplomats are busy with the same stories in hundred maybe thousand other cases. Matyakub says he will never be back to Turkmenistan, where are no respect to him and people doing their work. Matyakub seemed to be very disappointed for being unpaid for his work. At the same time he says his family and three children were waiting for money he would bring from Turkmenistan. These stories are not new from Uzbekistan, the same occurs in the neighboring parts with Kazakhstan. Today Matyakub prefers to earn lees money but in Uzbekistan, and in case of police detention to be able to settle the issue quickly.

The other interviewed person Otabek Mukhitdinov has told us the story that the life in the capital so complicated with often police raids that it’s almost possible to be in the capital alone without good connections in police or good friends who know you and may introduce to the sheriff of the district you live. He says that any official visit on the high level or national holiday starts with deportation of “unreliable” people without the registration in the capital. Otabek compares

himself with the criminal who is not allowed to visit public places or freely walk on the streets. He says that our presence is invisible since we go to work secretly and very early in the morning and then directly coming back to home often by taxi. We can not afford to walk on the streets because the capital is full of police stopping you on the each corner to check the documents and have some money from you. He says that police easily determines ourselves by our appearance color of skin burned under the sun and poor clothes we wear. Otabek is continuing that there are about twelve friends living in the small apartment, and should they need to buy something they do not risk to go outside of the apartment. Otabek is highly skeptical with respect to future in the capital and thinking to move further to Russia.

Having reviewed the questioners and all data we gathered for the period of research we have acknowledged that all interviewed mardikors are regularly paying some remuneration to police. This practices repeats regularly and supposes full immunity for well being at that certain area. Nevertheless daily hundreds of mardikors got arrested on the streets, being outside of their “native” districts or having no money to settle the problem. Those mardikors are gathered on the special camp organized in each district of the city.

Surely there is no organized crime controlling the district or business there is police comparable to the organized group of people and monitoring the territory giving them so much daily cash. In the absence of the any research, public opinion poll or whatever else, we can only guess how much people “illegally” working in the capital. We were told that police controlling the situation and that believed to be very profitable for the street police and their bosses. Police is controlling themselves, if necessary jailing if not bribing and protecting. Police becomes the only authority having the jurisdiction and responsibility for the situation on the streets and with the campaign on the passport control.

Having said that, we have concluded that despite the absence of some crime groups protecting their interest on the certain territory there are obvious discretionary and arbitrary state and law enforcement policies with respect to mardikors.

Social Security of mardikors

The very first about mardikors we heard form the witnesses of the misfortune happened on the summer villa of Uzbek businessmen who was building the house and has invited few mardikors. During the assembling of the roof one of the mardikors has fallen down and died. The

businessmen did not call for police or ambulance, but invited the relatives of the victim. He gave them the bag of flour, rice and some meat for the funeral and let them go. The relatives were not complaining or investigating what happened. This is one of the examples how the life and security of these people are respected. The state does not really care but having the monopoly to restrict, punish but never help or protect. The attitude of the relatives also very illustrative, they were threatened with the fact that the guy was doing some illegal works and was not paying the taxes, that he did not have a registration, and that police would not solve the problem but initiate investigation and punish anyone else but not the businessmen or the one who must be responsible.

Another example was told by unnamed mardikor who said practically every time he works on construction works some trouble happens with his colleagues. He says it was never a case that employer was paying any damages or care about the health of people working on him. He says that people hiring him (brigade chiefs) are very reluctant to understand other people pain and problems. He said: "We must remember that we are alone and no one will support or help when some bad things will happen". On the basis of what he said mardikors working for 12 hours a day on very physical and astonishing works, when the outside temperature reaches 45-50 degrees or in winter when the outside temperature can be minus 20, and that many of his colleagues have left the city with severe health problems and no money for qualified medical treatment. But at the same time each of them does not believe that something bad can happen with him personally, and hope that bad things will pass over.

Other problem very many people are saying about including Muzaffar Azizov from Kashkadar'ya region is works on police construction sites. Often those are the personal houses erected by the police bosses looking for the free labor force. He says that several times he was arrested on the labor exchange and instead of the going to the police department was dropped on the construction site to work for free. Muzaffar was working on that construction site twice and spend about two months with no chance to leave, since that was kind of tax payable to the police officers responsible for the security of the area where "labor exchange" was located.

In our opinion, the system of registration and cruel police practices strongly appears Uzbekistan as a country where slavery and void human rights becomes normal and daily. The states that indirectly sponsors the examples of slavery where the human rights and freedoms as well as the life of an individual does not protected and guaranteed, the slavery becomes something inevitable.

