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Master's essay

**The Impact of Socio-Economic Factors on Migration in the
Republic of Armenia**

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List of abbreviations

AMD – Armenian dram

CRRC – Caucasus Research Resource Center

EC – European Commission

EU – European Union

FG – Focus Group

GDP – Gross domestic product

GNP – Gross national product

IOM – International Organization of Migration

NA – National Assembly

NMR – Net migration rate

NGO – non-governmental organization

NSS – National Statistical Service

PVO – Passport and Visa Office

RA – Republic of Armenia

SMS – State Migration Service

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the impact of socio-economic and certain other drivers on the level of migration from Armenia since 2000. The objective of the study is to find whether migration flows are strictly determined by socio-economic conditions in the country or not. For this purpose a sequential-quantitative research design was used, which incorporated the following research tools: two surveys, six in-depth interviews and two focus groups. The results of the gathered data indicate that migration from Armenia is also influenced by factors other than socio-economic conditions. In particular, the research shows that security issues, family reunification, educational purposes, psychological issues, unclear vision towards the future and objectives to develop professional skills also have an impact on migration. Therefore, the discussed phenomenon is not strictly determined by poor socio-economic conditions in the country.

Introduction and problem statement

Migration is a national security issue in the Republic of Armenia. The problem is the growing numbers of emigrants. Many Armenian politicians (Pashinyan 2013, Minasyan 2013) and researcher (Ter-Matevosyan 2013) unanimously posit that migration flows from Armenia is a direct threat to national security, as they lead to demographic problems.

In the last decade migration from Armenia has been gradually rising. The statistics provided by the State Migration Service indicate a negative value in the net migration rate (also migration saldo) in recent years. In particular, the calculations of the migration saldos showcase that since 2007, more than 250,000 people have left Armenia. Another striking feature of the analyzed statistics is that there is a tendency in the growth of emigration from RA. In such a situation there is an apparent threat of depopulation, which has a direct linkage to the national security of Armenia.

Thus, there is a great necessity for identifying the core reasons of the rising level of emigration. And it is important to develop appropriate policies to address the issue. This essay is an attempt to shed light on the issue what are the main characteristics of the Armenian migration.

Firstly, the research question and hypothesis are presented. Then in the methodology part the research methods and design are introduced. Besides, the information about the data analysis are presented.

In the second part of the research the literature review is presented. Perspectives of different researchers regarding the issue are discussed. Afterwards, the mentioned arguments are compared with the results of the findings.

The section of findings entitled “General overview of the migration in the RA (data and findings)” firstly speaks about the historical background of the Armenian migration in the recent times. Afterwards, the socio-economic factors of the phenomenon are presented

and then, the reasons beyond the socio-economic are discussed. Finally, we draw conclusions based on the data analyses, and finally provide some recommendations.

Chapter 1: Research Design and Methodology

Research Questions and Hypothesis

The aim of this research paper is to identify the main drivers of migration from Armenia. Particularly, this study tries to shed light on the issue whether migration from Armenia is driven strictly by socio-economic factors. Based on the mentioned objectives the following research questions and hypothesis are formed.

- **Research question 1** – What impact do the socio-economic conditions have on migration in Armenia?
- **Research question 2** – Alongside with the existing socio-economic situation what other factors influence migration from Armenia?
- **Hypothesis 1** – The migration from Armenia is strictly determined by socio-economic factors
- **Hypothesis 0** - The migration from Armenia is not strictly determined by socio-economic factors

Methodology

Mixed research methods (quantitative and qualitative) are used in order to answer the above mentioned research questions. Quantitative-first sequential transformative design is used in this research paper. First of all, quasi-stratified survey questionnaires were distributed to residents of all the regions (marzes) of Armenia. Afterwards, sets of semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with experts on migration. And finally, two focus groups were conducted with the potential migrants who are about to leave the country.

The survey questionnaire is formed based on meta-analysis and literature review. Overall 18 questions are included in the questionnaire with 17 multiple-choice questions and one open ended. The first 10 questions are either about respondents' intention to migrate or about the factors that caused them to do so. Six Likert scale and one Guttman scale questions are designed in the survey. The last eight questions refer to the personal information of the respondents.

