Enterprising Women in Transition Economies

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Chapter 5

Djamila's Journey from Kolkhoz to Bazaar: Female Entrepreneurs in Kyrgyzstan[1]

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Introduction

Chingiz Aitmatov's novel 'Djamila' portrays tribal, communal and profound personal changes taking place for Kyrgyz women at the outset of the Second World War. The consolidation of Soviet power in Central Asia changed the lives of many Kyrgyz families and marked the beginning of massive transformation towards a command economy and society under Soviet rule. Thousands were removed from their nomadic yurts to agricultural kolkhoz life and to urban settlements to perform jobs in industrial establishments. Djamila's journey took her from the strictly delineated yet spiritually rich tribal life to the collective destitution of the kolkhoz. During the war years, the Soviet regime not only mobilised men to fight in trenches but also harnessed the remaining population to work for the production of army supplies. Djamila represents the many women who took charge of kolkhoz production, although she later attempted to shape her own destiny by abandoning the kolkhoz life for a new future. Djamila represents the spirit and hardworking character of Kyrgyz woman with her rich inner world and her strong determination and independence.

Still today, no matter what their ethic origin, the women of Kyrgyzstan are not passive to economic shocks. They work hard to preserve their dignity and to look after their families. Whether Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Uyghur or Russian (or one of the dozens of ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan), women are all remarkably active and responsible in economic life. Thus, Djamila is an inspiration and a symbol for us as it is for them.[2]

Aitmatov leaves it to the reader to decide what ultimately happens to the hardworking and independent Djamila. This research exercises our imagination about women like Djamila as they respond to their social role in this and similar economies in transition. There is another story to be told about what happened to Djamila after she left her village. Before relating this we need to reflect on the

transition era, that is the post Soviet life of an emerging state with a new mode of production and private ownership. What is evident is that a short period of prosperity under the Soviet regime during the 1960s and 1970s ended in a deep crisis and political, social and economic failure in the late 1980s. During the period of prosperity many Djamilas moved to factories, benefited from compulsory education, and took up professional jobs.

The industrial workers, engineers, and school teacher Djamilas of Soviet times are today trying to find new meaning and strength. One of the most striking elements of the collapse of the Soviet regime is personal insecurity. De-industrialisation, poverty and disorientation have forced women to seek new ways of surviving, supporting their families and preserving their dignity. The numbers of bazaars where women entrepreneurs predominate have become the only source of hope and income for thousands of families. Even for a casual observer, the bazaars appear to be a communal place and the incubation zones for businesswomen. This chapter analyses how women entrepreneurs shape their lives in these bazaars, to what extent their enterprise is generating income and job opportunities for their families and others, and how they cope with the risks and uncertainty of their business environment.

The research is based on 35 in-depth interviews with female entrepreneurs and numerous observations in various bazaars across the country, including the Dordoi Bazaar in Bishkek (formerly Frunze), the capital with 1.5 million inhabitants; Osh Bazaar (in Osh, the second largest city with 800,000 inhabitants); and AkTilek Bazaar in Karakol.[3] Other bazaars visited include the rapidly expanding Karasuu Bazaar, the Central Bazaar in Jalal-Abad, and the Osh and Medina Bazaars in Bishkek. This is part of a larger project that collected 135 interviews with business owners from all backgrounds and sectors in six cities (Bishkek, Karabalta, Karakol, Cholpon Ata, Osh, and Jalal-Abad). Our overall findings show rapid growth in the number of both female and male entrepreneurs in bazaars.

Bazaars provide the single most important commercial activity in the country. They are also increasingly evolving into entrepreneurial hubs with newly emerging business/entrepreneurial networks, providing the externalities of a capitalist market economy. The emergence of bazaars in the post Soviet economic landscape is a result of several factors. Firstly, the old and obsolete industrial complexes of the Soviet period were almost entirely dissolved, leading to complete de-industrialisation of the country. With a small and highly fragmented agricultural sector and no available financial capital for new investments and industrial re-structuring, commercial activities emerged as the major source of income generation and job creation. Secondly, highly fragmented and low working capital forced traders to seek externalities through local agglomeration, in which they lowered transaction costs and narrowed information gaps through networking and solidarity ties. Finally, with the dissolution of the USSR, network externalities and subsidies of the Soviet regime were no longer available to the Kyrgyz Republic and people were forced to supply many goods and services through markets filled by single traders.

While academic and policy studies on Eastern Europe have been rapidly increasing, there is very little empirically informed research on Central Asian development in general and Kyrgyzstan in particular. Central Asia deserves serious attention within the context of Eurasian development because understanding and helping the process of economic development in that region will be mutually beneficial for Europe and Asia. Since the economic role of women is so important there, it is crucial to analyse their entrepreneurial initiatives. Despite this, there is no informed research on bazaar activity in Kyrgyzstan (Bal, 2004). For gender studies, female entrepreneurship in Central Asia offers a very interesting case of the accommodation of pastoral nomadic traditions combined with Soviet ideals, Islam, nationalism and modernity. Modern Kyrgyzstan is a melting pot of different and sometimes competing identities of modern and secular Islam, as well as a reawakening of Islamic traditions. Yet, the nostalgia for Soviet order still prevails. At the same time, multi-ethnic Kyrgyzstan is striving to develop its own form of nation state beyond the old Russian domination and ethnic and tribal rivalries. Women face all these political and cultural undercurrents in their daily lives along with the pressing need to generate income for their households. While their country is going through fundamental economic and political changes, women's cognitive understanding of the world vis-à-vis their position is in deep turmoil. For them, the only fixed ground is their family and the struggle to survive in a highly volatile and insecure environment. Their battle is manifold and their story is yet to be narrated. This chapter is a modest attempt in trying to unravel this economic struggle.

The chapter is structured in the following five sections. The first section provides a background on the Kyrgyz state and economy with an emphasis on the economic reforms and macro-economic indicators. Small and medium-sized entrepreneurship and the role of women in this sector are illustrated in the second section. Due to a very high number of unofficial businesses, we are unable to provide an accurate estimate of the numbers of SMEs in the country. In the third section, we illustrate the role of bazaars in the evolution and growth of female entrepreneurship with detailed analyses of several bazaars. This is followed by our findings on female entrepreneurship and the business growth and survival patterns and on vertical and horizontal business growth. The conclusion summarises the research findings, emphasising the importance of institutions and the policy environment for sustainable and secure business growth, as well as capital accumulation to move away from the current situation of marginal and highly fragmented gains.

