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Integration in Azerbaijan's Migration Processes

Arif Yunusov

CARIM-East Research Report 2013/09



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CARIM-East
Creating an Observatory of Migration East of Europe

Research Report
CARIM-East RR 2013/09

Integration in Azerbaijan's Migration Processes

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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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Abstract

The paper deals with the problems of integration in migration processes taking place in Azerbaijan. The paper, after defining integration, distinguishes between the problems of migrant integration in Azerbaijan and the integration of Azerbaijani migrants in other countries. In the former case we speak of refugees' and forced migrants' adaptation, as well as the adaptation of Azerbaijan citizens returning home from other countries. But Azerbaijan has also recently experienced an inflow of thousands of labour migrants, principally from Asian countries. The paper considers the difference in the approaches taken by the Republic's authorities to various migrant categories. The problems of Azerbaijani emigrants, differing considerably in respect of a recipient country, are considered as well. Azerbaijani migrants, have lived and worked, sometimes for years, in Russia and CIS countries. Yet they have never lost ties with their homeland and they have been attentively following its socio-political developments with an apparent desire to return at the first signs of positive changes there. This meant an unwillingness to take on, say, Russian socio-cultural patterns or, for that matter, those of any other post-Soviet community, including local languages and local behavioral norms. Much was here conditioned by the Soviet past. The situation of Azerbaijani migrants in European countries is different: there is a language barrier, a visa regime and strict immigration rules, whereas the labour market is well provided with migrants from numerous countries. There Azerbaijani migrants were faced with a dilemma: if they chose to leave for these countries this meant leaving their country for good together with their families and they had to think of integration into local communities. For Azerbaijanis not adapted to live in a diaspora and in isolation from their homeland this posed a serious problem. Therefore, a decision to migrate to European countries was taken only by those who were self-confident, had the necessary skills and knowledge, including the relevant language skills, and by those who were forced to take such a step.

Definition of the term

The problem of integration in the context of migration processes is very complex and ambivalent. It depends, to a great extent, on the affinity of cultures and the languages of migrants and receiving societies. It also depends on conditions in the country of residence. Here we are dealing with the necessity for a receiving society to interact with a great number of migrants of differing ethnic origin and religion, which often leads to xenophobia and nationalist feelings. There are also other factors which further complicate this process. The very term “integration” and respective integration policies are understood and approached differently in different world regions.

The term integration itself derives from Latin *integration* and means the mutual rapprochement of the cultures of receiving societies and migrants, and the intermingling of cultural norms and values which originally functioned separately and, possibly, in contradiction to each other (*Yudina, p. 64; Mukomel, Integration*).

However, in different world regions there exist varying interpretations of this term. Throughout the post-Soviet space, in Russia especially, although has been the term itself is very imprecise. Migrants, in fact, have just two options: to stay in the country as temporary labour migrants (“temporary guests”) or to naturalize (obtain citizenship). The legal component of integration is vague, with all integration measures suggested limited to mere socialization (study of Russian, Russian history exams, etc.). Thus, “integration” is, in fact, understood as “socialization” and migrants’ naturalization (*Prokhorova*).

The approach assumed by EU countries is more productive. They are trying to both regulate migration flows and to integrate migrants into their countries’ legal frameworks. But even in this case the term “integration” is not clearly defined and, to a great extent, imprecise. In some of the European countries it means the migrants’ renunciation of their cultures and their lifestyle patterns. Migrants must substitute these for the culture and values of a receiving society. That is, integration is understood as a form of assimilation: either strictly or softly applied.

Other countries understand “integration” as mutual adaptation: immigrants assume the principal values of a receiving society and seek to abide by its laws and background societal norms, simultaneously retaining their ethno-cultural and religious identities. Such an approach has been labeled “multiculturalism” (*Apanovich, pp. 248-249*). Recently, however, some European countries, which had been trying to implement multicultural policies, declared the failure and inadequacy of the same principles. Though we would suggest that such conclusions are hasty, they testify to the great politicization of the term and the difficulties faced by migrants and receiving societies alike.

All this variance affected the fate of Azerbaijani migrants in certain countries. Yet, in Azerbaijan itself “integration” is ambiguous. As applied to Azerbaijani labour migrants in other countries, as well as to returning migrants-compatriots, integration is understood as adaptation. In the case of foreign nationals, the Russian approach to migrants as “temporary guests” is assumed and supplied by even stricter naturalization policies. We, however, suppose that the Russian approach reflects society’s lack of willingness to accept the social role of migrants, which has greatly increased in recent years, and, in general, is unproductive. This kind of approach does not, in fact, lead to integration, but rather to future conflicts, as the receiving society sees migrants as a danger to itself. In turn, migrants do not feel themselves an integral part of the receiving community. More correct is, thus, the European approach to multiculturalism, which introduces migrants into the legal framework of a country and, at the same time, initiates gradual and smooth integration process. Migrants thus retain their ethno-cultural and religious identities and sharp conflicts are thus eliminated. Multiculturalism is undoubtedly a complex process and certain problems arising in the course of its realization are unavoidable. The experience of some of the European countries provides ample evidence of this. Yet, as of now, this approach is the most productive and it is exactly this approach that should serve as an example for Azerbaijan.

Problems of migrant integration in Azerbaijani society

1. The problems of Azerbaijani refugees from CIS countries and domestic migrants

As the result of the Azerbaijan-Armenian conflict over Karabakh, 750,000 refugee and forced migrants contingent from the occupied territories of Karabagh and adjacent lands had accumulated in Azerbaijan by the mid 1990s.

The issue of solving the multiple socio-economic problems, and other types of problems of this vast group of forced migrants rose almost immediately. First, these people were chaotically settled, above all, in the capital and other cities, which led to numerous conflicts. This still persists and affects many political processes in the country.

