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Linguistic Processes in Contemporary Urban Space of Tashkent Oblast*

Yulia Tsyryapkina

Docent at Altay State Pedagogical Academy

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Key Points

- There is still a lack of generalizing comprehensive research covering all aspects of life of the Russian-speaking population in the regions of Uzbekistan in the context of a "nationalizing" state.
- The results of field studies suggest that the way the Russians adapt to this context differs from the conventional perceptions of discrimination of the Russians in Central Asia, and the question of the functioning of the Russian language in social and cultural life of the republic is overly dramatized.
- Popularity and dissemination of the Russian language does not necessarily entail its widespread use.
- Russian is still indispensable in the industrial space, as it is the language of technical progress. Since Angren retains its industrial status, employees of enterprises (Uzbeks and Tajiks) must be bilingual.
- Tightening migration legislation in Russia, in particular a requirement demanding Russian language proficiency for migrant workers, will further consolidate the incipient changes in the perception of the Uzbek population.
- As a result, the cities of the Tashkent region may preserve a Russian information and communication environment in the context of a "nationalizing" state.

Although important, ethnic and cultural processes in modern Uzbekistan continue to be understudied. In the nation-building period following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a particular consideration and interest was given to the study of national culture, state language, medieval history, and the history of the Uzbeks, the titular population of the region. Therefore, many important issues surrounding minorities in the region have been seldom researched or analyzed, including ethnic and cultural processes among the minorities in the new socio-political and economic context of independent Uzbekistan.

A similar work was published in 2007 by the British anthropologist Moya Flynn, who investigated the identity of the Russian-speaking population in Tashkent.[2] The author's conclusions appeared to be traditional for the Western anthropological studies on minorities in Central Asia: Russian-speaking people are part of the Uzbek society; they are anchored to Uzbekistan as their home and are concerned about socio-economic problems. This study is based on interviews with people without statistical and analytical data analysis, which are usually not available in Uzbekistan.

To date, there are almost no comprehensive studies of the ethnic and cultural processes among Russians/Russian-speaking populations in the city of Tashkent or the Tashkent region

Among ethnic minorities Russians stand apart, while it is more appropriate to include them in a large ethno-linguistic group of the Russian-speaking population (including Koreans, Tatars, Germans, Ukrainians, Jews, and others).

To date, there are almost no comprehensive studies of the ethnic and cultural processes among Russians/Russian-speaking populations in the city of Tashkent or the Tashkent region. Those few studies, which touch upon the shifts in the environment for the minorities in Uzbekistan in the post-Soviet period, are mainly produced by Western researchers. Perhaps the only work that specifically studies the Russian population of the Tashkent oblast is the study done by the American political scientist Scott Radnitz,[1] who analyzed the factors leading to the immigration of minorities, primarily the Russians and Russian speakers. According to the author, in their decision to move to Russia, the Russians are not factoring in the political changes in Uzbek society which came in the post-Soviet period. There are mainly economic reasons that lie at the heart of their migration sentiments. These are the outcomes of the study which the author carried out based on focus groups' interviews in the small town of Chirchik in the Tashkent region, but Radnitz extrapolated his findings on the entire territory of Uzbekistan.

In recent years, a number of anthropological studies have emerged with complex analysis of the urban space in Tashkent. In one of his English-language publications, Artyom Kosmarski[3] traces the history of Tashkent from a colonial city to a socialist metropolis. Along with an analysis of the architectural heritage from the various epochs, the author notes important ethnic and cultural changes in the environment of the capital of independent Uzbekistan. While looking at the social fabric of Tashkent, Kosmarski came to the unique conclusion that the Russian-speaking population enjoys a high degree of comfort in the capital city. The author argues that it is the "Europeans," or the Russian-speaking populations who fully support the policies of the government of Islam Karimov and his uncompromising struggle against the Islamists that secures their perception of safety in Tashkent.[4]

It should be noted that ethnic and demographic processes in Uzbekistan are the subject of numerous studies of Uzbek analysts,[5] whose works are mainly devoted to demographic development of all the peoples in Uzbekistan, including the Russians/Russian-speaking population.

Among Uzbek authors, one can highlight the work of Evgeniy Abdullayev,[6] a philosopher, poet, and currently editor-in-chief of the spiritual, literary and historical magazine *Vostok svyshe/Dayspring*.

