



CARIM EAST – CONSORTIUM FOR APPLIED RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

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Integration of migrants: Armenian realities

Ruben Yeganyan

CARIM-East Research Report 2013/16



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CARIM-East
Creating an Observatory of Migration East of Europe

Research Report
CARIM-East RR 2013/16

Integration of migrants:
Armenian realities

Ruben Yeganyan

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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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Table of Contents

Abstract	
Абстракт	
Introduction	1
1. The Armenian Diaspora: the Integrated and the Integrating.....	2
1.1. The Armenian Diaspora before the Breakup of the Soviet Union	3
1.2. The Post-Soviet Armenian Diaspora.....	4
2. The Integration Processes of Armenian Immigrants into Host Countries. Views from the Inside and from the Outside	7
3. Return Migrants: Challenges of Reintegration.....	18
Conclusions and Suggestions	22

Abstract

This paper embarks upon a brief examination of the history of the formation and development of the Armenian diaspora. Special attention is given to the quantitative, structural, and qualitative changes that the diaspora has experienced as a result of international and domestic migration flows brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as by the related aggravation of the geopolitical situation in the Near East. This paper proposes and defines notions of “old Armenian diaspora”, “new Armenian diaspora”, “integrated diaspora”, and “non-integrated diaspora”. Attention is also given to the non-homogeneity of the last of these categories, both in terms of aspiration for integration within the host society, and in terms of the actual degree of integration therein. Based upon an analysis and comparison of Armenian and Russian research data and materials, the author identifies and characterizes the peculiarities of the integration process amongst the non-integrated segment of the Armenian diaspora. Integration processes in the legal, residential, labour and general economic and social integration of emigrants from Armenia in the various host countries (mostly in the Russian Federation) are examined and evaluated separately. The paper identifies and characterizes the main issues which they face in a multilateral and complex integration process, and establishes the principal causes for these challenges. The second part of the paper examines the issue of the reintegration of Armenian return emigrants and the integration of the small number of persons who migrate into Armenia. The main problem of resettlement for migrants who return to Armenia, we suggest, is work-related: it is caused both by limited demand in the labour market and by low levels of labour income. What is more, upon return, migrants face problems such as finding housing, receiving medical assistance, sending children to school, and obstacles in exercising their rights, both from the point of view of insufficient knowledge, and because of various bureaucratic hurdles and delays. The paper places particular emphasis on the fact that the reintegration of migrants into the Armenian Republic is problematic not only due to unfavourable conditions in the country, but also because of an absence of any state policy in this regard.

Абстракт

В работе кратко представлена история формирования и развития армянской диаспоры. Особое внимание уделено количественным, структурным и качественным изменениям, которым диаспора подверглась вследствие межгосударственных и внутригосударственных миграционных перемещений, вызванных распадом Советского Союза, а также, отчасти, обострением геополитической ситуации на Ближнем Востоке. Даны определения понятий «старая армянская диаспора» и «новая армянская диаспора», «интегрированная диаспора» и «не интегрированная диаспора», обращено внимание на негомогенность последней как с точки зрения нацеленности на интеграцию с принимающими сообществами, так и по степени фактической интегрированности. На основе анализа и сопоставления армянских и российских исследовательских данных и материалов выявлены и охарактеризованы особенности протекания интеграционных процессов неинтегрированной части армянской диаспоры. Рассмотрены и оценены механизмы и степень интегрированности отдельных ее составляющих, в частности, правовая, жилищная, трудовая и в целом социально-экономическая интеграция эмигрантов из Армении в принимающих странах (в основном в РФ). Выявлены и охарактеризованы основные проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются мигранты в каждом из этих пластов многогранного и сложного интеграционного процесса, определены их главные причины. Во второй части работы рассмотрены проблемы реинтеграции возвращающихся армянских эмигрантов и интеграции немногочисленных иммигрантов в Армении. Установлено, что главная проблема реинтеграции возвратившихся в РА мигрантов связана с работой: как с ограниченностью спроса на рынке труда, так и с низким уровнем трудовых доходов. Помимо этого, по возвращению мигранты сталкиваются с такими проблемами как: обеспечение жильем;

получение медицинской помощи; обучение детей; сложности с осуществлением своих прав - как по причине недостаточного их знания, так и из-за всевозможных бюрократических барьеров и проволочек и т.д. Особое внимание обращено на то, что реинтеграция мигрантов в РА проблематична не только из-за неблагоприятных условий в стране, но и во многом из-за практического отсутствия какой-либо государственной политики в этой области. В завершении приведены основные выводы и представлены три предложения, реализация которых, по мнению автора, в состоянии во многом исправить положение в рассматриваемых областях.

Introduction

In the process of collection of statistical data and research materials and review of the published scientific literature concerning the processes of integration of migrants from Armenia into the host communities, the processes of re-integration of returning former residents of the Republic of Armenia and their children, and the integration of immigrants (that is, those people who have never lived in the RA) into Armenian society, we have come to the conclusion that these data neither suffice to provide a comprehensive and sufficiently grounded coverage of both the nature and characteristics of the flow and the development of the processes of integration, nor offer a tool for the understanding of the present situation.

This lack of data is due to some objective and subjective factors. First of all, it is evident that the only official statistical data source regarding the array of emigrants – the national census – is not sufficient because of the limited range of information collected, and also due to drawbacks in its design. The organization of the census made it almost impossible to identify and assess the quantitative and qualitative parameters of the differences between the living conditions of the host and migrant communities (especially among the certain ethnic groups of the latter). One must rely on special sample surveys to acquire this kind of information. The latter, unfortunately, are not conducted regularly, and not always with due regard for the principles involved in acquiring of a representative sample.

In the meantime, the fact is that when - and if at all - host country experts studied the integration of Armenian emigrants, they did so only locally, within certain specific communities and not having a representative sample. This situation is most likely due to the fact that Armenian emigrants are hardly part of the most significant and problematic immigration mass of these countries.

An even more passive approach on the part of the Armenian researchers is due, among other reasons, to the limited finances and the lack of funds for research projects, even when they are large-scale (inside and outside of Armenia).¹

As regards the poor knowledge of issues reintegration of returning former residents of the Republic of Armenia and their children, as well as the integration of immigrants, in addition to the lack of funds this situation is also due to fact that these issues were overshadowed by such phenomena as the continuous and labour emigration of the population, which made the questions of reintegration seem relatively less problematic. The majority of returnees are short-term circular migrants who have very few or no problems with regard to reintegration. The vast majority of the few long-term return migrants are those who have retained their own real estate. They face problems, first of all, of employment (but not more, and in some cases less, acute than any other resident of the RA), as well as problems with the language of instruction of children who have started school before returning. As a rule, problems of integration of an extremely small flow of immigrants tend to remain virtually unnoticed.²

¹ It suffices to say that despite the acuity of migration issues for the RA, all migration surveys undertaken during the post-Soviet period were funded by international organizations.

² In particular, according to our experts, during the past 5 years, a maximum total of 500 non-Armenian immigrants arrived in Armenia. Most of them are Iranian businessmen engaged in wholesale and retail trade of Iranian goods (mainly in the capital of Armenia, the city of Yerevan). This is a predominantly male community (those who came with their families, are few). At the moment, they consider Armenia as a place of long-term temporary residence rather than a place of permanent residency. Therefore, they do not intend to fully integrate into the society but merely seek to integrate into everyday environment, which they quite successfully manage. In this respect, the only clearly visible problem is related not to the processes of integration, but to the situation whereby Armenian migration law does not provide for mechanisms of monitoring of the presence of foreign nationals, including immigrants, in the country. In particular, there is no procedure for granting them the right to work. For this reason, the majority of immigrants are visible to the authorities, including statistics, in two cases only: upon their entry into the country and upon their exit from the country. Evidently, this information gap eliminates, among other things, the possibility of an accurate analysis and of the evaluation of the integration process.

For all of the above reasons, this work should be seen as an attempt to make sense of how things are proceeding with the integration of Armenian emigrants in the host societies and the reintegration of return emigrants into Armenia.

The logic of this work is as follows.

First of all, the question regarding the process of integration of particular stocks of migrants will be considered. With regard to this goal, the history of formation and development of the modern Armenian diaspora is presented, briefly, with a particular emphasis on its two stages:

First, the period before the breakup of the Soviet Union, when in conditions of virtual absence of influx of people from their homeland into the diaspora, the diaspora of some countries have been fully integrated into the host community.

Second, the post-Soviet period, when, due to the influx of people into the Armenian diaspora abroad as a result of various extreme factors on the one hand, and intra-diaspora migratory movements on the other hand, a large number of non-integrated individuals have appeared inside the Armenian diaspora.

Further, an attempt is made to understand the degree of integration of the latter. Given that most of them are concentrated in the Russian Federation, and that the more significant integration problems are observed there, the focus will turn towards the realities of post-Soviet integration processes of Armenian emigrants.

The conclusion looks at the question of the reintegration of return emigrants.

1. The Armenian Diaspora: the Integrated and the Integrating

With the collapse of the Soviet Union (and, in part, because of geopolitical processes in the Middle East), large-scale migration flows of population of the last two decades have brought about significant changes in the distribution of Armenian ethnoses.

First, due to the outflow of population from Armenia, the share of Armenians living in Armenia shrank, while the share of Armenians living abroad increased. For example, if at the beginning of the 1990s, approximately 4 out of 10 ethnic Armenians lived in their homeland, at present, the ratio is only 1 out of 3. The existing Armenian Diaspora, which can be loosely called the “old” diaspora, was joined by more than a million of emigrants from Armenia, the stock of which can loosely be called the “new” Armenian Diaspora.

Second, there have been significant changes in the distribution of the Armenian diaspora, both across countries and within individual countries. This was caused not only by the appearance of the “new” diaspora, but also by the intra-diaspora and between-diaspora migration movements. As a result of all this, the Armenian diaspora in some countries has ceased to exist (in Azerbaijan, in the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union and in Iraq), while the number of diasporas of other countries (including Georgia), as well as of regions within individual countries (primarily, the North-Caucasian autonomies of the RF), have drastically reduced. The migration flow of the representatives of these diasporas have increased the absolute and relative sizes of diaspora in the countries of Western Europe and the U.S., and, particularly significantly, in the Russian Federation.

Thus, the Armenian Diaspora has significantly changed quantitatively, structurally and qualitatively. From a community, almost completely integrated into the host societies, it has now evolved into a stock, which consists of two parts: the integrated and the integrating. It is clear that the latter includes both representatives of the “new” diaspora and representatives of the “old” Diaspora, who have left their homes under the pressure of circumstances (mainly, of extreme nature) and have also found themselves faced with the necessity of integrating into the new host communities (a total of more than 500 thousand people).

To better understand what has happened, a brief introduction into the history of the formation and development of the Armenian diaspora is offered below.