At first, refugees, especially from Armenia, were received in Azerbaijan with great compassion and tolerance. They were viewed as innocent victims. Very soon, however, relations between the local population and forced migrants changed drastically. The forced migrants were in need of accommodation and workplaces, whereas the authorities were unwilling to solve their problems. Completely abandoned, refugees and forced migrants attempted to solve their problems on their own.

The situation in the capital, Baku, was particularly difficult in the early 1990s, where violent seizures of flats became widespread. Such actions, of course, alienated local residents. Baku residents, in fact, derogatively nicknamed the refugees from Armenia “evrazis” – an abbreviation of ‘Erevan Azerbaijani’ (*Sidikov, 2007*). This derogatory name, widespread in everyday use, is proof of a phobia for Azerbaijani migrants.

After termination of the war in Karabakh in May 1994 it seemed that the situation was going to improve. In the early 1990s many city dwellers, especially the residents of the capital, moved out of their flats and houses for various reasons and left the country with the intention of waiting in Russia or other CIS republics until trouble ended in their home country. Yet, after the truce they started to come back. This was particularly true of former Baku residents. The reality back home was shocking to many, since, in their absence, their empty flats had, in many cases, been taken by refugees and forced migrants. Attempts to solve the problem legally turned against the lawful owners: on 9 May 1994 Parliament adopted resolution 014/7-398, which prohibited eviction of refugees without granting them some other place to live. In other words this official document legitimized those forced migrants who had illegally seized flats. Moreover, 1 July 2004 the president of Azerbaijan, Ilkham Aliiev, signed decree No 298 confirming the Parliamentary resolution and allowing refugees and forced migrants to move into empty flats and houses. Article 2 of that decree mentioned that the refugees and forced migrants could not be evicted from the houses they had moved in from 1992 to 1998 “irrespective of the form of ownership” (*Nagorno-Karabakh, p. 21*). Lawful owners of flats could not, then, get back their dwellings even appealing to courts.

The problem of the illegal seizures of flats in Baku was so widespread that it became one of the most discussed topics in the media. Moreover, a specific public organization – the Committee of homeless Baku dwellers – was soon created. The problem was so serious that, in late 2007, the authorities announced that the Supreme Court of Azerbaijan would search for legal solutions when flats had been taken by refugees and forced migrants. In Baku alone 6,000 flats were taken and their owners are still clamouring for them now. At the same time refugees could not be evicted from illegally occupied flats while the Karabakh conflict was ongoing (*Yunusov, 2009, p. 68-69*).

Thus, the housing problem, artificially created by the authorities, worsened the attitudes of the locals, in Baku especially, to refugees and forced migrants. Other problems were quickly added to these and most of all that of employment. First, these forced migrants were trying to find work in the capital, where western and other companies were based and where the chances of getting jobs were, thus, higher. Yet, getting these jobs proved difficult because of the inadequate education of migrants. Nor did oil companies have work for everyone.

In the 1990s five so called “slave markets” (*Gul Bazars* in Azerbaijani) – four of them male and one female – appeared in Baku. These were illegal labour exchange markets where dozens of the unemployed, predominantly forced migrants, were ready to get hired for any job offered. Many of the refugees and forced migrants, then, moved to work in Russia and other CIS countries. In the 1990s they provided the basic contingent of the labour migrants from Azerbaijan in the post-Soviet region.

This led to many urban inhabitants, who formerly had welcomed refugees and forced migrants, treating the same with bias and suspicion, particularly in the capital. Myths and stereotypes began to form, which were reflected in internet forum discussions and in the media. The city dwellers arrived at a conviction that the refugees had improved their conditions at their expense. As the socio-economic crisis in the country deepened, negative stereotypes and attitudes developed still further. As one of the residents of the capital mentioned in an interview: *“Gradually we felt that we, indigenous city dwellers, are being replaced by these refugees. We were deprived of our houses, flats, even recreation spaces. City residents themselves started to sell their homes and turned into refugees. All this is being performed with the connivance of the authorities. Now I do not feel myself at home in my own native city and am ready to leave for any country where there is work, accommodation and quite life”* (Yunusof, 2000, p. 72).

This all triggered a response from refugees and forced migrants who resented the myths and stereotypes.

Since late 1999 the conditions of forced migrants worsened drastically, since most international humanitarian organizations halted their food supplies to Azerbaijan. In 2001-2002, therefore, migrants periodically blocked roads and demanded an improvement in their living conditions. It was only after such actions, that the authorities decided to deal with this problem. The other factor was income from selling oil and gas. In 2003 the process of resettling 28 forced migrant camps to newly-constructed residential areas around the country was initiated. Each migrant family received a three-room house. By early 2010 this process was complete and currently there are no more forced migrant camps and all forced migrants have moved to 76 settlements in areas mainly along the front line (Azerbaijan, 2012).

This undoubtedly improved the situation, though many forced migrants are still living in very difficult circumstances and the housing situation remains critical (*The refugees in Azerbaijan, 2012*).

Relations between refugees and forced migrants, on the one hand, and the country's citizens, on the other, are still very tense, however. Though in Azerbaijan a special State Committee has been inaugurated by the authorities, its activities are limited by housing and infrastructure construction for the victims of the Karabakh conflict. The issue of refugee and forced migrant adaptation are set aside and are abandoned for the care of non-governmental organizations.

2. Problems of Azerbaijani compatriot-immigrants

Another integration problem was caused by the return of Azerbaijanis to their historic homeland. These Azerbaijanis fell into two categories: those who returned back home from other Soviet republics upon the collapse of the USSR; and those who had previously left the country looking for work.