His works offer an analysis of all processes associated with nation-building in Uzbekistan and the changing role and importance of the Russian language in the 2000s. While there is no detailed analysis of the situation across different regions of Uzbekistan and no empirical basis, the author is a witness to the events and records common shifts in the identity of the Russian population in Central Asia.[7]

In Russian historiography it is difficult to find new distinguished research on minorities in Central Asia. A certain breakthrough in this area was made by the monograph of Natalia Kosmarskaya on the Russian population of Kyrgyzstan,[8] which was written on a rich empirical base. Some of the conclusions made by the author can be extrapolated to ethnic and cultural processes among the Russian-speaking population of Uzbekistan.

The availability of fragmented research on ethnocultural peculiarities of the Russians/Russian-speaking population of Uzbekistan is a positive fact. However, there is still a lack of generalizing comprehensive research covering all aspects of life of the Russian-speaking population in the regions of Uzbekistan in the context of a "nationalizing" state. Moreover, the results of field studies suggest that the way the Russians adapt to this context differs from the conventional perceptions of discrimination of the Russians in Central Asia, and the question of the functioning of the Russian language in social and cultural life of the republic is overly dramatized.

Ethnic and social background of Angren in 1946-1980

Angren is located approximately 100 km from Tashkent, in the Akhangaran Valley between the Chatkal and Kurama mountain ranges in the floodplain of the Angren river. Historically, the Angren valley links Tashkent with the pearl of Central Asia, the Ferghana valley. Today the Angren is the last city of the Tashkent region on the way to the Ferghana Valley as it is located on a strategically important automotive highway. The city was developed after lignite deposits were discovered there in 1933 as part of comprehensive exploration and development of natural resources in Central Asia. The exploration of the Angren Valley began in 1940, and a year later construction of the Angrenugol mine was launched with an emerging village called Angrenshahtostroy[9] nearby. Archival documents indicate that exploration works in the Akhangaran valley were led personally by Josef Stalin and Lavrentiy Beria. On the eve of the Second World Zar, the Soviet Union was speeding up the pace of industrialization in Central Asia and Kazakhstan and actively engaged in the development of new mineral deposits in order to turn the region into an independent national economic complex.

From 1940-1943 several coal-producing mines were developed and the first coal trains arrived in Tashkent during the war. Angren had actually become the second Donbass. In 1946, it was transformed into a city subordinated to a region. A new working city was added to the map of the Tashkent region and it was declared an all-country construction site. The workers from many areas of Uzbekistan, Central Asia, and Russia came to take part in a construction of the new industrial coal site in the republic.

The city became home to many large industrial facilities such as coal mines, a rubber plant, Angren State District Power Plant (GRES), Novo-Angren GRES, a ceramic factory, cement, asphalt, concrete, chemical, metallurgical production, and machine-building plants, a gold processing plant (now Angren rudoupravlenie - office of Almalyk Mining and Metallurgical Combine [hereinafter AMMC], which specializes in gold mining), Podzemgaz and others. The history of Angren recorded in the memories of its residents suggests that the city was flooded with immigrants from various regions of the USSR. Most recorded biographical interviews belong to the natives of the Urals and Tajikistan, and many mining experts, sinkers, miners, builders, etc. worked in the city.

The majority of the city's population was Russian or Russian-speaking people. One of the Soviet theses recorded that during the process of industrial development of Angren in the late 1950s - early 1960s, there was a problem with urbanizing the Uzbek population.[10] Uzbeks had been less engaged in industrial development and poorly urbanized, as evidenced by the data in Table 1.

Therefore, the cities of the Akhangaran valley - Angren and Almalyq - were predominantly "European" in their early years of development. In Angren there was a high proportion of Russians, Tatars (in Table 1, Crimean Tatars and Volga Tatars are most likely combined), Ukrainians, and Koreans. At the same time, Angren had traditionally hosted a high number of Tajiks (in 1959, 7.4% of the population). The Akhangaran valley has many place names derived from the Persian language, and Akhangaran means "a master blacksmith."[11]

Table 1. Nationalities of the cities in Tashkent region in 1959 (in % of total)[12]

Cities	*Uzbeks*	*Russians*	*Kazakhs*	*Kyrgyz*	*Tajiks*	*Tatars*	*Ukrainians*	*Koreans*
Tashkent	33.8	43.9	0.9	0.05	0.5	6.7	2.7	0.4
Almalyq	10.5	53.8	1.1	0.05	0.2	18.4	4.9	6.0
Angren	15.7	42.9	0.6	0.03	7.4	17.9	3.7	2.6