As it was already mentioned, the conducted survey is quasi-stratified: 316 survey questionnaires are randomly distributed among the respondents from all the regions (marzes) of Armenia including Yerevan. The questionnaires are sent to the authorized recipients from different regions via e-mail, who after getting the proper instructions conducted surveys in the main streets of regional centers by asking every fifth passerby. The number of the respondents is chosen according the proportion of the Armenian population based on the 2011 census (Armstat 2011). Below is presented the exact number of respondents from each region. The numbers were determined before conducting the survey to make sure that all the regions are represented according to their population.

1. Aragatsotn Marz, population 132,925 (4.4%) – 14 questionnaires are distributed in the administrative center Ashtarak
2. Ararat Marz, population 260,367 (8.6%) – 28 questionnaires are distributed in the administrative center Artashat
3. Armavir Marz, population 265,770 (8.8%) – 28 questionnaires are distributed in the administrative center Armavir
4. Gegharkunik Marz, population 235,075 (7.8%) – 24 questionnaires are distributed in the administrative center Gavar

5. Kotayk Marz, population 254,397 (8.4%) – 27 questionnaires are distributed in the administrative center Hrazdan
6. Lori Marz, population 235,537 (7.8%) – 24 questionnaires are distributed in the administrative center Vanadzor
7. Shirak Marz, population 251,941 (8.3%) – 23 questionnaires are distributed in the administrative center Gyumri
8. Syunik Marz, population 141, 771 (4.7%) – 15 questionnaires are distributed in the administrative center Kapan
9. Tavush Marz, population 128,609 (4.3%) – 14 questionnaires are distributed in the administrative center Ijevan
10. Vayots Dzor Marz, population 52,324 (1.7%) – 6 questionnaires are distributed in the administrative center Yeghegnadzor
11. Yerevan, population 1,060,138 (35.1%) – 113 questionnaires are distributed in the capital of Armenia

In total, 316 people from 10 Armenian Marzes and the capital Yerevan responded to the questionnaires. Thus, it can be assumed, that approximately every ten-thousandths opinion is collected.

$$\frac{316}{3,026,900} = \frac{1}{9,578}$$

In addition, another survey questionnaire was distributed among Armenians living abroad. Because of the limitations of resources and time constrain only 85 survey questionnaires were sent to the accessible Diaspora Armenians (32 to Russian Federation, 20 to the United States, 12 to Georgia, eight to France, five to the United Kingdom, four to

Canada, three to Italy, and one to Germany). As both, the size of the respondents and the methods of the sampling are not reliable, the data is collected only in order to estimate whether the needs of Armenians that live abroad are satisfied or not.

The questions for the in-depth interviews were formed after the analysis of the survey results. Overall there are 10 open-ended questions with corresponding follow-up questions. The six representatives of the semi-structured in-depth interviews are as follows:

1. The representative of the International Office of Migration (IOM) Mission in Armenia
2. The representative of the State Migration Service,
3. The representative of the National Statistical Service,
4. The representative of the Passport and Visa Office,
5. Former member of the Parliament (co-author of Anti-migration Plan that was written by Dashnaksutyun party in 2013, and was offered to NA of Armenia, which was later not approved).
6. The representative of the People in Need (NGO).

Afterwards, the responses of the interview questions were coded based on their reference to a set of descriptors, which are related to the drivers of migration from Armenia. Each descriptor is measured by its intensity and frequency. The intensity (strength) of the descriptors in the in-depth interviews is measured on a scale from 1 to 7 (1 = lowest importance, 7 = highest importance). The frequency of the descriptors in the interviews showcases the number of times that a particular descriptor is mentioned.

The collection of the primary data also involves the results of the conducted two focus groups with the potential migrants, who are about to leave the country. Two focus group sessions were conducted with six participants each. In the first group the participants were under the age of 25. The second focus group was conducted with potential migrants who

were 25 or older. Below is presented brief background information about the participants of the focus groups.

Group A

- Participant A - has already bought a ticket to leave Armenia for Switzerland
- Participant B - is a businessman that has been researching the business market in Russia in order to transfer the entrepreneurship to Russia.

