

ARMENIA - Analytical Assessment Report

(Report is prepared by representatives of YSU and RAU)

1) State of the Art of Migration Policy in Armenia

a) Facts and Figures about Migration

Settlement changes have accompanied the humans during the whole history being one of the main elements conditioning the origin, existence and fall of states, societies, civilizations. Such changes in modern times are, more than ever, reflections of different evident or latent processes with their main or secondary factors. This is especially visible during the 20th century, which began and ended in the atmosphere of migrations.

Migration is neither a new nor a homogenous phenomenon in Armenia. Armenian communities of the Near East, East Asia, Europe, North and South America, Russia and Georgia have centuries old histories. They were qualitatively reshaped especially at the beginning of the 20th century and are dynamic also today, particularly during the 1990s that migration movements were significantly reshaped both quantitatively and qualitatively. During the last 20 years, Armenia, as an integral part of the modern world, underwent the same global, regional, and local events of world developments. One of the results of such developments is migrations of post-Soviet period which left traces on all spheres of social life of Armenia from everyday life to geopolitics.

It is characteristic of the late 80s and 90s that due to the economic and social stalemate after the collapse of the Soviet Union, natural catastrophes, such as the devastating earthquake in 1988 causing the resettlement of approximately 200 000 people, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict leading to the relocation of approximately one million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) on the sides of both Azerbaijan and Armenia, more than 40 % of the Armenian population have been involved in migratory movements.¹ The flows of emigration in this period resulted inter alia in the transformation of the demographic situation with undesirable changes of the reproductive model, decreases in numbers of the economic active population, the depopulation of villages, and the deformation of social structures. The Armenian society was especially marked by the phenomenon of brain drain since it was primarily the well educated class leaving the country for the greater good.

On the other hand, however, emigration had also its positive impacts on the development of the country because of increasing amounts of money transfers (remittances)² and foreign investments but also because emigration contributed to a decrease in potential social tensions in the 1990s. Despite the positive impacts labour emigration had on development

¹ G. Pogossyan, Migration in Armenia, Yerevan 2003.

² Armenia is one of the major receiving countries of remittances worldwide. According to World Bank Statistics, in 2010 US\$ 824 million have been sent by Armenian emigrants. See <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLAC/Resources/Factbook2011-Ebook.pdf>.

in particular at the house-hold level in Armenia, Armenian workers abroad were increasingly confronted with precarious working conditions and violations of their labour rights in host societies. Mainly being employed in peripheral labour sectors on the basis of oral working agreements the human rights situation of emigrated workers became a main concern of Armenian policy makers.

Between 1995 and 2001 emigration rates evened out due to the relatively stable economic situation of the country and the decreasing trend continued between 2002 and 2010.³ Even though the net migration rate remains negative it is interesting to note that between 2002 and 2010 approximately 80 % of emigrated Armenians returned to their country of origin. The reintegration, in particular of returning forced migrants, however imposes severe social-economic challenges on the Armenian society especially with regard to language issues, since reintegrated Armenians often do not speak the Armenian language, employment and housing.

Violent/forced migration

Migration image of Soviet Armenia in mid 1980s consisted of labor migrants (*khopanchi*) who were engaged in seasonal works, the ones who returned from other Soviet republics, as well as more and more increasing immigration outside of Soviet Union. At the end of 1980s these processes became unprecedented in Armenian reality. In spring 1988 Soviet Armenia hosted first wave of refugees saved from Sumgait massacres which had its continuance until the autumn and winter of 1991. During 1988-1993 more than 420000 refugees migrated to Armenia, 350-360000 of which from Azerbaijan, the rest from other Soviet Republics (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirghizistan, Abkhazia).⁴ During the mentioned time span, according to some sources, Armenia left 100-150000 ethnic Azerbaijanis. The crisis in Armenia of early 1990s caused outflow of 120-150000 former migrants which seemed to have found their homeland.

If the inflow of migrants from Azerbaijan, due to its massiveness and direct impact on Armenian society, has been investigated properly than other immigrations still need to be investigated.

Evacuation of population in earthquake epicenter

The earthquake of December 7 1988 took more than 25000 lives and caused evacuation of the rest of population. During 1989 their destroyed houses left more than 200000 people (mainly women and children). Resettlement of the most of them (160000 people) was organized by the state, the rest managed evacuation due to own links. Although most of them returned back, however ca. 1,5% of population of Armenia (50000 people) found their

³ Statistic Yearbook of Armenia 1997-2010.

⁴ Framework Paper on State Regulation of Population Migration in the Republic of Armenia, Department of Migration and Refugees under the Government of Armenia, Yerevan 2004.

permanent residences outside of Armenia.⁵ One of the negative results of this event was that it served as a factor for further massive outflows.

Internally displaced persons (IDP-s)

Besides the migrants from Azerbaijan, Armenian-Azeri confrontation served as a reason for the formation of a mass of internally displaced persons. During bombardment of borderline regions in 1991-1993 the nearby settlements were left for the central regions of Armenia by 70-80000 citizens. One part of this flow returned back, however a considerable percentage became part of outflow of 1992-1994.⁶

Social-political emigration

Collapse of the Soviet Union, disappearance of the iron curtain, reshaping of social structure, degradation of Soviet value system, social and economic crisis and social tension served as a ground for qualitatively new outflows in which were mainly involved:

- people who were discontent with Soviet rules and always wished to migrate;
- Armenians from mainly Near Eastern countries who, due to new conditions, were able to continue their lives in Europe and USA;
- specialists with high qualification, mainly scientists who had now possibilities to work in Western research centers;
- newly formed businessmen which preferred to try their possibilities in other post-Soviet countries, mainly in Russian Federation;
- representatives of national minorities, mainly ethnic Russians, who were assisted by the politics of repatriation promoted by Russia;
- Russian speaking pretty big group of Armenia;
- representatives of administrative apparatus of Soviet Armenia, who, using their former links, moved to Russian Federation and other republics of the former USSR.⁷

Mass social-economic migration during 1992-1994

First years of independence was a period of social, economic unprecedented decrease in all Soviet republics. This period was especially crucial for the Republic of Armenia: the 1988 earthquake, Nagorno-Karabakh war, blockade resulting in social, economic, energetic and cultural chaos served as an impetus for unprecedented migrations. According to different sources, during 1992-1994 Armenia left 980000-1000000 people, the absolute majority of which (620000) did not return back. During these years more than 40% of population of Armenia was directly involved in migration processes.⁸ The data of investigations essentially surpass the ones from official reports. The census of 2001 demonstrated, that

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Post-Conflict Recovery Plan of Borderline Areas of the Republic of Armenia, Department of Migration and Refugees under the Government of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan 2000.

⁷ National Human Development Report. Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges, Armenia 2009

⁸ G. Pogossyan, Migration in Armenia, Yerevan 2003.

during 1990-2001 Armenia left more than 632000 people without coming back, which 14 times surpasses (44000 people) the data of border crossings. For another apogee of migration activities in 2002 the data differ 35 times.⁹ The main reasons of such an image are social uncertainty as well as gaps in counting of migration acts during the first years of independence, as well as un-perfectness of the system and the lack of reliability today. The citizens of the Republic of Armenia having no confidence with future were not able to foresee the process of migrations, which made obstacles for realization of such investigations. Unfortunately, due to different reasons, the data and estimations are scarcely considered reliable by publicity today.¹⁰

Many investigations show that mass migration in early 1990s consisted mainly of two flows - short and long temporary labor migrants, whose relatives were in Armenia, and long term social migrants or migrants without coming back. The geography of mentioned flows, as a rule, was restricted by the Russian Federation (80-90%), other countries of Community of Independent States (mainly the Ukraine). In the demographic structure prevailed economically active men of reproductive age (more than 65%). The presented flows can be labeled as "Brain Drain" because the educational level of the involved migrants in the average surpassed the middle-republican.

As a negative result of this mass migration can be stated as follows:

- decrease in population quantity and critical depopulation of settlements;
- mass outflow of active reproductive and middle age men, which conditioned the deformation of demographic structure of the Republic of Armenia;
- critical decrease of number of qualified specialists;
- increase in proportion of not wholly "unfather" families;
- deformation of traditional family as socialization agent;
- increase in social-economic overloading of the population which remained in Armenia.

Besides negative results, the migrations had also positive outcomes. So, due to such migrations the Republic of Armenia "emancipated" itself from the army of unemployed and marginal persons who were the main element of social tension and inevitable conflict.

The only source of income for many families in Armenia was direct monetary transfers of their relatives abroad. Labor migrants organized their activities in some spheres, among which constructions, repairs, trade and service were the most important. The broadening of flows, increasing of migrants quantity in different social and economic spheres, possibilities to earn money and the acute need of it, chaos in relations concerning labor organization as well as corruption and illegalities increased risks of migration activities. Migrants being involved in Peripheral sectors of host societies were working often with oral agreement. The rights of migrants were continuously disregarded. Besides evident

⁹ Ruben Yeganyan and Karine Kuyumjyan, Socio-Demographic Challenges of Post-Soviet Armenia, the Eurasia Foundation, CRRC Armenia Program, UNFPA, Yerevan 2004.