Furthermore, today Uzbekistan has very few chances to change the situation, since the understanding of the problem and the ways of its solution does not exist. We were very surprised that no one we were talking or interviewed did have some understanding about his/her rights or the most important characterized immoral legislation. It seemed to us that people are not ready to understand that laws can be immoral and inhuman and that the practice of registration is not something people have to live with like their parents in the Soviet era. People are not aware of other practices in the other countries of the world. All they were complaining was unjust requirements for the registration but not the practice itself. They were not ready to require from the state any changes, but each of them was looking for solutions in the legislation. Usually people are very poor and very frustrated to lose the very minimum they have, and the same applies to people working to survive rather than to enjoy life and hope for the better. As we were told by unnamed mardikor he does not have much courage to protest and demand for the change. He said that the level of poverty is so high, that very many of us have lost respect in themselves. He said it looks like people become stupid, limited and very apprehensive. The respect we have lost will not let us speak and act freely. We gave up and are scared to lose the very minimum hope for the better. He added that paradigm shift in Uzbek ideology is possible with changes which are necessary, then the more development and civil society will be possible. Nowadays we are silent, we are stupid, we are not protesting, but passively leave our places to the cities or new countries without dignity to actively protest for the empty stomach.

We were deeply concerned with this situation, we were really trying to change the understanding and explain that registration and propiska practices do not have anything to do with the statehood and whatever government good policies. Nevertheless the tools for self-realization and to be heard in Uzbekistan are null, that they were just smiling with no idea to contribute or complain.

All we observed talked and felt through gained in ourselves a foothold that the state absolutely has left the social arena. Not a single person mardikor has remind us about the state or some state policy socially securing those people. Mardikors are not aware any of the state policies or reforms or at least political will to make a move to the better. Simply said the State has left the social arena, and in willing to come back, the society lacks the tools to return and turn the minds of the state officials towards the people of Uzbekistan.

For example, Nodir Norov, a mardikor of 30 years old, came from Samarkand for the long time was working on the car wash center in Tashkent. He worked daily throughout the year in the cold

water, and now seriously sick and have permanent pains at the place of kidneys. He said that the work was not bad and he was happy however these days he cannot even visit free public doctor for the reason of his registration. He says that at the same time medical treatment at his home town is much poorer and doctors have much lower qualification. Nodir ruined his hands and now hardly curves his hands. He says that ex employer has promoted him for a while and that Nodir was not supposed to work in the cold water but soon after the business was sold with no place for him.

Older mardikors like Usmon Nasyrov of 50 years are complaining for the fact that illegal occupations do not give the right for the pensions. Even though pensions in Uzbekistan are low and constitutes around 7-15 USD, for the people living in rural areas are quite significant. For that reason Usmon is complaining that his present illegal work place does pay his pension insurance and thus deprive of minimum record of service for being eligible for normal pension payments. Usmon was saying that currently his income constitutes about 100 USD a month working as a house painter and other building services. He is saying that for his qualification employers are paying him better money, but even 100 USD a month is not enough. Usmon is renting the place in the big house where other people live, paying for his food, paying for other urgent needs and very few dollars sending back home where his wife and grandsons and daughters are living.

When we were talking to him we saw hopeless and exhausted person with very little understanding what was done wrong in his life for having such a horrible life. Before Usmon has told us about the working career, and that the whole life he was working hard and those money were enough for descent life and normal food.

The last and the saddest thing in his story was the attitude of authorities. As any other person illegally working in the capital, Usmon was saying about bribes and services to those who let him work and earn “easy” money in the capital. Unfortunately he said, authorities have lost the feeling of reality and how the people live. Our governors’ do not think on their people. Usmon says that sometimes I am wondering what are the taxes, for what I am supposed to pay them, for what? Isn’t it immoral that the man surrendered the whole his working life for the native state supposed to justify his presence in the city he was doing after the horrible earthquake disaster of 1966. Usmon uses obscene language and characterized Uzbek with silent cattle deserving the life like this.

Simply said, when we were trying to find the problems with the social security, every time we were replied with sarcasm and misunderstanding. People have no idea whatsoever what is security and who are those supposed to care about this. None of them have faith in the state or have received a penny for the last many years. Practically in all instances the live of people in Uzbekistan is a struggle with the state, with police and very many other agencies in the uniform. None of people in uniform are doctors or people supposed to help, all of them are law enforcement people looking for own subsistence.

Mardikors and the society

This chapter is aimed to illustrate the special relationships of people unwilling to die of hunger in the regions and moving closer to the cities, in particular to Tashkent. As we were telling you in the previous chapter mardikors have very little or no chances to make their papers for the permanent living and any employment in the capital. This fact stains their relationships with police and tensioning the whole society living in the rural areas and some people in the cities who actually do not care but prefer to see less people on the streets or those who add the army of criminals. Surely people who came from the regions and have no chance to work properly or do not see much chances to do that or in fact were forced to break the law were also the purpose of our questioners.