1.1. The Armenian Diaspora before the Breakup of the Soviet Union

Despite the fact that throughout most of its history the ethnic Armenians lived in many countries of the world, the beginning of the formation of the Armenian diaspora is associated with those terrible years, when the Armenian survivors of the 1915 genocide were deprived of their historical homeland and became scattered around the world.

Initially, most of them found refuge in the countries with already established Armenian communities with their own churches, cultural and charitable organizations of compatriots, schools, mass media, book printing facilities, etc. (Russia, Iran, France, Bulgaria, Egypt, Greece, USA, etc.), as well as in those Middle East regions, into which they had been forced to flee or into which they had managed to escape (Mesopotamia - modern Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, etc.).

Later, before the Second World War, some migrated to France, the U.S. and South America (Argentina, Uruguay, etc.)

In addition, during 1921-1936, the Soviet state periodically conducted organized resettlements of Diaspora representatives into the Armenian SSR. In the process of these resettlements (which were termed "repatriation," not an accurate term to describe the essence of what had been happening: people were not returning to where they were forced to leave from, but moved to the part of their historical homeland, where they had never lived before). A total of 42,000 Armenians, mainly from Syria, Greece, Bulgaria, France and Turkey, emigrated to the Armenian SSR.

The geopolitical changes that occurred as a result of World War II determined the beginning of a new phase of migration movements on the part of the Armenian diaspora.

Starting from 1946, the Soviet state had resumed the practice of resettlement, with the sole purpose of using the incoming community of former Turkish citizens and their descendants to justify the demands to return the Armenian territories that had been given to Turkey according to the 1921 agreement. During 1946-1948, approximately 90,000 people from the Armenian communities of Syria, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, France and other countries were resettled. However, the Cold War (and, in particular the fact that Turkey has come under the influence of the U.S.) has put an end to this project. In 1949, the relocations stopped. It should be noted that the settlers found themselves in very difficult living conditions.

In addition to the economic and housing problems, and problems of adaptation and integration into fundamentally different political, social, economic and social conditions, they have also faced the problem of distrust on behalf of the authorities, and thereby suffered severely. Shortly after the relocation, many of these problems, as well as part of the local population, were exiled to the eastern and northern peripheries of the USSR.

At the same time, the Armenian communities of Eastern Europe and other countries within the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union have formed a steady stream of emigration flow to the United States, Australia, Canada and countries of Western Europe.

Later, with the onset of political upheavals in the Middle East (the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Iran-Iraq war, the Lebanese civil war, etc.), the out-going westward migration began among the Armenian communities in the countries of the region. Interestingly, as a result of this new Armenian communities have formed in the countries, where they never existed previously (the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, etc.).

It should be noted that over time, all communities of the Armenian Diaspora have fully integrated into the host communities. However, the nature and the results of the integration in the western and eastern countries were, as a rule, significantly different.

In the first case, the integration was accompanied by a significant loss of the ethnic self-identity, with clear manifestations of assimilation (limited use of the Armenian language, a high proportion - up to 60% - of mixed marriages, etc.).

Diasporas of the Eastern countries have successfully integrated, and have not only not lost their ethnic self-identity, but have also strengthened it (full preservation of their native language, nearly complete absence of mixed marriages, etc.).

Obviously, these differences were both conditioned by the particularities and dynamics of public and social lives of the host communities and, not least, by the religious factor (common in the first case and different in the second case) and the nature of the resettlement of the community members (mostly concentrated in the eastern countries and much less compact in the west). It is noteworthy that, since the 1960s, when the emigration of Armenians from the eastern countries to the western countries started, the activities of the Armenian communities of the host countries significantly increased. New schools were opened, community and cultural-educational organizations started to function more efficiently, newspapers have started to be published, and even TV channels later appeared, etc.

The situation in the Armenian Diasporas of the Soviet Union was fundamentally different. Their representatives, to the same degree as the Armenians living in Armenia itself, were (or, were considered), first of all, citizens of a single state - the USSR - the national policy of which was largely focused on the education and creation of precisely such self-consciousness among the Soviet people of different nationalities. Amongst other things, and also as a result of the consistent implementation of this policy, the Armenian minority communities almost completely ceased to exist in most Soviet republics. This, in its turn, was accompanied by increasing assimilation processes, mostly not into the titular ethnic communities of the republics but into the Russian cultural-ethnic environment³.

1.2. The Post-Soviet Armenian Diaspora

From the first years of independence, mass migration of population from Armenia was triggered by the pressure of a constellation of extreme events (economic collapse, mass unemployment, shock therapy, near total impoverishment of the population, transport and energy blockades, etc.).

In 1992-1994, the number of emigrants from Armenia amounted to 620-690 thousand people, or 18-19% of the population.⁴ During the same period, the number of immigrants (from then onwards and until today, the overwhelming majority of these are re-emigrants⁵) amounted to 140-155 thousand people. Thus, in just 3 years, approximately 465-550 thousand people, or one-seventh of the citizenry of the country, were engaged in emigration. This marked the beginning of the replenishment of the Armenian Diaspora with individuals coming from Armenia proper. Later, with the decline of influence of the extreme factors, the migration activity in the RA abated considerably, which, however, manifested itself only in the reduction of the amount of negative balance. In 1995-2001, this value was approximately 162 thousand people, or 5% of the population.⁶ Based on the 2011 Armenia

³ The exception to this rule were the Armenians living in the border regions of Armenia: the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region of Azerbaijan and the Akhalkalaki and Ahaltsinskomi regions of Georgia, as well as a large Armenian community in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi.

⁴ *Migracia naselenia Armenii za postsovetskij period* [The Migration of the Armenian Population in the post-Soviet period]. UNFPA, Independent Research Group. S. Karapetyan, N. Shahnazaryan, R. Yeganyan. Yerevan, 1996, pp. 25-26.

⁵ Returning from the emigration.

⁶ *The Demographic Handbook of Armenia*. NSS of Armenia, 2010, p. 30.

preliminary population census, the outgoing migration during the inter-census period (2002-2011) amounted to 257 thousand people, or, approximately, 8% of the population.⁷

Thus starting in 1992, more than one out of every four citizens of Armenia, a total of approximately 885-970 thousand people, had left the country and had not returned.

One should take into account that 80-100 thousand circular (seasonal and non-seasonal) labour migrants from the RA, who go abroad the most of the year, add annually to the stock of mostly permanent migrants. We can thus conclude that the total number of RA citizens/former citizens permanently or temporarily residing abroad amounts to around 965-1,070 thousand people.

The vast majority of this stock (over $\frac{3}{4}$) are concentrated in the Russian Federation. The others, in about equal shares, have found refuge in Europe and North America (mainly in the U.S., and almost entirely in California).

It is precisely the stock of these migrants and their children born to immigrants (according to the most moderate estimates, 120-140 thousand people) that constitute the "new" Diaspora, which, in turn, makes up for the majority of that part of the Diaspora. This latter part of the Diaspora is currently undergoing active integration.

Apart from these, this stock includes those representatives of the "old" Armenian Diaspora, who have left their homes, voluntarily or otherwise, in the past 20 years, and are currently in need of integration. These are refugees / migrants from Azerbaijan (250-300 thousand), from Georgia (over 100 thousand people), from the Central Asian republics of the former USSR (about 50 thousand), as well as from the northern-Caucasian autonomous republics of Russia, with their off-spring born after the emigration. In addition, it also includes immigrants from the Armenian Diaspora in the Middle East (first and foremost, Iraq), forced into migration by the consistently growing geopolitical tensions in the region.

It must also be noted that the increase in the stock of the non-integrated Diaspora is likely to continue, as a result of both the inflow new emigrants, and as a consequence of the intra-diaspora migration. In particular, today, the existence of the 60-thousand Armenian Diaspora in Syria is under question.

The Russian experts who examine the problems of the Diaspora within the RF observe that many Armenian immigrants from the "old" post-Soviet Diaspora moved so far away from the Armenian ethno-cultural identity in the process of integration that in their new places they affiliate themselves with the Armenian Diaspora mostly because this is how they are identified by the receiving community.

Thus, according to K. Mokin "... *the external cultural environment «includes» him/her (the migrant – R.E.) into a «statistic» group and assigns him/her some features that are not only individual but also common for the group, that is, some sort of "collective identity". In other words, irrespective of fact whether the persons identify themselves with a particular group or not, they find themselves "objectively" belonging to it – simply because they are «recognized» as representatives of a certain group in the process of identification by the outsiders. Under the pressure of the active external influence on the system of values and motivations, their consciousness launches a mechanism of self-identification – the individual begins to act, to think, to build relationships with others in accordance with the scheme that is imposed on him/her.*"⁸

⁷ Ruben Yeganian. *The Impact of Labour Migration on the Demographic Situation of Armenia*. CARIM-East Research Report 2012/27, p.7.

⁸ Constantine Mokin. "Diasporna identichnost' v dinamike: konvergencija i entropija (izuchaja armjan Saratovskoj oblasti)" [Diaspora Identity in Dynamics: convergence and entropy (studying the Armenians of the Saratov region)]. *DIASPORA. Independent scientific journal*, 4 (2006): 153.

Having studied the Armenian communities of the Saratov region in the RF, the same author identifies five groups, which vary in their self-identification estimates, the degree of integration and further integration aspirations:⁹

The first - "Armenian Armenians", or persons who have emigrated from Armenia.

The second - "Armenians of Azerbaijan", i.e. resettles/refugees from Azerbaijan, mostly from Baku, and people from Nagorno-Karabakh. The author also includes migrants from other Caucasian republics (Georgia, Dagestan, etc.) into this category.

The third group - the "Central Asian Armenians" who mainly came from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, or, occasionally, from Tajikistan.

The fourth group - the "Russian Armenians" - is particularly interesting. Essentially, these are the inner migrants who arrived from other regions of the Russian Federation from among the representatives of the "old" Armenian Diaspora, i.e. people, who are fully integrated into the Russian culture and who, largely due to the fact that the external environment perceives them as representatives of the Armenian minority, have increasingly come to identify themselves as such. It is noteworthy that, according to the author's observations, this group, "while being at the periphery of the identification field has the largest centripetal force. In practically all families, children study Armenian language and culture under various pretexts."¹⁰

A theory taking into consideration the rationale behind the move and purpose of staying was employed as a unifying factor for the fifth group and not that of the "exodus." According to the author's estimate, unlike others focused on integration, this group (consisting, one may assume, primarily of circular labour migrants from the RA), has a different frame of mind: "... the values of pragmatic culture dominate it... Even in cases where they obtain Russian citizenship, they do it for mostly instrumental purposes – more efficient management of their own businesses. ... They do not aspire to integrate, despite living in Russia either permanently or periodically leaving to cross the border and come back."¹¹

Depending on which Armenian community within the RF is studied, and on the purpose and the methodology of the study, other researchers have a different approach to the studies regarding its structure.