The census data from Angren in 1979 and 1989 (see Table 2) underlines the trends that had become common to all Central Asian republics for that period. By the end of the 1980s, the share of autochthonous groups (Uzbeks, Tajiks) had increased, while the share of Russians and Russian-speaking populations had gradually decreased with the slowdown of natural growth and increasing out-migration from the region. It is difficult today to analyze the ethnic statistics of such cities as Angren because the headcount methods for the population of individual administrative units are not quite clear. It is most likely that in 1979 and 1989 Angren's population would have included the population from nearby villages (Ablyk, Dzhigiristan, Karabau, Teshiktash, Apartak, Saglom, Gulbag, and Katagan), which were predominantly Uzbek. Even now most of population in Karabau is Tajik. Therefore, according to the statistics, the share of the urban Uzbek population had increased, but in reality Uzbeks had been living in the villages outside of the city space. In one interview a respondent noted that in the Soviet period almost no Uzbeks lived in Angren itself.[13]

Table 2. Population of Angren by nationalities in 1979-1989[14] (people and %)

Years	*Total*	*Uzbeks*	*Russians*	*Crimean Tatars*	*Tajiks*	*Tatars*	*Ukrainians*	*Koreans*
1979	105,757	30,248	36,011	3,613	13,142	9,967	2,181	2,065
%	(100)	(28.6)	(34)	(3.4)	(12.4)	(9.4)	(2)	(1.9)
1989	137,615	43,374	43,218	4,912	18,163	11,503	2,794	3,266
%	(100)	(31.5)	(31.4)	(3.5)	(13.1)	(8.3)	(2)	(2.3)

The data in Table 3 proves that the main population of the city and surrounding villages inscribed in the city limits was Russian-speaking. A similar situation was observed for all industrial centers. Russians (97.8%) did not speak a second language, which was explained by their "status of extraterritoriality." This concept was introduced by the Norwegian researcher Paul Kolstø. In one of his articles he stressed that during the Soviet time the Russians in any of the constituent republics of the USSR, even where there were few of them (in the case of the Uzbek SSR), felt free to use their native language as their self-confidence was supported by the availability of the official Russian-speaking government institutions.[15] Accordingly, in the USSR, nationality was territorial for all, except Russians. Russians did not speak the language of the titular population and did not aspire to learn a second language, as it was not necessary in the urban space.

Similar processes had been taking place among other Russian-speaking groups: 66.8% of the Volga Tatars spoke Russian fluently. A higher level of proficiency in Russian was displayed by the Crimean Tatars (79.8%), and the vast majority belong to the Russian-speaking group. 47.3% of the Koreans spoke Russian fluently, about the same share of Germans in Angren as well as 48.9% of the Germans spoke Russian fluently. Among the Uzbek population of Angren 56.8% spoke Russian fluently, while 41% of Uzbeks did not speak a second language. These Soviet statistics again show that the urban environment was predominantly Russian-speaking, forcing the indigenous Uzbek population to learn Russian.

Table 3. Population by nationality and knowledge of the second language (languages of the former USSR) in Angren in 1989[16] (people and %)

Nationality	Total	including					
		those who speak fluently the second language of the USSR nations					
		Native language	Russian	Uzbek	Tajik	Tatar	No second language
Total population	137,615 (100%)	771 (0.5%)	49,359 (35.8%)	8,293 (6%)	695 (0.5%)	97 (0.07%)	77,747 (56.4%)
Uzbeks	43,374 (100%)	171 (0.3%)	24,657 (56.8%)	-	654 (1.5%)	46 (0.1%)	17,800 (41%)
Russians	43,218 (100%)	15 (0.03%)	-	596 (1.3%)	14 (0.03%)	77 (0.17%)	42,292 (97.8%)
Ukrainians	2,794 (100%)	101 (3.6%)	841 (30%)	42 (1.5%)	3 (0.1%)	2 (0.07%)	1,748 (62.5%)
Tajiks	18,163 (100%)	118 (0.6%)	5,294 (29.1%)	6,666 (36.7%)	-	6 (0.03%)	6,039 (33.2%)
Tatars	11,503 (100%)	259 (2.2%)	7,688 (66.8%)	348 (3%)	7 (0.06%)	-	3,181 (27.6%)
Crimean Tatars	4,912 (100%)	23 (0.4%)	3,921 (79.8%)	227 (4.6%)	4 (0.08%)	13 (0.2%)	718 (14.6%)
Koreans	3,266 (100%)	-	1,546 (47.3%)	50 (1.5%)	-	1 (0.03%)	1,622 (49.6%)
Germans	4,766 (100%)	-	2,335 (48.9%)	25 (0.5%)	2 (0.04%)	1 (0.02%)	2,355 (49.4%)