The first category comprised Azerbaijanis who were forced to leave some of the former Soviet republics and returned to their historic homeland in the 1990s. As of January 1997 the State Statistics Committee of Azerbaijan had registered 2,525 people as involuntary migrants, including 1,556 people from Kazakhstan and 960 from Russia. However, in the 1990s most Azerbaijanis had to leave Georgia. In this latter case we have no precise data, yet the number runs into tens of thousands of Azerbaijanis, who were previously Georgian citizens (Yunusov, 2009, p. 31-33).

These Azerbaijanis were totally neglected by the state authorities: to an even worse extent than those who had been victims of the Karabakh conflict. The authorities often did not register them as refugees at all, since Azerbaijan was not in a state of war with any of the countries they left. The

migrants from Russia, Kazakhstan and Georgia thus often arrived to Azerbaijan as foreign nationals. They gave interviews in the media speaking about their problems and conflicts with local population, conflicts which had become widespread across the post-Soviet territory. Yet they were not accepted as refugees and victims of these conflicts and, therefore, were deprived of the social and economic benefits allowed to refugees. As the result, these immigrants had to solve all problems with accommodation, employment and adaptation in their historic homeland, which they had left in Soviet times, on their own. Not all of them were able to solve all these problems and some left for other countries, including European countries. Many, however, stayed.

3. Foreign refugees and labour migrants

After the collapse of the USSR refugees from other countries started to flow into Azerbaijan. First, came Chechen refugees from Russia, then came refugees from the Middle East, principally Afghanistan and Iraq. Their total number fluctuated around 10,000-15,000 and they were dealt with not by the Government of Azerbaijan, but by UNHCR. Moreover, these refugees became of interest to Azerbaijan's law enforcement agencies. This was especially true in the case of Chechen refugees. In 2001 there were over 12,000 in the country, but as the result of pressure from the authorities and tense relations with the local population most Chechen refugees had to leave Azerbaijan. As of now, there are approximately two thousand of them (*Yunusov, 2009, p. 217-221*).

The signing in 1994 of the "Contract of the Century" and especially the inauguration of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline led to an inflow of labour migrants, many of whom came from the east: the 'east' here included Pakistan (the majority); but also (in decreasing order) India, Iran and Bangladesh; some came from the Eastern CIS republics, particularly Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

At the same time, the number of labour immigrants from the countries of Southeast Asia, most notably from China, also gradually grew. There are three Chinese companies operating in Azerbaijan: Ching Millie Caratash, Salyan Oil and Val Drilling. Though on a small scale, their management prefers to hire compatriots. In their wake came Chinese traders who organized shops and retail trade. On the whole, however, there was initially only several hundred people.

The situation changed perceptibly in 2006, when Russia tightened her migration regulations thereby causing outflows of Chinese migrants, as well as Vietnamese, Laos, Cambodian and some other Far Eastern nationals. As the result, in 2006 the number of the Chinese in Azerbaijan reached 1,000 and this growth continued. In early 2007 there were almost 3,000 and almost 7,000 by the end of 2008 (*Yunusov, 2009, p. 229*).

Around 2009 there came illegal migrants from Serbia, Bosnia and some African countries.

This flow was often uncontrollable and led to contradictory statistical data from the state authorities dealing with migration.

Thus, according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population there were 30,000 temporarily residing foreign nationals registered in Azerbaijan in November 2007, with 15,000 of them illegal migrants. At the beginning of 2008, however, the same ministry claimed that 25,000 illegal migrants lived and worked in Azerbaijan. And finally, at the end of 2008, the same authority informed the public that it had registered 6,238 nationals from 79 countries as illegals. Of these 3,647 were Turkish citizens, 988 were Georgians, 444 were Russians, 181 were Iranians, 138 were Indians and 75 were Chinese nationals.

In its turn, the Ministry of the Interior claimed that 27,000 foreign nationals were registered in Azerbaijan in 2007. At the same time, the Ministry admitted that not all foreign nationals register with the authorities and the real figures were much higher. Therefore, it is unknown how many foreign nationals were, in fact, in the country. In its other press release the Ministry of the Interior indicated that 9,500 foreigners were registered in Azerbaijan in 2007. Of these 3,820 people permanently

resided in the republic. Moreover, 184 illegal migrants were detained in 2007, 106 of whom were made to leave Azerbaijan. Altogether there have been 2,000 individuals forced to leave the country. Even the number of the people who got work permits was not quite clear. Thus, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population claimed that, from January to December, 2008, 4,367 foreigners, mostly Turkish citizens, got permits to work primarily in oil production and construction. However, the State Statistics Committee provided data according to which 5,000 foreigners were officially working in Azerbaijan in the same period. Of these 1,500 were engaged in industry, 1,400 in construction, 1,000 in sectors related to real estate, leasing and consumer services, 500 in wholesale and retail trade, car and domestic electronics repair, 300 in education and 300 in other sectors (*Yunusov, 2009, p. 231-232*).

Yet, starting from the autumn of 2010, Azerbaijan toughened visa regulations and launched a campaign for detecting and deporting illegal labour migrants. As the result, the number of illegal migrants, especially from Asian countries, dropped considerably and currently fluctuates at around 9,000 to 11,000. Simultaneously, the Azerbaijani authorities are trying to limit the ways to legally employ foreign citizens. Special quotas are established (9,800 people for 2011) and the companies desiring to hire a foreign citizen need to pay considerable sums. In 2009 these registration payments grew 22 times from 45 manats (around 55 USD) to 1,000 manats (around 1,250 USD) for one foreign worker. Moreover, the authorities are trying to control the labour market and exclude foreign labour migrants from competition for those jobs (for example, drivers, construction workers, etc.), all of which can be amply supplied by local labour force (*Abbasov, 2011*).

As of now, living and working conditions of foreign labour migrants vary greatly. Thus, migrants from Serbia and African countries are mainly employed at construction sites in Baku, where they are in demand due to the low cost of their labour. Often several of these migrants join and rent a one- or two-room-flat near the site of their work.

