



## **CARIM EAST – CONSORTIUM FOR APPLIED RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Co-financed by the European Union

# ***Immigrants in Azerbaijan: Current Situation and Prospects of (Re)integration Policy***

**Sergey Rumyansev**

CARIM-East Research Report 2012/43



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**CARIM-East**  
**Creating an Observatory of Migration East of Europe**

**Research Report**  
**CARIM-East RR 2012/43**

**Immigrants in Azerbaijan:**  
**Current Situation and Prospects of (Re)integration Policy**

**Sergey Rumyansev**

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## **CARIM-East – Creating an Observatory East of Europe**

This project which is co-financed by the European Union is the first migration observatory focused on the Eastern Neighbourhood of the European Union and covers all countries of the Eastern Partnership initiative (Belarus, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and Russian Federation.

The project's two main themes are:

- (1) migration from the region to the European Union (EU) focusing in particular on countries of emigration and transit on the EU's eastern border; and
- (2) intraregional migration in the post-Soviet space.

The project started on 1 April 2011 as a joint initiative of the European University Institute (EUI), Florence, Italy (the lead institution), and the Centre of Migration Research (CMR) at the University of Warsaw, Poland (the partner institution).

CARIM researchers undertake comprehensive and policy-oriented analyses of very diverse aspects of human mobility and related labour market developments east of the EU and discuss their likely impacts on the fast evolving socio-economic fabric of the six Eastern Partners and Russia, as well as that of the European Union.

In particular, CARIM-East:

- builds a broad network of national experts from the region representing all principal disciplines focused on human migration, labour mobility and national development issues (e.g. demography, law, economics, sociology, political science).
- develops a comprehensive database to monitor migration stocks and flows in the region, relevant legislative developments and national policy initiatives;
- undertakes, jointly with researchers from the region, systematic and *ad hoc* studies of emerging migration issues at regional and national levels.
- provides opportunities for scholars from the region to participate in workshops organized by the EUI and CMR, including academic exchange opportunities for PhD candidates;
- provides forums for national and international experts to interact with policymakers and other stakeholders in the countries concerned.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: <http://www.carim-east.eu/>

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*“Our identity is at once plural and partial.  
Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures;  
At other times, that we fall between two stools.”*  
Salman Rushdie<sup>1</sup>

## Summary

Problems of immigrants in the post-Soviet Azerbaijan in the context of the issue of their integration in the host society till now has not been in the focus of researchers' attention. In the attempt to analyze this issue it makes sense to classify immigrants into three groups: 1) natives of Azerbaijan (re-emigrants) and their family members; 2) ethnic s from Georgia; 3) labor immigrants from different countries (EU, Turkey, India, Pakistan, etc.), who arrive to the country to look for a job or to open their own business. Conditional division into these three groups lets us describe major trends in this research area.

Analysis suggested in this article is mostly based on a series of biographic interviews with immigrants from all three conditionally defined groups.

The main research question in the author's opinion should be formulated as follows: what are the social resources and practices used by immigrants in Azerbaijan for integration in the host society, in the absence of any targeted state integration policy.

The author concludes that the main resource is each immigrant's personal social capital. That is, his/her stable membership in the networks built up on the basis of family, friendly and/or fellow-countrymen connections. These networks are transnational in their nature. Immigrants build up and integrate in this kind of transnational networks, as well as in the transnational spaces of the capital of Azerbaijan (Baku), where the vast majority of them reside after they move to the country. The author states that in the current conditions any prospective state program and/or policy aimed at integration of immigrants cannot replace these transnational networks and spaces. Building up such networks and spaces, along with personal social capital of each immigrant will continue to define the specific nature of immigration practices in Azerbaijan. These conclusions should be considered in the context of expansion and enforcement of the control over immigrants exercised by a number of state institutions, and first of all, by the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan (founded in 2007). However, enhanced control does not imply implementation of any integration programs. But despite the fact that the flow of immigrants is not so significant, implementation of certain programs may contribute to improvement of immigrants' situation and better control over their activities in the country. Thus, for the first group (and especially for their family members), as well as for some immigrants from the third groups it makes sense to organize language courses. For the second group the process of acquisition of the citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan should be simplified.

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<sup>1</sup> Imaginary Homelands. Essays and Criticism 1981-1991. London: Granta Books, p. 15.

## Introduction

In 1989-1990 Azerbaijan became emigration donor country. For over two decades now the number of emigrants leaving the country<sup>2</sup> exceeds significantly the number of immigrants arriving to Azerbaijan. But at the same time hundreds of thousands of people moved to Azerbaijan permanently in the post-Soviet period. According to the official version peak of both emigration and immigration occurred within the three years after the collapse of the USSR (1990-1992). In general, however, from 1990 to 2007 260,000 people moved to Azerbaijan permanently according to the version of State Statistics Committee of Azerbaijan. Starting 2008 according to the same official version Azerbaijan is a not an emigration donor country anymore. For the three years (2008-2010) only 4,700 people left the country, and 8,100 people arrived here for permanent residence<sup>3</sup>.

Absolute majority of those who arrive to Azerbaijan as well as those who left the country were citizens of CIS republics. Thus, 2,155 people of 2,781 of those who arrived to the country in 2008 were citizens of the CIS, and only 816 persons in 2008 and 137 in 2009 moved to Azerbaijan from other countries. There are virtually no immigrants from developed countries among them. Thus, for the same two years only 10 people moved to Azerbaijan from the USA, and 9 from Germany<sup>4</sup>. Majority of those who moved to Azerbaijan permanently are former citizens of Azerbaijan who for different reasons decided to return to their native country. An important group also is ethnic Azeris, citizens of the third countries who decided to move permanently to Azerbaijan. Most of such Azeris come from neighboring Georgia.

If we try to describe very briefly the predominant trends among immigrants, we can define three most numerous groups:

1. Ethnic Azeris are those who move to the country most often<sup>5</sup>, as well as representatives of some ethnic groups, which populate the country in compact settlements (Talysh, Lezghins, Avars, etc.)<sup>6</sup>. This group includes natives of Azerbaijan who have resided in other republics of the USSR for a long time (mostly Russia and to a less extent Ukraine). Many of them studied at Russian and Ukrainian universities, and after receiving their degree stayed to live

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<sup>2</sup>Leaving Azerbaijan for varying reasons (conflicts, labor migration, etc.) (see for example: Huseynova 2009; Seidbeyli 2009; Huseynova 2011).

<sup>3</sup> According to the official data the authenticity of which is quite doubtful, in the period between 1990 and 2007 net migration remained negative and was equal to 183,300 people. Beginning with 2008 official statistics began to register positive migration balance. However, in the period between 2008 and 2010 positive balance was only equal to 3,400 people. Downloaded from: The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. International Migration, 2010. <http://www.azstat.org/statinfo/demographic/en/index.shtml#>, on 31 May 2012.

We do not dispose of any exact data on labor migration. According to different estimates the number of labor migrants may vary from 500,000 - 600,000 to 1.3 million people. See Interview of the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev for radio station "Ekho Moskvu", <http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/beseda/48358/>, on 26 March 2012; (Migration in the Republic of Azerbaijan 2008, p. 17); (World Bank Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011, p. 25).