Industrialization in Soviet Central Asia and Kazakhstan was led by the center using Russian while engaging skilled workers from the European parts of the USSR. In the first years of emerging Soviet power, the indigenous peoples of the region had been poorly engaged in the processes of industrialization. For the Uzbeks of Angren to urbanize meant to join the Russified lifestyle through knowledge of the Russian language without which it was impossible to participate in industrial production. Accordingly, mid-aged and younger generations of Uzbeks and Tajiks in the 1980s generally learned the Russian language.

Changes in ethnical and social processes of the Tashkent oblast in the 1990s - early 2000s

According to the data from 1991, there were about 132,000 people living in Angren, mostly Russian, Tatars, Crimean Tatars, Germans, Koreans, Ukrainians, etc., who were employed within the industrial enterprises of the city.[17] Angren was built in quarters and the Russian-speaking (multiethnic) population was prevalent within the city limits. Several rural settlements surround Angren: the Dzhigiristan villages (in 1940 this was a settlement of workers), Ablyk, Guram, Teshiktash, Apartak, Saglom, Gulbag, Katagan (a predominantly Uzbek, Tajik village), Karabau (currently, a part of the city), a settlement of geologic explorers/Geologorazvedchikov (in common parlance - Geologists), as well as the German village.

In the 1990s through the first decade of the 2000s most businesses in Angren ceased to function except for the Angren office of the AMMC and coal mines, as well as Angren and Novo-Angren power stations (GRES). Stagnation of core industries had seriously affected the ethnic and social composition of the city and the living standards of the Russian-speaking residents. Widespread unemployment caused by the shutdown of the core enterprises, economic crisis, and processes of ethno-political mobilization in Uzbekistan contributed to the rapid outflow of

the Russian-speaking population. Angren had become populated by the residents of nearby villages, where the situation in the 1990s - early 2000s was even worse.

The economic growth in Uzbekistan had had a weak effect on Angren in the 1990s - 2000s, as a result the city had lost its industrial status and the structure of employment had changed. The years from 1995 to 2003 had been particularly challenging for the city as the Soviet system of urban infrastructure collapsed, entailing year-round shutoffs of electricity, heating, and hot water. Everyday problems aggravated the difficult situation with the lack of available jobs, decay of the old structure of employment, and shifts in the information and communication environment. Employment in various sectors went through serious deformation. Gradually, by the 2000s such sectors as the service industry and trade had begun to develop, partly due to the fact that Angren is located on the transit way of goods from the markets of Kokand to Tashkent. In 2008, in one of the Angren quarters "5/4," a new bazaar, was built with modern shopping pavilions and trade, as the main area of employment in the city, began to appear more regulated.

The changes of the 1990s - 2000s in Angren brought about a ruralization of the urban space, which resulted in the appearance of sheep, goats, and cows on the streets. For the population of nearby villages, cattle became one of the reliable sources of income (every day women from villages come to the city market and sell homemade dairy products). Cows and sheep can be seen in Angren parks and on main streets. Yet none of 15 individuals interviewed during 2011-2013 fieldwork mentioned that everyday rural practices are being moved to the urban space along with the spontaneous market trade. There is no visible tension between the Russian-speaking population and the "new city residents," which is common in the cities of Kyrgyzstan, while the Russian-speaking community in Angren is more concerned with the out-migration of Russians from Uzbekistan, which changes their communication environment.

Today Angren is undergoing important changes, particularly in regard to its status. In April 2012, President Islam Karimov signed a decree on the establishment of the special industrial zone (SIZ) in Angren. The city was not chosen accidentally: the important industrial complex there during the Soviet period still has valuable potential. Additionally, in Angren there is also a gas production station, the only one in the country that operates using the underground angle pyrolysis method. The cities of the Tashkent region also have a large untapped labor pool.