The Chinese, in their turn, prefer to live in groups of 8-10 in dormitories or rented flats. In summer time they mostly live in Azerbaijani provinces in tents, which they set up in their trading locations. Apart from the capital, the greatest number of Chinese nationals are registered in as the cities of Ganja and Sumgayit, as well as in the regions of Liankiaran and Salyan. Thus, in Salyan there is even a settlement called "Salyan Asia", where 40 migrants from China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and other Southeastern Asian countries permanently reside and engage in petty trade. They mostly trade outdoors, selling Chinese domestic electronics, perfume, cloths, musical instruments and so on. There have not been any conflicts with the local population. On the contrary, locals are their eager customers and readily buy their cheap Chinese consumer goods. Such loyal attitudes lead to the arrival of Vietnamese migrants, who also brought their families. They rent flats, open cafes, restaurants, engage in market trade and have gradually integrated into local society. Worth of note is the fact that Asian migrants communicate with locals in Azerbaijani (*Shakhinoglu; Mukhtarly; Salianskaiia, 2007*).

Undoubtedly, we cannot speak of any integration of Asian migrants. Neither of any role played by the state in this process. In reality migrants are left to solve problems on their own. They live separately and do not seriously interact with the local population. Migrants view their residence in the country as temporary and try to earn as much money as possibly to send back to their families.

If migrants from China, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are, in most cases, engaged in street trade, then the citizens of India, Bangladesh and, especially, the Philippines are more typically found in the oil and construction sectors.

The growing number of foreign labour migrants in Azerbaijan with the simultaneous outflow of a considerable part of local population to work abroad has provoked migrantophobia. Its level, however, is not as high as in Russia or other countries, perhaps because the role of migrants in Azerbaijan is not yet particularly important. The question of integration into local community has not even been raised in Azerbaijan to date. Migrants are perceived as "temporary guests," even though many of them have been living in Azerbaijan for 5-10 years or more and, in some cases, are married to the locals. Yet, even in the case of marriage with locals it is very difficult for the migrants in question to obtain Azerbaijani citizenship.

Integration problems of Azerbaijani migrants in other countries

Currently, Azerbaijani citizens live and work in three world regions: first, in and around the post-Soviet space, mainly in Russia (approximately 600,000-800,000); second, in Western countries (120,000-140,000), mainly in Germany, the Netherlands, France and the USA; third, the Middle East (approximately 140,000-150,000), mainly in Turkey (no less than 100,000). Each of these regions has its own specifics and nuances in terms of the integration of Azerbaijani migrants.

1. Russia and CIS countries

Out of the former USSR countries Azerbaijani migrants prefer to live and work in Russia, and it is here, where the problem of their integration into local society is the most important.

Azerbaijanis residing in Russia currently fall into three basic groups: first, those born in Russia who consider themselves native Russians; second, those who arrived in Russia after the collapse of the USSR and who are intent on integration and obtaining Russian citizenship; third, those who came to work there and are ready to either get back home or leave for some other country.

The representatives of the first group are so deeply integrated into Russian society that they should be considered Russian nationals of Azerbaijani origin. In most cases they speak their “native” language poorly or perhaps do not speak it at all. This is especially true of their children, the second generation. The only exception is provided by Azerbaijanis, who for centuries have lived in South Dagestan (mainly in Derbent) on the border with Azerbaijan and who managed to retain their culture and language. In other regions and, especially, in Moscow the situation is the opposite.

With the second and third groups, we are dealing with migrants. For years, few have aimed at integration. As a rule, in 1990s these were mainly so called “Russian speaking” Azerbaijanis, who, in the wake of social and political turmoil caused by the Karabakh conflict and the collapse of the USSR, felt great discomfort and desired to leave their country. Even though many of them retained connections with their home country, they, from the start, were focused on living in Russia, a country which they perceived as their new home.

Azerbaijani labour migrants, especially from rural areas, had a different model of behavior. The economic crisis of the 1990s forced them to leave the country searching for work, but they viewed their migration as temporary and forced. Azerbaijanis are not adapted to live in a diaspora and isolation from their homeland, their habitual environment and cultural tradition is a very painful step for them. This is especially true of rural dwellers, who make up the bulk of labour emigration for these years. Therefore, sometimes for years living and working outside their homeland, Azerbaijani migrants kept ties to their home country and kept track of political and social events there, hoping to return at any sign of positive change.

Yet, to understand why problems with integration became important for Azerbaijani migrants in Russia and other countries, one has to first understand the departure schemes and migrants’ everyday lifestyle. Viewing their departure to Russia as a temporary and forced measure, Azerbaijani migrants carefully prepared their trip.

As a rule, these are mostly men, aged 20-35, who go to work to Russia. Emigration of people aged 36-50 or 16-19 is much less frequent. The life of a labour migrant is very tough and is related to various hardships, to overcome where one has to be an able bodied grown-up male not overburdened with family ties.

Migrants usually do not have any serious problems with Russian, especially those coming from Baku or the Apsheron peninsula. It is exactly because of their knowledge of Russian, that many Azerbaijanis, including refugees and rural dwellers, prefer Russia as a country, to find work and earn money for their family. Russia is a neighboring country, well-known to Azerbaijanis and one that is relatively close in social and cultural terms.

The first problem faced by Azerbaijanis migrants, even prior to their departure to Russia is the need to save enough money to cover 2-3 months of expenses. These include paying for registration at place residence, rent payments for a flat, a place on the market, and some money for incidental expenses. As a rule, a month in Moscow costs at least 2,000-3,000 USD. Life, meanwhile, costs slightly less in the provinces. Therefore, before leaving, a future migrant goes in search of money and, thus, ends up selling his livestock, car, or even his house. Sometimes he borrows money. Very often relatives and fellow villagers help to collect money hoping to receive assistance from this migrant in the future, when is able to send remittances from Russia.