Thus, for instance, V. Popkov draws distinctions between "the local", "the Caucasian", "the Central" and "the Armenian" groups of Armenians.¹² By singling out the "local Armenians", i.e., representatives of the so-called "old" diaspora, some territorial scopes of which (in the Rostov region, in the North Caucasian region, etc.) have started to form in the XVIII century and earlier, he, in fact, presents the current breakdown of the Russian Armenian Diaspora in general.

Y. Arutynyan adopts a similar approach. He divides the Moscow's Armenian Diaspora into the natives of Armenia, the natives of the Caucasian republics, the natives of other regions of Russia and the natives of Moscow.¹³

According to the ranking by T. Poloskovskoi, the Moscow Armenians consist of the following groups: "the Tbilisi", "the Central", "the Baku" and "aistanski" (Armenian) Armenians.¹⁴

⁹ Ibid, p. 154-158.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 157.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 158.

¹² V. Popkov, *Fenomen etnicheskikh diaspor* [The Ethnic Diasporas Phenomena]. Moscow, 2003.

¹³ Y. Arutynyan, *Armenyane v Moskve (po rezul'tatam sravnitel'nogo issledovaniya* [The Armenians in Moscow (the results of a comparative survey)]. *SOCIS*, 11 (2001).

Thus, the attention of the experts who study the integration processes involving the Armenian immigrants within their host countries and, first and foremost, within the RF, is not paid solemnly to the natives of the Republic of Armenia. This fact is an additional argument in favour of the idea that this paper should be devoted to the process of integration of the entire non-integrated part of the modern Armenian Diaspora. However, it was not always possible to do so due to information gaps, outlined in the introduction.

2. The Integration Processes of Armenian Immigrants into Host Countries. Views from the Inside and from the Outside

The absence of comprehensive and reliable data describing the full range of integration processes of the total stock of "integrating" Armenian Diaspora has forced the author to recourse to the so-called not direct sources of information in the analysis and evaluation of these processes.

One of such indirect sources is the recent complex representative sample survey of population migration in Armenia 2007. It contains the data on the legal status, living conditions, employment, incomes, and their use, etc. of the identified stock of immigrants from Armenia in the period 2002 - 2007 (approximately 206 thousand persons).¹⁵

These data give an idea of how the processes of integration of the stock into the host communities proceeded in that period of time. Despite the fact that this stock represents only a small portion of the above-noted "new" Diaspora (less than 1/5), and an even smaller part of the "integrating" Armenian diaspora (approximately 13%), these data are essentially the only data available, to which no viable alternative exists. Besides these data, there are no other data that could representatively characterize the state of affairs for the entire community of emigrants from Armenia in recent years (in contrast, the data sources of the host countries mostly do not provide information regarding the state of affairs within the countries as a whole but, as a rule, regarding separate Armenian communities within the countries).

Thus, the analysis is structured as follows: the relevant data of this survey are presented and commented upon (the so-called "look from the outside"). Afterwards, if similar data are available in the foreign sources (the so-called "look from the inside"), a comparison of both types of data is presented.

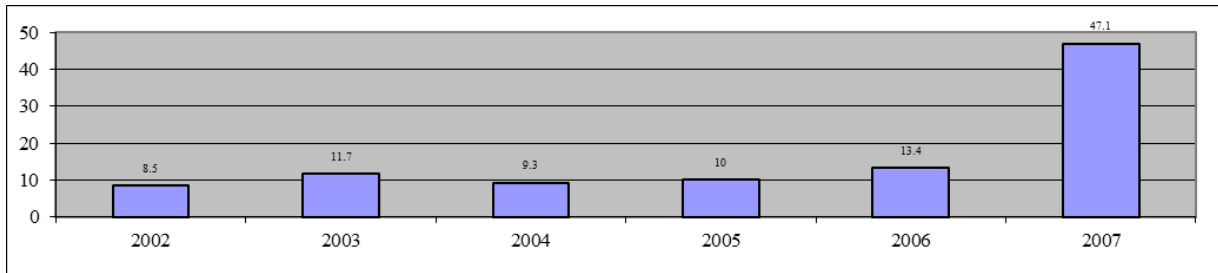
First of all, the stock of emigrants from Armenia as identified by the current survey is considered. If we apply the classification provided by K. Mokin, it can be stated that the stock consists of two parts. Following his terminology, there are "Armenian Armenians", i.e. permanent or long-term emigrants from Armenia, who aim to fully integrate into the host community, and "labour migrants", i.e. temporary short-term (mostly seasonal) labour migrants, who are likely to confront the problem of domestic adaptation only.

(Contd.) _____

¹⁴ T. Poloskova, *Armyanskaya diaspora v Rossii* [The Armenian Diaspora in Russia]. Available at <http://www.armenia.ru/community.php3?age>.

¹⁵ *Doklad viborochnogo obsledovaniya vnyeshney i vnutrenney migratsii Respubliki Armeniya* [The Report on the Cluster Sampling of External and Internal Migration of the Republic of Armenia]. UNFPA, Yerevan, 2007, p.40.

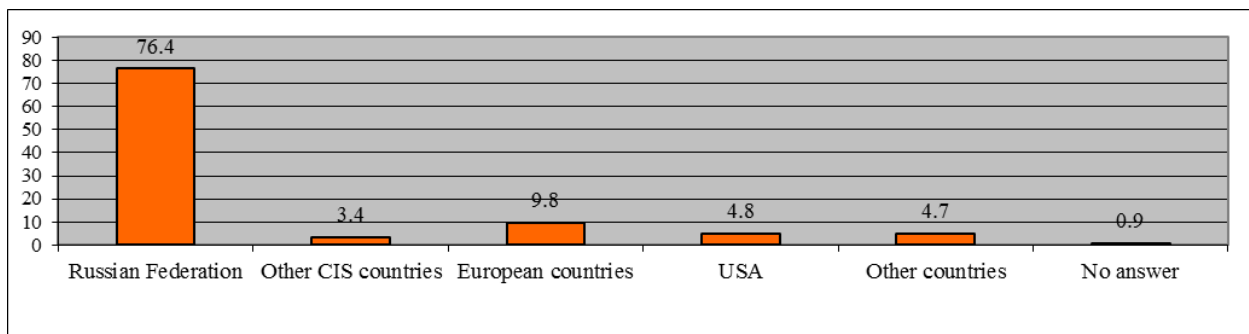
Figure 1. The distribution of emigrants from Armenia by years of emigration (per cent)¹⁶



Interestingly, the screening program did not include a question about the purpose of emigration. Therefore, only a vague answer can be obtained with the help of data on its distribution by years of emigration (see Figure 1). Based on the fact that 53.9% of the stock has been involved in emigration for over a year (the medium stay in emigration for the entire stock is 2 years, and amongst those who emigrated before 2007, it is approximately 3,4 years), and also given the fact that upon their return, a certain portion of emigrants will exceed the annual limit of absence (judging by the number of emigrants in 2002-2006, that would be least 1/10 of the stock), one can safely assume that 65-70% of the population fall into the first group, and only 30-35% - into the second group.

Over 78% of the stock is male. Children and persons of retirement age constitute less than 11% and approximately 1%, respectively. The average age was 34.8 years (men - 36 years old, women – 31 year old). Married men and women accounted for 68.6% and 63.1% of the stock, respectively. Their educational background did not differ greatly from the national average and was predetermined by the particularities of their age structure. Over 94% were citizens of the Republic of Armenia, 5.4% were nationals of other countries, and 0.4% did not have citizenship.¹⁷

Figure 2. The distribution of emigrants from Armenia in the host countries (per cent)¹⁸



The distribution of the stock by country of residence is presented in Figure 2. The data speak for themselves and do not require further comments.

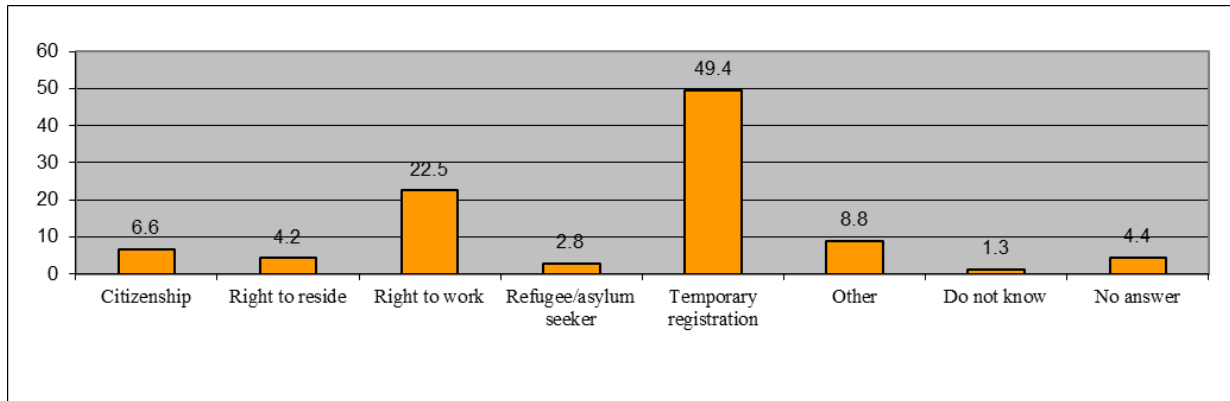
Given that the stock is largely concentrated in Russia, its distribution according to one important parameter of the integration, the legal status of residence, is quite characteristic (see Figure 3). Almost every second emigrant had a temporary registration (which is an almost exclusively Russian legal phenomenon). More than one out of five has legalized him- or herself through the “right to work.”

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 64.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 54-55.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 64.

Figure 3. The distribution of emigrants from Armenia according to the legal residence status (per cent) ¹⁹



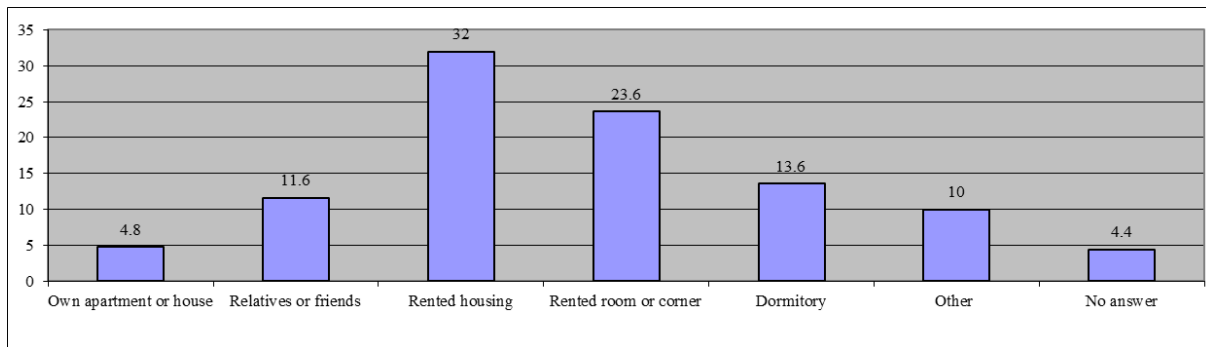
Interestingly, if it were not for short term labour migrants, the distribution according to the legal status would have been different. Thus, according to the provisional calculations, each tenth member of the “Armenian Armenians” group held citizenship, nearly 7% held a residence permit, about 20% held a work permit, over 4% were refugees or asylum seekers, and less than 40% lived with a constantly renewed temporary registration. It seems that such legal integration of the stock, which intends to integrate into the host community with a brief history of emigration, can be assessed as satisfactory.