In April 2012, President Islam Karimov signed a decree on the establishment of the special industrial zone (SIZ) in Angren

The first changes are already noticeable today. A new pipeline plant has been built in the city, along with factories for the production of silicon tiles, sugar, flour, cardboard, etc. Modern mechanized productions did not have a noticeable effect on the employment situation in the city. Major construction projects use foreign labor, such as the railroad Angren-Pap (Pap district is located in the Namangan region), which is being constructed by the Chinese and will be the first railway linking the cities of the Tashkent oblast with the Fergana Valley. According to unofficial sources, this construction involves 1,000 Chinese workers. The Spanish firm Isolux Corsan leads reconstruction of the 76-kilometer span of the road running from the checkpoint at Kamchik to the checkpoint at Chinor and is entirely located in the mountains. It employs about 200 Spaniards. Accordingly, major construction projects from 2012-2014 did not radically improve the employment situation in the city itself.

Large-scale changes of the 1990s - 2010s led to fundamental changes in the ethnic composition of the city. According to the official data of the State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan, the population of Angren on January 1, 2013 was 172,880 people, of whom 126,247 were Uzbeks (73% of the city's total population), Tajiks - 28,653 (16.8%), Russian

– 4,621 (2.6%), Tatars – 1,284 (0.7%), and Koreans – 8,282 (4.7%).[18] Accordingly, the share of the "European" population, which was formerly dominant in the city, is now less than 10%. During the period of independence, Uzbekistan had not held a census and the headcount of its residents had significant errors. For example, the official statistics did not include residents of Angren who received Russian citizenship and have residence permits in Uzbekistan, so-called "returnees," whose numbers are significant.

The railroad Angren-Pap, which is being constructed by China, will be the first railway linking the cities of the Tashkent oblast with the Fergana Valley

Russian language in the sociocultural space of Angren

The issue of Russian language continues to be important. Due to the outflow of the Russian-speaking population during the period of independence, there were changes in the use of the Russian language. Russian has a strong position in Angren's social and cultural arenas despite the changes in the ethnic composition of the population. A demand for Russian education remains extremely high. Currently there are five schools in Angren that deliver education in two languages; they have both Russian and Uzbek classes. In fact, there are schools with Russian language instruction in all districts of the city, which meets the needs of the students. This is impressive given the fact that there are only 4,621 Russians left and there are few children among them. In comparison, as of January 1, 2013 there were 28,653 Tajiks living in Angren (16.8%)[19], while there are only 5 schools that instruct in Tajik.

The interview with Lucia Shamilevna Rebechenko, director of school #33, concurrently chairman of Angren branch of the Russian Cultural Centre, suggests that the indigenous population developed a high demand for children's education in Russian. Russian instructed classes are overcrowded; in a school with 5 classes, 4 classes are instructed in Russian and 1 in Uzbek.[20]

The reasons for such a high demand for education in Russian are:

1. A perception about the quality and benefits of education in Russian;

2. Education in Russian is a prerequisite for career opportunities both in Uzbekistan and abroad;

3. The socio-economic orientation towards Russia due to labor migration. Evgeny Abdullayev had rightly noted that Russia of the 2000s is regaining symbolic status as "big brother," which elevates the status of the Russian population in Central Asia; [21]

4. Russian-Uzbek bilingualism maintained from the Soviet era.

It would seem that because of the national language development program (change from Cyrillic to Latin alphabet in the 1990s) the position of the Russian language had been completely undermined, but it turns out that Russian is booming after oblivion even in the cities of the Tashkent region.

The officers of Rossotrudnichestvo (a structure of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in Uzbekistan mentioned that representatives of the country's elite seek to improve their Russian language skills for better utilization of the opportunities of internet resources, Russian specialized literature, etc. In Tashkent, the Russian Cultural Center and Rossotrudnichestvo provide courses to train students of community colleges (in Uzbekistan schooling continues until 9th grade followed by 3 courses of specialized schools) to enroll in Russian universities on a budgetary basis. For example, for the 2011-2012 academic year, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation had allocated 297 places for these students.[22]

At the same time, it should be noted that popularity and dissemination of the Russian language does not

necessarily entail its widespread use. The younger generation, born in the late 1980s - early 1990s, has been educated in schools with the state language, while Russian might have been maintained as an elective language. As a result, Russian is used in domestic spheres and media in a rather simplified way.