<sup>4</sup> The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Breakdown of persons arriving and departing to Azerbaijan from foreign countries for permanent residency, 2009. Downloaded from: <http://www.azstat.org/statinfo/demographic/en/051.shtml#s1>, on 30 September 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Similarly to Benedict Andersen I regard national communities as "imaginary" ones (Andersen 1998, pp. 5-7). I view the category "ethnic group", especially applied to immigrants among which cultural limits are often indistinct, families are ethnically mixed, etc., as conditional one. Generally speaking, I share the criticism of *groupism*, developed by Rogers Brubaker. In his opinion: "when we talk about ethnicity <...> we almost automatically find ourselves talking about ethnic groups. <...> [But] Ethnicity <...> should be conceptualized not as substances or things or entities or organisms <...> but rather in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disaggregated terms. <...> It means thinking of *ethnicization* <...> as political, social, cultural and psychological *processes*. And it means taking as a basic analytical category not the "group" as an entity but *groupness* as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable" (Brubaker 2002, pp. 165-168).

<sup>6</sup> See for example Musabekov 2009.

and work in these republics. It is not uncommon for such natives of Azerbaijan to create mixed families. Collapse of the USSR pushed a lot of them into returning to Azerbaijan. Their families moved together with them. These are wives and children who had previously visited Azerbaijan only for holidays and school vacations<sup>7</sup>.

2. The second group includes ethnic Azeries, mostly coming from Georgia, where they reside in populations on the border with Azerbaijan. For various reasons (which I will discuss below) a lot of them try to move to Azerbaijan.
3. The third group includes labor immigrants from different countries (Turkey, India, Pakistan, etc.), who arrive to the country in order to look for a job or open their own business. Some of these immigrants initially come to the country for higher education (mainly, migrants from Turkey), and then they stay here to work, form families in Azerbaijan.

Hereinafter I will try to define the specific features of integration processes in Azerbaijan, as well as those spaces, resources and practices to which mainly immigrants have access, and which they use for integration. I will suggest a description of methods for collecting field materials. Finally, within the limits of this article, I will concentrate on the analysis of the situation of immigrants from the three groups conditionally defined by me regarding them as the most significant ones. At that, it should be emphasized that definition of these three groups is conditional to a great extent. Diversity of structures, reasons, objectives and intentions of immigrants coming to Azerbaijan is much more varied<sup>8</sup>.

The primary research question which I will attempt to answer in this article can be formulated as follows: what are the social resources and practices used by immigrants in Azerbaijan for integration in the host society in the absence of any targeted state integration policy.

### **About Immigrants' Reintegration and Integration Policy**

In the situation with the three groups stated above very different aspects which can be considered in the context of integration become very important. However, first of all, it should be asked how relevant can the issue of immigrants' integration be in the case of Azerbaijan? The discussion of various 'integration' policy models and practices accepted in EU countries (see for example Heckmann & Schnapper, eds., 2003), as applied to Azerbaijan, in my opinion is not very constructive. Azerbaijan has never faced such mass inflows of immigrants as many European countries. The issues of formation of various policies and integration practices (multiculturalism, incorporation, acculturation, or assimilation) of some large groups of migrants in the host society have never been relevant<sup>9</sup>. I would like to emphasize that most of those who moved to Azerbaijan permanently are ethnic Azeries who have resided in other USSR republics for a long period of time.

In the context of Soviet national policy (Slezkine 1996; Brubaker 1997; Suny 2012), all of them were considered members of unique ethno-nation of Azeries<sup>10</sup>, i.e. dominating (or according to the Soviet version "titular") ethnic group in Azerbaijan. Notions of ethnicity/nation accepted in the Soviet times "successfully" survived the collapse of the USSR (Romyantsev 2011). Today the status of citizen is determined to a great extent by his/her biological ethnicity (inherited by blood and/ genes) (Brubaker 2000, pp. 27-28; Malakhov 2007, p. 50). Thus, most of such migrants not only acquired citizenship by birth on the territory of Azerbaijan, but also made part of the dominant group ("titular nation").

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<sup>7</sup> I do not mention here re-emigration of ethnic Russians or Jews which could be observed in the 2000s. The number of such immigrants is insignificant.

<sup>8</sup> I also do not touch in this study the problem of refugees whose integration in itself represents a separate research subject.

<sup>9</sup> As for example in the cases of the USA, Great Britain, France, Germany, Holland and other countries attracting a lot of migrants (see: Crowley 1999; Entzinger 2003; Brubaker 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Or, as this imaginary community has often been defined in the post-Soviet period - Azerbaijani Turks.

However, for many migrants who returned to their home country (included in the first group), and who have undergone the stage of *secondary socialization* (Berger P. & Luckmann T. 1995, p. 224-238) outside of Azerbaijan, repeated (re)integration was often associated with certain difficulties (differences in the norms, rules and behavioral patterns, adopted in the period of *secondary socialization*, etc.) According to Anders Stefansson "Because of the mismatch between the imagined and experienced homecoming, coming home can be more difficult and emotionally destabilizing than leaving home and settling in a new part of the world"(Stefansson 2004, p. 8). Stefansson talks about representatives of different diasporas. However, despite the fact that migrants who are discussed in this article changed their place of residence within the common space of the USSR, the difference in daily lifestyle and behavioral patterns in different Soviet republics could be quite significant. Besides, for many of them returning to the homeland coincided with simultaneous arrival to the area of ethno-political conflicts, economic disaster, etc.

Still, among immigrants there were also those who required integration, if integration is understood not as citizenship but rather as knowledge of the national language, knowledge of certain cultural norms and rules accepted in everyday life; employment difficulties. Such immigrants who need integration are those who should be included in the first group defined by us, i.e. members of mixed cross-cultural families who have never resided in Azerbaijan for a long period of time before immigration. Mostly these are women who married native Azeris and children in such ethnically mixed families. Citizenship is not an issue for such immigrants, as one of the family members (as a rule the man) acts as guarantor of quick acquisition of citizenship by birth, etc.

There is no special state policy aimed at (re)integration of the family members of such immigrants in Azerbaijan, possibly for two reasons. Firstly, the number of such immigrants has never been significant. Secondly, they have found the resources necessary for (re)integration (including language and cultural integration) in their own social capital (Bourdieu 2005), i.e. in their affiliation with networks and/or groups built up based on the principle of family or community connections. At that, for women their active life is often (but not necessarily) limited solely to family duties. Children in such families have often undergone *initial socialization* (which is "most important for an individual", for more information see Berger P. & Luckmann T. 1995, p. 211-223) outside of Azerbaijan, and they often aspire to leave Azerbaijan after they attain full legal age and/or have finished their education<sup>11</sup>.

If we view the issue of integration as an issue of acquiring citizenship this problem is more valid for so-called Georgian Azeris. It is unknown how many of them there are. In the experts' opinion, it can be 20,000-30,000 people, or somewhat bigger number. They do not have a problem learning the national language. Azeris in Georgia mostly live in the rural area, and quite often they only know the Azeri language<sup>12</sup>. There is also no need to learn additionally any cultural norms and behavioral patterns. Most often the problem is lack of full-time job and/or some kind of real estate (apartment, house, etc.), where they could reside permanently. In this case there is a serious obstacle in obtaining permanent registration at the place of residence. These circumstances, accordingly, make it difficult to acquire citizenship, as in order to acquire it one has to live in Azerbaijan for up to five years<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup>As it is fairly noted by Berger and Luckmann "Socialization is never completely successful. And some "populate" universe which they need to hand over to the next generations more decidedly than the others" (Ibid p.172). Parents (re-immigrants) whose children have undergone initial socialization in Russia or Ukraine often "populate" the universe *less decidedly*. It is not infrequent (willingly or unwillingly) for them to sustain a certain degree of nostalgia for their country where they have undergone secondary socialization in their children as well. Certainly, mothers who have not resided in Azerbaijan before also have a certain impact.