Figure 4 illustrates the housing situation. According to the figure, about 5% of the stock had managed to procure their own housing. Almost one third were renting separate housing; almost every fourth person could only afford to rent a room or a corner. More than one in ten was accommodated by relatives or friends. Slightly more people than this were living in the dorms, and slightly fewer lived "elsewhere." One can only guess what this latter category includes. These could be temporary shelters provided to refugees and asylum seekers, lodging at the workplaces, or social housing, provided by some European countries to those emigrants who have lawfully received residence permits.

Due to the lack of specific data about the housing situation, one can only make draw logical conclusions, based on the existence of certain differences in the living conditions of the two components of the stock. Thus, with high probability, one can assume that the share of people living in rented rooms or corners, dormitories and with relatives or friends and partially ‘in other dwellings’ is higher among the short-term labour migrants; that the owners of their own homes are nearly absent among them, and that the share of individuals renting separate housing is low. In contrast to this group, the group of "Armenian Armenians" should contain a higher proportion of the latter two categories (however, apparently as high as to call their housing integration satisfactory).

¹⁹ Ibid, p.58.

Figure 4. The distribution of emigrants from Armenia according to the housing conditions (per cent) ²⁰



*"An Insight."*²¹ According to a survey of migrants, conducted in Moscow in 2009, the Armenian migrants (44% of whom lived in a rented apartment / room, and one out of four lived in a dormitory or with relatives / friends), while perceiving the main housing problem in excessively high prices of both the purchase and the lease, were generally satisfied with their housing conditions (9 of 10, wherein each second person was completely satisfied).

Figure 5 offers data on the extent and the nature of labour integration of the stock. According to their testimony, except for those who chose not to respond to the question (7.7%), 97% of those who could work and who wanted to work (economically active - almost 88% of the total) were working. That is, only 3% were unemployed (they searched but could not find any work).²²

The main bulk of economically active emigrants (2/3, excluding those who did not respond) were employed in the private sector (which is also largely determined by the short-term migrants, most of whom were employed in the private sector). More than one in ten of them was self-employed, 7.3% worked for the state, the most active and successful who built their own businesses with employees (the employers) accounted for 3.5%.

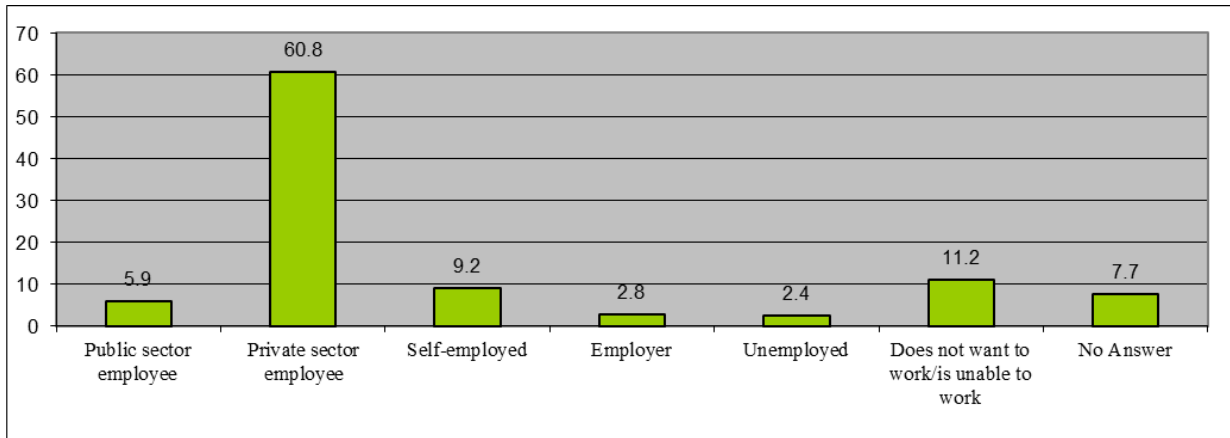
Regarding the group "Armenian Armenians," as our approximate calculations show, given their comparatively lower levels of economic activity (about 82%) and a slightly higher level of unemployment (4.7%), the parameters of their labour integration can be evaluated as more favourable. Thus, 5.5% were employers, 11% were employed in the public sector, nearly 18% were self-employed, and approximately 6 out of 10 were salaried employees.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 57.

²¹ Osadchaya G.I. *Migranti iz Armenii i Gruzii v Moskve* [Migrants from Armenia and Georgia in Moscow]. RGSU, 2010, p. 45-60.

²² It must be noted that the unemployment rate in Armenia in 2007 was 7.1% according to official data (available at employment.am/ru/38/free.html). According to informal assessments of various surveys the unemployment reached 25-30% (see *Viyezdnaya trudovaya migratsiya iz Armenii za 2008-2009 g. Analiz tendentsiy trudovoy migratsii i migratsionnogo opita* [External labour migration from Armenia in 2008-2009. Analysis of trends in labour migration and migration experiences]. Final Report, ILO, Yerevan, 2010, p. 30.

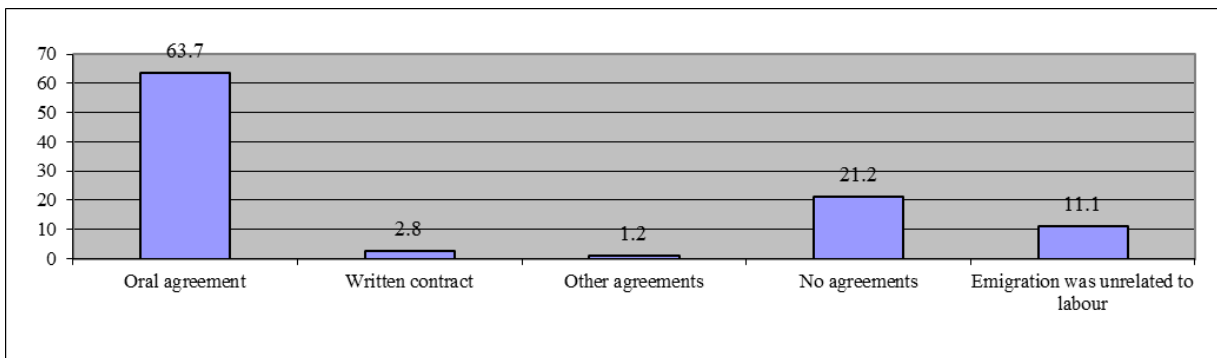
Figure 5. The distribution of adult emigrants from Armenia according to the type of employment (per cent)²³



Paradoxically, this degree of employment was achieved with little or no involvement of the relevant formal structures (both the public employment services of Armenia and of the host country, and private firms dealing with employment), and in the absence of binding preliminary agreements. Figure 6 indubitably demonstrates this fact. According to the data, only 3.1% of those emigrants who migrated with the intention of working in the host country had obtained written employment contracts by the moment of departure. 7 out of 10 emigrants have had an oral promise of work only, and almost every fourth had nothing at all.

One can therefore conclude that labour emigration from Armenia is essentially of an informal nature, unprepared in advance in due measure, which, no doubt, cannot but have negative consequences, particularly in terms of integration.

Figure 6. The distribution of adult emigrants from Armenia by types of preliminary employment agreements (per cent)²⁴



Regarding the spheres of employment of emigrants from Armenia, construction has an unrivalled pride of place: nearly two thirds of migrants were employed in construction, which is more than 6 times higher than the share of employment in the second-largest industry - trade (see Figure 7). Symptomatically, as the results of preliminary calculations demonstrate, the structure of employment of the "Armenian Armenians" was only quantitatively different from the general structure of employment

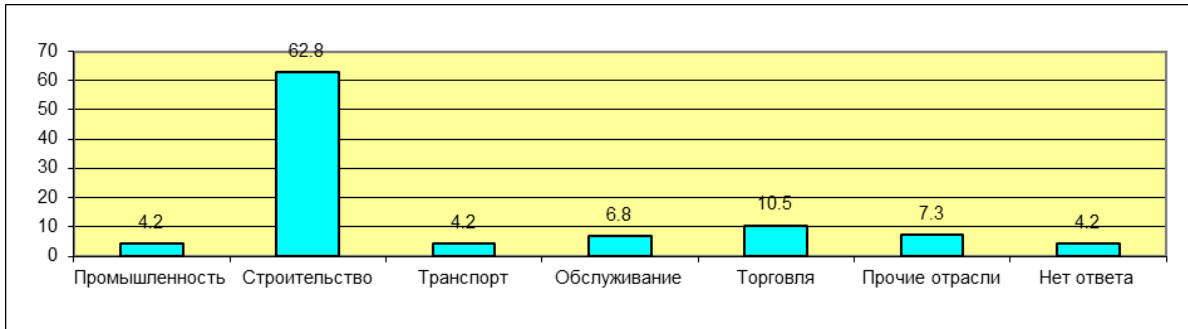
²³ *Doklad viborochnogo obsledovaniya*, p. 58.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 62.

for the rest of the stock: about every second migrant was employed in construction, nearly 15% were employed in trade, 10% - in other industries and services, and 6% - in industry and transport.

Clearly, this distribution is significantly different from the structure of employment in host countries.