Kyrgyz State Building and Business

Kyrgyzstan[4] is a small land-locked country of 5 million people surrounded by Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and China. Since its independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, the country has gone through dramatic economic and social transformations. Kyrgyzstan has a huge ethnic mix consisting of 65 per cent Kyrgyz, 14 per cent Uzbek, 12.5 per cent Russian, 1.8 per cent Ukrainian, 1.3 per

cent Tatar and others (Korean, Kazakh, German, Tajik, Uyghur and Ahiska Turks). The country has been the deportation destination of many persecuted communities and despite the recent exodus of Germans and Russians and a history of ethic strife between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in the south, Kyrgyzstan retains a remarkable ethnic diversity and harmony. The Ahiska Turks and Avars, Germans, Koreans and others were forcibly transported to Central Asia by Stalin as part of his assimilation and pacification policy. Tens of thousands of Uyghurs and Muslim Chinese, locally known as Dungans, escaped prosecution in China and established their communities in there.

The most important challenge for Kyrgyzstan today is to build an economy and state apparatus to sustain its population and maintain its viability. Independence came unexpectedly. Many Kyrgyz admit that they did not want to leave the Soviet Union but one day found themselves abandoned by it. The shift from being a satellite state in economic and political affairs to an independent and sovereign one required deep changes in social attitudes, as well as in economic development and state building. This is indeed the major challenge not only for Kyrgyzstan but for all former Soviet Republics in Central Asia. Potential dangers of ethnic and religious conflicts loom large in the process of modern state building and democratisation (Handran, 2001). In addition, there are currently many border issues to be resolved with Uzbekistan. The Soviet legacy of interlinked economic interests and artificially drawn borders and ethnic enclaves aimed to enhance the USSR regime is now causing trouble for the new states. Apart from divided communities, water resources and electricity and the use of gas are sources of deep anxiety and periodic tension between the Uzbek and Kyrgyz governments.

When the USSR collapsed, Kyrgyzstan had a small but diverse industrial base consisting of machine tools (the production of machine parts, weaponry, electrical machines, hay bailers, regulatory instruments and gauges, electric lamps), mining (extraction of mercury and antimony, rare-earth elements, gold, coal and oil), electric power, the production of industrial materials, furniture and consumer goods (textiles, shoes, cotton textiles, etc) and processed food products (meat and milk, bread, candy, alcoholic drinks). Agriculture was also diversified with products ranging from animal feed and commercial crops such as cotton, tobacco and sugar beets, grains and fruits. However, as the eminent Kyrgyz reformist Koichuev (2001) describes, the economy suffered the ills of the USSR pattern of economic development with extensive exploitation of resources and no emphasis on intensive development and technological advancement.

Soviet modernization policies were arbitrarily executed and territorially disintegrated and their legacy has led to the creation of a distorted industrial structure throughout Central Asia (Iwasaki, 2000). With its poor resource base, Kyrgyzstan especially needs urgently to overcome these distortions. The country could not maintain its fragments of Soviet industries that were interlinked to far-flung regions. When the USSR collapsed, these networked links of the former command economy were no longer economical or desirable for the new independent states. While some of these industrial complexes successfully transformed in countries with a larger industrial base such as Uzbekistan, in Kyrgyzstan most ceased to exist. This rapid downfall was also a function of the lack of any industrial policy or foresight of the political leadership for transition in the country (Özcan, 2004).

With no obvious natural resources like those of Turkmenistan or Kazakhstan, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined to 50 per cent of the 1990 level between 1991 and 1995. All economic indicators deteriorated. Hyperinflation, rising unemployment, and reduction of real incomes led to a dramatic increase in poverty. Despite the economic reforms of the mid 1990s, GNI per capita was $270 in 2000, and 51 per cent of the population live below the national poverty line (George, et al. 2002; Koichuev, 2001). However, there is a huge unregistered economy in the country, which many believe to be around 70 per cent of total activity.[5] While living standards have recently been improving in big cities like Bishkek and Osh, rural poverty is rampant in many oblasts coupled with poor public services such as health and education.[6]

Nevertheless, Kyrgyzstan has made significant macroeconomic progress since the comprehensive and rapid reform movement initiated in 1993. Important changes were made to the legal framework (in particular with business laws), most prices were liberalized, mass privatization began and the tax system was almost completely overhauled, with the introduction of a VAT and excise tax system. In 1993, a national currency, the Som, was introduced, permitting the authorities to assume full responsibility for monetary policy, and which allowed for international trade to be settled in convertible currencies. In 1994, the trade regime was liberalized as export and import licensing requirements were lifted. In 1997 the reform of the civil service began, which initially entailed reducing government employment and improving efficiency through the restructuring of public institutions. In 1998 Kyrgyzstan acceded to the WTO and remains the only republic of the CIS to do so thus far. Since 1996 the economy has begun to recover. Real GDP growth has averaged about 5 per cent per year since then and remained positive even during the regional financial crisis of 1998. The recovery in the agricultural sector, which accounts for over 35 per cent of GDP, after the privatization of land in 1998, together with yields from the Kumtor gold mine, account for most of this growth (Koichuev, 2001).

Despite these positive indicators, the Kyrgyz economy remains vulnerable to external shocks, as macroeconomic stability has not yet been fully achieved and foreign debt and debt service are now at worrisome levels. Moreover, there has been some slowdown in reform. At the micro level, the real problem lies in slow pace of enterprise creation and poor entrepreneurial development. While the leadership of President Akayev provides a stable and highly liberal regime, it is also entrenched and corrupt. Despite the wide range of international support and NGO presence, there is a lack of industrial and economic policy vision and no coherent plan for enterprise development. The level of corruption is deepening, representing an endemic problem at every level of society, in the public and private sectors alike (Çokgezen, 2004). Rumours of the massive wealth and power of the Akayev family

are causing deep concern. All of these elements distort this fragile economy and damage income and job generation.