- Participant C - applied for US visa and is waiting for the appointment in the US Embassy

- Participant D - is a citizen of the Republic of Georgia of an Armenian origin, who has applied for Armenian citizenship in order to subsequently move to Russia

- Participant E – has already received a confirmation from the London School of Economics and plans to fly to the UK in October

- Participant F – has relatives abroad and considers leaving Armenia

Group B

- Participant G – is waiting for an invitation from his wife that is a US citizen to leave Armenia for family reunification

- Participant H – is going to Russian Federation in the near future

- Participant I – is a student that wants to leave the country after graduating from the university

- Participant J – wants to work abroad and plans to leave Armenia for Russia

- Participant K – is a citizen of the RA, but annually visits his father in Bulgaria and considers to migrate there permanently
- Participant L – annually applies for green card and wants to go to the United States

The results of the mentioned quantitative and qualitative research tools were later triangulated for providing a valid analysis of the main drivers of migration from Armenia.

Limitations of the research study

As it is mentioned, the questionnaire used in this research study is quasi-stratified. The financial and temporal limitations are the reasons that the questionnaires are sent only to the administrative centers of the Armenian Marzes. It would have been more efficient to conduct a survey in the rural communities as well in order to see the general picture of migration in Armenia.

Yet, another limitation is that the sample of surveys that are sent to the Diaspora Armenians is relatively small. Besides, the sampling is not representative, as it is difficult to find Armenian migrants all over the world. Thus, convenience sampling is used.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The causes of migration are hotly debated issue nowadays. Different authors tackle the entire spectrum of reasons, but since this paper mainly focuses on socio-economic factors of migration we leave political reasons beyond the scope of our study.

The body of scholar publications on the causes of migration in different socio-economic setups is vast. Richard Freeman (2006) examines the main causes of immigration in general. He believes that migration occurs because of economic, social, geographic reasons and stresses that the issue of migration is very timely topic and requires in-depth analysis. According to the statistics of International Organization for Migration (2005) by 2005 more than 190 million people are living outside their own countries. Furthermore, the majority of migrants are living in developed countries (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2004). Thus, if we couple these statistics with the main points of different researchers who have observed the economic causes of migration we can claim that immigrants are searching for better life conditions (Rogarly 1998; Birindelli 1967; Light and Togunde 2008; R. R. Freeman and Borjas 1992). In other words, the migration flows stem from the countries with low gross domestic product (per capita) to target countries with high gross domestic product (per capita) (Clark, Hatton, and Williamson 2002; Kamamera, Oguledo, and Bobby 2000; Borjas 1987). In contrast to this other researchers are quite confident that there are other reasons behind migration, which are not economic (Hendrik P. van Dalen and Kène Henkens 2007; Sassen 1993; Shaw 1974).

Robert Trotter (1972) states that after World War II, more than one billion people have migrated from their homeland countries. He posits that willingness of people to migrate will have a rising tendency. Ben Rogarly (1998) who has examined the issue of migration particularly in India claims that seasonal mobility is the main component of livelihood for the poor. So, Rogarly assumes that migration in India is driven by socio-economic poor

conditions. Furthermore, Birindelli (1967) also argues that migrants are driven by rational choice, particularly for improving economic situation.

Pal Nyiri (2002) studied the case of Chinese migrants in Hungary. The author emphasizes that the migration flows mainly started after 1988 when China and Hungary signed bilateral agreement, which allowed these citizens' visa-free entry. As a result more and more Chinese immigrated to Hungary. Pal Nyiri argues that newcomers were inspired by a desire to have better life conditions and relatively greater income. Gradually they settled in the country and also advised their friend and relatives to follow the same path. So, this is an example of a migration that is a result of socio-economic factors.