It is only upon the collection of a necessary sum of money that a migrant departs to Russia. Since a visa is not needed for travel in Russia, there are usually no particular difficulties in crossing the border, especially travelling by plane. Those who take cars or railroads should prepare to lose a certain sum already at the border, or upon crossing it. The road from Azerbaijan to Russia goes through dangerous areas, namely Dagestan and Chechnya, where war hostilities still continue.

Azerbaijani migrants never go to Russia or other CIS countries unless they have relatives or fellow-countrymen there. Without prior assistance from their compatriots, the trip is, many would say, doomed to failure. Azerbaijanis, thus, prefer to come to Russia without their families. Some time later, having earned and saved money, migrants marry and, if possible, take their families to Russia. There are not, however, very many of them – the majority prefers to keep families at home in their parents' and relatives' care while sending money regularly.

At the same time, many migrants in Russia actually acquire second families, entering *de facto* marriages with local women, or, more often, female migrants from Ukraine and Moldova (*Yunusov, 2009, p. 94*).

Upon their arrival migrants look for accommodation. Since Azerbaijani migrants in Moscow are primarily engaged in trade, they try to settle close to local markets. Then, they need to register to avoid problems with law enforcement agencies. Prior to 2004 this was a serious problem for migrants, since to get half a year registration one had to queue for days without being sure of registration at the end. Today, registration is much simpler and this problem has almost gone.

After completing all these operations, a place at a market has to be bought. Unofficially it costs 1.500-2.000 USD with an extra ten or so dollars of daily rentals.

Azerbaijanis try to settle in Russia according to their place of their origin. Thus, natives of such cities as Gazakh and Agstafa settle in Kogalym, Surgut and Tyumen, whereas those from Baku and the Apsheron peninsular natives first preferred to settle in the Russian capital. Surprising as it is, the dwellers of subtropical south regions (Liankiaran, Massaly, etc) were not afraid of the cold of the Russian North and are quite successful in settling there. There are a good deal of them in Murmansk, Archangel and other settlements beyond the Arctic Circle today. Only recently Azerbaijanis from Karabakh used to settle chiefly in Samara and Nizhny Novgorod and the migrants from Shamkir, Ganja – in Moscow, the Greater Moscow area and in St. Petersburg. However, recently there have been certain changes: many Azerbaijani migrants from Karabakh, mostly forced migrants from Agdam and Fizuli regions, as well as residents of Nakhichevan Republic are now more active in exploring Moscow, with some of the Moscow markets being controlled by their representatives. The role of migrants from other Azerbaijan regions is still high, however (*Yunusov, 2003, p. 126*).

The desire of Azerbaijani migrants to settle close to each other, as well as to engage in small- and medium-scale businesses, mostly market trade, instantly led to problems with the local population: in Russia migrantophobia is widespread.

One should note that many of the problems labour migrants face in Russia correlate with inter-state relations. Relations between Azerbaijan and Russia are exemplary in this respect, because Russia treats other CIS countries as a sphere of its influence and migration factors have often been used and is still being used as a lever of pressure in inter-state relations.

In its relations with Azerbaijan, in particular, Moscow takes into account the great increase in the number of Azerbaijani migrants in Russia and Baku's sensitivity to the issue. That is why, from time to time, when relations with Azerbaijan become more strained, the Russian authorities threaten to play "the migration card."

The hardest blow to Azerbaijani migrants in Russia came in the late 1990s, when Azerbaijan left CIS Collective Security Treaty. Azerbaijan, in fact, declared its intention to join NATO and initiated the creation of the GUAM political organization as a counterweight to Russian influence. All this caused exasperation in Russia. By the autumn of 1999 Azerbaijan-Russian relations were tense, with both countries exchanging notes of protest on every occasion. Then, in November 1999, the Russian authorities toughened up conditions for Azerbaijani migrants. Mass raids were organized against them by the police around Russian markets and an anti-Azerbaijan campaign started in the media. By December 1999 12,000 Azerbaijanis were deported from Moscow alone for "transgressing passport regime." Something similar happened in other parts of Russia (*Yunusov, 2003, p. 131*).

Quite naturally such actions risked ethnic conflict. In Russian cities, especially in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, many Azerbaijanis fell victims to pogroms and nationalist rioting by some Russian citizens, constant attacks and abuse from militia and anti-riot police (OMON). As a result, on 7 May 1998 Azerbaijani migrants, outraged by the murder of one of their compatriots, held their first and to date the only (unauthorized) demonstration in Moscow, protesting against ethnic persecution (*Yunusov, 2009, p. 100-101*).

In 2000-2002 official Baku made great efforts not only to prevent the introduction of a visa regime for Azerbaijan, but also to ease the sojourn of Azerbaijani citizens in Russia. As a result they managed to avert the introduction of a visa regime. Yet, all these events made Azerbaijani migrants, especially rural dwellers, feel uncomfortable and unsafe in large Russian cities. As a result, Azerbaijanis, who previously had been eagerly settling in large Russian cities, since the late 1990s preferred to stay in smaller towns and villages, where they engaged in agriculture, organized cooperatives and farming enterprises.

On the other hand, socio-cultural differences and migration intentions started to be real problems for Azerbaijani migrants in Russia. For years, a considerable part of Azerbaijani labour migrants viewed Russia not as a sovereign state, but simply as a source of economic support; that is a country, where they were only staying temporarily to earn money. They, therefore, were unwilling to adapt to the socio-cultural realities of Russian society, including its language and local communitarian norms.