Every time we were talking to the group of mardikors or individually, we were interested to find the stories and opinions about the people who committed some crime because of poverty and minimum state policy and support. Tried to understand the situations and how the society could prevent such practices. Even though many answers were obvious as well as reasons behind the questionnaire demonstrate much more unexpected result. Every second interviewer has explained the situation with those who decided to join criminal groups with so called “No exit” situations. From mardikors own perspective normal people decided to exceed have been doomed with reality and options open. Mardikors do not believe that in this situation an individual is the only responsible but the society as whole and each of us in particular. We were really surprised since we expected the only justification of money necessary and low opportunity level, however interviewed people have demonstrated their own observations much more symbolic and deep.

One of such meetings was carried out nearby the market on the street. When the police officer have mentioned one of us with the paper, asking questions and writing something down on it, he asked us to show the comments and explain what we were doing. For the time being we were

refusing to show the documents and wanted to know what was done wrong? We wanted to know his ideas and why we were not allowed to talk to those people. He could not explain what law we violated by interviewing the mardikors, but was very nervous since the idea of our recording was surely not really ideal from his point of view. In less than a minute all mardikors have left the company of our interviewer since we were absolutely sure that later, after we would live the same guy in uniform could be quite dangerous for themselves. Nevertheless our dispute did not disappeared the policemen was insisting and at the same time could be happy to finish the dispute with people so bravely defend their rights. On the question: 'What is the law we broke by talking with those people, he said stupidly replied that: "That the law is myself and I am here to dictate what to do". That poor guy was the ordinary private, with no distinctive signs on the uniform. That was really pity to observe such a limited understanding, comprehension, professionalism, so dangerously emanating from people like he is.

This was our personal experience how police securing the territory and stability so famous and precious in our national ideology. That was the dispute impending to be finished in the court or in the room of his big bosses. That was the disputes of people who do not care about his uniform and himself personally. But what about the people who do not know their rights, especially if they don't have those? What other words the private could apply in that situation and what actions he would address to mardikors?

Nevertheless our interviews were continued later and on other palaces with the aim to find correlation between crime and mardikors and what is the contribution from the state side to multiply crime effect.

The results were really unfortunate. Mardikors we were interviewing who were usually very reluctant to speak about their problems what solution could be possible got really bucked up on this topic. Their feelings become real and grown up angry forced them to speak. They were telling us their misunderstanding that should they come back to the places of their origin often the only option left to survive is to join the radical studies of Islam. They are telling that for 20-50 USD many of their friends were risking their lives and distributing literature and leaflets. For example one of unnamed mardikors told us the story of his family. He said two of his elder brothers were jailed for participation in radical fundamental group. They were distributing the literature and had about 50 USD a month. That was only the work for them; they had never associated themselves to those radical people but did not have other source of income. After they were jailed the person giving an interview was several times called to police every time

suspected in radical studies groups participation. Then he decided to leave for Tashkent, and live and work here. He said I heard that live here is tough but he does not have many options or maybe leave for Russia and try his best over there.

Absolute majority even hypothetically were not ready to break the law and earn money with robbery or committing other crime. The state control and numerous police on the streets threatening them until death. As we were constantly told how to survive in Tashkent, mardikors have some “save” place to gather and then going back to the job and to the city by taxi. Surely taxi is very expensive for them but to take public transportation means to be kept by police and questioned and fined. Therefore their presence is very invisible, they are working on the places where they in need and then hiding on the place they sleep. Basically all their live are illegal with no severe work conditions and withstanding heavy duties.

Obviously we felt that people working in the same city where we live got consumed and additionally fined and prosecuted with the risk for their lives. In response to their loyalty and hard work urban society has no intention to pay any attention to their problem. We were asked with the question: Is it normal for any society, or peculiar to the people threatened, having no possibility to express their views and missing the civil society. No doubt we become silent and blind to other people needs and unable to pronounce views of ourselves. The society silently turned against itself with no exists visible. In our opinion this is the distinguishing feature of Uzbekistan nowadays.

Women mardikors

The horrible sign of today Tashkent is women mardikors. This fact is really threatening both intellectuals and not. Historically mardikors were represented by men working in hard low paid positions and doing the most unfavorable physical works. No matter how horrible is the life for men in today cities, the fact of women mardikors makes people really worry. The people are saying that never, never in the history of Uzbekistan women got forced to seek for any paid job to do on the labor exchange. We have to take in consideration Asian traditions and often stereotypes which say about some passive or sometimes privileged position shaming any man go to pieces to let his wife to work physically on the public offer.