Similarly, the flows of Puerto Ricans to the United States also were a result of severe socio-economic conditions. The phenomenon got a new impetus in 1950s and a decade later there were more than 600,000 Puerto Ricans in the US. Relying on the collected data Eva Sandis (1970) argues that the high rates of mobility were due to poverty. According to the reports eighty nine per cent of male immigrants and respectively sixty nine per cent of women anonymously were indicating socio-economic factors as the main reason for migration. Typical answers to the interviewer's questions were like "I wanted to get a job" or "my aim was to make money". In addition the author states that these Puerto Ricans were mostly dissatisfied with some aspects of their life in the country of origin, and perceive the life opportunities in the United States as attractive, which were a means to fulfill their needs.

It is worth mentioning that in the second half of 1960s the economic situation in Puerto Rico significantly improved, as a result many immigrants decided to return to their own country. Besides, the economy of the United States encountered some problems in 1970s and without any doubt these changes had their direct impact on the Puerto Ricans that came back to their country. That is why the emigration flows to Puerto Rico were higher than

immigration to the United States (Ortiz 1986). Thus, the less prosperous is a country, the less attractive it becomes for the potential migrants.

Light and Togunde (2008) examine the case of Mexican immigration. Their study showcase that migrant's decision to change their location is rooted in different factors, such as cultural, demographic, historical and socio-economic. While elaborating on the last factor they argue that in the modern world migration is a result of supply and demand. That is to say, migration occurs when the wish of accepting country matches with the willingness of a migrant. There is a common belief that there is a lack of labor force in the United States, whereas there are many. Mexican people that do not manage to find jobs in their own country. The arguments provided by Borjas and Freeman (1992) come to support the already mentioned position. They claim that people from Puerto Rico who immigrated to the US were mainly less educated and were seeking for higher wages. In addition Light and Togunde (2008) claim that networks of relatives and friends strengthen the bonds between Mexicans living in the US and in Mexico. Thus, this phenomenon leads to further immigration. What is more, according to the statistics of International Organization for Migration (2005) by 2000 the eight percent of Mexicans that were born in their own countries were living in the US. Hence, the scholars mainly stress that the high rate of migration to the US is driven by economic factors. However, the immigration does not always entail that a migrant-sending country should be developing one and the case of Canada is a vivid manifestation of this argument. Migrants from Canada leave their own country for the United States not because they encountered socio-economic hardships (Kesselman 2001).

Saskia Sassen (1993) claims that U.S. policy makers and public in general believe that causes of migration are evident: unemployment, poverty, overpopulation and economic stagnation. Nevertheless, Sassen emphasizes the fact that not all migrant-sending countries are poor. For instance, in Mexico in 1970s the GNP grew from 4.2% to 7.2%, another vivid

example is South Korea. The latter had one of the highest growing GNPs in the world in 1970s, nevertheless South Korea was a country with very high rates of migration to the U.S. Besides, Paul Shaw (1974) has the same position in terms of defining the causes. The widespread opinion that “man is a maximizer of economic advantage” led him to examine whether migration is mainly driven by poverty and socio-economic conditions. According to the research, Shaw puts forward a hypothesis, which indicates, that a significant proportion of people do not make cost-benefit calculations when considering migration.

Furthermore, Hendrik P. van Dalen and Kene Hekens in their article titled “Longing for the Good Life: Understanding Emigration from a High-Income Country” (2007) try to shed light on the issue why citizens from developed countries want to immigrate. Firstly, they stress that nowadays immigration is also quite common in high-income countries such as Belgium, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Denmark, and so on. The authors provide statistics of BBC opinion polls and showcase that the willingness of British people to migrate rose dramatically from 2003 to 2006. In the first opinion poll only seven percent of the respondents expressed their intention to leave the country, however, three years later the number almost multiplied by reaching 13 per cent.

Secondly, the same authors particularly examine the case of Netherlands by providing some historical backgrounds regarding the issue. In 1950s Netherlands was considered to be developed country with high rates of immigration. Thus, the main driving force that led people to change their location were respectively the fact that the country was overcrowded and the fear that they will encounter problems in terms of losing their jobs. This tendency continued over time and as a result the Dutch diaspora is now spread all over the world.