To a great extent this situation is related to former Soviet realities, when Moscow was the capital of the USSR and, therefore, was also capital of Azerbaijan. For a long period Azerbaijani migrants viewed the collapse of the USSR as a political formality. Sociological research, held in 2001 among the representatives of various ethnic groups residing in Moscow, found that the share of respondents considering themselves the "Soviet" was greatest exactly among the Azerbaijanis (almost 17%) (*Vendina, p. 69-70*). In other words, many Azerbaijani migrants even ten years after the collapse of the USSR refused to accept the fact and still kept a Soviet identity. What is surprising is that such attitudes were widespread among Azerbaijani migrants of various age groups.

Other surveys help to understand the motives of Azerbaijanis in Russia. Thus, in 2002 a poll was held to find out how migrants view Moscow and what goals they have in this city. The answers of migrants from various ethnic groups were compared to the answers of native Muscovites. Here, more specifically, we compared the answers of Russian Muscovites to the answers of Azerbaijanis (table 1).

Table 1. Answers to the question: “What is Moscow for you?” (%)*

No	Answer options	Answers by Russian Muscovites	Answers by Azerbaijanis	
			Long-term residents**	Migrants
1	Moscow is a large international city	26	50	45
2	It is a spiritual capital for all former Soviet peoples	18	13	33
3	It is the capital of multi-ethnic Russia	37	50	23
4	It is a Russian city	39	3	0
5	It is the capital of the Rus'	37	0	0
6	Other	3	0	0
7	No answer	1	0	0

Source: V.K. Malkova. Moscow – A Multicultural Metropolis [Москва – многокультурный мегаполис] Moscow, 2004.

* Respondents were offered several answer options; therefore, the total exceeds 100%

** Long-term residents in this survey are Azerbaijanis, who had been living in Moscow for over 10 years.

As we can see from the table, most Russians thought Moscow was a Russian city and even the capital of the Rus' – a medieval state, which has long since vanished. Azerbaijanis, not only recent migrants, but also long-term residents, did not perceive Moscow as a Russian city, regarding it rather as the capital for multi-ethnic Russia. So hugely differing approaches could not but affect the adaptation of Azerbaijani migrants in Moscow and their relations with the local population (*Malkova, p. 127-129*).

The results of the survey, held in Moscow in 2005 among 300 Azerbaijani migrants in order to verify their identities in the environment of the Russian capital are no less characteristic (Table 2).

Table 2. Identities of Azerbaijani migrants in Moscow

No	Azerbaijani immigrants	
	Integration oriented	Oriented on temporary stay and earning money
1	Residents of Azerbaijan	Azerbaijanis
2	Azerbaijanis	Residents of Azerbaijan
3	Muslims	Muslims
4	Russian citizens	People of my income level
5	Muscovites	Caucasians
6	People of my income level	Transcaucasians
7	Caucasians	Russian citizens
8	Transcaucasians	Muscovites

Source: 'Does Russian Society Need Immigrants?' Ed. By V.I.Mukomel and E.A. Pain, Moscow, 2006 [«Нужны ли иммигранты российскому обществу?». Под ред. В.И.Мукомеля и Э.А.Паина. – Москва, 2006]

Azerbaijani migrants were divided into two distinct groups: those who wanted to integrate and to live in Russia and those, who came to Moscow to earn money without any intention of residing there permanently. The first three lines in the table are taken by the common theme of belonging to their native land, nationality and religion. Then come differences. Azerbaijanis focused on integration and permanent residence, perceive themselves as Russian nationals [rossiyane] and Muscovites and not as “persons of Caucasian nationality”: an image imposed on them by Russian society.

Azerbaijanis who do not want to integrate perceive things differently. They primarily identify themselves with those who earn at their level, including “Caucasians,” if such an identification is so dear to the community of the “Russian nationals” [Rossiyan] and “Muscovites,” with whom they obviously have no intention of identifying themselves (*‘Does Russian Society Need Immigrants?’*, p. 82-83).

Since the late 1990s new trends have become visible in the behavioral patterns of Azerbaijanis in Russia, and especially in Moscow: if previously they had tried to spend as little as possible on accommodation and, therefore, settled in the suburbs and closer to markets, then at the turn of the century a great number of well-to-do Azerbaijanis were already buying flats in more fashionable districts. As a result, the most drastic social differentiation among migrants in Moscow is visible among Azerbaijanis. As the data on birth rates in 1999-2003 from Civil Registry Offices prove, apart from traditional residence locations in the capital’s suburbs, Azerbaijanis were registered in the most fashionable and costly districts, including those in Moscow’s historical center (*Vendina*, pp. 59-62, Table 15). This is proof of social polarization among Azerbaijanis, since petty traders and suppliers obviously do not have sufficient funds to allow themselves downtown accommodation.

Yet, Azerbaijani integration in Russia went through a radical change. Having lived in Russia for a number of years, the majority of Azerbaijani migrants managed to save some money, which they intended for a business startup at home. They were, however, prevented from doing this by massive corruption, the arbitrary powers of bureaucracy and the local authorities. They, nonetheless, did not lose their hope for positive change in Azerbaijan in the future, as well as their belief that they would eventually get back home and start their own business.

In 2003 the young president Ilham Aliyev came to power. Aliyev promised to create 600,000 new working places in five years, to get corruption under control, to tame the almighty bureaucracy and to enable people to freely engage in business activities. This proved an inspiration to many Azerbaijani migrants in Russia. As multiple interviews, as well as internet forum discussions, testify, many migrants returned and even invested their money, saved in Russia, in their business enterprises in Azerbaijan. Yet, it soon became clear, that the situation in Azerbaijan was not going to improve. On the contrary, it worsened and corruption, the omnipotence of bureaucrats and local authorities intensified. Those migrants who came back soon lost their hopes in positive changes and their business opportunities. As one such migrant remarked in the internet forum: ‘there also exists lawlessness in Russia, but it does not come close to what we have here in Azerbaijan. There is, after all, law in Russia. Here in Azerbaijan it is absolutely void’ (*Yunusov*, 2009, p.122).