¹⁰ National Human Development Report. Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges, Armenia 2009.

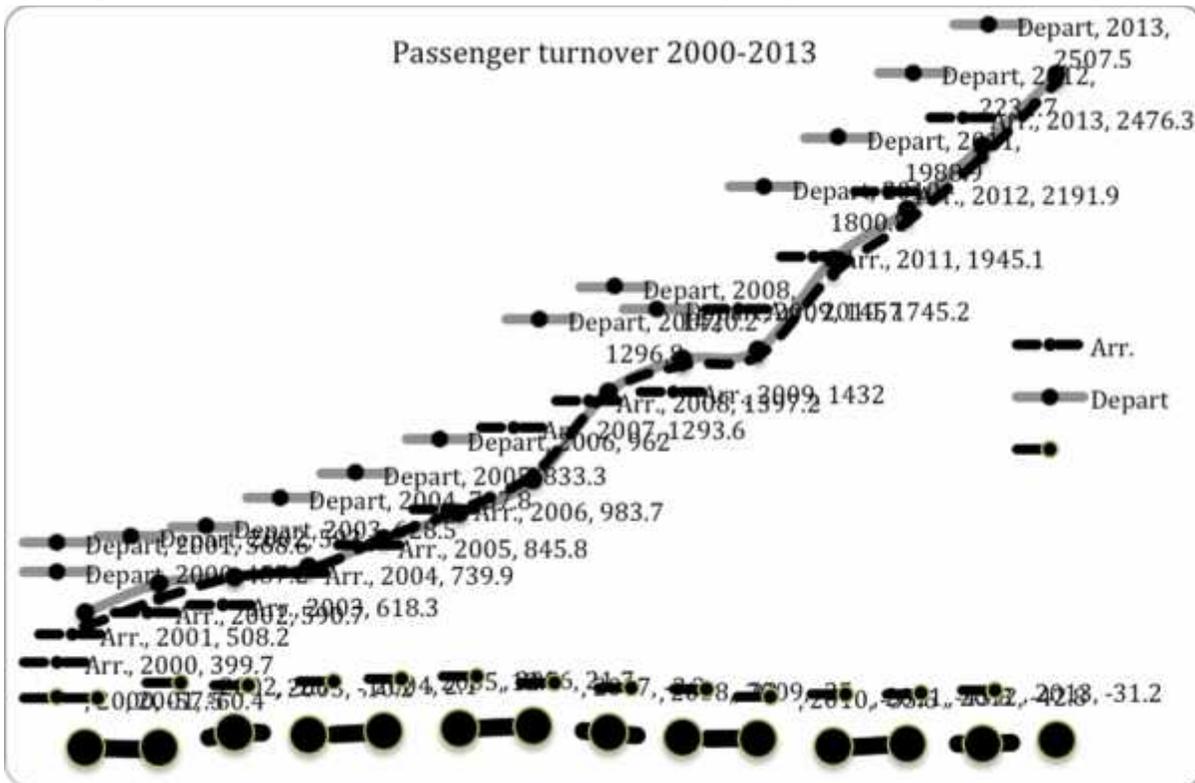
anti-Caucasian and anti-Armenian trends of particular groups were essential, which sometimes ended with tragic outcomes.

Decrease in outer migration activities

The years of 1995-2001 are characterized by abrupt decrease of migration activities and by considerable increase of inflow (outflow 600-650000, inflow 350000, migration balance 250000 people).¹¹ This phenomenon was conditioned by comparative stability of social and economic conditions in Armenia for which monetary transfers and decrease of migration potential played the most essential role.

Migrations in Armenia during 2002-2010: increase of migration trends

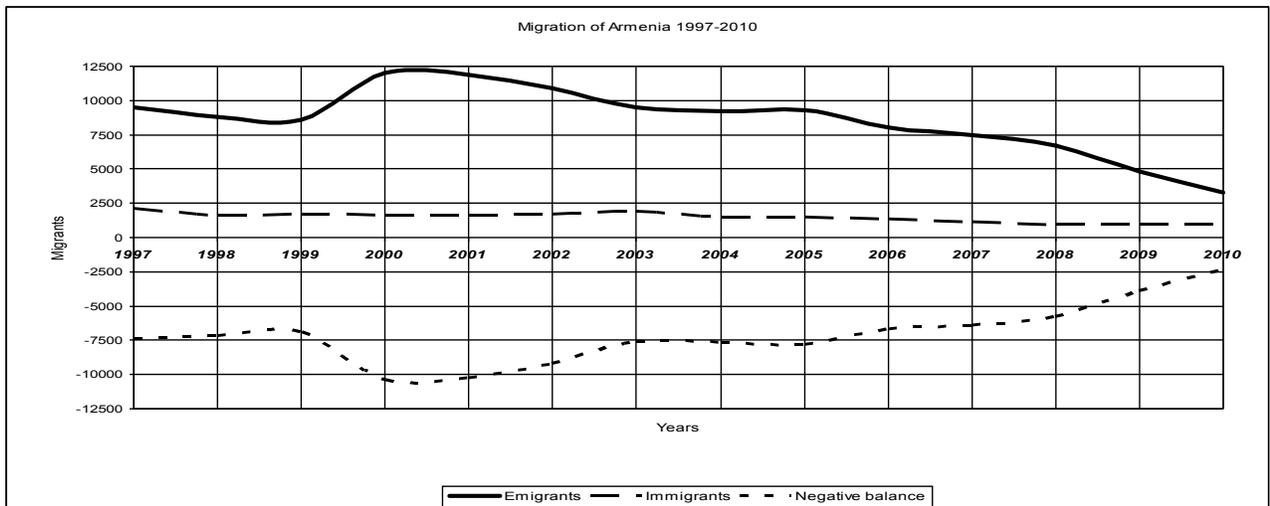
The researcher will definitely have the first relation to the migration through quantitative data, the monitoring of the dynamics of change of which is an important component of migration studies. Particularly, information on volumes of border crossing directly shows migration circulation of the population of Republic of Armenia. Despite of the simplicity and accessibility of the latter, they are not free of some drawbacks, which do not allow making a more in-depth analysis. Thus, the presented data lacks a quality component. Anyone, crossing the Armenian border is included in migration circulation without the most important characteristic features, which are very important for social analysis.¹²



¹¹ Migration of Armenia's Population in the Post-Soviet Period (UNFPA, Yerevan 1996).

¹² See http://www.smsmta.am/?menu_id=18

According to official sources, the outflow from Armenia in all directions made up only 54000 people and inflow 9100 people which provided 45100 migrants negative balance.¹³



Experts investigations show that during the mentioned period the outflow from Armenia in all directions made up 750000 people, inflow 600000 people and negative balance 150000 people, i.e. ca. 5 % of the population.¹⁴ We can conclude that during this period emigration from Armenia becomes more intensive, mainly keeping the qualitative image of mass outflow of 1990s, it means:

- emigration is, as a rule, temporary, connected with labor search;
- most of the emigrants are men;
- the most part of emigrants (82%) are 20-54 years old;
- the most part of emigrants (67-68%) are married;
- the role of persons with high education and overqualified persons is considerable in emigration flows (22%);
- the most part of emigrants, as before, is involved in constructional (63%) and then trade (10-11%) spheres;
- the most part of emigrants (75-76%) is oriented to the Russian Federation.¹⁵

The expert data presented above are characterized by the fact that 80% of the emigrants of 2002-2010 came back to Armenia which is to interpret by the evident decrease of social and economic conditions in host countries.

Refugees from Syria, Ukraine and other places

Not only quantitative, but also qualitative changes, having a number of truly profound, far-reaching consequences, are common to recent migratory processes and circulations. The recent Armenian migration dynamics picture is supplemented by a large number

¹³ Statistic Yearbook of Armenia 1997-2010.

¹⁴ Sampling Survey of Armenia's External and Domestic Migration, UNHCR, National Statistical Service of Armenia, Yerevan 2008.