Figure 7. The distribution of working emigrants from Armenia by sector (per cent)²⁵

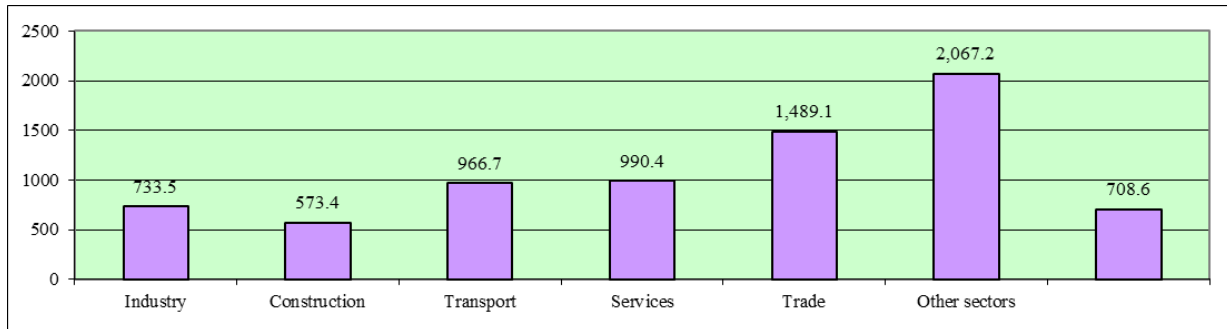


“Insights.”²⁶ In her presentation of the results of the above-mentioned survey of Moscow, G.I. Osadchaya draws particular attention to the following fact: *“The Moscow labour market demonstrates a model of employment of migrant workers from Armenia, ... which is typical of host countries. As a rule, they tend to work in those sectors, which are unattractive for the Muscovites.”* She also notes that the type of work of Armenian emigrants only partly conforms to their previous experience; that they are employed mainly with the help of friends and relatives: *“Nearly half of the respondents had resorted to these means in their search of employment or when starting a business. Less than 1% was helped by an employment agency or an agent in the country of origin in their search of employment or in the process of opening a private business... In Moscow this number was 7.8% ...”* She states that their educational potential is not fully realized: *“... the type of work every fourth migrant from Armenia was employed at did not correspond to the level of his or her education, and, additionally, for each four out of ten, it corresponded only partially.”* This being said, she also specifies that this situation is in many ways equally typical for the native Muscovites. Drawing on the survey data that *“... more than half of them (migrants from Armenia), work at the enterprises where the owner or the manager is a citizen of the Russian Federation, one in ten is a citizen of the country of origin, and for one sixth of those surveyed citizen of their employer did not matter,”* she rightly concludes that the choice of the place of employment was not conditioned by the fact that their employer is their compatriot, but by the possibility to earn decent living and friendly atmosphere. Interestingly, according to this survey, despite the change in the specialization of work, the vast majority (nine out of ten) of employed migrants are generally satisfied with their work.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 59.

²⁶ Osadchaya G.I., 2010, pp. 45-60.

Figure 8. The average monthly salary of emigrants from Armenia by sectors of employment (per month, U.S. \$)²⁷



The average income of the employed portion of the stock of emigrants from Armenia amounted to U.S. \$ 709 (see Figure 8). This is not only 3.3 times higher than the level of the analogous parameter within the RA in 2007 (74.224 AMD or \$ 217 U.S.²⁸), which one could and should have expected, but it was also 1.6 times more than the average wage within the Russian Federation, i.e. the country where the majority of emigrants from Armenia are employed (about 11 thousand rubles, or \$ 440 in 2007²⁹), which is remarkable and surprising. Compared with the local population migrants tend to have such significant additional expenses as housing rental, and most of them transfer part of their earnings home for the maintenance / support of their families. It is therefore possible to assume that at the end of the day their economic situation ultimately turns out to be more modest than that of the local population.

“Insights.”³⁰ The relatively high incomes of migrants from Armenia are demonstrated in the aforementioned survey of Moscow. According to the survey, while the minimum cost of living in Moscow is 6,648 rubles³¹ (about U.S. 215 dollars at the rate of 2009³²), the average per capita income of Armenian migrants was 35,652 rubles (U.S. 1,150 dollars), which was marginally higher than the average income in Moscow (34,814 rubles,³³ or \$ 1,123 U.S.).

Interestingly and at the same time characteristically, the value of earnings of emigrants from Armenia, apparently, could have been higher, if they had managed to obtain the entire amount (see Figure 9). Only half have succeeded. One in three has lost a small part of the entire amount due, while the rest did not manage to avoid more significant losses.

Undoubtedly, this situation is largely, if not mainly, associated with the prevalence of shadow employment amongst the emigrant circles. Unfortunately, the survey did not manage to obtain concrete figures to confirm this due to the fact that nearly 56.7% of the respondents did not answer the question of whether the employment of emigrant worker was legal or not. The fact that 30% out of 43.3% respondents answered "yes" and the remaining 13.3% replied "no" is not enough to draw grounded conclusions.

²⁷ *Doklad*, 2007, p. 59.

²⁸ Available at www.armstat.am/am/?nid=126&id=08001.

²⁹ Available at ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Доходы_населения_России.

³⁰ Osadchaya, p. 45-60.

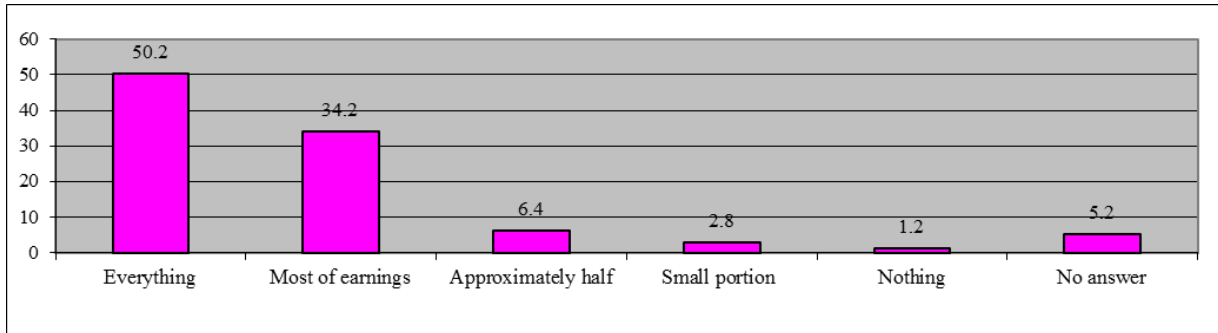
³¹ Available at <http://moscow.gks.ru/default.aspx>.

³² Available at www.kurs-dollar.ru/dollar-2009.html.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 45-60.

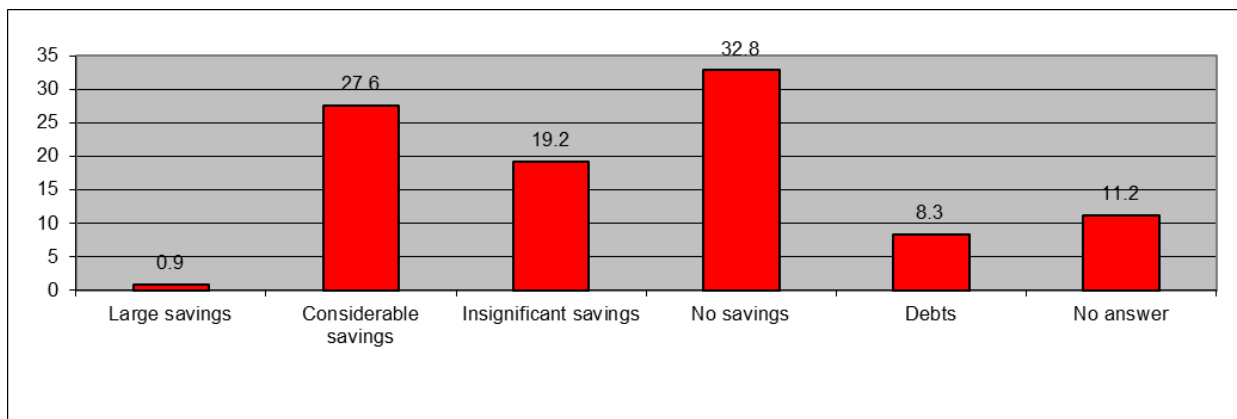
Despite the lack of specific data, it is possible to put forward the assumption that, in comparison with a group of short-term labour migrants, a group designated as the "Armenian Armenians" was largely better off.

Figure 9. The distribution of working emigrants from Armenia in terms of obtaining their earnings (per cent)³⁴



“Insights.”³⁵ The negative value of the low level of formalization of employment relations towards working migrants, in terms of their social security, is emphasized by nearly all experts in host countries. Thus, according to E. Tiuriukanova, Moscow migrants, employed at the informal labour market, are underpaid for their work, are not always paid for overtime, the wages are delayed, they are forced to perform additional functions, they are unfairly fired, they are forced into sexual services, etc.

Figure 10. The distribution of adult working emigrants from Armenia according to their ability to make savings (per cent)³⁶



to make savings (per cent)³⁶

Figure 10 essentially provides insights, so to speak, on the qualitative aspect of the incomes of emigrants from Armenia. It answers the question as to whether their income allows for making savings, which could be invested into development, including such integration purposes as children’s education, improvement of living and housing conditions, etc. As can be seen from the graph, the income of 4 out of 10 emigrants is at best sufficient to cover the basic needs only. One out of five

³⁴ Calculated by the author based on the data in the Table 74 of the *Report*. UNFPA, Yerevan, 2007.

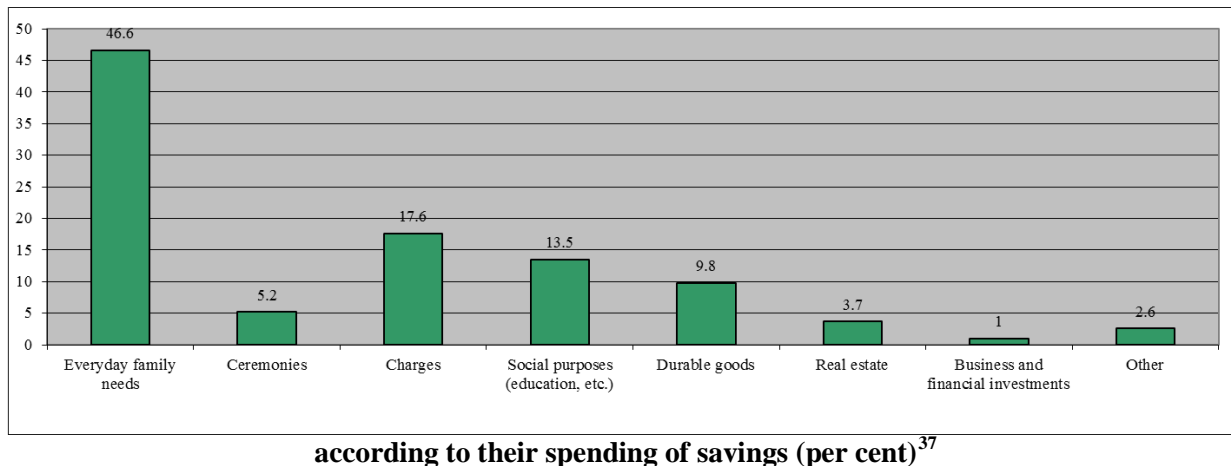
³⁵ See: Tiuriukanova E. V., “Migranty na neformal'nom rynke truda v Moskve” [Migrants at the Informal Labour Market in Moscow], *Ekonomika prestuplenij i nakazaniij: Nelegal'naja migracija v sovremennoj Rossi*. M., RGGU, 8 (2006): 51-59.