Despite this, in recent years liberal practices have allowed the country to become a hub of regional trade and commercial activities that seems now to be forming the backbone of income and job creation. The number of wholesale and retail bazaars is increasing and the sprawl of retail trading spaces is continuously growing in all cities. Goods from China, Russia and Turkey, and to a lesser extent from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are brought to and traded in Kyrgyzstan. Many wholesalers and some retailers from Russia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan obtain their goods from the Kyrgyz mega markets, Dordoi, Karasuu and Osh. Kyrgyzstan is becoming a gateway for Chinese products heading to Central Asia, Russia and Europe. The Chinese government has been boosting the economy of Urumchi, its westernmost urban centre, to take advantage of this emerging trade to Russia and the Central Asian states. While this form of international trade is currently generating jobs and income, its sustainability is linked to the economic political agenda. The lack of any productive base in the country and the marginal gains in transit trade might not lead to economic prosperity for small traders or economic growth since much of the trade remains unregistered.

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Female Entrepreneurship in Kyrgyzstan

Nomadic traditions that prevailed in Kyrgyzstan over the centuries were transformed by the Soviet command economy into collective farming in kolkhoz and urban centres were established based on heavy industries. Since Islamist social strictures are weak in Kyrgyz nomad traditions, Kyrgyz women quickly moved into new occupational positions. Even Uzbeks, who managed to maintain their traditions as well as Islam under communism, had to accommodate the command economy. Russian imperial adventures towards the end of the 19th century which created military-urban outposts, such as the town of Karakol[7] were later expanded into new settlement centres through Soviet planning. The notions of unity, grandeur, order and glory of mass industrial complexes reshaped the older centres of Bishkek and Osh. Thus, as was vividly illustrated by Aitmatov, Djamilas moved to kolkhoz and to industrial complexes from tightly knit nomadic families. Everybody had to work, share responsibility and came to expect to be allocated housing and other state provisions such as health and education. Women not only provided semi-skilled labour but through comprehensive compulsory education, new professional and lower middle range managerial positions opened up for them.

Small, mostly owner-operated business ventures replaced the former command economy with tiny amounts of investment capital and limited growth opportunities. Similarly, privatization in agriculture resulted in very small average farm size.[8] The share of manufacturing relative to agriculture within the GDP has been declining since 1985. In terms of the current factor cost, agriculture occupies 38.6 per cent of

the output followed by 24.9 per cent for industry and 36.5 per cent for services in 2002. Trade has filled the economic vacuum left by the collapsed command economy. The survey by Proma and the International Business Council (2003) indicates the diminishing rates of employment and income creation measured by the declining number of businesses in agriculture (26.7 per cent) and manufacturing (5.5 per cent), while wholesale and retail trade accounted for almost 50 per cent of all businesses in the country. The Kyrgyz economy today relies heavily on its small and medium-sized trading businesses and the Kumtor gold mine, along with the financial support of international donors. Even for a casual observer the number of street traders and bazaar stalls that invade every corner is stunning, as if the entire population is on the move with trade. In 2003, there were 122,525 owner-operator small businesses in the country, mostly in retail and wholesale trade, indicating the very large number of micro-firms in a country of five million people.[9]

At the same time, private ownership and enterprise creation suffers from a whole set of legal, ideological and social handicaps. The individual habits of former command economy, such as a lack of personal initiatives, political involvement and interest representation still persist. Thus, ownership and enterprise rights are not well protected. While Kyrgyzstan may have adequate laws, enforcement is weak. Corruption and political influence over the judicial system are two other major handicaps that stand in the way of a well-functioning legal system. Our research indicates an overwhelming mistrust among business people towards public officers, in particular police and customs officials. Financial capital for enterprise creation is controlled by a few major banks which are politically manipulated by the Presidential Office. A weak securities market limits both borrowing and investment opportunities. Many Kyrgyz have never used banks to deposit their savings or borrow money. Indeed, modern banking is a new phenomenon and many services such as bank machines and credit cards are not yet offered. Businesses in need of credit often end up selling their assets or borrowing from loan sharks.

Our observations reinforce an analysis carried out by the National Business Opinion Survey[10] among over 3000 businesses in all oblasts and all sectors (Bishkek City, Chui, Issyk-Kul, Naryn, Talas, Osh, Jalal-Abad, Batken), which showed that there is widespread abuse of power by tax officials. Indeed, our research indicates that many old Soviet regulatory and monitoring bodies still survive as governmental agencies and their employees are reportedly harassing businesses for extra payments and taxes. This form of extensive inspection of businesses is also opening the door to further corruption and bribery by poorly paid state officials.[11] From the perspective of entrepreneurs, corruption makes lives difficult and drains resources, but also opens possibilities as long as companies pay a premium. In other words, bureaucratic procedures as well as illegal actions are often legitimized through bribery. This fosters a society with no concern for standards and law.

In Kyrgyzstan 43.9 per cent of the working population is self-employed, which is a high figure indicating the lack of alternative job opportunities (Hübner, 2000), rather than entrepreneurial choice for business. Many businessmen and women

publicly admit that if they had had a stable job, as they did under the command economy, they would not run small businesses. Private business ownership is a way to survive where, as in many cases, there is no other income possibility. Such small business activities are in general outside the registered economy, tending to operate under pseudo-market conditions. Nevertheless, we will continue to use the term 'entrepreneur' for all small business owners due to their risk taking initiative and independent work.

Women occupy a significant part of this entrepreneurial activity, according to the Centre for Study of Public Opinion 2003 survey in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which shows that women entrepreneurs constitute almost one third of the all businesses in Kyrgyzstan, the highest percentage in the region (Table 5.1). However, as in other transition economies in the region, they tend to occupy the lower echelons of this spectrum: female entrepreneurs are in charge of enterprises, which are smaller in size and have lesser impact on the economy. Most of them are limited to small trade and services, but they nevertheless account for over 60 per cent of total retail and wholesale businesses.

Table 5.1 Gender distribution of entrepreneurs in Central Asia

	Gender of entrepreneurs				Total	
	Male		Female			
Kazakhstan	424	70.7%	176	29.3%	600	100.0%
Kyrgyzstan	351	70.2%	149	29.8%	500	100.0%
Uzbekistan	375	75.0%	125	25.0%	500	100.0%
Tajikistan	167	83.5%	33	16.5%	200	100.0%
Turkmenistan	159	79.5%	41	20.5%	200	100.0%
Total	1,476	73.8%	524	26.2%	2,000	100.0%

Source: Survey of the Center for Study of Public Opinion 2003.

There is almost no collective organization of entrepreneurs in Kyrgyzstan apart from a handful of associations promoted by donor agencies and the state.[12] Our survey shows that most of the female entrepreneurs in Kyrgyzstan are not part of any business association. Those who were involved in business associations prefer to use this affiliation for the promotion of their own individual interests, which leads to a common mistrust towards interest representation through collective action.[13] Indeed, as seen in Table 5.2, SMEs are not organized to pursue their common interests across Central Asia.