Finally, the authors conducted two surveys (in 2004 and 2005) among Dutch people in order to understand what the main incentives for migration nowadays are. According to the results of survey among the thousands of respondents the main factor that contributed to

immigration was social networks. That is to say, the majority of potential migrants had friends and relatives abroad and these bounds had a great impact on their decision to cross the border. Besides, the socio-economic conditions also played a role in their decision-making process, however it was not the dominant component. A vivid example that supports the last argument is that about 35 per cent of the Dutch people that were on the verge of migration stated that they realize the potential decrease in their wages when they leave Netherlands. Still, it did not affect their willingness to change their location.

Apart from already mentioned factors, problems like pollution, ethnic conflicts, crime, overpopulation, drawbacks in educational system, law, health care, combined with the ineffective counteractions from the government were also triggering their intention to leave. Hence, the decision to migrate is observed not only in underdeveloped countries.

The study by Anne White (2010) examines why the youth from Poland are inclined to immigrate. The following research showcase that educated youth have a fear regarding job opportunities that is why Western Europe seems more attractive place for them. The author posits that in Poland there are more university graduates than jobs available in labor market. Therefore, this disproportion leads to “brain overflow” as the author states it. Anne White argues that migration flows to Western Europe got a new impetus after Poland joined European Union in 2004. Afterwards, the United Kingdom has become the major destination for Polish youth. Moreover, their friends and relatives who are already in the UK support Polish migrants. They provide them help and opportunities to adapt to new conditions. Thus, the author also tackles the factor of social networks that also play a dominant role in migrants’ decision.

Yet, another results of immigration are historical reasons and social networks. The former colonies of England and France are the main migrant-sending countries for them. Other illustration of the mentioned argument is Russia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union

Russia became the major migrant receiving country from other post-soviet republics. Thus, internal migration transformed into international migration (Freeman 2006) With regards to social networks, people usually follow the path of their compatriots, friends and relatives. Consequently, the immigration of a certain individual presumably entails further immigration of friends and relatives (Light and Togunde 2008; Freeman 2006). The statistics of International Organization for Migration (2005) state that approximately 70 percent of US immigrants come to the country as close relatives of their compatriots that are citizens of US.

In the previous chapters we have already tackled that a huge number of migrants were less educated and their decision to cross the border was related to improvement of socio-economic conditions. Alternatively, Reynolds (2002) who has delved into the case of Igbo Nigerians that are living in Chicago claims that the main purpose of this particular group was educational. The author made a research in Chicago over a period of four years (1997-2000) and found that the majority of Igbo Nigerians had at least bachelor's degree before moving to the US. According to conducted interviews with many representatives of the ethnic group their main aim was to get further education and also professional practice. Moreover, many of them had already occupied some posts in different fields such as physicians, teachers, accountants, lawyers, research scientists, entrepreneurs, and so on. In conclusion the author points out that the decision to migrate was mainly due to the desire to get professional education in the US rather than it was driven by socio-economic bad conditions, as the Igbos were considered to be "brain drainers" and their financial conditions in Nigeria could not be described as severe.

In this context it is important to mention about other groups that are very popular among researchers who examine the issue of migration. It is a common thing to encounter epithets like Mexican "Rancheros" (a person who works at a ranch), "Gastarbeiter" (guest worker in German) from Turkey, Greek fisherman or domestic worker from Philippines.

Many authors anonymously posit that these immigrants are mostly less educated and their incentives to migrate were the promises of job opportunities (Light and Togunde 2008; Farr, Marcia 2000; Moskos, 1999; Van Hear 1998; Guerra 1998; R. R. Freeman and Borjas 1992)

In a nutshell, there is no unified opinion regarding the main causes for migration, as the incentives to cross borders have various forms of expression in different societies. The argument that migrant-sending countries have low GDP per capita (Clark, Hatton, and Williamson 2002; Kamamera, Oguledo, and Bobby 2000; Borjas 1987) is not applicable to all countries and a vivid manifestation of it are the findings by Hendrik P. van Dalen and Kene Hekens (2007) that showcase that Netherlands having quite high GDP per capita is also among countries that have high rates of migration. Besides, many scholars argue that the migrants are usually less educated and are seeking for job opportunities (Light and Togunde 2008; Farr, Marcia 2000; Moskos, 1999; Van Hear 1998; Guerra 1998; R. R. Freeman and Borjas 1992). On the contrary, Reynolds (2002) and Kesselman (2001) claim that the Igbo Nigerians and some Canadians that are currently living in the United States had higher education and that the economic conditions were not the dominant factors that affected their decision. Thus, every single case requires individual approach.