³⁶ *Doklad*, p. 59.

immigrants manages to put aside a small part of the income. Only about 3 out of 10 migrants have the capacity to make significant savings. Not having access to the data, not even via expert calculations, regarding the distribution of the income within the two groups of the stock, one can only assume that, compared with short-term labour migrants, the group of "Armenian Armenians" has a higher percentage of people who can afford to make savings.

The following graph 11 allows for the conclusion that a little less than half the savings of emigrants were mainly a kind of insurance fund against periodically recurring deficits of funds that are necessary for everyday expenses. About 18% of emigrants mainly used their savings to solve residence-related problems. Essentially, 13.5% of respondents invested their savings into the development of human capital (education, health); nearly 10% purchased durable goods; only 3.7% purchased real estate, and, finally, less than 1% invested the savings (business entry related expenses, securities, bank deposits, etc.). A small number of respondents (5.2%) spent their savings mostly on ceremonial events (weddings, baptisms, funerals, tombs, etc.). It can be assumed that, also in this respect, the group of "Armenian Armenians" is more prosperous compared to labour migrants.

Figure 11. The distribution of adult working emigrants from Armenia

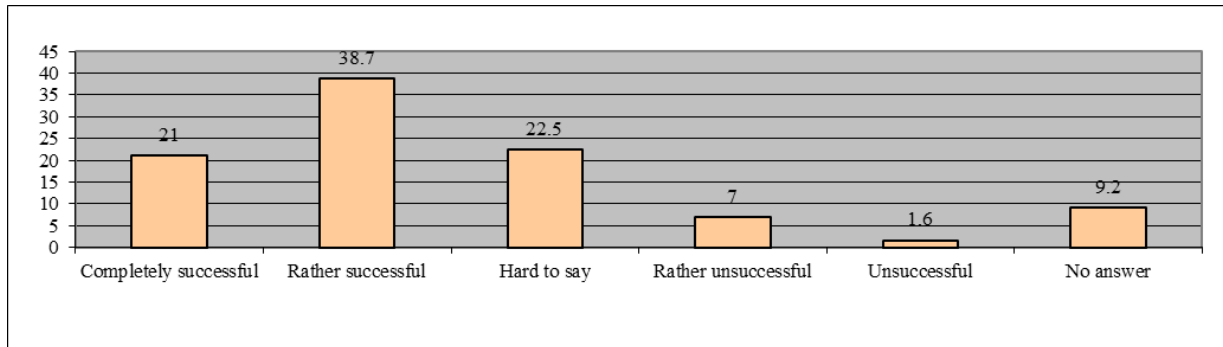


Thus, one can state that the economic integration of Armenian emigrants as a whole is sufficiently profound, although not without problems. The latter are not necessarily related to the employment, but to the fact that only a small portion of emigrants can find employment that matches their level of education and professional qualifications, and where the provisions pertaining to the legal framework, working conditions, wages and the frequency and the totality of payment are observed.

Interestingly, despite all the problems listed above, the majority of emigrants evaluated their emigration trip as a more or less successful. For example, 1 out of 5 have rated the trip as "completely" successful, about 4 out of 10 rated it as "most likely" to be successful. Additional 22.5%, while having reservations regarding the degree of its success, have not rated the trip as unsuccessful, nonetheless. Only 8.6% rated their trip as "unsuccessful," amongst which only 1.6% rated it as such without any reservations. Given that the success or failure of the migration trip is apparently evaluated mainly on the basis of what goals had been realized, it can be concluded that these data generally indicate a fairly successful flow of the integration process of migrants, whose objective was permanent or long-term residence, i.e. subgroup "Armenian Armenians."

³⁷ Ibid, p. 61-62.

Figure 12. The distribution of adult emigrants from Armenia according to their evaluation of emigration as successful or unsuccessful (per cent)³⁸



“Insights.”³⁹ Interestingly, the Armenian emigrants living in Moscow are more categorical in their assessments. The vast majority of them (94.5%) are satisfied with their stay in Moscow, while four out of ten are fully satisfied (these are, above all, those who have already obtained the Russian citizenship and have a family). Another five out of ten are partially satisfied (these are mainly young citizens of Armenia, who came to study). Only 5.5% are unsatisfied. These are most often Armenian citizens over the age of 35 years, that is, mature people with high demands towards living conditions. According to G.I. Osadchaya, "a small number of respondents who plan to return to their homeland is a positive indicator that indirectly reflects the success of integration of the majority of migrants from Armenia into the Moscow society."

One can assume that the corresponding estimates of the two parts of the stock are unlikely to vary significantly. However, given that under the unfavorable circumstances working migrants are likely to return, it is logical to assume that the share of the satisfied migrants should be higher among the long-term emigrants from the “Armenian Armenians” group.

“Insights.”⁴⁰ It is indisputable that "a view from inside" allows to correctly touch upon such layers of the integration processes, which are inaccessible to the “outside point of view,” where the information is obtained not from the source (a migrant). Access to medical services is one of such layers. According to the Moscow survey, emigrants from Armenia have organized themselves as follows: 6 out of 10 had a permanent and 23% - temporary compulsory health insurance. Those who did not have insurance were mostly young unmarried men and those without Russian citizenship, - most likely, temporary migrants, who were not aiming to remain for a long period of time. This, and the fact that only 7.5% of respondents from Armenia had experienced difficulties with the health care system in Moscow, testifies that the medical care was not perceived as a significant problem.

The survey has also revealed some other notable facts about the Moscow migrants from Armenia, and some important conclusions are drawn, such as:

- ✚ 85.5% of them maintain relationships with relatives and friends living at home;
- ✚ Most of them are immersed into the Russian information context (they habitually read Russian press and watch Russian television);

³⁸ Ibid, p. 57.

³⁹ Osadchaya, p. 45-60.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

- ✚ Only every third migrant participates in the gatherings of the compatriots at least once a month. Only 3.5% of migrants are regulars at the ethnic organizations in the capital. The most active participants in the activities of the clubs are young unmarried men;
- ✚ The fact that the vast majority of them (85.2%) have developed friendly relations at work with colleagues and business partners; that no respondent had evaluated these relationships as "hostile;" that the citizens of Russia prevail among colleagues and business partners of the respondents, is an evidence of their successful adaptation to new conditions and positive integration into the Moscow society;
- ✚ The latter observation is fortified by the fact that Russians prevail among the friends of migrants over the compatriots;
- ✚ The fact that when in a difficult situation or in case of problems the respondents rated their local contacts first and their compatriots - second, also testifies to a rather high degree of social integration of migrants. Local authorities were ranked third, lawyers - fourth, and human and citizen rights protection organizations - fifth;
- ✚ Every third migrant was married to a Russian. However, over 70% of respondents believed that because of the particularities of mentality, shared values, norms and patterns of behavior, it is preferable to have a wife or a husband of their own nationality (it is interesting that the proportion of women who shared this view was higher);
- ✚ Six out of ten migrants from Armenia estimated the attitude of unfamiliar people to them as at least "friendly," and only 2.5% described it as "not friendly." Along with the fact that half of the respondents did not experience a negative treatment towards themselves, one in three of them had experienced some form of abuse. There were declared cases of physical violence and threats. The main reasons for non-friendliness were the following: the Muscovites do not like labour migrants, foreigners and Armenians. As G.I. Osadchaya notes, these views resonate with the fact that a significant portion of Muscovites: is against the growing number of migrants from the CIS; believe that they pose a threat to security; are in favor of maintaining a low status for migrants; are in favor of a unilateral and unconditional integration of migrants into the cultural environment of the metropolis; have particular prejudices against people from the Caucasus, regardless of their nationality;
- ✚ Interestingly, those persons interviewed more negatively assessed the attitude of the authorities. Only one in three rated it as friendly. More than half rated it as "indifferent," and 12% rated it as "unfriendly and even hostile";
- ✚ Some results of the expert survey conducted as part of this survey are also of interest. For instance, the overwhelming majority of experts agreed that the formal, legally defined rights of migrants are not necessarily observed. Because of this, migrants (including Armenians) constantly face problems with the police and the FMS bodies. The experts underlined the need for specific action to integrate migrants: info-legal support, legalization programs, labour and social security, ensuring children's education, and cooperation of the FMS with diaspora and migrant organizations on the prevention of illegal stay by migrants.

3. Return Migrants: Challenges of Reintegration

The existence of problems with the reintegration of return migrants in Armenia, especially long-term migrants,⁴¹ is generally recognized not only by the public (represented by a number of NGOs) and the experts, but also by the representatives of state agencies, particularly the State Migration Service of the Republic of Armenia.

It is noted that upon their return they face such interconnected and overlapping issues as: housing, employment, medical care, education of children, part of whom do not have a good command of the Armenian language; the problem of obtaining or replacing passports and other necessary documents; the exercise of their rights both in terms of lack of awareness and because of various bureaucratic delays and obstacles, etc.

However, the recognition of the problem and its manifestations has not resulted in any concrete steps towards an all-encompassing – or partial – solution. Suffice it to say that until today not a single Armenian governmental body has been obliged to carry out direct statutory duties and responsibilities to promote the return and the reintegration of emigrants.

As stated in the informal concept paper, elaborated in 2010 on the initiative of the non-profit organization "A Person in Need,"⁴² only a small number of local programs on the reintegration of return migrants in Armenia, run by a few international and non-governmental organizations (in some cases, with the participation of state agencies), was available in the last years.

As such, the unofficial state approach to the problem is as follows: return emigrants, while possessing all the rights and opportunities as citizens of the Republic of Armenia, must solve their own problems independently, on equal grounds as the rest of Armenian citizens, exclusively within the framework of these rights and opportunities.

Apparently, this "philosophy" and the relative paucity of the flow of return migrants explain the lack of statistics and data not only regarding the flow of reintegration, but also regarding the numbers and composition of those in need of reintegration: no official data on this matter are collected.

The attempts to fill in this information gap with the help of special surveys have not always been successful due to a number of objective and subjective reasons. Thus, the only special survey of returned migrants (held in 2008 on the initiative and with the financial assistance of the OSCE) had received an assessment of the stock of permanent returnees as well as the stock of those migrants who returned temporarily. Return migrants, i.e., individuals who did not intend to emigrate in the next year, accounted for 55 thousand persons, or 24% of emigrants who returned in 2002 and 2007.⁴³

The fact that members of this stock have stayed in Armenia for a period of 31 month (on average) upon their return,⁴⁴ indicates that a large number of them are actually permanent returnees. However, it is indisputable that these numbers also included those of them who had returned from short-term trips (less than 1 year), and those pausing between two trips (postponing a new journey), i.e. those who as a rule do not require re-integration. One way or another, even according to such a controversial interpretation of the concept of "permanent returnees," it turns out that the average annual flow did not exceed 9 thousand people between 2002 and 2007, which can be divided as follows: approximately 0.3% of the total population of the Republic of Armenia; about 0.8% of the number of citizens of the

⁴¹ Especially involuntary return migrants: deportation, difficult economic situation, etc., which makes them particularly vulnerable.