Business training is crucial for an emerging entrepreneurial class. This includes education of entrepreneurs and participation in drafting legislation. With no collective voice, women mainly rely on their family and kin contacts to arrange and solve business problems. They are also alienated from the political process of decision making since the current political structure is insulated from public participation in decision making. Despite the existence of 100 women NGOs

registered on paper in the country, the gender divide in political power is widening with fewer and fewer women taking active political interest.[14] As pointed out by the Centre for Study of Public Opinion Survey (2003), the ability of the associations to influence the legislative and executive bodies in making decisions acceptable for the entrepreneurs reflects the actual power of the associations, their independence and effectiveness. Even in Uzbekistan where 37 per cent of entrepreneurs are members of business associations, only 31 per cent think that the associations are able to influence government organizations. In other countries this indicator is much lower: 20 per cent in Kazakhstan, 20 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, 17 per cent in Tajikistan and 8 per cent in Turkmenistan.

Table 5.2 Assessment of effectiveness of lobbying activities of associations in Central Asia

To what degree do associations render influence on central and local legislative and executive authorities with the view of adopting decisions acceptable for entrepreneurs?

	Fulfil		Rather fulfil		Rather do not fulfil		Do not fulfil at all		Don't know	
Kazakhstan	48	8.0%	70	11.7%	129	21.5%	97	16.2%	256	42.7%
Kyrgyzstan	36	7.2%	63	12.6%	122	24.4%	135	27.0%	144	28.8%
Uzbekistan	50	10.0%	107	21.4%	96	19.2%	85	17.0%	162	32.4%
Tajikistan	13	6.5%	21	10.5%	17	8.5%	26	13.0%	123	61.5%
Turkmenistan	3	1.5%	14	7.0%	50	25.0%	48	24.0%	85	42.5%
Total	150	7.5%	275	13.8%	414	20.7%	391	19.6%	770	38.5%

Source: Survey of the Center for Study of Public Opinion 2003.

Female Entrepreneurial Hubs: the Bazaars

A Kyrgyz proverb summarises the role of women in market place: 'Erkek kazanda, aial bazarda' (emphasising that women look after men through their bazaar activities). Bazaars are the biggest and most important sources of entrepreneurial talent and development for women, as well as men, in Kyrgyzstan. Our enterprise survey including 135 enterprises across the country indicates that many women learned and developed their business skills, and acquired a sense of market exchange and money in bazaars. Imitating and learning from the experience of family, friends and others opens new opportunities. In a country with no industrial base and inadequate backward and forward linkages to become an integrated economy, many individuals take up trade and delivery services. During the early years of economic crisis after independence, individuals were desperate to find a way to survive but very few understood how to operate trade and other private businesses because these were disgraced occupations in Soviet times. This changed as shuttle trade directed to China, Korea, Turkey, Germany

and other countries in the region[15] made bazaars lively and businessmen and women gradually established better links with their suppliers abroad. With this came capital accumulation, external links and a great deal of learning. The success stories and rumours encouraged more men and women to travel and seek new opportunities through shuttle trade.

Economic and social lives overlap in often crowded alleys of bazaars. The bazaars are not only trading but also living spaces for women as well as men. As Dana et al. (2004) indicated, value creation in bazaars is greatly enhanced by relationships and networks, as the vendors and their customers forge a special and often long lasting relationships. This is rather different from single firm operation as well as internet based new economy. Our observations illustrate that prices are not fixed and bargaining on the selling price is a ritual that starts the bonding tie between customer and seller. Similarly, traders benefit from externalities of social and/or ethnic networks that reduce transaction costs and uncertainty for businesses as well as for individuals. For example, the prosperous male Uyghur traders of Medina daily pray in one of their designated containers. They have their Uyghur butcher and bakery nearby and stay overnight in their containers as they often travel by rented buses between Urumchi and Bishkek.[16] Similarly, many women in the Dordoi, Osh or Ak-Tilek markets eat, chat and live in their trading spaces all day long. They develop bonding, likes and dislikes with their fellow traders. This allows them to learn more about the business environment, whilst also contributing to intensifying competition, and providing new opportunities. It is their form of on-the-job training. Many female entrepreneurs claim that they developed their skills and learned more about doing business within this communal space of traders than from any formal education or business association.

The character of bazaars is also associated with post Soviet urban setting. First of all, bazaars provide commercial space that is scarce or unavailable in post Soviet urban structures for businesses. Under collectivized centralization, retail outlets were scarce and uncompetitive. Secondly, bazaars offer protection and solidarity in the unfamiliar territory of capitalist enterprise. Thirdly, in bazaars individuals learn the value of money and market exchange, new business ideas and how to survive with competition. Finally, bazaars have strong international connections through shuttle trade that many entrepreneurs cultivate, either directly, or through kinship links in urban areas. In short, bazaars are the breeding grounds for entrepreneurial activities and their social and economic dynamics are highly complicated. Not everybody prospers and businesses often suffer from the deep institutional and policy failings they have to function around. The biggest institutional challenge in Kyrgyzstan is the lack of any coherent industrial policy, coupled with the deep uncertainty caused by poorly defined property rights (Çokgezen et al., 2004).

Only a few commercial spaces for retailing existed during the Soviet times and new provisions for land ownership gradually generated privately owned bazaars or expanded the old ones in the major cities. Bishkek has several such big bazaars (Dordoi, Osh, and Medina). In Osh, there is a mile-long city bazaar along the Ak-Buura River which forms the heart of trade and is the single most important

provider of employment after agriculture. Jalal-Abad has several smaller bazaars in addition to its central bazaar. In Karakol, Ak-Tilek, Makish and Bugu bazaars all form the core of trade. Most of the traders work with a patent system which is a form of tax registration. They also pay rent to owners of land for the stall or container used. Some of these bazaars are owned by local authorities and later privatised (Ak-Tilek) or newly established family enterprises (Dordoi).

A common characteristic of these bazaars is that they all have open stalls or semi-open simple stores, except for the Dordoi, Karasuu[17] and Medina Bazaars, which are formed out of cheap shipping containers arranged to establish commercial areas. Most of these trading spaces are only partially covered against rain and sunshine. Heat and cold affect traders badly and working conditions can be very harsh in extreme weather. Moving to a container or a small store is a significant upgrade for traders but even containers are very hard to heat in the winter.[18] These circumstances create very difficult work conditions for women bazaaries. Here we describe three major bazaars.