¹⁵ Labor Emigration from Armenia during 2002-2005: Sociological Survey of Households, OSCE, Survey of Migrants Returning to Armenia during 2002-2008, OSCE.S

migrants, immigrated to Armenia as a result of Syrian and Ukrainian political crises, wars. The data, presented in the website of the State Migration Service of Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations of Republic of Armenia involve only the migrants from the abovementioned places, who have applied for shelter and received it¹⁶:

Table 1. Syrian citizens applied for asylum

Total		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
Applied	Received										
819	626	4	-	6	6	519	372	290	248	49	27

At the same time, there are 114 shelter seekers from Ukraine. Naturally, this data is much less than the number of migrants firstly from Syria and Ukraine, immigrated in recent years, from the actual total number of refugees. The problem actually has the qualitative most important ingredient. The biggest part of immigrants from these countries is ethnic Armenians.

b) Main Challenges Armenia is facing

Table 2. Basic economic facts of Armenia¹⁷

Estimator	Details	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Population	thousand at yearend	3222.9	3230.1	3238.0	3249.5	3262.6	3 021.4	3 026.9
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	AMD billion	2656.2	3149.3	3646.1	3141.7	3501.6	3 777.9	3 997.6
	US \$ million	6384.5	9206.3	11916.6	8648.0	9371.2	10142.1	9950.3
GDP per capita	AMD thousand	824.6	976.1	1127.4	968.5	1075.4	1252.8	1321.9
	US \$	1982.1	2853.3	3684.8	2666.1	2878.0	3363.2	3 290.3
External public debt	US \$ million	1205.6	1448.9	1577.1	2966.7	3299.0	2955.83	3157.95
Average monthly nominal wages	AMD	62293	74227	87406	96019	102652	108 092	113 163
	US \$	150	217	286	264	275	290	282
Fixed minimal amount of	AMD	15000	20000	25000	30000	30000	32500	32500
	US \$	36	59	82	82	80	87	81

¹⁶ See http://www.smsmta.am/?menu_id=152

¹⁷ Source: National Statistical Service of RA – www.armstat.am

wages								
Average size of monthly pensions	AMD	10912	12746	21370	24520	27107	27 062	29 696
	US \$	26	38	70	67	73	73	72
Average annual consumer price index	% of previous year	102.9	104.4	109.0	103.4	108.2	107.7	102.6
Consolidated budget revenues	AMD billion	533.4	698.3	800.8	711.7	804.3		
Consolidated budget expenditures	AMD billion	567.8	746.8	827.4	947.6	975.9		
Exports (including services)	% of GDP	23.4	19.2	14.7	15.1	21.0	24.0	25.0
Imports (including services)	% of GDP	39.3	39.2	39.8	43.0	45.0	47.0	49.0
Labor resources, total	thousand persons	2114.9	2171.4	2 376.9	2 397.6	2 389.7	2 286.3	2 260.8
Economically active population	thousand persons	1418.3	1416.3	1 414.6	1 418.8	1 463.3	1 440.9	1 418.3
Unemployment rate	%	19.2	18.5	16.4	18.7	19.0	18.4	17.3
Unemployment total	of which (by education) :	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	higher, post-graduate	14.4	11.8	12.4	14.2	14.8	16.7	16.3
	secondary specialized	79.8	32.4	33.1	30.0	29.6	29.0	30.4
	secondary		50.6	49.5	50.3	49.9	48.0	46.9
	basic	5.8	5.2	5.1	5.5	5.7	6.3	6.4

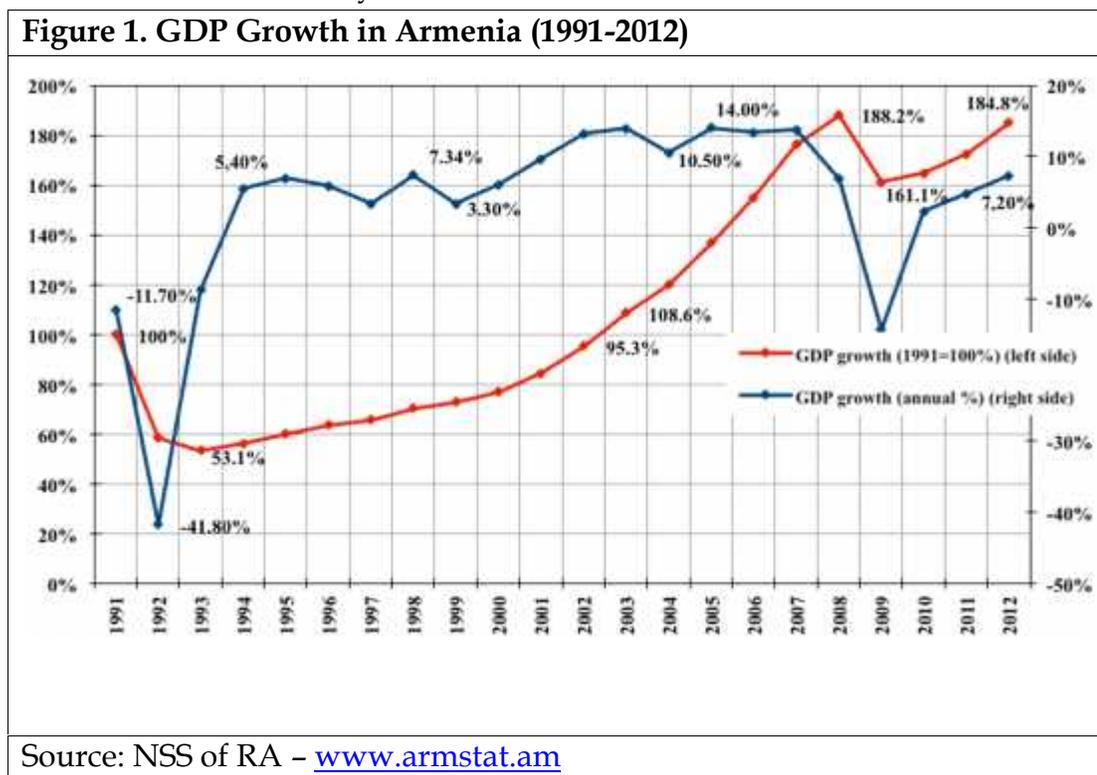
Poverty and inequality

Armenia and the Armenian people have always been engaged in migration processes. A number of concurrent economic, military-political, social and other factors drew Armenia into turbulent currents of migration during the last two decades.

In the last two decades, though, the migration flows related to Armenia, by virtue of their obvious intensity, started to affect the country's public life and development in an unprecedented manner and still require a comprehensive and profound study.

Armenia and settled abroad during 1990-2005 alone. Reasons of migration as a rule have economic character. One of the basic reasons for leaving their own country is bad living conditions and low quality of life.

From the very start of the transition to a market economy, income inequality rose sharply in Armenia. It led to a higher rate of poverty in the total population. 1991-1994 years were marked by unprecedented economic decline and related macroeconomic and social indicators, leading to widespread poverty. Figure 1 shows that only in the second period of independence Armenian economy reached the level of 1991.



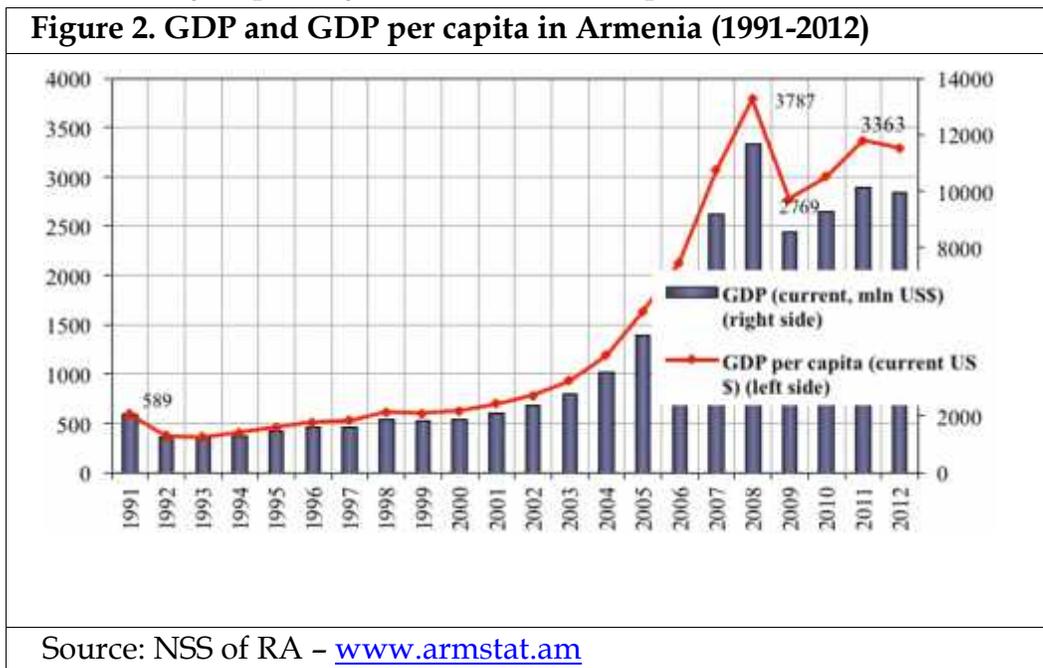
As we can see from the Figure 2, GDP per capita in Armenia increased from less than 600 USD in the beginning of the independence to 3000 USD in 2010. Before the global financial crisis of 2008-2009 this estimator reached the top level – 3787 USD per capita. It means that Armenia is still lower middle income country according to the World Bank country distribution by income level.

In 2009 34.1% of population in Armenia were defined as poor - those with consumption per adult equivalent below the upper poverty line, while extremely poor population share

made up 3.6% – those with consumption per adult equivalent below the food (extreme) poverty line.