The fact really represent horrible tendency when strong traditions and believes give up before the reality never been so tough before.

Frankly, before we have started our research we did not know the scale of mardikors movement and did not understand that women mardikors become usual and very available phenomenon. However the number of women working in the city as a mardikors is great and we don't see visible signs why the situation could be improved.

Therefore we have drafted suggested list of questions to our interviewers. The idea was the same as to the man mardikors with more emphasis what kind of work they perform, what services and the attitude of authorities and police.

In the course of our research we have interviewed about 40 women working in the city with very illustrative stories what they are experiencing. We have concluded that in most of the cases those women are lonely or have handicaps husbands unable to win the bread by hard physical works. At the same time the state pensions for handicaps amounts to maximum 15-20 dollar a month whereas unofficial but very true living minimum is about 150 USD for a person.

The first women called Katya from Kokand town came to Tashkent alone to find any job to wash clothes, prepare the food or whatever else will be necessary. Her husband is half blind man, ex professional driver who is unable to work anymore. She has three children and about 30 USD a month while living in Kokand. She says: "that money is not enough to pay for the utilities, and how I am supposed to survive?" She says husband's pension plus my 10 thousand at the factory is all what we had in Kokand. When she came to Tashkent she did not know where to look for the job and how to accommodate without any money to survive. She stayed at her niece apartment and before found some job was cleaning that apartment and helping her at home. Now she works at the apartment of young family and get around 120-150 USD a month. She says this is more then enough for her, plus the lunches and some clothes are provided by the family. She says: "I don't need to pay for the apartment; therefore I can monthly send quite a lot of money back home". However Katya is complaining that niece does not want to see me for too long, and asking her to find or rent the room in other place. Katya is very sad, since to rent an apartment is very expensive and all her income will be spent for the rent fee or utilities. Katya thinks to come back to Kokand since she missed her children and then think how to come back to Tashkent and do not rent an apartment.

Actually this is the most typical story of the women who wins the bread for the family. At the same time we asked Katya to tell us on her relationships with police. She said that sheriff

monitoring district knows her but does not say anything; she says that on the streets police stops only men.

Another woman Albina is from Tashkent region. We have met on the labor exchange, Albina was not so lucky as Katya and did not have permanent place of work, but people knowing her and inviting when heavy house work is required or just to clean a house. She says the story of the husband who left her a year ago, without a word. He left her to other women and does not supporting her and children. She says about her brother who assisting them he is also not a rich man. Therefore Albina left her children to her mother and left for the city. Albina says that life in the city is horrible and that always she wants to come back to her children, however the village she came from is absolutely unemployed with very little or no at all possibility to earn money.

According to our survey on the labor exchanges where the most cheap labor force is situated and seeking for the temporary work, good women mardikors in comparison to men mardikors having better chances to find the permanent job. Usually rich and middle class households hire them for descent money to work and help themselves at the houses or to be babysitters. As one women of age 30 told us: ‘I am lucky women, because found good job with good people and live in one of the rooms of their big house, I am well paid, and have no other problem but to work and be friendly to their family. I am sure that everybody in my situation could dream about such a chance’.

For many women mardikors this story seems to be a story of success. Indeed their dream is to be busy, be paid and save as much as possible, preferably living at the place of an employer.

As we said at the beginning of this chapter we have started the research unable to imagine how widespread the problem of women mardikor is. As we discovered while the research women mardikors market is latent, and often does not advertised or obvious on the streets and exchanges. Women really prefer to act as a part of the working brigades responsible for some part of the work, or known among the close group of families for their household services. Sometimes their presence can be detected at the labor exchange, however very rarely they active in searching for the work and busily offer their services.

We were finishing this research when one day one person told us a very interesting story. Here is the story. Last weekend I went to buy some fruits and vegetables from the near market. I was bargaining with a seller when I heard a voice of that boy. He said: “Would you like a trolley

service, sir?” He was offering people to put their purchases in the trolley and he was pushing the trolley to their car. I agreed to this proposal. He told me that his name was Akbar and he was 12, but he was hardly taller than his trolley. When we reached my car I asked him: “How much do I owe you?” He said: “Well, it is up to you – 200 or 300 soums*?” I gave him 500 soums, boy was happy. I asked him why he was working. I regret that I asked him that as the answer was too obvious - “to help my family”. He told me that it is difficult for his parent to secure him and other three children so he had to work. At parting he said: “When I grow up I will become a famous doctor!”

This research aimed to increase attention of international and local civil society to the indeed new phenomenon of mardicors. Although this phenomenon existed even in the early history of this land, nowadays due to poverty it changed to the extent when researchers are able to consider it as new and widespread phenomenon.

* Approximately 0.2 dollars