The Dordoi Bazaar This is by far the largest modern bazaar formed out of shipping containers, not only in the country but perhaps in the world. It was established in 1992 by the regional governor of Nayrn province and his brothers. The pioneers of the Dordoi market explain the reason for this initiative: 'Kyrgyzstan does not have an industrial base so we thought it could be a trade hub instead'.[19] Indeed, this vision proved to be successful as today it hosts 5000 containers (3000 owned by the Salymbekov family) and is visited daily by 80,000 people. Over 50 per cent of the goods sold in Dordoi go to neighbouring Central Asian countries and Russia. Dordoi is a gateway mainly for Chinese and to a much lesser extent Turkish and western goods of all kinds, including cars, to enter Central Asia and Russia through shuttle trade. The daily turnover is estimated to be around 18-25m US dollars (Bal, 2004).[20] Dordoi serves retailers, wholesalers and middlemen of all kinds. It also has a remarkable ethnic diversity of traders: Kyrgyz, Russian, Kazakh, Korean, Uyghur, Dungan, Dagistani, and Uzbek.

Osh Bazaar (Osh)[21] This is one of the old bazaars in a city where the history of trade goes back over 2000 years. Osh was also an important trading post on the Silk Road and benefited from being at the upper end of the fertile and legendary Fergana Valley.[22] Uzbeks (60 per cent) and Kyrgyz are the two main ethnic groups; and very few Russians remain. The Osh market grew in the 1990s. It is now is a mile long, 50 yards to 100 yards deep, consisting of shopping space with largely semi-open stalls rented out by various land owners and hosting around 10,000 traders every day. Uzbek and Tajik traders travelling from across the borders are among the customers. Textiles, clothing and foodstuffs occupy the largest areas in the market. But the diversity of other products includes construction materials, kitchen utensils, and second hand goods of all kinds. The market also hosts a gold trade carried out by women only. Around 60 to 80 women gather daily around a square to sell the popular gold jewellery common to women of Central Asia. A huge string of gold

rings or earrings carried by a woman trader at first sight is a striking image of this intricate mobile gold trade.

The Ak-Tilek Bazaar (Karakol) This market was established during the last years of Soviet control, in 1987. During the 'perestroika' period several such markets were established as an intended panacea to combat increasing unemployment as many people were looking for new possibilities to earn money. However, at that time it was a small market of about 100 traders, whereas it now hosts over 1000 traders. The main goods sold are foodstuffs, clothes, cosmetics, shoes and small items. Every entrepreneur has to pay a fee to the bazaar's owner according to the space they rent. Karakol neither has the charm of Osh nor the power of Bishkek, and trade in this provincial town is much more regionally focused to its hinterland of small towns and villages.

A Case for Female Entrepreneurship through Vertical and Horizontal Expansion

A great majority of women surveyed are in their mid-thirties and forties; the youngest being 16 years old. Most have university degrees (only about 30 per cent have high school diplomas only). The Soviet system liberated women through education and employment but this also meant long working hours and hardship in state plants and workshops for many. The quality or relevance of this education is also questionable for an open society and market economy. Under communism, apart from medicine and some sciences, most social science education was dogmatic and backward. Today the situation is somewhat worse as, for example, Soviet criminal law is still being studied at law schools. Poverty reduced state spending on education, books and school maintenance and the mushrooming private education providers greatly vary in their quality. It is commonly known that high school and university diplomas can be gained through bribery. Thus, educational qualifications often mean little for the entrepreneurial development of women.

Women are very protective of their families and resist the temptation of using child labour in their businesses. The status of children in Kyrgyz society is, indeed, very different from other poor countries, as they are protected from work and economic exploitation. Women go out of their way to secure care for their children and usually avoid employing underage children in trade. They rely heavily on female solidarity within their close family and kinship, often developing partnerships with male members of their family. It is also increasingly common for men to look after the children while women work, although many regret not having enough time to spend with their children such as Çınara (Case 1).

Although there are commonly shared perceptions and stereotypes of each ethnic group in Kyrgyzstan; such as 'hard working Koreans and Ahiska Turks', 'canny Uzbek and Uyghur traders', 'laidback Kyrgyz' and 'trustworthy Russians'.[23] There is no observed ethnic difference in entrepreneurial talent; i.e. successful

entrepreneurs typically come from a large pool of different ethnic groups. However, it is true that those who suffered from repression in China and Russia had to work harder to prove themselves and showed stronger solidarity and determination to survive, as is the case of ethnic Koreans and Uyghurs. Similarly, the settled life in the south that the majority Uzbeks enjoyed over the centuries, together with traditions of trade seems to foster a more business-adept environment. Russians long enjoyed the upper hand in education and intellectual life. With their calm and rather introvert character, Kyrgyz are tolerant and hospitable towards different peoples and ideas. As shown in Table 5.3, female entrepreneurship portrays distinct skills, motivations and business dynamics.

Table 5.3 A typology of female entrepreneurs in bazaars

Category	Characteristics	Exemplary Cases	Limitations
Qualities, skills	• canny • economical • fast adapter	All cases	Women's concern for the family livelihood limits risky and innovative ventures
Motivations	• single bread earner • partnership • income pooling	• Case 6 • Cases 3 and 4 • Cases 2 and 7	Poor business trust beyond family and friends inhibits institution building and company partnerships
Business growth and survival	• vertical expansion • horizontal spread • switching & skipping	• Cases 6 and 7 • Cases 1 and 5 • Case 4	Economic and political volatility as well as lack of external finance inhibits business growth

Source: Author.

Qualities and Skills

Women invariably state that their intuitive and communication skills are better suited for commercial activities, seeing themselves as more skilled and adept for trade. It is also astonishing to find men justifying female talent in commercial entrepreneurial activities while in other cultures this is not easily accepted or allowed to flourish (Özcan, 1995).[24] Along with the highly liberal Kyrgyz, even the more traditional and religious Uzbek families seem to accept that women are simply better at trade by nature. The observed superiority of female entrepreneurs, in this regard, is summarized below:

i) *Canny traders and communicators*: With no misgiving or regret, many men and women from all backgrounds believe that women are more talented in selling a product to a customer. This is commonly explained with the following expressions:

- 'women know how to talk and persuade'
- 'women can understand the desires of a customer better'
- 'women are more patient with an undecided customer'
- 'women are more stable and determined in trade'

ii) *Good money managers*: Women were considered to be better managers of business finances and more responsible members of their family. The laid-back manner of men is often referred to as an old Soviet attitude.