The poverty gap in 2009 was 7.8%. This estimator indicates that if the country could mobilize resources equal to those percent of the poverty line for each individual (both poor and non-poor) and if these resources were allocated to the poor, poverty would be theoretically eliminated, assuming that the assistance to them were perfectly allocated. If calculated over the poor population only, the poverty gap indicates poverty shortfall or deficit, i.e. it shows how much the average consumption of the poor falls short of the poverty line.

The severity of poverty measures the inequality among the poor; it takes into account that some poor are further away from the poverty line, while some have consumption closer to it. In 2009 the severity of poverty in Armenia made up 2.4%.¹⁸

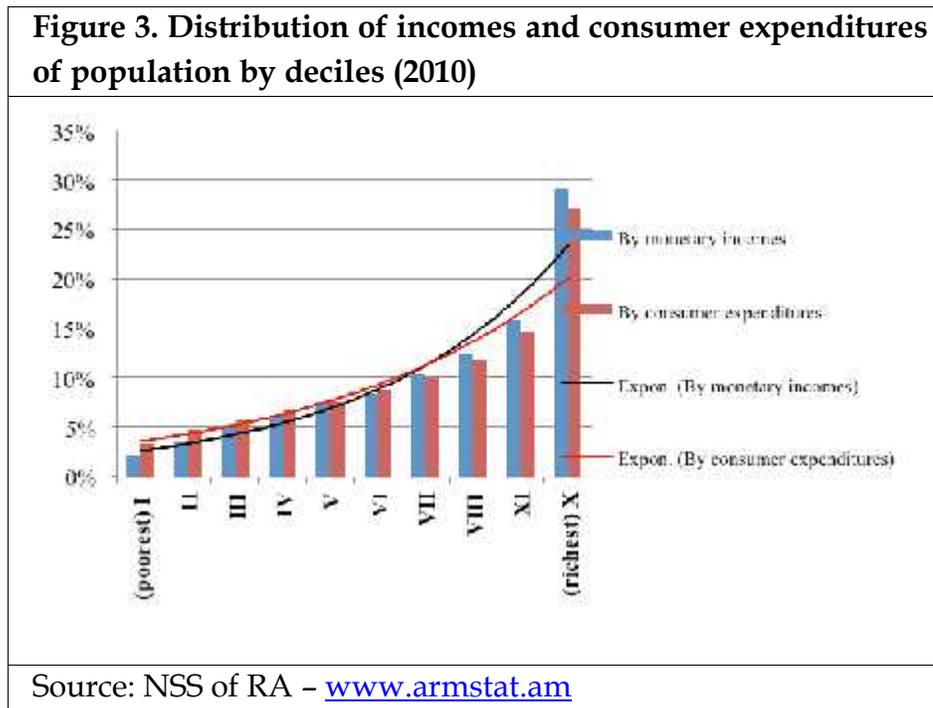


Poverty and inequality are closely interconnected. Inequality affects not only the individual, but also society, provoking mass stress and frustration, which in turn are conducive to the destruction of families, crime, suicide and violence. Various forms of inequality between the living conditions of different social groups are continuously growing as a consequence of rising poverty. Poverty and inequality explicitly and implicitly affect not only the health, but also the social, psychological and physical well-being of the individual, his or her position in society, access to public goods, the individual's attitudes towards society and society's attitudes towards the individual, and numerous other spheres.

¹⁸ NSS of RA / Statistical Yearbook of Armenia 2011 - <http://www.armstat.am/file/doc/99466823.pdf>

As we can see from the Figure 3, distribution of incomes and expenditures of population by deciles is uneven. Thus, the richest decile of population receives about 30% of income and makes up 27% of consumer expenditures.

The Gini coefficient that reflects the degree of income inequality of the population rose from 0.258 in 1989 to 0.59-0.60 in the second half of the 1990s, causing Armenia to rank among the countries with the most income inequality in the world. Today the Gini coefficient is almost equal to the level of 1989.



The poverty and inequality situation in Armenia leads to the raising of emigration from the country searching for the “best life”.

Fortunately, the acuteness of the problem of poverty for the nation has been recognized at the level of government in Armenia, as reflected in the adoption in August 2003 of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)¹⁹, the most comprehensive strategic program document on the socio-economic development of Armenia adopted since Armenia gained independence.

More information about poverty and inequality and migration you can find also the following sources:

- UNDP Armenia National Development Report “Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges” (2009)²⁰
- IMF Country Report “Republic of Armenia: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Progress Report” (2005)²¹

¹⁹ Government of the RA / Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper // 2003 - <http://www.gov.am/files/docs/58.pdf>

²⁰ UNDP Armenia / Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges // 2009 - <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/87B390CE-F203-1EE9-B95DF29A79F6080C>

- etc. (see sources in the Annex 4).

Access to finance resources, labor market and business environment

Factors determining the demand of population for financial services have crucial importance for the increase of financial coverage and depth, thus, it should become the main focus of the policy in this field. The quality of financial services' supply under such circumstances becomes a secondary issue. To increase and improve supply at this stage, demand improvement is crucial.

Nowadays according to surveys Armenian population does not see the need or necessity for using bank accounts and cards. They keep cash savings at home for more than three months, thus not trusting banks. Banks are perceived as risky for taking loans. Overall financial awareness and literacy is very low. Awareness on loans is relatively higher among population. Awareness on plastic cards is especially low. Use of main financial services is very low.

In terms of geography, physical access of banks varies dramatically. In villages, despite very few banks available, there are numerous loans lent. Loan interests also vary. Borrowings with high interest rates are two times more in Marzes.

More information about access of the finance resources you can find in the following sources:

- UNDP Armenia National Development Report "Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges" (2009)²²
- etc. (see sources in the Annex 4).

Given the close causal link between unemployment and migration in Armenia, the 2008-2021 Sustainable Development Program (SDP)²³ adopted by the Government on the basis of the Revised PRSP views expanding dignified employment through economic growth as a feasible way to overcome poverty. By regarding employment as a key factor in overcoming poverty and, thereby, preventing emigration from the country, the SDP rightly recognizes that, presently, having employment in the Armenian labor market is not necessarily an adequate safeguard for overcoming poverty, because a considerable number of employed persons are still unable to provide for a basic living standard for themselves and their family members. This is evidenced by the fact that, in 2005, 24% of the employed population (including their family members) were considered poor (compared to 49% in 1999). See also the Table 1 in current document. Nevertheless, having a job is a primary factor for overcoming poverty, as proven by the fact that the share of the poor among the employed population is 10 percentage points lower than the overall level of poverty.

²¹ IMF / Republic of Armenia: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Progress Report // 2005 - <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05176.pdf>

²² UNDP Armenia / "Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges" // 2009 - <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/87B390CE-F203-1EE9-B95DF29A79F6080C>

²³ Government of the RA / Sustainable Development Program // 2008 - http://www.nature-ic.am/res/pdfs/documents/strategic/SDP_01_eng_20081030.pdf

Relying on rising demand for labour and wage increase trends in the Armenian labour market on the backdrop of economic growth during 2002-2006, as well as the net immigration reported during 2004-2006, the SDP regards supply-demand mismatch in the labour market as the main cause of migration processes. More specifically, the SDP (*paragraph 313*) views the significant difference in levels of demand for labour force in the Armenian and Russian labour markets as a primary reason for emigration. The authors of the SDP believe that "...labour migration plays a dual role in terms of the poverty risk to migrants and their family members. In the short run, it plays a key role in reducing poverty on the background of persisting high unemployment in Armenia. However, in the long run, especially informal migration poses strong risk to migrants in view of the unstable nature of the employment."

More information about Armenian labor market you can find in the following sources:

- UNDP Armenia National Development Report "Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges" (2009)²⁴
- etc. (see Sources below).

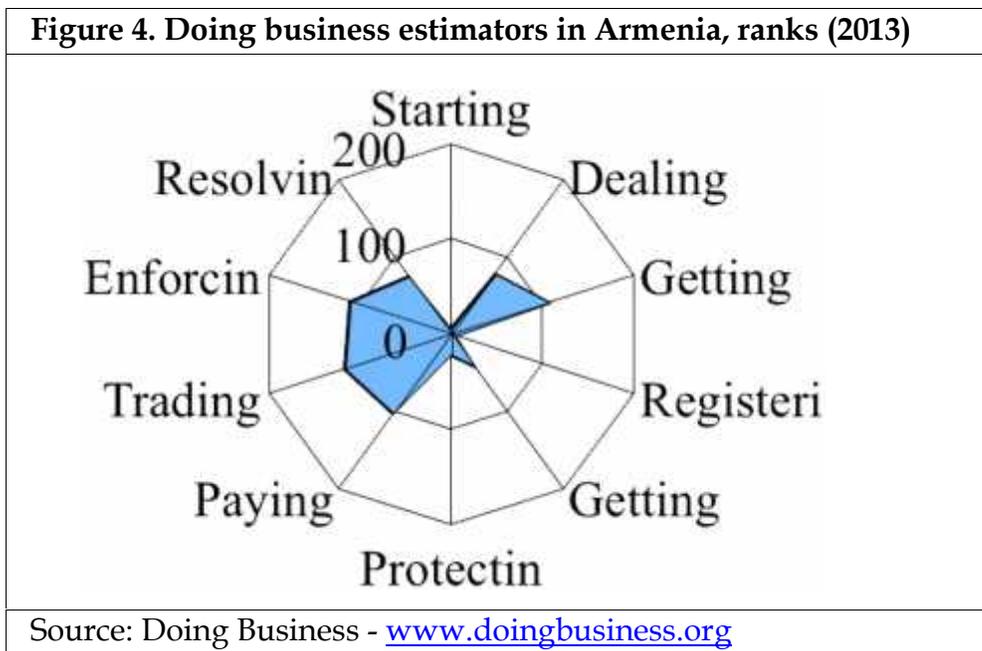
One of the most important reasons of leaving Armenia is not sufficient good conditions for small and medium business development.