<sup>12</sup>It is wide-spread among them to speak Russian as well as Georgian (though to a lesser degree).

<sup>13</sup>The issue of granting a preferential right to acquire Azeri citizenship to Georgian Azeris as members of unique ethnation of Azeris is often discussed in newspapers (especially oppositional ones), and in the Parliament. However, until now, no such right has been granted to them. Despite the rhetoric of populist nationalism popular among representatives of the public authorities as well as political opposition, the government in place is not inclined to support mass migration of Georgian Azeris to Azerbaijan. See Session of the Third Convocation of Extraordinary IX Session Milli Majlis RA. Minutes No. 88, June 24, 2008. Session chaired by the first Vice Speaker of the Parliament Z. Askerov, Downloaded from <http://www.meclis.gov.az/?/az/stenoqram/148>, on 30 March 2012; Session of the third convocation of the extraordinary XII session of MM RA. Minutes No. 119. June 30, 2009. Chaired by the Speaker of the Parliament O. Asadov. For more information see: Downloaded from <http://www.meclis.gov.az/?/az/stenoqram/180>, on 30 March 2012;

However, in case of Georgian Azeries the social capital they have (membership in stable and extended family and community networks and groups, etc.) also facilitates the integration process significantly.

The number of immigrants included in the third group is small. According to the experts it may include 20,000-30,000 people (or slightly more). Absolute majority of them do not express their willingness to move to Azerbaijan permanently, they do not strive to acquire Azeri citizenship. In case of the second and especially the third group the criticism of the approach when citizenship is considered to be a necessary prerequisite for fully functional integration in the host society can be accepted as fair (see Soysal 1994, pp. 163-167). Extended transnational community, family, and business ties, all kinds of social networks which are built up by the immigrants, allow them to integrate successfully in Azerbaijan.

Of course, in this case it is meaningless to speak about integration in the political imagined community. Such immigrants integrate in the host community and other kinds of social networks, as well as transnational urban spaces. At that, they do not aim at acquiring political rights. If we view integration as civil and political membership in the host society (the right to participate in parliamentary or presidential elections, etc., i.e. in governing the country), social guarantees, then not only immigrants in Azerbaijan, but the overwhelming majority of the population as well can be considered as non-integrated<sup>14</sup>.

### **Baku: Transnational Spaces in the Capital**

There are two important aspects that can be defined as common for all three groups of immigrants. *The first* of the most important aspects which will let us understand the specifics of (re)integration processes implies that absolute majority of immigrants from all three groups settled in Baku, regardless of the region where they resided before departure from the country, those who are natives of Azerbaijan. This should not come as a surprise. According to some expert estimates enterprises which produce up to 90% of the country GDP are concentrated in Baku metropolitan area (Taghiyev et al. 2007, p. 3). All the largest oil and gas fields which represent the foundation of the country's economy are located close to the capital of the republic. Attractiveness of the capital for immigrants (especially for those from the first group) is also related to the fact that all the political and bureaucratic institutions of the country government are concentrated in Baku; the capital is also the principal cultural and education center of the country<sup>15</sup>.

*The second* aspect implies that Baku, as a capital of independent national state now becomes an urban center where there are plenty of transnational spaces after the collapse of the USSR. Such spaces may include "relatively stable, lasting and dense sets of ties reaching beyond and across borders of sovereign states. They comprise combinations of ties and their substance, positions within networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that cut across the borders of at least two national states" (Faist 2004, pp. 3-4).

Immigrants often tend to maintain such ties and build up transnational spaces using the resource that lets them establish intensive contacts between the host community and home country. Nina Glick Schiller suggests denoting such immigrant experience with the notion *transnationalism*. In the context

(Contd.) \_\_\_\_\_

Азербайджанцы в Грузии подвергаются дискриминации [Azeries in Georgia are subject to discrimination] – Deputat, Downloaded from <http://www.georgiatimes.info/news/54920.html>, on 30 March 2012.

<sup>14</sup> According to the official version, the country now is a democratic state. Independent researchers and experts, on the contrary, point out obvious authoritative style of the political regime currently in place in Azerbaijan (See Ottaway 2003, pp. 51-70; Guliyev 2011, p. 83-90; Abbasov 2011, p. 108).

<sup>15</sup> Undoubtedly, the quality of the education in the post-Soviet period decreased significantly. However, universities of the country until now attract students from many countries, for example, from Turkey, India, China, etc. According to the official data 7,150 foreign students were studying in the country in 2008-2009. A lot of students (primarily those from Turkey) stay to work in Azerbaijan after completing their studies. Downloaded from <http://edu.gov.az/view.php?lang=ru&menu=134>, on February 29, 2012.

of this experience it deems possible to focus on the emergence of "social process in which migrants create social fields across geographic, cultural and political borders" (Schiller, et. al., 1992, p. ix). In the framework of such approach the process of incorporation of an immigrant is understood as one taking place simultaneously at local, national, and global levels. Glick Schiller suggests to focus on the process itself and social relations, and not on the "culture, identity or 'functional' spheres of integration within the boundaries of the given national state" (Schiller & Çağlar 2008, p. 47).

Construction of such spaces in Baku is also related to post-empire (post-Soviet) specifics of immigrants' transnationalism (extended and stable ties within CIS space; the Russian language as lingua franca, etc.), with the cultural hybridization of the identity of immigrants from the first and the second group. Transnationalism of immigrants included in the third group lets them build up their own integration spaces and networks at supranational level. Baku, as a large metropolitan area (financial, industrial, political and cultural center) is the best place for creating such transnational connections and spaces (Ruble 2008, et. al., pp. 3-4).

It can be affirmed that the whole prior history of development of the city (since the end of the 10th century) contributed to formation of such spaces in it. Population of Baku (oil capital of Russian, and then Soviet empire from the end of the 19th and till the middle of the 20th century) throughout the 20th century was characterized by a high degree of religious and ethnic diversity. In the years of formation of the USSR the city acquired political and symbolical status of "outpost of socialism in the East". Thereafter, in the context of "friendship of nations" it has discursively transformed into the most international city of the USSR. Baku residents themselves in 1960-1980s preferred to describe Baku in the categories of cosmopolitanism (Badalov 2001, p. 260; Grant 2010, p. 126). Population of the city in those years is often described as consisting mostly of ethnic Azeris, Russians, Armenians, and Jews. However, the barriers between these groups were not insurmountable. Especially after the Second World War, the city could be described as social cultural space formed by all of its diverse residents. At that, Azeris (titular nation of the republic) were not the dominating majority.

Baku faced the situation which was typical for most of the Soviet cities, when use of Russian among its inhabitants was a form of expression of cultural loyalty to the Soviet Empire, according to Malakhov. Although the population of such Soviet cities was Russian-speaking, it was not Russian ethnicity-wise (Malakhov 2007, p. 165). Russian-speaking multiethnic community of Baku residents (like other similar urban communities) rather represented a group with conglomerative identity (Laitin 1998, pp. 31-32). Although at the moment of collapse of the USSR the city has quickly nationalized and became ethnically much more homogenous, Baku in fact remains the only place attracting transnational corporation, international non-governmental organizations and absolute majority of (re)immigrants.

It is such urban spaces within which immigrants often prefer to settle. Very many immigrants (almost all of those included in the third group) integrated successfully in the transnational networks and organizations. Such networks may be built up based on maintenance of frequent and intensive contacts between the host society and country of origin. At the same time, transnational networks and spaces which are often built up by the immigrants themselves, can be much broader, including third and fourth countries. Resources for construction of such networks may include different international organizations, companies, banks, etc. A lot of such transnational corporations and organizations settled in post-Soviet Baku, the center of financial, business, political, and cultural activity of the country.