The loss of faith in getting back to their home country inevitably led to the growth in number of those Azerbaijanis who decided to live permanently in Russia. Such intentions are particularly strong among Azerbaijanis living and working in the Russian provinces. Thus, the survey held in Moscow in 2005 showed that 49% Azerbaijani migrants were planning to get Russian citizenship and remain in Russia. There were 60% of them in Astrakhan and 88% in Samara (*Mukomel*, p. 151).

At the end of 2006 a new migration policy was adopted by Russia: from early 2007, foreign migrants’ activities in trade, especially, at markets, should have been reduced to zero. Simultaneously, the tough control measures over migrants and the procedure for their employment were adopted. A virtual ban on migrants’ market trade, where Azerbaijanis were obviously dominant, was introduced. These migration restrictions triggered much anxiety in Azerbaijan.

The most important thing was that these new regulations made Azerbaijani migrants decide whether to stay in Russia permanently or to go back home. The situation in Azerbaijan, in 2007, and the activities of the Russian authorities put an end to the integration intentions of Azerbaijani migrants. Previously Azerbaijanis had not been viewing Russia as their new homeland and made little attempt to renounce Azerbaijani citizenship or to acquire Russian. If they got Russian passports, this was only to avoid residence and employment problems. At that moment, however, the majority of Azerbaijani migrants working in Russia changed their attitude. Many instantly acquired Russian citizenship according to the simplified system of acquiring citizenship. According to the data of Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia, by early 2007, 50,000 Azerbaijanis had already got Russian citizenship. As a result, the cost of intermediary services increased immensely. Simultaneously the number of marriages between Azerbaijani men and Russian women quadrupled, which can also be explained by the toughening of migration regulations (*Yunusov, 2009, p. 104*).

Labour migrants from Azerbaijan now residing in Russia are unlikely to be eager to return home and, therefore, will need to revise their attitudes towards living in Russia. Now, we should expect a significant growth in real estate acquisitions and business expansion by Azerbaijani migrants, who are actually already Russian citizens, and who are engaged not only in trade. Thus, of the real integration of Azerbaijani migrants into the Russian society began only in 2007.

2. Integration problems of Azerbaijani migrants in Western countries

The situation for Azerbaijani migrants is, in principle, different in Western countries: there exist a language, visa regimes and strict immigration rules, whereas the labour market is saturated with migrants from other countries. The west could not have become a region, where Azerbaijanis could just earn money, sending it back home. Here they were immediately confronted with the necessity of leaving their home country for good, taking with them their families and thinking about integration into local communities. For Azerbaijanis, unfit to live in a diaspora without links to their homeland, this spelt serious problems. This is why the decision to go to Western countries was only adopted by those, who were self confident, had the necessary knowledge and skills, including the knowledge of the language of a receiving country, as well as those who had no other option, but to take such a decision for political or other considerations.

That is why the western flow of Azerbaijani emigration in first ten years of country's independence included mostly the better educated, Russian speaking youth from the capital, as well as the representatives of opposition parties and organizations, who had a chance to get the status of political exiles or asylum seekers.

Later, these two migration flows (political exiles and the youth) were joined by other groups of Azerbaijanis. Some were businessmen, including those who had made their fortunes in Russia or other CIS countries and who did not want to or were afraid of investing in their home country. There, however, were very few of them. Most had to look for employment in other countries and regions, including Europe, because of the worsening situation in Russia. Among these there were a lot of people from the Azerbaijani provinces.

The social heterogeneity of Azerbaijani migrants also affected integration issues. A small percentage of businessmen have no financial problems and views the countries of the West, European especially, as the best territory to develop their career plans successfully. They are hired by oil companies or start their own firms, becoming businessmen in certain countries. The representatives of this group set themselves aside from other Azerbaijani migrants and have no real problems with integration into Western society, accepting them without particular apprehensions. This is also related to the fact that they have an opportunity to visit their home country as often as they want to, and because of that there are not threatened by nostalgia.

Likewise, of the young Azerbaijani, who travel to the West according to various education programs, have no particular problems with employment and integration. This is a new generation of Azerbaijanis, who are up to living in a foreign environment, know languages, seek career in the West and who easily change their countries of residence.

Integration problems are more palpable in cases of the other groups of Azerbaijani migrants. First of all, this is true of political exiles, especially those of the older generation. As a rule, they find it difficult to study the language of the country of residence, to get accustomed to their new status and to find redress for their strong homesickness. Yet, as my multiple interview surveys show, they are willing to suffer anything for the better future of their children, who are much better in adapting themselves to a novel environment.

The worst integration situation is experienced by those Azerbaijanis who found themselves in the West in search of work and better living. These are principally rural residents, who speak foreign languages poorly or who do not know them at all. They have no contacts with and support from the receiving country, nor resources for business startups. These are labour migrants who found their way to the West, legally or illegally. Their principal problem is to find employment. Their entry procedure is usually as follows: for a moderate fee Azerbaijanis or Turks, living in Western countries, send an invitation for a future migrant to legally get a short-term (1-3 months) tourist visa for the Schengen zone. Quite naturally, such a visa does not authorize a migrant to work officially. This problem, however, could be easily overcome: Azerbaijanis are hired by either their compatriots or Turks, trying to avoid attention from the police and contacts with locals. Our surveys showed that such an illegal state sometimes continues for several years. In case of a danger of being detected, they just move to another EU country and continue their illegal residence there. Another option is to try to get official status in the guise of being victims of political or ethnic repression.