Annex 1 shows the main doing business estimators in Armenia for 2006-2010. We can see that either the overall doing business rank or almost all estimators' ranks of Armenia among the rest of the world are going up. According to the Figure 4 nowadays the easiest in procedure for Armenian entrepreneur is registering property (5) and starting business (10). The most time, procedures and costs require paying taxes (153), trading across borders (102) and protecting investors (93).

But it tells only part of the story. Yearly movements in rankings can provide some indication of changes in an economy's regulatory environment for firms, but they are always relative. An economy's ranking might change because of developments in other economies. An economy that implemented business regulation reforms may fail to rise in the rankings (or may even drop) if it is passed by others whose business regulation reforms had a more significant impact as measured by Doing Business.

Moreover, year-to-year changes in the overall rankings do not reflect how the business regulatory environment in an economy has changed over time or how it has changed in different areas.

²⁴ UNDP Armenia / "Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges" // 2009 - <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/87B390CE-F203-1EE9-B95DF29A79F6080C>



The absolute values of the indicators tell another part of the story (see Annex 1). The indicators, on their own or in comparison with the indicators of a good practice economy or those of comparator economies in the region, may reveal bottlenecks reflected in large numbers of procedures, long delays or high costs. Or they may reveal unexpected strengths in an area of business regulation - such as a regulatory process that can be completed with a small number of procedures in a few days and at a low cost. Comparison of the economy's indicators today with those in the previous year may show where substantial bottlenecks persist - and where they are diminishing.

All these factors tell about incomplete institutional environment in Armenia, low level of right protection and absence of strong rule of law.

More information about business environment in Armenia you can find in the following sources:

- UNDP Armenia National Development Report "Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges" (2009)²⁵
- etc. (see sources in the Annex 4).

c) Policy Framework (Policies, Programmes and Action Plans)

The migration conception of the Republic of Armenia and 2008-2012 state program of migration regulation underline the rights of migrants as an important background. In the

²⁵ UNDP Armenia / "Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges" // 2009 - <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/87B390CE-F203-1EE9-B95DF29A79F6080C>

frameworks of the mentioned program and in case of other equal conditions, the government of the Republic of Armenia considers the legislative regulation of the questions concerning labor emigration, migrants' right protection and labor activities as being of primary importance. The document is directed to regulation of labor and other rights of both the citizens of the Republic of Armenia working abroad and the foreign residents of Armenia.

Currently the migration service of Ministry of Territorial Government implies the strategic program of migration regulation for 2010-2014, which is based on the idea of equality of rights of migrants as well as on the basic right of free movement.²⁶

The mentioned problems have posed the following key challenges of policy and governance before the Armenian state:

1. Creating a situation (through appropriate policies) that will considerably reduce the motivation of Armenia's population to leave the country and increase the motivation for return;
2. Developing a framework of state regulation of migration, proportionate with the intensity and complexity of the migration problems faced by Armenia, which will help to minimize the negative impact of migration and maximize the positive contribution of migration to public life.

The experience of recent years has demonstrated that the RA state system of migration regulation along with the political approaches, as well as the former institutional and administrative mechanisms, was incapable of effectively solving the migration problems faced by the RA. It is also evident that up until now the day-to-day, reactive policy of the RA directed, as a matter of priority, at the consolidation of the legislation in this area could not automatically lead to improved positive impact of the RA migration policies and the prevention and reduction of their negative consequences. Therefore, it is now time to switch from a passive-contemplative and operative-reactive policy to proactive-foreseeable migration policy.

More detailed information state policy of the RA you can find here:

- Concept for the Policy of State Regulation of Migration in the Republic of Armenia²⁷
- Decision "On Approving the Action Plan 2012-2016 for the Implementation of the Policy Concept for State Regulation of Migration in the Republic of Armenia"²⁸

²⁶ The "Concept Paper on State Regulation of Population Migration in the Republic of Armenia" was adopted as Appendix to the Republic of Armenia Government Session Record Decision # 24 dated June 25, 2004, "2008–2012 Program of the Republic of Armenia Government" adopted by the Republic of Armenia Government Decree 380-A dated 28 April 2008 and approved by the Republic of Armenia National Assembly Decision N-074-4 dated 30 April 2008 "On Approving the Program of the Republic of Armenia Government."

²⁷ Government of the RA / Concept for the Policy of State Regulation of Migration in the Republic of Armenia // 2010 - http://www.carim-east.eu/media/sociopol_module/Concept%20for%20the%20Policy%20on%20State%20regulation%20of%20migration%20Concept_2010.pdf

- RA Government Program for 2008-2012²⁹
- Sustainable Development Program of the RA Government³⁰
- for more information about Armenian legislation regarding to migration regulation see Annex 1.

d) Assessment of Impacts (Improvements)

Migration in modern Armenia is not a common and unified phenomenon and has different kinds of reflections, each of which has its own impact on the life of modern Armenia.

Besides the quantitative impact external movement (especially emigration) of a large percentage of the country's total population has affected public life and development in a number of clearly alarming ways, including, most importantly economic consequences. There are two main directions of the migration influence on the economy: through the labor market and financial flows.

Labor market

In addition to the general impact on public life, migration negatively influences specific migration flows and groups of migrants in a variety of ways. In the last 20 years, migration flows out of Armenia have been loosely regulated - irregular migrants have accounted for a large share of emigrants, and the vast majority of emigrants have been labour migrants.

The main negative consequences of the contemporary migration processes in Armenia in terms of global financial and economic crisis are the following: irregular drain of 'brains,' quality labour force and the capital, decrease in the economic potential of the country, deterioration of the economic development opportunities and perspectives.

More information and particularly list of recommendations in this regards are given in in the following sources:

- UNDP Armenia National Development Report “Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges” (2009)³¹
- etc. (see Sources below)

Remittances

Remittances from abroad to Armenia are an important source for economic growth and poverty reduction. This reflects in a number of studies and expert estimations. However,

²⁸ Government of the RA / On Approving the Action Plan 2012-2016 for the Implementation of the Policy Concept for State Regulation of Migration in the Republic of Armenia // 2011 -

http://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=72241&DocID_AM=72241&DocID_RU=0&DocID_EN=0

²⁹ Government of the RA / RA Government Program for 2008-2012 // 2008 - <http://www.gov.am/files/docs/77.pdf>

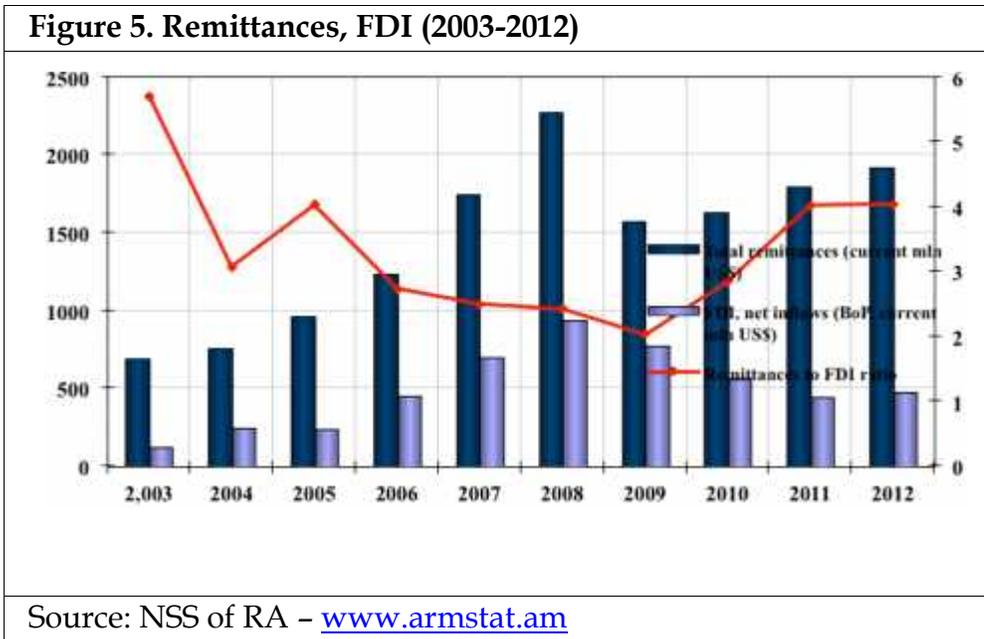
³⁰ Government of the RA / Sustainable Development Program // 2008 - http://www.nature-ic.am/res/pdfs/documents/strategic/SDP_01_eng_20081030.pdf

³¹ UNDP Armenia / “Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges” // 2009 - <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/87B390CE-F203-1EE9-B95DF29A79F6080C>

there are very few data and researches on the role of remittances to Armenia and, in particular their impact on households' welfare.