⁴² *Omositel'no pooshhrenija repatriacii v Armeniju i reintegracii repatriantov: Koceptual'nyj document* [Regarding the Promotion of Repatriation into Armenia and Reintegration of Repatriates: the conceptual note], NGO "Chelovek v Nuzhde", Yerevan, 2010, p. 2.

⁴³ *The Survey of Return Migrants in 2002 and 2008*. "Asogik," Yerevan, 2008, p. 72.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 25.

Republic of Armenia in emigration, and slightly less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total annual number of permanent and long-term emigrants from Armenia for the same years.

Unfortunately, this survey touched upon the reintegration issues only briefly.

Specifically, it did not touch upon such an important aspect of reintegration as housing. Despite the fact that the factor of keeping or not keeping housing in the home country by all means not only largely determines the success or the failure of reintegration but also plays a crucial role in making the decision regarding the return, the proportion of those who retained their housing in Armenia has not been identified by the survey, and neither was the pattern of how the latter dealt with this issue.⁴⁵

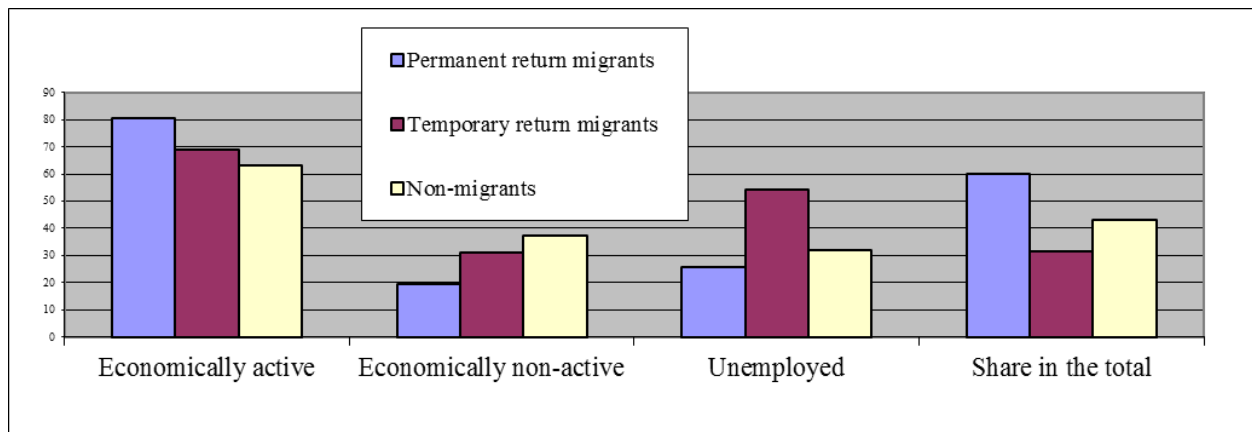
However, the fact is that the information collected allowed for that, the stock of permanently returned was not divided by such parameters as individuals, parts of families, full families, and those whose families partially remained in the Republic of Armenia and/or remained in emigration. Clearly, from the point of view of understanding and assessment of return and reintegration, such structural data would have been extremely important.

Despite all this, the survey data revealed some noteworthy, though not quite indisputable facts.

First, not only in terms of economic activity (not unexpectedly), but also in terms of levels of employment, the identified stock of permanent return migrants by far exceeds the stock of temporary return migrants (also unsurprisingly) and non-migrants (the part of population of the Republic of Armenia, which had not been involved into the migration processes in the period from 2002 until 2007). This came unexpected.

8 out of 10 permanent returnees were economically active, compared to about only 7 out of 10 and 6 out of 10 of the temporary return migrants and non-migrants, respectively. Out of every 10 representatives of the stock, 6, 3 and 4, respectively, were employed. Equally remarkable are differences in unemployment rates of these stocks: 25.7%, 54.3% and 31.8%, respectively (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Indicators of economic activity, employment and unemployment of the population aged 16-62 (per cent)⁴⁶



The comments of the authors of this survey are, we believe, nebulous and inaccurate. Thus, putting forward the theory that the only factor responsible for the high levels of employment and low levels of unemployment amongst the permanent return migrants are the newly acquired in migration skills and abilities, and supporting this theory by their own personal opinions that these skills make them more

⁴⁵ Based on the fact that practically no respondents (permanent return migrants in the RA) of the qualitative observation conducted under the same survey mentioned housing among problems of reintegration, it can be assumed that the vast majority of permanent return migrants kept their property in the RA.

⁴⁶ *The Survey*, p. 29.

competitive in the Armenian labour market,⁴⁷ the authors pay no attention to the fact that these skills (perhaps to a lesser degree than amongst permanent return migrants) have failed to assist every second temporary return migrant in his or her search of employment.

All in all, while not disputing the importance of this factor, we believe that the significant differences are determined by other factors as well:

The structural factor manifests itself in the different age and sex composition of migrants and non-migrants. The predominance of men (72% among the permanently returned and 85% among the temporarily returned migrants versus 47% in the RA as a whole⁴⁸), exclusively represented by the active working age individuals, is underlined. This factor largely explains the higher level of economic activity of this stock.

Another factor, which, in our opinion, to a great extent determined the difference in the levels of employment and unemployment among the two stocks of migrants, is, so to speak, the availability-absence of alternatives.

Having taken a difficult decision to return (i.e., voluntarily eliminated the alternative of offsite labour), the return migrants are constantly forced to be more flexible on the Armenian labour market and, if one may put it like this, easy to deal with: to accept employment offers, which they would not have accepted in the presence of an alternative solution. Seemingly, this largely explains their high level of employment.

In contrast to them, the temporarily returned migrants who do not only not exclude but presuppose new emigration temporary returned migrants (who also more actively search for employment at the Armenian labour market if compared to the non-migrants), seemingly do not agree with proposals, whose parameters (presumably, mainly in terms of wages) are dramatically inferior to their work in emigration. As the number of such proposals in the Armenian labour market is very limited, most of them are unemployed and remain unemployed until the next round of migration. It can be noted, that a lower level of employment among the temporarily returned migrants may be partly caused by the fact that, unlike the permanent returnees, most of them is looking for temporary employment rather than permanent employment (sometimes for several months, to which employers are generally reluctant to agree).

The survey disclosed another noteworthy fact, i.e. that the average earnings of returned migrants was more than 10% higher than the stock of non-migrants (242 and 220 U.S. dollars, respectively).⁴⁹

On the one hand, the authors attribute this to the same factor of acquisition of new skills and abilities amongst the return migrants, and, on the other hand, to that fact that a significantly greater part of them (see Figure 14) was employed in the private sector where, the salaries are generally higher than in the public sector.

However, as we see it, a certain role was also played by the above-mentioned features of the age-sex composition of return migrants and by the marked differences in the structures of employment by industry among migrants and non-migrants (in particular, the excessive number of return migrants is employed in construction, where the level of wages are relatively higher: 17.3% and 22.2% among the permanently and temporarily returned migrants, respectively, as opposed to 6.6% among non-migrants⁵⁰).

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 30.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 15.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 30.

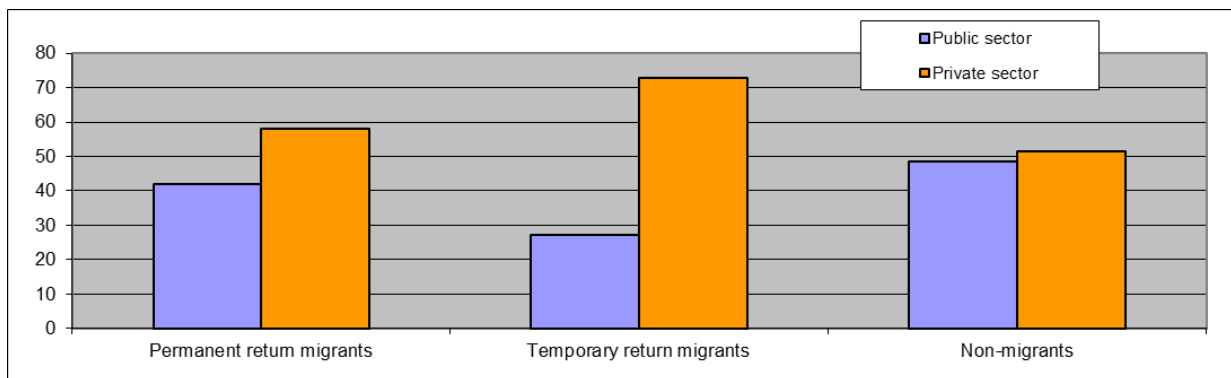
⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 31.

It may seem that such a situation as a whole, while indicating a high level of self-integrating potential of migrants who return to permanent residence in the Republic of Armenia, thereby to some extent justifies the inertia of the Armenian government in this regard.

However, in at least one circumstance does not allow for that.

The situation is that the probability of inclusion into the sample of successfully reintegrated individuals among the permanent return migrants during this period of time is at any given moment of observation objectively higher than among the less fortunate. At this point, the less fortunate ones are not included into the survey as they have already fled the country, despairing of success. Consequently, there are reasons to believe that the relatively positive employment characteristics of the permanently returned migrants are increasingly inherent to their successful representatives, and that the corresponding figures are, to say the least, less positive for the entire stock.

Figure 14. The distribution of employment by sector (per cent)⁵¹



This conclusion is indirectly confirmed by the results of a qualitative observation of emigrants who returned to Armenia, conducted in the framework of the same survey.

Nearly all respondents advanced employment as the main problem for resettlement. Altogether, most of them saw the problem as not so much in the lack of jobs in general, but in the situation where the jobs did not match their education and professional qualifications, and, most importantly, that the salary was usually not sufficient to afford a decent standard of living. According to many of them, a separate issue is the fact that the decisive criterion in the provision of decent employment is not the objective qualifications of the applicants but patronage.

Quite a few respondents consider integration and resettlement in Armenia difficult due to the difficulties related to setting up and running private business enterprises. They draw attention to the complex nature of the relationships between the entrepreneurs and the tax system, the low level of business ethics, consumer insolvency, etc. In addition to these, the respondents also noted the language problem of children, the lack of social justice, limited opportunities for leisure and recreation (this was mainly mentioned by the rural respondents), etc.

Opinions and estimates of young respondents who had returned from educational migration were particularly frustrating. They acknowledge that they have acquired knowledge and skills that are little demanded on behalf of the Armenian employers, including the state. Many of them do not exclude the possibility of labour migration, in most cases, permanent.⁵²

The results of qualitative observations have allowed the authors to draw the following important conclusion: compared with return migrants from the so-called "near abroad" (Russia and other former

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 30.

⁵² Ibid, section "Student migrants," pp. 54-64.