For the Russian-speaking residents of Angren it remains unclear how best to educate their younger generation with no institutions of specialized secondary or higher education. Currently, the Tashkent region is the only one in the country that has no higher education institution. Out of Angren post-secondary education institutions there is only one available, which is the Medical College, which has a "European group" (with Russian language instruction). In July 2011, on the eve of entrance exams, the Tashkent Regional Pedagogical Institute, named after Mahmud Kashgari (TOGPI), closed its doors unexpectedly.[23] The Pedagogical Institute provided training not only for educators, but also for city law enforcement agencies. Because of the TOGPI closure, the opportunities to obtain higher education dropped dramatically for all Angren residents. A branch of the Navoi Mining and Metallurgical Institute operates in Almalyq located 45 km from Angren.

Overall, higher education in Uzbekistan is gradually becoming elitist, as the system of grants (education on a budgetary basis) acts on a case by case basis and the majority of students enroll on a contract basis. In this system, only those who can afford to pay tuition get education and most of the Russian-speaking population of Angren – i.e. industrial workers, teachers, drivers, etc.– miss out on such opportunities. It must be noted that it is the "closed" system of higher education that acts as a major factor pushing the middle-aged Russian-speaking residents to participate in the repatriation program in Russia. The perception of the population is that access to higher education in Russia is significantly easier.

The industrial status of the city is the main reason why the Russian language enjoys such a high popularity in the urban space. During 23 years of independence, dramatic changes have occurred in the urban space, including the ethnic composition of the population, as well as in the industrial and manufacturing sector, but the information and communication space in Russian seems to be unchanged. This phenomenon can be explained by the functional stability of the Russian language in industrial production.

This is confirmed by three interviews recorded with the employees of Angren's leading industrial enterprises. A driver for a local logistics company confirmed that internal documentation is kept entirely in Russian.[24] An electrician in the mining industry from one of Angren's gold processing plants also confirmed that all internal documentation is compiled in Russian, and that company regulations are also maintained in Russian: "For example, I worked in energy management. All negotiations there between the controllers had been led in Russian. Because a dispatcher does not know many electrical terms in Uzbek, while he, for example, must pass the instruction to disable or enable any line, his colleague may not perceive the Uzbek properly, can make a mess and may bring the people under death, so everybody is forced to speak in Russian."[25]

Another episode from an interview with him:

"A: My whole shift must be fixed in the log

Yu.Ts.: in Russian?

A.: In Russian, yes, and Uzbek shift, who work with me, they also write in Russian. Firstly, nothing is recorded in Uzbek. Secondly, we have two Russians, one Tatar, and three Uzbeks. They write in bad Russian, but this is Russian. They usually can write everything in Russian. He writes in bad language and it is funny to read, of course, when you take the shift, but this is clearer than their Uzbek."

The third example is related to the activities of an employee from an Angren coal mine and confirms that the managers give all commands to load and unload the coal in Russian and that the technical documentation is complied entirely in Russian.[26]

Russian is still indispensable in the industrial space, as it is the language of technical progress. Since Angren retains its industrial status, employees of enterprises (Uzbeks and Tajiks) must be bilingual. Later, with the mechanization and modernization of industrial enterprises, the demand for Russian will only increase as Russian language

is linked to high standards, and for the people of the region it is easier to master than English. In this regard, it would be prospective to further investigate the issues surrounding new businesses built after 2012 functioning in the Angren industrial zone. In what language would production be led in the new facilities? For example, in a cardboard factory in Angren a huge workshop was built and new equipment was purchased, while the project was supervised by Czech entrepreneurs, it is notable that the head engineers were invited from Novosibirsk, Russia.

To conclude, it is worth noting that, despite the nationalization of all spheres of public life and introduction of the Uzbek language in the official documentation, the Russian-speaking population retained its position in the social space of Angren. William Fierman analyzed that the Russian language in Central Asia plays a much more important role than in the Baltic States or even the South Caucasus where the Russian population is small.[27] Tightening migration legislation in Russia, in particular a requirement demanding Russian language proficiency for migrant workers, will further consolidate the incipient changes in the perception of the Uzbek population. These changes entail shifts in priority values, as a choice for the future becomes critical and is associated with obtaining education in Russian. As a result, the cities of the Tashkent region may preserve a Russian information and communication environment in the context of a "nationalizing" state.

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