Remittances have played an essential role for the Armenian economy as financial inflows accounting for a considerable share of the GDP (Armenia is in the top 20 countries of the world in terms of this indicator, and is among the world's leaders in terms of remittances per capita). Remittances are 2.5-3 times the volume of direct investments in Armenia. Nominal remittances tend to grow, despite the decline that started at the end of 2008. The volume of remittances in real terms, i.e. adjusted by the exchange rate change and inflation, will tend to fall in the years ahead. Historically, a stable factor that moved counter-cyclically (in the opposite direction of an economic crisis) in the recipient countries, remittances are currently affected by a different situation caused by a global crisis that has undermined the economies of numerous countries.

Therefore, projecting the future flow of remittances becomes even more difficult. Migrants remit money to their families rather frequently - most migrants remit money at least once a quarter, and one fifth of the migrants remit once a month. In terms of remitting money, the most important group is that of seasonal migrants, and the leading origin countries of remittances are the Russian Federation and the USA. The majority of the remittances are still spent on current consumption needs; savings are made for purposes such as future investments, education and special occasions.



Though savings still account for a small share of remittances, there is rather strong potential in terms of the volume, which can be put to effective use. Moreover, the potential of the migrants' savings abroad is even more promising. During 2004-2006, the share of remittances in household income fell. Moreover, there is a trend to consume less and to

save more. Though a larger number of households have started to save, the number of households making investments has virtually not changed. According to the results of the regression analysis, when remittances grew, households were more inclined in 2006 to spend those amounts on business investments followed, in the order of priority, by land and other real estate acquisition, current consumption, education, savings, renovation, and purchases of household appliances.

The growth of remittances has caused changes in the structure of the use of remittances - growth of remittances caused the share of current consumption to decline and the shares of investments and savings to increase. The comparative analysis of households receiving remittances and those not receiving any using the case-control method provided additional evidence of the existence of such links, i.e. remittance-receiving households save more but still invest less than households not receiving remittances. Considering that the estimated relation between remittances and investments is highly significant and remittance-receiving households have a high propensity to invest, the impact of remittances on poverty reduction promises to remain stable, if this propensity is put to efficient use, because in absolute terms, remittance-receiving households continue to invest less than households not receiving remittances. According to the results of the analysis, remittances have a strong and reliable impact on and can, therefore, give a stimulus to education and health care.

The Armenian Diaspora has strongly influenced economic and human development in the Republic of Armenia. It is one of the main generators of foreign investments, but its own share in total direct investments apparently remains below expected (25% of direct investments in Armenia), possibly because the Armenian economy still does not provide sufficiently competitive and attractive investment climate from the standpoint of the Diaspora.

More information and particularly list of recommendations in this regards are given following sources:

- UNDP Armenia National Development Report “Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges” (2009)³².
- WB report “Migration and Remittances: Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union” (2006)³³
- ADB Country Report “Remittances of International Migrants and Poverty” (2007)³⁴
- IMF Working Paper “Microeconomic Implications of Remittances in an Overlapping Generations Model with Altruism and Self-Interest” (2008)³⁵

³² UNDP Armenia / Migration and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges // 2009 - <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/87B390CE-F203-1EE9-B95DF29A79F6080C>

³³ WB / Migration and Remittances: Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union //2006 - http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTECA/Resources/257896-1167856389505/Migration_FullReport.pdf

³⁴ ABD / Remittances of International Migrants and Poverty // 2007 - http://www.edrc.am/WP/Rem&Poverty_in_Central_Asia.pdf

- IOM Policy Brief “The Impact of the Global Economic Crisis on Migrants and Migration” (2009)³⁶
- etc. (see Sources below)

Trafficking

Exploitation of human beings, their violent movements or trafficking in modern terminology is one of disgracing and dangerous phenomena which spreading through the world involved also the Republic of Armenia.

Armenian trafficking has two main reflections - sexual exploitation of women in the United Arabian Emirates, sexual and labor exploitation in Turkey and forced labor of men mainly within the Russian Federation. This is not an open phenomenon in Armenia, and despite the opposite undertakings, the results are not satisfying (only 23 criminal cases during 2001-2009). Other type of trafficking is forced begging by children, which also has not corresponding response in the society yet.³⁷

Typical is the public interpretation of trafficking, according to which, Armenian prostitutes which actually appear in sexual slavery in Turkey and the United Arabian Emirates, are not perishes of trafficking because they made conscious choice.

e) **Gaps to be closed**

Migration studies mirror the migration and related processes, which are witnessed by modern societies and states. It is meaningless to speak about any issue of migration to be finally analyzed and there is no need to refer to it. Especially nowadays, in the case of intensive changes and processes many new challenges come along, and the old ones are presenting themselves in a fundamentally new way. At the same time, many problems related to people’s mobility do not receive enough research attention due to their complexity, politicization, lack of academic cooperation. Today we are witnessing political, economic, social and cultural processes and developments, at which social, cultural seemingly contradictory forms of penetration, rearrangement, obvious interrelations at different levels of societies are revealed at first site.

Under these conditions such issues, as various social integrations and issues due to their presence or absence, in particular, corruption and intense transformation of common, otherwise said, traditional forms of organization of life, construction of social equity and cohesion in a new way, appear in the focus of migration and related researches. Undernationalism with its partial demonstrations receives primary importance, which throw unprecedented challenges to identity, consciousness, conventionalism, etc of

³⁵ IMF / Microeconomic Implications of Remittances in an Overlapping Generations Model with Altruism and Self-Interest // 2008 - <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2008/wp0819.pdf>

³⁶ IOM / The Impact of the Global Economic Crisis on Migrants and Migration // 2009 - http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/policy_documents/policy_brief_gfc.pdf

³⁷ Human Trafficking in Armenia, OSCE, 2007.

participants of the processes. States, being the producer and the holder of the migration processes, are continuously caught between attractive choices of strategic significance in conditions of intense changes.

The importance of research and academic agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations is highlighted more than ever in this situation. Widely assorted knowledge, which are regularly enriched with empirical approaches, can greatly contribute not only to represented issues and reveal and solution of many other problems, but also to reopening of many other unnoticed, denied problems.

Science is no more collection of information on mysterious, exciting phenomena and discussions on it. It is an integral and often referred to as a primary instrument of modern social developments.

In its turn, the public sector in the form of non-governmental organizations and associations of various fields and contents, being more mobile and flexible, take upon themselves revealing, regulating and directing of such problems, which, in case of state regulation would require enormous resources, extensive bureaucratic apparatus, resulting in a lot of questions remaining unanswered.

2) Research and Projects dealing with Migration in Armenia

a) Main actors in Migration Research and Policy Development

Investigations and research has been increasingly conducted on a broad scale encompassing *inter alia* the economic impact of labour migration on Armenia, integration of Armenian labour migrants in countries of destination, forced migration and its socio-political context, irregular migration, human trafficking etc., comprehensive data and research on migration in Armenia is still lacking. At the beginning migration and its implications on the Armenian Society has been addressed within the frames of forced and violent migration in particular in the field of conflict and refugees studies with an emphasis on the specific situation of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), problems arising with regard to their reintegration and accommodation (e.g. minimal living conditions etc). In the mid 90s due to the second wave of economic emigration, research focused increasingly on socio-economic implications - both positive and negative ones - the mass outflows have had and on how negative impacts could be cushioned. Since labour migration was and is the dominant feature of migration realities in Armenia research not only was mainly concerned with the economic impact of remittances on the various spheres of the Armenian society, it quickly took up the topic of the situation of Armenian labour migrants in host societies encompassing studies on living conditions, discrimination and conflicts within the host societies, integration and cultural adaptation. However, research in Armenia never seemed to be able to keep track with migration realities leading as well to delayed answers by policy makers. Only in the end of the 90s when emigration rates started to level off migration related research seemed to catch up. Proper assessments of the migration related impacts were made and policy responses drafted accordingly. Migration related questions that have been ignored so far, such as

irregular migration and human trafficking, came into the field of vision of researchers and politicians. From the state side attempts to approach migration more systematically have increased since the beginning of the new millennium and the State Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration started to statistically compass migratory movements (i.e. border-crossings) and to continuously monitor inward and outward migration through the regular analysis of preliminary data.³⁸

The phenomenon of migration still remains to be an important topic for Armenian society, being a target of interest of state, international, research, personal and public spheres. Especially often touched problems are concerning labor and illegal migration, trafficking, social evaluation as well as state regulation mechanism.

b) Migration as a topic in academia

The present report, together with the attached table on resource data, is a brief description of migration processes and their social impact in Armenia during last 20 years. This time span is characterized by considerable inertness in perception of social phenomena and particularly in evaluation of migration influences, the result of which is reflected in certain delay of corresponding investigations.