Building up and/or integrating in such networks immigrants (especially those from the third group) do not seek political (civil) integration. One of the reasons for lack of such aspiration can be considered incapacity of the ruling regime to guarantee real political and civil membership in the imaginary Azeri community, as well as social protection. Labor immigrants from the third group consider their stay in the country to be a temporary one, even if they live and work in the country for 5-10 years and more. Another reason is the tendency to maintain intensive contacts with the country of origin. This task is notably easier when preserving citizenship of the country of origin. The same immigrants who aspire to acquire citizenship (especially Georgian Azeris) prefer to also keep the Georgian citizenship.

## Methodology

Although somewhat delayed, it should be noted that the analysis in this article is based on biographic interviews with immigrants. Most of the interviews selected for analysis were conducted in 2009-2011; eight interviews were additionally conducted in 2012 (four interviews with representatives of the first and the third group). These are three blocks of interviews:

*First*, with (re)emigrants to Azerbaijan (20 interviews) included in the first group;

*Second*, with Georgian Azeries (20 interviews) - the second group of immigrants;

*Third*, with immigrants from Turkey, India, and other countries (10 interviews).

Most interviews took place in Baku. Six interviews were conducted in the rural area (Shemakhinskiy and Ismailinskiy regions of the republic). Informants included women, men, as well as children from the families included in the first group.

Additionally, 7 problem-oriented expert interviews were conducted (academic researchers, independent experts, public officials). Besides, my observations are also confirmed by the critical discourse analysis of publications in mass media on the issue of Georgian Azeries.

Thereafter the article will be structured into three main titles, in which I will attempt to illustrate the described situation for each of the defined groups of immigrants.

## Re-emigrants and Their Family Members

The reasons for return in the 1990s could be different. Collapse of the USSR changed the status of natives of Azerbaijan residing in other Soviet republics. They turned into migrants and had to acquire citizenship of the country where they were staying, or to abandon this citizenship in order to return to their national republic. Close relatives who remained in Azerbaijan (mostly parents) often had a direct impact on return of native Azeries. Family ties and relations are still very powerful and influential in Azerbaijan.

Teymur<sup>16</sup> (male, Azeri, born in 1956), left Barda (small provincial town in Azerbaijan) in 1976. In 1997 he returned back to the country influenced by multiple pleas of his mother who remained alone after husband's (Teymur's father) death. Interviewee's brother lives in the republic. But mother managed to insist on the second son's return to the country as well. He came back to Azerbaijan with his Ukrainian wife and daughter who have previously visited the country only several times, for holidays and vacations. He settled in Baku. The return itself did not imply the need to take direct care of his mother, i.e. return to the town of origin (so-called *small motherland*).

After the collapse of the USSR Ukraine was now perceived as foreign country, and mother required the son to come back to his homeland which politically narrowed down to the borders of Azerbaijan. However, secondary socialization in Ukraine, where Teymur got his education, became a doctor, created a family, becomes a serious obstacle for reintegration. New behavioral patterns acquired in the receiving country resulted in appearance of cultural "barriers" between Teymur and host society.

"Ever since I returned I just cannot live here normally. I am constantly under impression that I am suffocating here. All these bribes, corruption everywhere which just destroys everything here. Everything is rotten to the core. [...] The organization where I have been working for a long time after my return [transnational NGO], even though "Western" one<sup>17</sup>, has been known for a bad reputation from the first years of its existence. Azeries are themselves to blame for this. I had a totally different life in Ukraine. [...] I really regret having listened to my mother and coming here. I had to leave a three-bedroom apartment, good job there [in Ukraine]. To be fair, I did not have

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<sup>16</sup> Hereinafter all the names of interviewees were changed for confidentiality reasons.

<sup>17</sup> Interviewee named the country where the headquarters of this international organization is located.

any problems with apartment and job in Baku either. [...] But everything was much better in Ukraine. If they see that you are a good specialist they cherish you. And in Baku you must have good connections, contacts, relatives, bribes".

Integration in the host society was even more difficult for his wife and daughter. Despite the fact that they do not speak Azeri, it is easy enough to find such space in Baku where Russian speakers feel comfortable. It was possible for the daughter to complete secondary education in Russian (last years of studies). But it was much more difficult for Teymur's wife to find a job, social network (neighbors, friends).

Almost right after the move the family began to live in the transnational space between Azerbaijan and Ukraine. At that Teymur himself for over ten years has been working at international humanitarian organization. Teymur left close friends in Ukraine, his wife and daughter have blood relatives there. They also kept their property in Dnepropetrovsk (apartment) and having graduated from the secondary school the daughter immediately returned to Ukraine. Wife constantly lives in the space between the two countries. Part of her time she spends with the daughter in Ukraine, and the rest of it - with her husband in Baku. At every opportunity Teymur also aspires to visit Ukraine.

Memory of opportunities lost after re-emigration (especially with respect to professional and career growth) is typical for such re-emigrants. They are often people with higher education who do not have the necessary social capital (family/community connections, etc.) to occupy a prestigious position at governmental authorities. Such position in the corrupt post-Soviet state often is one of the few guarantees of financial and social welfare.

Avaz (male, Azeri, born in 1967), originating from Akhsuyskiy region of the country moved to Volgograd in 1988, where he graduated from the institute and got degree in law. In Soviet Azerbaijan it was almost impossible to enroll in the law faculty. All the spots were reserved for children of higher political party officials and other leaders of the country for years and years ahead. After the collapse of the USSR Avaz acquired Russian citizenship. In 1998 he returned to Azerbaijan where he abandoned Russian citizenship and stayed to live and work in Baku. He also found a job in a transnational organization, but a commercial one.

"Having graduated from the institute in Russia I worked at prosecutor's office for two more years. Of course, it was internship. But I could also count on a permanent position. But here I have to run around all day to earn a living. Of course, I have a permanent job. The wage is not bad. But this is not what I would really like to do".

Avaz also returned to Azerbaijan upon the demand of his parents who (as he now remembers) were worried that in Volgograd he will marry a Russian girl.

"In our family two uncles and a cousin are already married to Russians. My mother said: "enough Russians in our family already". Then my father died and my mother just would not let me go. I had to stay. At first it was very hard for me here. For the first eight months I felt as if in a fog, until at least I found a job. [...] I would not hesitate to fly back to Russia, but my mother did not let me to. Also, I have to support my two sisters. No, she will not let me go. [...] Guys who come from Volgograd ask me, why are you hanging out here? Come over, you will make two-three times as much money. But now there is no way I could leave".

Re-emigrants who acquired professional education in Russia or Ukraine consider institutes of higher education in Azerbaijan provincial. Biographic representation also contains references to a higher level of education which re-emigrants obtained. As a result, if social capital of an emigrant is not sufficient for getting a prestigious position at one of the governmental institutions he/she will consider this situation as the ultimate form of unfairness. This feeling also reflects later on the perception of other norms and behavioral norms.

Not all immigrants by far come back at the request of their closest relatives. A certain category returns to the country of origin as they did not manage to settle down in the host country. Lala (female, Azeri, born in 1980), tried to move to Sweden together with her husband.