- 'women think of money for their families and children'
- 'women don't spend casually'
- 'women are more economical'
- 'women price products more carefully and they do not give lavish discounts'
- 'women know how to save for good and bad days'

iii) *Fast adapters*: The transformation to a market economy brought new thinking and principles. It has been very hard to run businesses and avoid unemployment, but women appear to be better equipped to adjust to these severe changes.

- 'women respond to changes faster'
- 'women make observations and generate ideas about their business faster'
- 'women are more rational about business change'
- 'women observe more carefully and understand trends'

The following cases illustrate these statements in more detail.

Çınara (Dordoi, Bishkek, case 1)[25] From selling small items on a street stall to her first trip to Turkey for shuttle trade, and then to Pakistan and Syria, Çınara managed to grow her business and now owns two containers in Dordoi. Now 32 years old, she has been involved in trade since she finished university. Over the years she has developed good contacts in Istanbul, taking advantage of her Kyrgyz and Turkish parentage and regularly sources merchandise through old established links. Most of her customers come from the newly independent states of Central Asia. She considers that she has learned a great deal from her trips abroad and feels toughened by stiff competition in Dordoi. Large numbers of traders in ready-made garments force entrepreneurs to look for new niche markets and Çınara admits that she often hides her ideas from others not to be imitated. Childcare that was available for working women during Soviet times is no longer there and she relies on her mother to look after her young child. As with many entrepreneurs interviewed, she expects the government to work harder to stabilise the economy and prevent corruption. She regrets not having enough time to spend at home with her child and family.

Şahanoza (Osh Bazaar, Osh, case 2) Şahanoza celebrated her 16th birthday on 8 September 2004 selling Uzbek 'atlas' textiles in her small stall. At the age of 15 she joined other female members of her family selling and trading. Her chatty, childish enthusiasm attracts many customers and she is a canny trader with a turnover around $150 per day, which is a considerable sum for the country. Seated between other fellow Uzbek silk traders she enjoys the jealousy as well as the support of her trading partners. The main pillar of the trade is her grandmother who despite old age weekly commutes to Uzbekistan to source 'atlas' from her contacts. Her mother organizes the work and joins Şahanoza in the stall as much as possible while her sister manages the household chores and cooking. Her father and brother both work in Russian Siberia in construction. In their tightly-knit Uzbek neighbourhood, the family enjoys the solidarity of their relatives in the absence of the male members of the family. Şahanoza is also being educated to be a devout Muslim by a neighbouring female preacher.

Motivations

The motivations pushing women to set up their own businesses are often linked to three issues of family circumstances. First, a sizeable number of single women work to support their children and sometimes extended family. Like Aisha (Case 6) many are the single bread earners for their family and often under pressure to generate employment and income opportunities for their children and close relatives. Secondly, women often work with their male partners, most commonly with husbands, in order to generate family income and share the multi-faceted responsibilities. Women often remain in charge of trade while their partner carries out the external tasks of purchasing and arranging daily chores. Finally, women take up trade while husbands or fathers are employed in other jobs. In most of these businesses, women rely on one or two casual workers along with their family members. As in the case of Şahanoza (Case 2), economic activities of family members contribute the family pool of resources. Many men travel abroad for trade or for seasonal jobs in construction and women generate income through trade to top up their family income. For example, in Osh, it is said that there is at least one male abroad in every household.

Women are motivated with a pursuit of economic opportunities in the market without any pre-set business plan. They tend to follow opportunities and imitate their competitors. Dana et al. (2004) argue that in the bazaar economy, competition implies a tension between buyer and seller rather than between sellers. This is only partly true. As bazaars are socially embedded economic spaces for traders, there is a certain degree of solidarity, but, they are also extremely competitive, ethically divised and full of built-in tension.[26] The bazaar's economic role is linked to the lack of information on new business areas, market, and technologies. This information gap makes bazaars most suitable for entrepreneurs with no access to political power and economic policy management in a highly blurred emerging market like Kyrgyzstan. Entrepreneurs often employ their intuitive skills to overcome imperfections of the emerging market economy through deepening social links and face-to-face contacts. As they imitate each other, secrecy in competition

becomes the rule. This is often expresses as: 'I don't want to tell my business ideas because others would imitate immediately'. As is often pointed out, 'women with better social and communicative skills' find it easier to build these social networks that support business survival. Overall, women are social network builders in bazaars. However, some deepen these network externalities through ethnic and religious solidarity, as is common with Uyghur and Dungan traders with strong Islamic traditions.

Despite the good motivations and skills of female entrepreneurs, many traders would have liked to stay in their former government jobs instead of taking up trade (Case 6). This is because there are difficult working conditions (Case 5), high risk and volatility embedded in trade and only a small proportion of traders are prospering and managing to accumulate capital for business growth. Many traders survive on marginal gains and their savings are not enough to grow or upgrade their business. Many also lack the required know-how and ability to grow, as is often the case for micro and small firms in other parts of the world.

Aigula (Osh Bazaar, Osh, case 3) This 39 year old Tajik used to work for Kyrgyz Electricity Company as an accountant until she was laid off in 1991. She has been trading since then. Initially, she helped her husband, but later they were both convinced that because she was better in trade, she took over the management of the store while her husband dealt with the supply of merchandise from Bishkek-Dordoi (toys, lamps, clocks and other bric-a-brac). Her mother and sister are also involved in this trade and the family now owns two selling points. Despite their hard work they only barely manage to live and the current hardship makes them miss the Soviet times. She is very pessimistic about the management of the economy and 'bribery and corruption everywhere'.

Ainura (Dordoi, Bishkek, case 4) Ainura is a 42 year old Kyrgyz gynaecologist, who, like many of her colleagues, took up trade in order to supplement her poor salary. With her civil servant husband, she managed to expand the business to four containers in Dordoi selling leather bags and purses, later establishing a retail store in Dordoi Plaza, new shopping mall in central Bishkek, and also in Osh and Karakol. The business is controlled by the couple and four relatives. Ainura travelled extensively in 1997 across China as part of 'shuttle trade mania'[27] and later in Korea, and maintains regular contacts in Urumchi. Her travels shaped the current business and she also has many new business ideas, which includes setting up a private health clinic where she can practice her profession more rewardingly. Like many women, she regrets not having enough time to spend with her family and children.