Soviet Union countries), the Armenians who returned from the “far abroad” (European countries, the USA, etc.) have a harder time integrating into the Armenian reality. This, according to them (something one should agree with), is due, on the one hand, to the existing discrepancy between the life-style and customs of modern-day Armenia and these groups of countries (generally, insignificant in the first case, and significant in the second case). On the other hand, this is due to the fact that, for objective reasons (visa regimes, higher travel costs, etc.), their period of absence from Armenia and their stay in the "far abroad" are much longer than of the return migrants from the "near" abroad.⁵³

It is worth of note that most returnees who suffered fiascos in their effort to re-integrate into the country have decided to leave again, in despair, without having any explicit desire to do so. This fact deserves foremost attention, especially on the part of the relevant public authorities, and can be seen as a request to develop necessarily and effective public policies to integrate migrants.⁵⁴

Despite the lack of relevant statistical data and research materials, apparently, the "old" Armenian diaspora who immigrated into the Republic of Armenia encounter roughly similar challenges. Judging by the fact that, according to the National Statistic Service of the RA, in the last 5 years the total annual number of immigrants who are not citizens of the Armenia had not exceed one thousand people,⁵⁵ their number is small.

Thus, summarizing the above, and based on the fact that the promotion of the emergence of sustainable and sufficient immigration flow from among the "new" and "old" Armenian Diaspora will become an effective factor in mitigating the negative effects of mass emigration of population from the post-Soviet Armenia, which will boost the recovery and the development of economic and social spheres in country, the authors consider the proposals of the authors of this informal concept paper justified and timely. The latter essentially boils down to the need to transit from the current practice of declarations to the development and comprehensive management of public policies to promote repatriation and real assistance in reintegration (integration) of the arriving persons.⁵⁶

Conclusions and Suggestions

Official statistics and research material are not sufficient for a comprehensive and informed coverage of both the nature and the characteristics of the processes of integration of migrants from Armenia into host communities, of the processes of reintegration of returning former residents of the Republic of Armenia and their children, of integration of immigrants and of the current situation in general.

To obtain this kind of information, special sample surveys are needed, which, unfortunately, are not conducted regularly and not always undertaken with due respect to the principles of a representative sample.

This work should be seen as an attempt to broadly understand the state of affairs in the field of integration of Armenian emigrants into host societies and the reintegration of return migrants in Armenia.

The fall of the Soviet Union (and, partly, geopolitical situation in the Middle East) predetermined large-scale migration of population as well as significant changes in the process of settling of the Armenian ethnos in the past two decades.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 53.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 54.

⁵⁵ *The Demographic Handbook of Armenia*. NSS RA, Yerevan 2011, p. 118.

⁵⁶ *Omositel'no pooshhrenija repatriacii v Armeniju i reintegracii repatriantov: Koceptual'nyj document*, 2010.

First, because of the exodus of population from the Republic of Armenia, the share of Armenians living diminished, and the share of Armenians living abroad has increased. The already existing Armenian diaspora (the "old" Diaspora) was joined by over a million of emigrants from Armenia (the "new" Diaspora).

Secondly, there have been significant changes in the distribution of the Diaspora, both across countries and within countries. This is not only due to the emergence of the "new" diaspora but also due to between-Diaspora and intra-Diaspora migratory movements.

Thus, the modern Armenian Diaspora consists essentially of fully integrated and integrating parts. The latter also includes, in addition to the "new" Diaspora, those members of the "old" diaspora who, under the pressure of circumstances, having left their homes, have found themselves faced with the necessity of integrating into new host communities (a total of more than 500 thousand people).

The stock consists of two parts: permanent or long-term emigrants, who aim at full integration into the host community, and "labour migrants," i.e. those who engage into temporary short-term (mostly seasonal) labour trips that are likely to confront only the problem of domestic adaptation. The vast majority of both of them are male. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of them lived in Russia, one in ten - in European countries, and about 5% - in the United States.

Given that the emigration history of the stock which aims to integrate into the host community is quite brief, the level of legal integration of the stock can be assessed as satisfactory.

The housing provision of migrants can be estimated as relatively adequate, but not to the extent to make statements about a satisfactory level of their housing integration.

Based on the parameters of employment and income of Armenian immigrants, the degree of their economic integration is quite high. The level of their economic activity and employment are higher than those in both Armenia and, to a lesser extent, in the countries where they live. At the same time, it has all the negative features of migration employment: employment mainly in the spheres that are unattractive to the local population and the positions that do not correspond to their professional qualifications and education.

The average income indicators of the stock of emigrants from Armenia are more than 3 times higher than those in the RA. However, they are also slightly higher than the average monthly salary within the Russian Federation, i.e. the country where most of them were employed. Considering the fact that, compared with the local population, migrants tend to have such significant expenses as housing rent, and that most of them remit part of earnings home, it is possible to suggest that their material capabilities are ultimately more limited than those of the locals.

Seemingly, the income of Armenian emigrants could have been higher, had they been able to receive their entitlements in their full amounts. Only half of them have succeeded in doing so. Indisputably, this situation is mainly related to the prevalence of shadow employment among the emigrant circles. Regarding the qualitative aspect of income of emigrants from Armenia, the indicators are that 4 of the 10 receive an income, which is, at best, only sufficient to their cover living expenses.

It is noteworthy that the formal structures (both public and private firms offering employment in Armenia and in the host countries), rarely participated in the processes of economic integration of Armenian emigrants. This implies that labour migration from Armenia is essentially of an informal nature and is not a phenomenon that is duly prepared in advance.

The social integration of Armenian immigrants proceeds rather dynamically, although not without problems. Every third migrant from Armenia has experienced abuse. There have been cases of physical violence and threats. Characteristically, the migrants have more negatively evaluated the attitude of the authorities.

In practice, the undeclared state approach to the issue of permanent reintegration of return migrants into the RA is as follows: the return emigrants possess all the rights and opportunities as citizens of the Republic of Armenia and should solve their problems independently, within the framework of these rights and opportunities. Apparently, this "philosophy" and the relative paucity of the flow of return migrants explain the lack of statistics and data not only regarding the flow of reintegration, but also regarding the numbers and composition of those in need of reintegration: no official data on this matter are collected.

Upon their return, they face such interconnected and overlapping issues as: housing provision; employment; medical care; education of children, some of whom do not have a good command of the Armenian language; the problem of obtaining or replacing passports and other necessary documents; the exercise of their rights both in terms of lack of awareness and because of various bureaucratic delays and obstacles, etc.

Not only in terms of economic activity, but also in terms of employment the stock of permanent return migrants by far exceeds the stock of temporary return migrants and non-migrants. This was due to the new skills and abilities that were acquired while in migration, structural particularities of the community of return migrants and, finally, the absence of alternative (compared to the temporary return migrants, the permanent return migrants have excluded the alternative of out-of-country labour and are forced to be more flexible on the Armenian labour market and to accept employment offers, which they would have not accepted under different conditions).

At least one circumstance does not allow viewing this situation as an evidence of high self-reintegration potential of the permanent return migrants.

This is due to the fact that the chances of inclusion into the sample on behalf of the successfully reintegrated permanent return migrants at any given moment of the observation are higher than among the less successful ones. At this point, the less fortunate ones are not included into the survey as they have already left the country, despairing of success.

According to the majority of return migrants, the main problem in the process of resettlement was the difficulty of finding employment. It was not necessarily the absence of working places that constituted the problem for most of them but the fact that the proposed vacancies did not match their education and professional skills, and, most importantly, that the salaries are as a rule, not sufficient to afford a decent standard of living. According to many of them, the fact that the attainment of employment is conditioned not so much by skills but by patronage constitutes an additional problem.

Many believe that difficulties associated with setting up and running their own businesses also constitute a serious problem. They draw attention to the complexity of the relationship between entrepreneurs and the tax system, the low level of business ethics, consumer insolvency, etc.

In addition to these, the respondents also noted the language problems of their children, the lack of social justice, limited opportunities for leisure and recreation (this was mainly mentioned by rural respondents), etc.

Opinions and estimates of young return migrants who left the country to obtain education were particularly frustrating. They acknowledge that they have acquired knowledge and skills that are of little demand on behalf of the Armenian employers, including the state. Many of them do not exclude the possibility of labour migration, in most cases, permanent.

The next important conclusion is that compared with return migrants from the so-called "near abroad," the return migrants from the "far abroad" have a harder time integrating into the Armenian reality. On the one hand, this is due to a discrepancy between the life-style and customs of modern-day Armenia and these groups of countries (generally, insignificant in the first case and significant in the second case). On the other hand, this is due to the fact that, for objective reasons (visa regimes, higher

travel costs, etc.), their period of absence from Armenia and their stay in the “far” abroad are much longer than among the return migrants from the “near” abroad.

The fact that the majority of return migrants has failed to reintegrated into the RA and have decided to leave the country again unwillingly and out of despair, is a kind of appeal to elaborate and launch an effective public policy to integrate migrants.

Apparently, the representatives of the “old” Armenian Diaspora who immigrated into the Republic of Armenia encounter roughly similar challenges as permanent return emigrants. Judging by the fact that, according to the National Statistic Service of the RA, in the last 5 years the total annual number of immigrants who are not citizens of the Armenia had not exceed one thousand people,⁵⁷ their number is small.

Summarizing the above, one can come to the following conclusions:

First, the integration policies of host countries of the Armenian emigrants, especially of the Russian Federation, are not purposeful, effective and consistent enough. Because of this, integration processes encounter significant challenges both for the migrants and for the local population. They need to be improved. In particular, as emphasized by most Russian experts (whose views we share), it is necessary to strengthen the information and legal support of migrants, to develop and implement programs for their legalization, to ensure the realization of declared employment and social guarantees, to establish permanent cooperation with emigrant organizations and the Diaspora, as well as prevention of illegal entry, etc.

Second, an important reason for the low efficiency of the integration policies of host countries is the fact that such a significant aspect of integration as employment of migrant workers develops largely spontaneously. Formal employment agencies of both sending and receiving countries do not participate in this process. Among other things, this leads to widespread informal employment and the accompanying negative social and economic consequences. Evidently, corresponding political efforts of both receiving and sending countries are needed to remedy the situation. In particular, organization and dissemination of circular migration on the basis of bilateral agreements can play an important role and help to address this problem, to reduce immigration pressure onto the host countries, to reduce the negative and increase the positive effects of emigration in the sending countries.

Third, stimulating the emergence of stable and sufficient immigration flow from the “new” and “old” Armenian Diaspora will become an effective factor in mitigating the negative effects of mass emigration from post-Soviet Armenia. It will also help to mitigate demographic problems will give momentum to the development and improvement of economy and social sphere of the country. Against this background, we believe that the transition from the current practice of declarations to the development of consistent and comprehensive management of a complex public policy to promote repatriation and assistance in reintegration (integration) of arriving persons is a vital necessity.

⁵⁷ *The Demographic Handbook of Armenia*. NSS RA, Yerevan 2011, p. 118.