"We have always wanted to leave Azerbaijan. It is not an issue of work. Both me and my husband have never had any problems finding good jobs. [...] Maybe it is rather a desire to find a place where one can be certain of one's future, and of course the future of one's children. [...] My sister and her family have moved to Germany long time ago. My husband's family has been living in Sweden for 12 years, they acquired citizenship. Of course, our relatives also influenced us. They supported our interest in moving to Europe. [...] But it still took us a long time to leave, we were still hoping for something. Meaning that we wanted to be sure of our move for good, in order to have the possibility to stay there. Unfortunately, there are not so many options. Anyway, there is just one way left – to say that we are political refugees. And at least we tried. Of course, we really wanted to stay. But we did not succeed".

In 2012 they returned to Azerbaijan after five years of stay in Sweden. In case of such re-emigrants there is no issue of integration. Steady and extended family and friendly networks allowed both spouses to find a prestigious job rather quickly. As before their departure to Sweden they work at different transnational commercial corporations. As a rule such migrants retain property in their country (apartments, houses, land). Thus, their social capital and retaining real estate let them reintegrate quickly and efficiently.

As it was mentioned before, a special situation is that of the children who have lived outside of Azerbaijan all their life before the move. Parvana (female, Azeri, born in 1979) was born, like her parents, in Djambul (Kazakhstan). All of them were descendants of the families who were repressed in the years of collectivization (1930-1932), and already their third generation was living in Kazakhstan. They moved to Baku in 1993. In the spirit of cliché patriotic discourse Parvana interprets this step of her parents as "call of motherland". Her father's personal experience when he visited Baku on business trips also helped him to react to this "call". The family moved to Sumgait - industrial satellite city of Baku, because they could not afford buying an apartment in Baku.

"I really like it here. Although at first parents wanted to go back. They really missed their family. Our whole family remained there. Only my mother's sister moved with us, she got married here, in Baku, and my uncle A. Other than that, everybody else stayed there. [...] Many of them tried to move, but unsuccessfully. They could not find a job [...] At first everything here looked scary to me. People are all dark. Big black eyes. Everybody with moustaches. Now it's OK. I got used to it. And it got much better in these years. When my parents asked whether we wanted to go back, we refused. [...] If you have the money you can afford anything. Although there were certain advantages there [in Kazakhstan]. People are much simpler there, both clothes and relations-wise. Here everything is much more complicated. For example, when we are going to Azerbaijan, on the way, in Russia or Kazakhstan, women are all wearing some simple cotton dress. And here it is different, everybody tries to dress nicely".

In case of Parvana and her sister socialization in the host society began already in the last years of secondary school, it was successful and quite fast. Besides, the country of origin (Djambul) remained in their memory as an unattractive place for permanent stay. In this case one can observe different specifics of interviewee's life experience in the "two worlds". The host country wins in the comparison of these two worlds.

The idea of return also contributes to integration. Parvana's reflections do not contain an attempt of interpretation of her life experience as those of an immigrant. She prefers to describe her move in the categories of "return home" to the "roots". However, Parvana is still missing that social competence which she would have for sure in case of initial socialization in Azerbaijan. The disadvantage of not knowing the Azeri language is compensated for by the higher education and knowledge of English. These resources allow her (despite the fact that the family lacks the resource of membership in extended family and regional/community networks) to integrate in the transnational spaces of Baku. She has been working at transnational telecommunication company for a long time, now she is working for a commercial organization. In case of Parvana the choice of language itself (prevailing attention to development of English rather than the national language - Azeri) is related to the prospects for integration in transnational spaces and networks.

Fikret (male, from mixed family - Azeri father, Russian mother, born in 1987), lived in Grozny with his family. When the war began the family moved to the Crimea where Fikret's older brother had moved earlier. In two years they moved to Moscow. Finally, in 2003 they came to Baku. This example demonstrates not only the integration process of a child from re-emigrants' family. In this case we can observe what frequent changes migration prospects may undergo in each individual case. Migration by no means always means singular move from the country of origin to the host state. Fikret's example demonstrates multiplicity of such decisions, as well as his intention to leave Azerbaijan by all means.

"People are very rotten here, very corrupt. Everybody is just using each other. Brother uses his brother. Father uses his daughter, wife uses her husband. People are double-hearted. Especially this is notable with relation to religion. Most of them fake it, and there are few true Muslims. Say, someone performs namaz [daily five-time prayer] and people begin to respect him for this. But generally, it's just a show-off. [...] I have already made my choice in Azerbaijan, and adopted Christianity. My father, of course, was not very happy about it. But he did not try to prevent me from doing this, or talk me out of it. [...] No way I will stay here. My brother is in Moscow, and as soon as I can I will move to him. [...] Most importantly, people in Russia are very different. Take for example my brother's friends: Russians, Chechens, or Azeries, native Baku residents. Good relations. All simple guys, you can sit down with them, and discuss any problem. Unlike in Baku. And President Putin is not to be compared with ours. He works for the people, and not for his own well-being, like Yeltsin or Aliyev".

Cultural barrier is imagined as insurmountable one. Fikret has no wish to spend time on increasing the level of his own social competence in the country where he does not intend to stay. Lack of aspiration to study the national language is also sustained by the choice of religion. At that, there is no internal family conflict. All negative emotions are aimed at host society.

But, albeit temporarily (as Fikret is convinced himself), staying in Baku he integrates in the networks of people similar to him - children of immigrants, often from mixed marriages. These networks can build up at secondary schools. Often emigrants from Azerbaijan (especially those residing in Russia), send their children for studies at schools in Azerbaijan. Alternatively such networks can build up at institutes, in the divisions with teaching in Russian. Finally, they do as a result of accidental acquaintance. There are still quite large Russian-speaking communities in Baku today.

Emigration intents are widely spread among children from such families, but of course, it does not mean that the interviewee will act exactly like this. A lot of things depend on the possibility of professional development in Azerbaijan. Natalia (woman from a mixed family - Azeri father, Russian mother, born in 1987) was born in Samara. Natalia's family moved to Baku in 1999.

"Frankly, I have not yet made final decision to leave. Especially since I have one more year of institute studies to go. I still have time to think. It's just that people here are different and the relations are different too. [...] One cannot find a job without personal connections. And even if you find a job, you work really hard, at zero result. Everybody cheats on each other. There is no honesty in people. [...] But my family is here. If I find a good job maybe I will stay too. [...] Russia is not exactly paradise either. But there are a lot of advantages there. Everything is very clear. If the boss says it's like this, it means it will be like this. Work is based on trust. [...] But relationships-wise it is not very good there. More vulgar, maybe. People drink a lot. [...] Maybe that is why it is easier to find a decent job".

Host community for children of immigrants from such families is limited to somewhat narrow circle including family members, new friends and acquaintances. As the major flow of such (re)emigrants aims for Baku, the probability of entering such circles (even though quite narrow) remains quite high.

On the other hand, the need to build up one's own social circle based on networks of close family members and friendly relations is not a problem for (re)emigrants, coming back to their native villages. Nasib (male, Azeri, born in 1962), having returned to his village quickly integrated in the networks of his relatives and fellow-villagers.

"I left after the 8th grade. We had a 8-year school in the region. [...] My uncle lived in Kazakhstan, and he hosted me so that I could graduate from 10-year high school, enroll at some college. Thus I moved to Kustanay Oblast in Kazakhstan. [...] Well, it used to be very nice there. In Soviet times it used to be nice everywhere. [...] I worked only a little in summertime ... at brick factory. That's when I studied at school. We had a kind of practical training. Students were sent to harvesting [agricultural works], and I would go to work at the brick factory. One could make more money there. [...] I got there in [19]78, studied for two years, was recruited for mandatory military service, served in Volgograd. [...] After the military service I returned back to Kazakhstan. [...] Then, at my parents' request I returned [to my native village]. [...] And then I went to Russia. [...] I worked in Orenburg Oblast. [...] In Kuybyshev oblast. [...] Then in Chelyabinsk Oblast. It was good there ... Well, in short, you could buy a car here in a season of work. In those prices, you could buy a car for 6,000-7,000. We earned around 6,000-7,000. [...] We were provided with housing for free, empty apartment.