The first discourse towards the topic was in the frames of the problem on violent/forced migration, unprecedented inflow of refugees, its social-political context and multi-level results (integration, adaptation, minimal life conditions for refugees, etc). Parallel to it the migration discourse was added by many reflections towards the second unprecedented wave – social-economic mass outflow of 1990s. In the mentioned context, factor analyses of the formed situation as well as reconstruction of social-economic and geographic images of social flows were especially important. Attempts were made for perspective previsions. Works elucidating positive and negative results of migration processes were pretty often.

While among the main elements of developments in 1990s was labor migration than also it found reflection in current investigations. In this regard causal analyses, outcome investigations (particularly demonstrating the impact of monetary transfers on particular spheres of social life of Armenia) were realized. Targets of such investigations were life conditions of labor migrants, possible and real conflicts within the accepting societies, problems towards their adaptation and integration, etc.

The decrease in migration activities at the end of 1990s enabled the statesman, researches, members of public and international organizations to view the problems on migration without “*zeitnot*” and reconsider the questions on regulation and overcoming of negative results of migrations. Corresponding investigations and evaluative researches towards the current social events came to life. Questions which were disregarded earlier were considered among them especially important were illegal migration and trafficking, the first investigation towards which was published in 2002.³⁹ Also the academic sphere

³⁸ See <http://www.ssmta.am/>.

³⁹ Irregular migration and smuggling of migrants from Armenia, 2002.

became active: some deep sociological investigations, among which articles and dissertations were presented.

Since the mentioned period until now The State Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration realizes statistical registrations of migration acts (i.e. border-crossings) as well as continuous monitoring of migration situation with analyses of preliminary data.⁴⁰

YSU and RAU have a huge scientific background in migration studies, especially in face of the Department of Sociology of YSU and the Institute of Economics and Business of RAU. In the **Annex 2** you can see the list of some key publications in this field, made by YSU and RAU staff during the main period of UNIMIG Tempus project realization.

c) Gaps identified/Fields requiring further research

Since the 1990s considerable progress has been made regarding migration research, however, a comprehensive approach in research towards the various forms of migration is still missing, especially at the academic level. Furthermore, research on migration in Armenia is characterised by a certain degree of delay with regard to the exploration of the social implications of migration on the Armenian society throughout Armenian migration research.

Even though the interest in migration related research significantly increased and the approaches made during the last decade were considerable, migration related research is far from being comprehensive and systematic and public data available remains unreliable. One noteworthy reason for this is that research on migration was and is mainly conducted by IOs and NGOs applying different methodologies and approaches. Therefore their outcomes seem to be self-sufficient and foreseen for 'internal use' rather than for broader dissemination. Accessibility to and dissemination of research results appears to be a major problem in Armenia being reflected as well in policy responses. Migration researchers cannot rely and build upon already existing research but basically have to start from zero again since previous results are hardly accessible. This not only leads to duplication of research done but also to diverging and superfluous data as well as causal interpretations. Although during last years many investigations have been undertaken, however deep and multisided academic analyses of the migration problem in Armenian reality unfortunately does not exist. This lack is especially discernable in consideration of the contexts concerning social, cultural, communicative, symbolic and identity levels. As the main migration factor has been considered the economic one, however, even in this regard, we lack essential researches. In fact the migration problem in Armenia still remains to be unsolved, the questions in front of researchers are huge hence it is impossible to present their variety within the frames of one report.

There are a lot of reasons for such situation. Among them especially noteworthy is the fact that today many structures are involved in investigation of migration processes in

⁴⁰ <http://www.smsmta.am/>.

Armenia, however the approaches, methodologies, results of the most of them remain to be unknown even for scientific circles: they seem to be sometimes self-sufficient and as if foreseen for the “internal” use.

In this regard the need of establishment of a resource center to be engaged in collection, investigation, monitoring and coordination of questions concerning migration in Armenia on academic level and with special involvement of sociology, seems to be evident.

In consideration of such questions in Armenia are engaged mainly international (IOM, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, USAID, OSCE, etc.) and public organizations to be financed by abroad. Also essential seems to be the involvement of the state sphere. However all of them have their own interests, methods and approaches. Meanwhile the deep and multisided academic investigations of essential scientific quality remain to be unknown both for the broad public and for the mentioned organizations: they even do not appear in Internet. Scientific researches are hardly accessible and every new researcher begins from zero, as a rule being restricted by quantitative and superfluous data and causal interpretations.

d) Migration in projects

The phenomenon of migration still remains to be an important topic for Armenian society, being a target of interest of state, international, research, personal and public spheres. Especially often are touched problems concerning labor and illegal migration, trafficking, social evaluation as well as state regulation mechanisms. A lot of national and international projects are aimed to find out decisions of current problems in this field. Among the organizations/institutions mostly interested and realized researches, studies and projects in migration problems can be mentioned State migration service (SMS) of Ministry of territorial administration of the RA, Ministry of Diaspora of the RA, IOM mission in Armenia, National Statistical Service of Armenia, Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC), International Center for Human Development (ICHD), The International Committee for the Development of People, Armenian Caritas foundation, “Hope and Help” NGO, “People in Need” NGO etc., as well as Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University and Yerevan State University (YSU).

Here are details of some of the most important projects, realized in Armenia during 2010-2015.

- *“Strengthening Evidence-Based Management of Labour Migration in Armenia”* project was realized in 2010-2013 by International Centre for Human Development (ICHD) and was supported by EU. The overall goal of the project was to enhance management of labour migration flows from Armenia to EU countries through four cross-cutting specific objectives: (A) enhancing capacities of private employment agencies (PEAs) to match labour demand and offer; (B) enabling a conducive environment for circular migration of Armenian workers; (C) strengthening national capacities in migration data collection, analysis and policy and (D) raising awareness towards possible approximation of

legislation on migration management with EU Acquis. To address these objectives a series of interlinked activities were implemented, including policy advice, institutional capacity building and awareness raising, which were constantly being revised and updated in line with new developments both in Armenia and the European Union.

- **“Migration and Development”** project (2010-2013) of Armenian Caritas was aimed to promote links between migration and development in the Armenian context by contributing to the establishment of sustainable reintegration measures for returnees to Armenia and to prevent illegal migration wave from communities having high rate migration waves and risks.
- **“Migration and Skills”** survey, hold on by CRRC-Armenia, was aimed to provide quantitative data of labor migration for analysis and later cross comparison with datasets gathered from other test countries. Information obtained from this endeavor will help guide labor migration efforts in Armenia with the European Union, which other counties have begun to initiate over the past several years. The Migration Survey from July 2011 to June 2012 has given CRRC-Armenia an opportunity to continue building upon data collection which will assist with development of well rounded policy recommendations at all institutional levels directed towards issues within the field of labor migration.
- **“Labor migration and STI/HIV risks in Armenia: Assessing prevention needs and designing effective interventions”** study was realized in November 2012 – March 2013 by CRRC-Armenia. The study was aimed to assess the scope, scale and, to a certain extent, the quality of the current interventions aiming at providing HIV prevention among labor migrants, examine the HIV/STI risks in urban and rural Armenia stemming from labor migration, assess the needs for prevention interventions, and produce recommendations for comprehensive, evidence-based, culturally-grounded, and cost-effective interventions to reduce these risks.
- Another project of Armenian Caritas **“Migration and Trafficking Resource Center”** (2012-2014) was aimed to mitigate the steady outflow of illegal migrants from Armenia and consequences connected with trafficking by serving as global resource center for promotion and dissemination information on legal ways of migration and by counselling support to the victims of trafficking.
- **“The depopulation crisis in Armenia”**, funded by Kololian Foundation (Canada) and realized by Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University Research Team, Research and Business Center of the Faculty of Economics of Yerevan State University, Hrayr Maroukhian Foundation and independent research group in 2013-2014 (see detailed information below)
- **“Evaluation of Migration Situation in Armenia through Selective Survey”**, funded by State committee of science at the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia, realized by Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University and National Statistical Service of Armenia in 2013 (see detailed information below).

- **“Missing Women in the South Caucasus”** short-term study was realized in February-March 2014. CRRC-Armenia with the support of the World Bank launched this project to explore the son preference and sex selective abortions in Armenia. The issue of “missing women” – women who would have been born (or survived infancy) if there hadn’t been efforts to prevent their birth or survival past infancy – has received attention globally since the 1990s. The reproductive patterns in South Caucasus shifted with the independence of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in 1991. Even considering the traditional male preferences at birth, the increasing imbalance of sex ratio may deepen gender inequality and injustice in the societies of the countries. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, a highly skewed sex ratio at birth has emerged in the South Caucasus. Sex ratios in Armenia (114.5), Azerbaijan (116.5) and Georgia (113.6) put our countries among those with the highest in the world. The figure that may not seem troublous in the short run may eventually end up with a range of serious problems considering low fertility rates and son preferences and increasing trend for technology to interfere with the support of the pattern. Focus group discussions, life stories and expert interviews initiated by the World Bank and implemented by the CRRC-Armenian in cooperation with Department of Sociology at Yerevan State University will provide an opportunity to shed light on the trends and consequences in the long run in Armenia.