Apart from employment, another serious problem of this migrant category is the absence of proper contacts with local population, and a rather secluded way of living within their community, principally Turkish, absence of families and, therefore, very strong nostalgia for the homeland. This is particularly true of those who came illegally or who are linked to criminal elements and who have to avoid contacts not only with the police, but also with local residents. The majority of illegal Azerbaijani migrants in Europe now live in Germany and the Netherlands, as well as in France and Sweden.

To solve the problems caused by the absence of family and local contacts invitations are sent to young Azerbaijani women (aged 20-30) and these come with a tourist visa. Having in reality worked as prostitutes among Azerbaijani migrants, they return. The term "outward prostitution" appears to describe this phenomenon.

Some of these migrants managed to legalize their state with the help of their lawyers. Those who failed, preferred to move to another European country to continue their illegal sojourn. Thus, in Switzerland, over 700 Azerbaijanis applied for legalization. Yet, according to the Azerbaijani diaspora, by early 2007 there resided only 300 people in the country (Akshin, 2007). No doubt that the majority of applicants, having failed to obtain the desired status, preferred to move to some other European countries.

Quite naturally, sooner or later, these illegals are detained by the police. The greatest number of Azerbaijanis has been arrested in Germany, where some 10,000 Azerbaijanis are illegally residing. By the start of 2007 the total number of Azerbaijanis arrested and awaiting their future lot in Germany reached 6,500. This even led to inter-state collisions, since annual expenses for the upkeep of illegal Azerbaijani migrants ran as high as 40 million Euros. The governments of Germany, Norway, Benelux and, in recent years, the European Union continually apply to Azerbaijani authorities with requests to make up an agreement concerning the return of such migrants to their home country. Yet, the Azerbaijani authorities refuse to sign a readmission agreement, that is the compulsory return of illegal migrants to their historic homeland, and their future is still uncertain (Yunusov, 2009, p. 151). The reason for Azerbaijan's refusal is not, however, the lack of resources to finance such a return, but rather difficulties with their future employment, since it is a burning problem in Azerbaijan nowadays.

3. Integration problems of Azerbaijani migrants in the Middle East

Out of the countries in the Middle East Azerbaijanis prefer to live in Turkey, as well as in Israel, because there are fewer language problems (Russian is widespread in Israel) and cultural difficulties. Other Eastern countries are viewed by Azerbaijani migrants as a mere economic resource and they do not, therefore, seek to integrate there.

Even in this latter case problems arise. These primarily concern those who reside there illegally and are related to criminal elements. There is one more specific feature of the migration flow from Azerbaijan to the countries of the East. Whereas the flow directed towards Russia and CIS countries, as well as to the West, mostly comprises male migrants, the Eastern flow mostly consists of women. In other words here we have trafficking and human trade problems.

This problem became apparent in 1997, when reports of Azerbaijani women engaged in illegal prostitution in Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Iran and, sometimes, Pakistan became more and more frequent. Doubtlessly, such a massive flow could not have come unnoticed by the police of the countries concerned. Thus, in 1999 it came out that the Turkish authorities had registered 6,000 Azerbaijani women engaged in prostitution. There were another 2,000 in the UAE (*Yunusov, 2009, p. 195*). Since then the situation has aggravated itself. The mass media are full of reports of Azerbaijani women being deported from Eastern countries, with the geographical range of their activities expanding. Yet, it was obvious that the majority of Azerbaijani women are sexually exploited in Turkey, the UAE, Iran, India, Egypt and Indonesia. It was, in any case, from these countries that most reports of arrests and deportations came.

In fact, the problem of trafficking became a national problem and, naturally enough, the problem of integrating returning women arose in a country that tends to reject them. This problem was so poignant that it led to a heated debate in the country and the authorities could not ignore the problem any longer. In 2004 the president I. Aliev signed the National Plan of Actions to Prevent Human Trafficking. According to the Plan a special department for human trafficking prevention was created within the Ministry of the Interior of Azerbaijan, a national coordinator for trafficking prevention was appointed, and a rehabilitation center for trafficking victims was inaugurated. The law "On Human Trafficking Prevention" was adopted by Parliament in 2005.

Recommendations

- Changes should be introduced into the legislation on labour migration in order to better protect immigrant interests in the country. For example, Azerbaijan's legislation does not allow immigrant status before arrival in the country. Currently, immigrants' families, including those of Azerbaijani ethnic origin, but foreign nationals, have to come to the country and reside there for at least a year with permission obtained from the State Migration Service (SMS). Then prolonged inspection procedures follow, which sometimes take months to complete. Very often an application is turned down and immigrants are deported. Such a policy only worsens the situation and increases the army of illegal migrants, most of whom arrive on a lawful basis and only then become illegal migrants. Therefore, a change is required, which would enable immigrants to apply to the State Migration Service beforehand and, if approved, to enter the country.
- Currently in Azerbaijan there are too many bureaucratic documents for migration. The need to develop a migration codes for the country has long been apparent. This code should precisely delineate all the mechanisms for regulating migration issues.
- Changes should be introduced into the law "On Compatriots," which need to simplify migration policy in respect of compatriots. Among the measures suggested is the solution of the problem of ethnic Azerbaijanis from other countries (principally Azerbaijanis from

Georgia, Israel and Russia), who have lived in Azerbaijan with old Soviet passports for over ten years, but who have not yet got the citizenship of Azerbaijan.

- Considering the strength of nostalgia among Azerbaijani migrants and their fear of losing their identity, a law on dual citizenship based on international agreements should be adopted.
- Azerbaijan needs to sign readmission agreement as quickly as possible.
- Migration centers for legal and information assistance to foreign labour migrants should be established in the capital and other cities of Azerbaijan in order to help their integration into Azerbaijani society and assistance with their existing problems.
- to improve the process of integration of Azerbaijani refugees, forced migrants and immigrants, their principal problems – with employment and accommodation – should be solved in first place.

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