In 1990, at the time of collapse of the USSR Nasib returned to Azerbaijan, to his native village. Naturally, there could not be any official and well-thought integration policy (conflict with Armenia, economic and political crisis, etc.). But the central question that should be asked based on the examples of immigrants from the first group should be formulated differently. In my opinion it should be based on the perspective of the (re)emigrants themselves. None of them based their expectations, hopes or dissatisfaction on any kind of state integration policy. Immigrants do not expect any special support from the state. State policy should not mandatorily include elements of financial support. One can suppose that for example, the authorities could organize language courses for immigrants. But the authorities do not undertake this responsibility, and the immigrants themselves do not vest their hopes in the prospective help from the state. As for the first group immigration to Azerbaijan for the 20 years after the collapse of the USSR remains a personal (individual and/or family) project. Personal social capital of each immigrant remained the major resource for immigration and integration throughout all these years. Potential possibilities of integration in the host society (especially for the children from mixed marriages) are related to the access to transnational space and participation in transnational networks.

### **Georgian Azeries: Representatives of "Accidental Diaspora"**

The experience of Georgian Azeries largely differs from the one described above. In one of his works Ernest Gellner, stating his opinion about appearance of nation states in Eastern Europe in the first years of the 20th century noted that "In the situation of ethnic diversity characteristic for Eastern Europe, an indisputable and fair political map was simply impossible to reach" (Gellner 2002, p. 169). In the context of nationalist discourse "fair map" can be understood as such image of the "homeland" within the borders of which all representatives of a unique ethnic nation are united. It was extremely difficult to build up such "homelands" in the South Caucasus region (as in virtually any other region, given mixed communities in the population, contradictory ideas of the local nationalists, etc. As a result of formation of national republics a significant group of ethnic Azeries residing in compact settlements found themselves in Georgia<sup>18</sup>. In the terminology of Rogers Brubaker, these communities can be defined as "accidental diasporas" (Brubaker 2005, p. 44-45). Valeriy Tishkov also addresses this issue and notes that the weakness of defining diaspora merely through migration is in that:

"it excludes another widespread case of diaspora formation - shifting of the state borders as a result of which culturally close population residing in one country finds itself in two or several countries without ever moving geographically. In this way, an impression of reality is created with political metaphor of "divided people" as a historical anomaly. Although history almost has not seen any undivided nations at all <> this metaphor makes up for one of the most important components of

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<sup>18</sup>As well as in Armenia where Azeries were residing in compact settlements until Karabakh conflict (1988-1994). Azeries accordingly were not an exception. Just like after the formation of Soviet republics in 1920 there were regions of compact settlement of Armenians or Georgians on the territory of Azerbaijan.

ethno-nationalist ideology which results from the utopian statement that ethnic and state borders should coincide in the space" (Tishkov 2003, p. 437).

Azeris live in compact settlements on the territory of Georgia in the areas adjacent to the borders of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Their largest population is concentrated in Marneuli region which is almost completely populated by Azeris. At the same time they account for a significant share of the population in Gardabanskiy, Bolnisskiy, and Dmanisskiy regions of Georgia. Besides, many Azeris live in the capital of the country, Tbilisi. According to the last Soviet population census 307,600 Azeris were living in Georgia in 1989, but according to 2002 population census which took place in sovereign Georgia, their numbers decreased, and constituted 284,800 people (Nodiya, *ibid*, p. 62).

After the collapse of the USSR administrative borders between Azerbaijan and Georgia turned into national borders. The status of the Georgian language began to grow, as in the Soviet years it was often replaced by the Russian language. Permanent move to Azerbaijan was complicated by the need to acquire citizenship, while in the Soviet years such problem simply did not exist<sup>19</sup>. Labor emigration to Russia came to depend directly on controversial policy of Russian and Georgian authorities, etc.

Besides, according to Eric Hobsbawm, the plan itself for "cultural unification and standardization of citizens' life" (1998, p. 150) could not go unnoticed for the situation of Georgian Azeris. According to Giya Nodiya:

"Whether one regime or another in fact performed any ethnic cleanings depended on the political structure at that moment, but ideologically ethnic cleansing in particular <> represented the ideal of state formation (even though unattainable in reality). Of course it was impossible to make such homogeneity an official objective of the state policy, everybody understood that, but the attitude towards ethnic minorities was one of undesirable burden, which Georgia unfortunately inherited from the historical past. It would be better to have no ethnic minorities at all, but since they are there anyway they should be tolerated, but at the earliest convenience it would be good to push them out in small groups to their "historical homelands" (is it was done with the Azeris or Ossetians in Bolnisi" (Nodiya 2003, p. 68-69).

Currently there is no official policy of discrimination against Azeris or Armenians in Georgia exercised by the authorities. However, difficult economic situation, limited choice of possible careers, etc. compel Georgian Azeris to move to neighboring Azerbaijan. An even more important factor is family and community networks which have always gone across the administrative and state borders. Besides, in 1960-1980s a lot of Georgian Azeris moved to Azerbaijan thus expanding these networks significantly. For example, Tamara (woman from a mixed family - Azeri father, Georgian mother, born in 1962), moved to Azerbaijan in 1981.

"I was born in Tbilisi. My mother, brother with his family, almost all my relatives live in Tbilisi. [...] I got married here, otherwise I would have never moved here. I met my husband in Georgia. He is also from Georgia, from Marneulsiy region, and when he graduated from AZI [Azerbaijani Institute of Oil and Chemistry] he was assigned to a position here [in Sangachaly, small town not far from Baku]. So what, if he has two degrees - now he is unemployed and stays at home. Me, I have been living in Azerbaijan for 30 years now. [...] At first I regretted it a lot. Couldn't live here. For the first ten-fifteen years it was very hard for me here. Everything is different. Different environment, no relatives or friends. At first I was staying at home, as housewife. And you cannot meet people like this. But then, already in the 1990s, after all those years when I was going to Georgia, I did not regret it anymore. In the 1990s in general I was going there only for my relatives, otherwise I would never go there. The spirit of Tbilisi somehow disappeared. Now it is not the same city as it was before. They are in a very bad situation now. It is not much better here, but still not as bad as in Georgia. And then, there is no stability, no confidence in the future there. Although Azeris live there peacefully, and everything is ok, there is already some uncertainty. You think - it's all fine with this ruling party, and you don't know what it will be like with a different party. Georgians do have this kind of chauvinism. [...] I don't even know what to do in

<sup>19</sup> It was replaced by the problem of permanent registration.

this case. But still, they are more patriotic, and it is good. We need to learn from them. [...] We have been living here for thirty years already, but in Georgia we also have land. A good parcel. And a house. A solid two-storey house in our village in Marneulskiy region. My mother-in-law now lives there. We take her here for the heating season, and in March she goes back there. [...] Generally, I think that once I retire I will move there, to my village. It is still my historical homeland. Although here [Azerbaijan] is my historical homeland as well. I don't know, I think I can call it [Georgia] that way, and am entitled to citizenship".