Business Growth and Survival

This collection of business and personal accounts illustrate survival and growth trends in bazaars. Our observations and personal stories indicate three major patterns. Firstly, a common phenomenon is horizontal expansion through business growth and employment generation. Many traders wish to keep their businesses small and manageable by spreading new trading units (containers or stores) among family members (Case 1, 4 and 5). Thus, they share the management with their family and at the same time generate new job and income opportunities. The increased involvement of relatives is also linked to mistrust of strangers and of professional management, which is a totally new concept for the country. Equally important is the need to keep the business small (at least in appearance), in order to protect wealth from predators (tax officials, government inspectors and other extortionists.

Secondly, vertical integration is another way to reduce risk and uncertainty and to generate job opportunities for family members. In some instances, women are forced to develop their business with vertical expansion due to a lack of business linkages among small firms. This is partly due to unfilled gaps in the market by private businesses and partly to a mistrust of outsiders in business dealings. Like Anna (Case 7), who decided to sew her own towel dresses together with her family members, and Aisha (Case 6) whose sons produce pasta for her stall, some traders began to develop business ideas combining production and trade. This allows them to reduce costs and generate further income as well as new job opportunities for family members. This trend is visible in the clothing sector more than in foodstuffs, since food processing requires special technical skills and machinery. Indeed, food processing is now a very poorly developed sector in the country.[28] Thirdly, switching and skipping between businesses is an opportunistic activity among women who recognize new avenues of trade and services (Case 4). Business failures and/or capital accumulation leads to new business investments in other sectors. In recent years, the number of restaurants and cafes, hair dressing salons, and private medical services has been increasing and areas of highly crowded trade in bazaars are also feeding new business ideas. For new business opportunities, entrepreneurs rely on imitation and there are changing cycles of popular businesses.

Economic and political insecurity as well as widespread corruption negatively effect business growth and survival. Female entrepreneurs are outspoken about these shortcomings and they often emphasize the unfair and arbitrary treatment of taxmen, state inspectors and customs officials. They also seem to be tougher in dealing with these officials than their male partners (Cases 3 and 5).

Kim (Dordoi, Bishkek, case 5) Kim is a 41 year old ethnic Korean who has been engaged in wholesale trade in Dordoi since 1997. She learned the business through buying and selling in small quantities with her family members. She used to work as an engineer in a Soviet factory and now has two containers selling ready-made trousers from China to small retailers and wholesalers coming from Tajikistan, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Her grandparents escaped from Chinese oppression to Russia only to

be deported by Stalin to Kyrgyzstan where she says they found peace. She still has an aunt living in China and hopes to find her someday. Ms Kim's sister is also a trader in the same market and her husband runs four small stores in the city. She thinks women are better negotiators and more successful in coping with customs and tax inspectors. She says, 'we don't trust the government, they don't think of the people. There has to be reforms easing customs regulations, as well as bureaucracy and bribery at the borders. But having said that, we are happy to live here and it is a much freer country than its neighbours, better than China, Kazakhstan and Russia'. Kim complains about the cold and difficult working conditions, especially in winter, when 'we just keep drinking cognac to keep warm.'

Aisha (Ak-Tilek, Karakol, case 6) Aisha is a tired-looking 51 year old Uyghur whose family escaped from China for a better life. She started working in a Soviet state canteen in 1969 and has been in Ak-Tilek since 1990. On a damp and cold day, standing around the open stalls of the bazaar is a real hardship and throughout her life Aisha has just managed to keep her head above water. Her two teenage sons are unemployed and produce Uyghur pasta at home for her to sell. She deals with small quantities of rice, soap, biscuits and other foodstuffs brought from Bishkek, and most of her customers are urban dwellers, as well as impoverished peasants travelling from nearby villages. Aisha complains about her work circumstances as it is uncomfortable and unhealthy 'for a woman', but she sees no other income opportunity for herself and her children in the sleepy town of Karakol. On the contrary, life is getting harder and harder for her with high taxes and 'bad economic management'.

Anna (Dordoi, Bishkek, case 7) At the age of 43, Anna is a successful Russian entrepreneur selling towel dresses and other textile products. She did various forms of trade with China and Turkey for many years. She was selling Turkish garments and towel products and eventually decided to set up her own sewing workshop in order to reduce prices and diversify products. She normally brings designs from Istanbul and replicates them at one third the cost of original item. The business grew rapidly and she currently employs 30 people in her sewing workshop. She runs the business together with her daughter, father and husband, each sharing a different task under her coordination.

Conclusions

The tale of Djamila dramatises the determination and free will of Kyrgyz women and we can see how today's Djamilas work and how they think within the context of today's Kyrgyz economy. The evidence presented has shown that bazaars play a crucial role in income and job generation as well as in entrepreneurial development. Women from different ethnic backgrounds take advantage of these hubs and shape their businesses along with changing market opportunities. Both horizontal and vertical expansion and capital accumulation are used to move to new sectors as

three effects of bazaar activities. Female entrepreneurship is often regarded as a segment of a larger pool of family enterprises that are shared most commonly by married couples. However, unlike other family businesses in societies where women have a secondary and less managerial role, female entrepreneurs and business partners in Kyrgyzstan play a strong managerial role and often hold the upper hand in businesses. This is seen in our survey by common perceptions about women's superior qualities in trade and money management.

Bazaars have been identified as an intermediary operational level between the firm and the market in this study. Bazaars are also socially embedded economic spaces for traders. While solidarity is shared among friends and relatives, they are also extremely competitive, ethnically divisive and full of built-in tension. Thus, bazaars host socially embedded network relations and inherent tension between rival businesses. Competition through imitation is the main driving force behind business creation, entrepreneurial innovations and tension in bazaars. The built-in tension in bazaars has many layers; between retailer and wholesalers; customers and sellers; between state officials/inspectors and businesses; between different ethnic and/or social groups. Women entrepreneurs in these economic spaces not only manage to develop their businesses but also provide a crucial social asset, in the form of their communication and social skills in building relations within networks of customers and suppliers as well as neighbouring traders. Networks and relations built by friends and relatives of women reduce transaction costs, uncertainty and fill the information gap. Thus, these networks enhance the survival and growth of businesses. However, women's deep preoccupation with their family livelihood and future of their children make them act in a less risky manner in their financial dealings for new business ventures.