- **“Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development”** current project (2014-2015) is realizing by CRRC-Armenia and supported by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This nation-wide study is a part of the comparative project in 10 countries worldwide, investigating relationships between migration and economic development of the sending communities. The study is aimed to examine migration-related development opportunities and the role of migration policies in promoting these opportunities.

Full list the most valuable projects, realized in Armenia in the mentioned period is given as an **Annex 3** to the current report.

3) Outlook: The role and contribution of the submitting institution in migration policy development, research etc.

Taking into account the specific of migration processes in Armenia and corresponding challenges, mentioned above, the role of each institution, participating somehow in migration policy development is too valuable. In 2011 both YSU and RAU have had an opportunity to increase their role and contribution in migration policy development in Armenia taking part in *“Migration and Higher Education: Building Skills and Capacities (UNIMIG)”* Tempus project together with another 15 organizations from 8 countries of the region and EU. Project duration was 3,5 years – from 15 October, 2011 to 14 April, 2015. One of the specific objectives of the project is “to develop, accredit and implement a basic curriculum for a Master Program in Migration Studies with a regional dimension in line with the Bologna requirements at 6 universities in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia”⁴¹. As

⁴¹ Official website of the UNIMIG project: <http://www.unimig.tsu.edu.ge/>

migration problems are too actual and urgent for nowadays Armenia, there is a strong need in qualified professionals in these field. The project gave us a chance to cover this gap due to two developed Master Programmes: “Master in Migration and Conflict Studies” in YSU and “Master in Economics and Migration” in RAU.

Moreover, the project was aimed also to found sustainable structures with the establishment of national Migration Competence Centers (MCC) and regional research network that serve as an interface between universities, research and public institutions, governments and society. The establishment of the MCC as integrated unit on the basis of YSU will contribute significantly to both the improvement of quality research on migration and the enhancement of knowledge on migration realities and therefore contribute to closing the aforementioned gaps in migration research. Being established as part of the Sociology Department, the MCC will build upon the considerable experience and corresponding scientific potential of the Sociology Department’s members who are actively engaged in various projects, studies, and teaching processes concerning migration. As a project partner RAU has a full access to MCC resources too, and this fact promotes new additional ways of cooperation especially in migration studies between two universities.

It’s initial that two other partners within the project from Armenia are IOM mission in Armenia and State migration service (SMS) at the Ministry of territorial administration of the RA, that are one of the key actors in migration policy development in Armenia. Cooperation between universities, representing academia, and such kind of key institutions is quite important in case of Armenia, where one of the huge gaps in migration policy is the gap between academia and state regulation of migration processes. These cooperation promises to be more productive due to the direct involvement of the Head of SMS into the working group of RAU as an expert and lecturer as well.

Thus, the UNIMIG project realization is a very special practical step towards qualified migration policy development and its’ sustainable improvement due to created mechanism.

Now, let’s speak about another experience of YSU and RAU in migration studies.

Yerevan State University (YSU)

International conferences, workshop meetings on migration in YSU.

Department of Sociology of Yerevan State University and Center for Migration Studies is one of the leading research centers of migration analysis. Since late 1990s, many specialists of the Faculty are involved in migration studies, have made numerous publications on the issue. In recent years, along with the establishment of Center for Migration Studies and "Migration and Conflict Studies" master's program, has increased the academic attention to the migration and related issues. State and international grant-supported research projects are undertaken and implemented, such as Rural communities as a mechanism of national identities' traditional elements reproduction in transition societies (on the example of Armenia and Belarus) research project, based on cooperation between Armenia and Belarus, on the results of which the "Issues of Social Identity Preservation in Armenian

Rural Communities" 42 collective monograph was published. Besides, "Features of formation and operation of Armenian migration networks " research program, being carried out under the direction of A. Atanesyan and funded by Scientific State Committee of RA is currently in progress.

Year of 2014 was especially significant for Center for Migration Studies, as well as for the Faculty. A series of events, conferences, workshops, directed to elimination of migration problems, were organized and carried out. Thus, in April 2014, "Migration in Globalized World" international conference was organized in the Faculty of Sociology, which was attended by experts from more than 15 countries. The results of the conference will be published in March issue of the "Bulletin of Yerevan University" magazine, as well as a number of works on transnationalism, presented at the conference, will be published in an anthology (Atanesyan).

In early November of 2014, the the Center for Migration Studies of Department of Sociology in cooperation with the "International Committee for Human Development" Italian NGO has organized a lecture on "Migration. challenges, development, development advantages", presentation of "Assessment of migration development policies, programs and projects in Armenia" study results, carried out under "Migration positive socio-economic empowerment in Armenia for a better future" programm.

At the same time, the Faculty and Center for Migration Studies organized and carried out "Armenia on the Verge of Eurasian Union: Economic Growth or Emigration" international conference, which was attended by experts from Russia, Armenia's leading research centers.

Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University (RAU)

Conferences

Institute of Economics and Business at the RAU has organized a lot of events, including conferences, round tables and discussions regarding migration processes in Armenia. One of the last conferences was International scientific-practical conference "*The Modern Issues of the Innovational Economy in the Developing Countries*", organized on October 17-18, 2013. One of the two sections of the conference was "Migration and its Role in the Innovational Processes Development in the Economy".

Participants have made presentations in the respective thematic sections focusing on the strategic management of innovation processes in organizations, migration and its role in the development of innovative processes in the economy, as well as the peculiarities of formation and development of innovative economy in developing countries. The conference also hosted a round table discussion on "How to examine the migration of the former Soviet Union?".

⁴²Vartikyan A., Vermishyan H., Mkrtychyan A., Sahakyan A., Shahnazaryan G. "Issues of Social Identity Preservation in Armenian Rural Communities"// Yerevan: YSU publ., 2013.

Besides that, as was mentioned above, professors and researches in RAU have a lot of publications in migration studies in different collections and editions. For more information see Annex 2.

Projects

1. "The depopulation crisis in Armenia"

Understanding unprecedented levels of emigration from Armenia and the emergence to reverse the population tide, The Kololian Foundation of Toronto, in cooperation with the International Center for Human Development (Armenia, Yerevan), announced one-year research project aimed at identifying the root causes of emigration from Armenia. Four academic groups from Armenia were selected to implement the research project: the Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University, the Research and Business Center of the Faculty of Economics at Yerevan State University, the Hrayr Maroukhian Foundation and an independent group of academics who present the case of repopulating Kashatagh and Shahumyan. The research report⁴³ was presented on October 8, 2013 in Yerevan. The report analyzes Armenia's demographic situation, with the aim of identifying reasons behind current trends and possibilities for their reversal. Drawing on statistical data, other research sources, media reports, focus groups and surveys, researchers in Yerevan assembled various analyses to show common patterns. They also undertook case studies of successful strategies for repopulating remote areas and attracting diaspora immigrants. Together, these sources have produced a set of policy recommendations through which the Armenian government and other stakeholders could take action to reverse population decline. By the end of the project two representatives of RAU research team hold on an international Speaking Tour, organized from January 30, 2014 to February 11, 2014 in Beirut – Paris – Toronto – New York – Los Angeles⁴⁴.

2. "Evaluation of Migration Situation in Armenia through Selective Survey"

Due to the support of State committee of science at the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia in 2013 Centre for Social-Demographic Researches of RAU hold on a one-year project "Evaluation of Migration Situation in Armenia through Selective Survey". The results of the survey have caused many reflections and discussions on different levels of migration policy development in Armenia, including the Government and Prime-minister of the RA, which decided to include the procurement of sustainability of similar researches in migration into the working plan of the Government for 2015-2017.

Besides the mentioned funding, the survey of Armenian households was supported also by IOM mission in Armenia projects financed by the Institute for the Study of International Migration at the Georgetown University (USA) and EU, as well as by "People in Need"

⁴³ See the full report here: <http://www.depop.am/download-report/>

⁴⁴ See DEPOP Speaking tour 2014 presentation here: http://www.depop.am/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/The-Depopulation-Crisis-in-Armenia-_-THE-KOLOLIAN-FOUNDATION_ENG_Speaking-Tour-Presentation1.pdf

NGO (Czech Republic) and Armenian Caritas. Working process and database creation due to the results of survey was organized by RAU and National Statistical Service of Armenia. Full report was published in 2014. ⁴⁵

3. "3-year Research of External Migration in the RA through Selective Survey"

This project started on January 1, 2015 and will last till the end of 2015 (December 30). The research is financed by State committee of science at the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia and is going to be realized by RAU research team. This Survey figures as a part of sustainability of researches in migration due to the working plan of the Government for 2015-2017, mentioned above. Results of the research will be published in 2016.

⁴⁵ See full report here:

http://rau.am/uploads/blocks/3/31/3115/files/Migration_Project_Report_final%281%29.pdf