Change of status of the two neighboring republics - Georgia and Azerbaijan after the collapse of the USSR does not become an ultimate obstacle for maintaining and forming networks of Georgian Azeris most of whom live in the transnational space between the two republics. Many people have property in both countries. It is not uncommon for Georgian Azeris to be citizens of two republics. First of all this is true for those who emigrated to Azerbaijan in the post-Soviet period. Stable family ties contribute to maintaining close connections. Many Georgian Azeris are used to spending holidays in Georgia, children go there for school vacations. Often, living in and between the two republics, they invest the money earned in Azerbaijan in improving their houses or extending their land parcels in Georgia. The steady trans-border networks and relations themselves (family and community) become the most important resource for moving to Azerbaijan. Tukezban (Azeri, woman, born in 1958), moved from Marneuli (city in Georgia) to Baku in 1976 having married her relative.

"Our people [Georgian Azeris] have started to move to Azerbaijan long ago, back in the 1970s. My husband is a local [from Baku], he was recruited for military service, and after that enrolled at institute. He graduated from AZI Oil Faculty, and stayed to work here. Then I came here and married him. All of us used to come to Azerbaijan for studies. There [in Georgia], say, you graduate from high school. There are Azeri schools there. But mostly everybody came to Azerbaijan for higher education. Everybody did so. If we found job, we stayed here. My husband came here as a boy. Graduated from high school here. Did his military service. Both of his older brothers had come here long before him. We have no other relatives in Baku besides them. All our relatives live in Georgia. I myself go to Georgia all the time. Both of my daughters-in-law are from Georgia. [...] My daughters-in-law are my relatives, that's why I took them. Generally, we try to marry within the community. We have never been in such relations with the Georgians so that they could marry our people, or our people could marry theirs. It never happened. It happened with Russians. [...] But not with Georgians. They have been treating us badly since Soviet times. Maybe back then they just could not do anything, but as soon as the Soviet Union collapsed, it got much worse. [...] Our people have a very difficult life there now. It's just impossible to live there now. They used to be rich, but now everybody is poor. Say, there used to be a lot of households, with several cars in each courtyard, but now nobody has any. Say, those who had a car sold it to survive. Everybody became poor. [...] Those who were working during summertime, gathering the harvest, tomatoes, prepared diesel fuel, to go to Russia and sell it - everybody remained with nothing. [...] Say, how did our people survive before? They came to Baku, bought cheap Iranian clothes and sold them there to earn a living. And now they prohibit bringing goods across the border. This is now also banned. [...] I think, sooner or later, everybody will move away from there. It has become completely impossible to live there. Very bad. [...] All my relatives, of course, would like to move, but this is not always so easy. Say, he has a two-storey house there, how can he abandon it? It's impossible to sell, nobody's buying. [...] We own land there, and one room. We go for vacations there in summer [...] Recently my husband's brother bought some land near Batumi, he wants to build a house there. A lot of things are being reconstructed there now, and it's an actual resort place. So he says - I'll build a house there and will move there after I retire".

Despite the difficult situation and continuous barriers between Georgians and Azeris, most immigrants do not aspire to get rid of their property in Georgia. In a way, this is related to low prices for houses and land in rural areas populated by Azeris. But often those Azeris who have moved and settled in Azerbaijan (especially during Soviet times) consider Georgia (and in particular their native village) as their small motherland. Not only they do not renounce to their property, but if they are financially well-off, they invest money in reconstruction and reparation of the houses, expansion of their land parcels. Despite the fact that the first two examples are interviews with women, men mostly

leave first. The second example demonstrates a more common practice of women moving to Azerbaijan - getting married to a relative or member of the same community. The example of Tair (Azeri, male, born in 1940) who moved to Azerbaijan after completing his studies in Russia in 1965, demonstrates how an immigrant begins building up the networks with the country of origin. He managed to find a prestigious job at a state institution.

"After I have settled here, I went to the village to find a bride. My parents found a bride for me from our family, and we celebrated the wedding there. In Soviet times our relations with Georgia also were not exactly easy. What can I say? I was in Tbilisi at the time when they were destroying the mosque of Shakh Abbas<sup>20</sup>. I was looking at this, and crying. [...] But Azeris have always resided and will always reside in Georgia. I am against it myself, when I see that more and more of them leave. If everybody leaves, there will be no one left. But our homeland is there and we cannot forget about this. For example, I have been living in Baku for many years, most of my life in fact, but our house in the village is still there! I go there every year. For every wedding or funeral service I always try to be there, in my native village. Especially if it is someone close to me".

Presence of many ethnic Georgians in Azerbaijan will let multiple new migrants go around the inconvenient law on citizenship. Georgian Azeris (as a rule these are young men and women who have just graduated from school), when coming to Baku, move in with their relatives. Thus they gain the possibility to obtain legal registration at place of residence and find a job. Tarlan (male, Azeri, born in 1987):

"I remember as if it happened yesterday, arriving in 2004 in order to enroll at the institute. I have only my mother in Georgia. How could she help me? She is of advanced age, sick. The life is so miserable there, there's really no place to earn a living. [...] Fortunately, my uncle (mother's brother) has been living in Baku for many years now. He has always been working in good positions. And I have been living at his house since 2004. Otherwise, for a guy to find a possibility to obtain official registration if you don't have relatives - it's very hard to do. [...] Basically - life in Baku is very expensive. How much do you have to make to afford renting an apartment? But in my case I can also put some money aside, help my mother. [...] My mother also started bringing some products from Georgia once a week. As much as she can bring. Fruit or vegetable, depending on the season. She also often brings fish. I help her sell it, at work. I work at a bank, and many people buy products from the village. Relatives also help out, give out to neighbors".

In case of the second group immigrants also do not have a fixed consolidated position with regards to the necessity to form integration policy. The most important requirement expressed by some ethnic activists from amongst the Georgian Azeris, as well as some politicians (mostly Parliamentarians) is introduction of a special regime for acquiring citizenship. The immigrants themselves also see a problem in acquiring citizenship. It is hard to tell definitively why the authorities do not aspire to introduce a special regime. It can be supposed that this way the authorities demonstrate their unwillingness to support immigration to Azerbaijan. However, the inconvenient law on citizenship cannot serve as a serious impediment for immigration of Georgian Azeris<sup>21</sup>. Existence of expanded and steady transnational networks based on family and community relations let many immigrants overcome this law quite easily.

## Labor Immigrants in Azerbaijan

As for the third group of immigrants in Azerbaijan, in this case the authorities also do not have any integration policy. However, control policy is formed with respect to this group specifically. By the end of the 1990s Azeri political regime started to pay more attention to the immigration policy, which

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<sup>20</sup> Shakh Abbas I from Persian dynasty of Sefevids. After conquering Tbilisi (Tiflis) in the beginning of the 17th century, he ordered to build a mosque in the city.

<sup>21</sup> It rather contributes to appearance of significant groups of illegal immigrants.

shows in formation of legislative framework. One of the first most important laws is the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on immigration (of 22 December 1998)<sup>22</sup>. According to the law anyone had the right to submit application for immigration to the RA, and provided that certain conditions are complied with this application should be approved. In October 1999 the Law on Labor Migration was approved which regulated the norms of employment of foreigners in Azerbaijan<sup>23</sup>. In 2002 the Law on immigrant certificate was signed<sup>24</sup>.