While bazaars are endowed with inter-personal trust in social networks against the shortcomings of the market and poor institutional structures, the lack of institutions and a stable policy framework negatively affects the formation of companies beyond family and social ties. This lack of impersonal trust beyond family and friends appears to be a limiting factor for business growth in bazaars, as well as in the business community in general. Similarly, collective action through interest representation and business associations is not yet part of the economic activities and behaviours of bazaar traders.

While a free market economy is slowly emerging out of the Communist Party and state control, the emerging post Soviet state power impinges upon the business environment as an unaccountable distributor of largess rather than an even-handed arbiter. The superior, hard working character of women in Kyrgyzstan cannot overcome the institutional and macro challenges. The biggest institutional challenge is a deep sense of uncertainty and poorly defined property rights. The regulatory system in Kyrgyzstan is not transparent and rules are applied inconsistently. Within this institutional context, despite the presence of numerous international donor agencies and aid programmes, small businesses often fail to benefit from initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and business creation (see also Khodov, 2003; Dadasev et al., 2003). Hard work needs an institutional umbrella of law and order, protection

of private gains and property, and stability. None of these are fully secure in Kyrgyzstan.[29]

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Notes

1 This research is funded by the Nuffield Foundation.
2 Today Kyrgyz people pay tribute to their 19th century leader Kurmanjan Datka, the women chief who negotiated a peace settlement with the advancing Russian powers, thus changed the destiny of the nation.
3 Kyrgyzstan is divided into seven administrative provinces – oblasts – identified with their main cities. Batken province (Batken), Osh province (Osh), Naryn province (Naryn), Jalal-Abad province (Jalal-Abad), Issyk-Kul province (Karakol), Talas province (Talas), Chui region (Bishkek).
4 Although the name has been officially changed to the Kyrgyz Republic, we use both terms interchangeably.
5 Many observers and experts in the country reckon the size of informal economy ranging from 50 per cent to 70 per cent.
6 See World Bank (2002).
7 Soon after a Russian military post was established nearby, the grid city of Karakol, meaning military post in Turkish, was founded in 1869. It was then called 'Przhevalsky' after the Russian explorer Nikolai Przhevalsky who provided crucial intelligence on the geography and peoples of Central Asia for Russian imperial expansion in the region.
8 After the privatization, agricultural land was divided into very small, economically inefficient units. Now the typical farm size is around 1.1 and 1.5 hectares and this is creating many problems (interview with Scott Wallace, Kyrgyz Agro-input enterprise Development, USAID, Osh, September 2004).
9 Many of these are individual patent (tax code) owners involved in small-scale trading activities. See Proma and International Business Council (2003).
10 See Proma and International Business Council (2003).
11 An average state employee earns around $19 (800 som) per month while a parliamentarian is paid $350 per month.

12 Forming associations is another new way of thinking for Kyrgyz people and donor agencies have been trying to help to initiate this public participation. Proma and International Business Council lists the following associations as partners: Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Kyrgyzstan, Entrepreneurs' Union of Karakol, Kyrgyz Exporters' Association, Small Business Development Centres in Bishkek and Narn, Women Entrepreneurs Support Association, Congress of Business Associations and the Centre for Public Opinion Survey and Forecasts.
13 A skilled female entrepreneur who was active in the Entrepreneurs Union of Karakol was quick to take advantage of privatization of a former Soviet factory and free zone initiative by utilising the Union solely for her own business interest. My visit to her flour factory, whose site was grabbed from the state, illustrated the grand opportunities delivered to a small well-connected group of business people.
14 Cf. Tabyshalieva (1999) on the political power of women.
15 An ethnic Uzbek trader's telling story about travelling across Turkey for five years working and undertaking small trade and later flying to Japan together with other small traders from CIS illustrates incredible courage and capacity of individuals.
16 Uyghur traders bring goods from their autonomous region in China to sell in Bishkek despite great hardship. They are not granted passports by the Chinese authorities and only travel with an issued ID paper. They often spend many nights in containers in between their trips.
17 The Karasuu Bazaar is newly established near to the old city bazaar in small city of Karasuu and is modelled after Dordoi bazaar in Bishkek. The Chinese border market set up near Doostuk is the main source of goods to Karasuu along with Dordoi.
18 To purchase a container or obtain a licence for a convenience store in Bishkek costs on average $2,500, which is a significant sum for small traders working on small margins.
19 Interview with Ulugbek Salymbekov, Chairman of the Dordoi Plaza, April 2004, Bishkek.
20 The lowest turnover is estimated to be around $4-7 million. The range between the low and high figures is huge and this is due to fact that most of the trade remains to be unregistered. The container rents vary between $600-700 per month and purchasing a container in Dordoi can be as expensive as $20,000 (Bal, 2004).
21 This market should not be confused with the bazaar in Bishkek of the same name.
22 The founder of the Mogul Empire, Babur, provides a vivid account of the Fergana Valley, its Turkic peoples, prosperous cities, and unmatchable fruits, in his personal accounts, known as the Baburname (see The Baburname, 2002). He is believed to have visited Suleiman too, the holy mountain in the centre of Osh, prior to his successful campaign in India and to have built a monument there.
23 These are expressions commonly used about different ethnic groups in cross reference.
24 An extensive survey on Turkish SMEs indicates that there is a clear gender bias against female employment and entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs are accepted more if they are outsiders and/or have higher educational qualifications.
25 To keep the respondents identity confidential, pseudo names are given to each case.
26 Deliberate fires and mafia type activities happen in bazaars. The former Uyghur Turbaza bazaar was completely burned down in 2002 and a bus full of them were robbed and killed by a group of bandits in 2003 near Narn.
27 Following the independence of the country and the fall of the communism, many people wanted to discover the world that they were not allowed to endeavour before. Partly as a response to travel restrictions and partly due to high expectations from shuttle trade, thousands of people left for China, Turkey and other western European countries. Individuals also want to imitate success stories. In recent years, for example, travelling

to Germany and bringing a second hand car loaded with second hand goods has been highly popular among men.

28 Seasonal fruit and tomato produce is often conserved by household and the remaining is wasted due to the small number of largely backward processing industries in the country.

29 In 1999, Transparency International ranked Kyrgyzstan 87th out of 99 countries.

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