Since 2001 the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection started issuing individual work permits in Azerbaijan. By 2006 8,485 immigrants received such permits. At that, until the State Migration Service was created control over immigrants was mostly exercised by the Ministry of Interior. According to the official data in 2005 20,986 foreigners<sup>25</sup> received temporary registration at police departments in the jurisdiction of their place of residence (Migration in the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2008, p 14). According to the most recent official information in January 2012 4,360 migrants appealed to the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan for various issues (applications for temporary residence permits, visa extensions, etc). 1,122 foreigners violated administrative legislation of the RA. As a result 261 of them paid penalties, 696 were prescribed to leave the country, and 165 were expelled from the country under administrative proceedings<sup>26</sup>.

Suppliers of labor migrants to Azerbaijan are Turkey, Great Britain, Iran, Pakistan, Philippines, and a number of other countries (Azerbaijan Labor Migrant Survey 2008, pp. 16-21). Some experts also state that there can be tens of thousands of immigrants on the territory of the republic who are not included in the official statistics. However, in fact it is virtually impossible to verify this information and provide any trustworthy numbers. It can only be stated that in the situation of high corruption in the state authorities a significant number of immigrants undoubtedly is doomed to be unaccounted for in the official statistics.

It can also be stated that three spheres are the most attractive for labor immigrants: oil and gas, construction, and private business. Murat (Male, Turk, born in 1976) studied for four years at Construction University in Baku in the second half of the 1990s. He married citizen of Azerbaijan and returned to Turkey. In 2009 he immigrated to Azerbaijan looking for a job.

"It is very hard to find a job in my profession of construction engineer in Turkey, let alone count on finding a permanent job. Meantime, Azerbaijan is undergoing construction boom at this time. Of course, it is also difficult to find a permanent job. But the most important thing is that there is work, and it is well-paid. [...] For about two years I have already changed four jobs. Currently I am working in Baku on a big construction project. The system is as follows: the owner is local Azeri. Specialists from Turkey work at engineering level. Guest workers from India perform highly qualified works. This is about fifteen hundred people. And local Azeries can only get a work of laborers. Thus it turns out that locals are on the top and at the bottom. [...] My goal is to make as much money as possible and come back. I do not intend to stay here. [...] None of my friends intend to. I have about twenty friends here. Some of them studied together with me, and then stayed. They opened their own business. Mostly, it's trade or restaurants. A lot of them got married here. They live here permanently, for almost fifteen years. But it does not even occur to them to acquire citizenship".

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<sup>22</sup> Downloaded from: State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SMS RA), <http://migration.gov.az/images/pdf/e4648c2607c8e316316a1388f6d09a16.pdf>, on February 29, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> Downloaded from: (ГМC AP), <http://migration.gov.az/images/pdf/b4a7bbc25c4e936cedaa5ee6d958a75e.pdf>, on February 29.

<sup>24</sup> Downloaded from: (ГМC AP), <http://migration.gov.az/images/pdf/0b3c44b1b3e9dafd811c99fb6892399d.pdf>, on February 29, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> However, a lot of them were Georgian Azeries.

<sup>26</sup> Official statistical information of the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan as of January 2012. Downloaded from: ГМC AP, <http://migration.gov.az/index.php?section=009&subsection=041&lang=ru&pageid=3036>, on February 29, 2012.

Networks created by such immigrants are often built up based on the principle of regional/community/friendly connections. The networks themselves include immigrants who open cafes, restaurants, and other businesses to provide services to the immigrants themselves. Such immigrants acquire a certain resource of contacts with the host community as a result of marriage with citizens of Azerbaijan. But they mostly live in the transnational networks and spaces. For citizens of Turkey as well (and for those immigrants who prefer studying in English) there are secondary schools in Baku where children who do not know Azeri or Russian can study. Job hunt is done through the same networks (community or friends). Guarantees of rights and social security are acquired through contacts with the local officials and high wages. As a rule, only a large business-owner can afford hiring construction engineer from Turkey. All large-scale business in the country is either owned or directly controlled by the high-rank officials and their family members.

The most privileged usually are employees of the companies involved directly in oil and gas extraction. But an immigrant can find a job at any transnational company or organization. Melanie (female, citizen of Canada, born in 1976) found a job in Baku using Internet. Trip to Azerbaijan for her is rather an adventure, immersion into a completely unknown world.

"I like everything in Baku, and everything suits me here. If I can extend my contract I will be happy to stay here. You know, I am from Canada. For me this wage-price ratio is very good. And then, it would be hard for me to find such job in Canada. I would likely be making more, but the living costs are also incomparable. And besides, I wouldn't be able to get such a job. The unemployment is high in our field. [...] It is generally very hard to live in Canada. Currently I am not making much for a foreigner - 2,000\$. But I can also make good money teaching English. And this is more than enough for a decent life. I can afford renting a good apartment, paying my housekeeper who takes care of the apartment. In Canada, given the average wage, I was forced to live with my uncle. At that, we are not from a poor family, but from middle class. Besides, I really like the ancient spirit which you can feel here, but there is none of it in Canada. You can feel the thousand year old history here. Its own culture, characteristics. Canadians don't have anything of their own. Even Americans at least have McDonald's, and we don't have anything. Only shopping is absolutely disastrous here. I just cannot shop here. There is nothing to buy".

Spirits among immigrants from the third group can be very different. Someone likes the environment in Azerbaijan. Some feel constant daily discomfort. But in both cases almost none of labor immigrants seek to acquire citizenship of Azerbaijan. In this case one can observe clear difference between Georgian Azeris and labor immigrants from other countries. Azeri women from Georgia get married in order to move to Azerbaijan, while female citizens (and to a lesser extent male citizens) of Azerbaijan marry immigrants from Turkey, USA, and other countries in order to emigrate from the country.

Randy (male, citizen of the USA, 51 years old) was unemployed before he came to Baku. He came to Baku in 2001. He met a woman who is citizen of Azerbaijan, on Internet, and came to visit her. His girlfriend has been trying to find a job for him for some time, but failed, and they separated. However, Randy stayed in Baku, and finally started making money giving private lessons of English. He met another lady and married her.

"I think the first one just wanted to use me, and now I live with the woman I love. [...] It is difficult to find work, I make some money here and there. She works, too. Her parents gradually got used to it, and now they do not object to our relations. [...] I am now used to living here. It has been many years since I moved to Azerbaijan. But my wife wants to go to the States. She studied there for two years, and would like to live there. Sometimes I miss my country too. Even the food that I like, pizza, for example, - it's not the same here. But generally, I am used to living here. I like the people here, and the environment in general. I don't think I will stay here for good. It would be best for me to come and go".

Transnational spaces and networks contribute to arrival of labor immigrants to Azerbaijan. The possibility to live in two or three worlds at the same time makes some people put up with the inconveniences of living in a post-Soviet country, for some it is an exotic adventure they miss so much in their everyday life.

## Conclusions

Finalizing the analysis we should think about the potential possibility of emergence of integration policy in Azerbaijan. It can be stated that currently there are no reasons to think that official authorities are interested in such policy. What is more important, there are no reasons to think that most of immigrants experience any need in formation of state integration policy. Currently it can only be stated that the state does not need a mass inflow of labor force; on the contrary, it benefits a lot from emigration of hundreds of thousands of its citizens. There is a new tendency of attracting highly qualified specialists, though not of the long-term integration of such specialists in the host society. Such immigrants estimate their presence in the country as temporary, and their number is insignificant. There are no reasons at all to expect any radical changes in this field. After all, it can only be affirmed that any attempt of the authorities to form any kind of integration policy is almost sure to be a complete failure. Such policy cannot grant to an immigrant integration resources which are at least somewhat comparable to those he/she can find in steady and extended family, friendly, and community networks, meaning the immigrant's social capital which he/she needs (and which everyone has to some degree or another) for integration in the host society.

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