Chapter 3: General overview of the migration in Armenia

(data and findings)

Historical background of the Armenian migration from recent times

In the beginning of the 1960-1970s the migration level from Armenia was relatively stable. The migration saldos (NMR) were approximately 12,000-14,000 annually. After the 1980s, the socio-economic hardships in Armenia gave a new impetus to emigration (CRRC 2012).

During this period Armenian emigrants were mainly seasonal (labor) still there were also permanent ones. Seasonal migration started in the sixties. The net rate of migration reached from 30,000 to 40,000 annually by the eighties. According to the Research Institute of the ASSR State Plan (1985) one percent of the Armenians and two percent of the labor force of the country left the country annually.

The trends of the Armenian migration in the last 3 decades changed rapidly because of two main events: Spitak earthquake in 1988 and Nagorno Karabakh conflict. These circumstances were combined with socio-economic changes, caused by the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, and with economic blockade after the Armenian-Turkish border was closed. According to the representatives of SMS and People in Need (NGO), the migration from Armenia hit the peak from 1992 to 1994. About 800,000-1,200,000 people left Armenia during these years. In other words, every fourth person left the country. Although there is no statistical evidence on how many people decided to migrate, based on the calculations made by experts, about a million Armenians left the country.

The State Migration Service of Armenia provides the number of net migration rate only starting from 2000. The migration saldos were positive only from 2004 to 2006. The presented table illustrates the number of net migration rate from 2000 to 2014.

Thus, the table 1 illustrates that starting from 2000 till 2014, 356,844 people left Armenia. According to in-depth interview results the majority of seasonal migrants are from rural parts of Armenia. They usually leave the country at the beginning of spring and come back in winter. The overwhelming part of the seasonal migrants, in particular 70 percent, are involved in construction force, 10 percent are involved in trade, six percent are working in different industries and so on. Annually 60,000 labor migrants leave Armenia.

In contrast, permanent migrants are usually wealthy; they have higher education and are from urban communities. Unlike seasonal migrants, their migration period is not limited to specific seasons. The former representative of National Assembly stated that seasonal migrants leave the country because of the need, and permanent migrants decide to change their country because of their want.

The respondents of the in-depth interviews unanimously state that the number of permanent migrants has gradually increased since recent years.

Table 1. Migration saldos from 2000-2014. *Source: SMS*

Migration saldos from 2000 to 2014	
Year	Migration saldo
2000	- 57,499
2001	- 60,389
2002	- 2719
2003	- 10,161
2004	+ 2,060
2005	+ 12,520
2006	+ 21,756
2007	- 3,223
2008	- 23,059
2009	- 24,978
2010	- 46,684
2011	- 43,820
2012	- 42,762
2013	- 31,214
2014	- 46,672

It is widely accepted that globalization and particularly the information flows are the main contributors for permanent migration.

Table 2: The status of the potential migrants: *Source: Author's calculations, based on survey results*

Please indicate your status	Percentage
I do not exclude the possibility of leaving Armenia	100
I plan to leave Armenia in the near future	71
I have a specific country for which I want to leave	61
I already took some steps	42
I already have my tickets	7

The results of the survey (see table 2) indicate that about 69 percent of the respondents want to leave Armenia. However, it must be taken into account, that

even though majority of the participant expressed willingness to move to another country, not all of them can be considered potential migrants ready to take practical steps. As the representative of NSS states, only a small percentage of people expressing their willingness to leave the country are the ones that are about to leave.

Thus, a lot of people really considering migration are at different levels of preparedness. According to the results, 16 out of 316 respondents have already booked tickets, and 99 people have already taken some steps in this regard. It is important to consider that the age, gender, income, and educational level do not correlate with the intention to migrate. Hence, the potential migrants in Armenia do not have specific characteristics.

This section tried to give a brief overview of the Armenian migration and to showcase the main characteristics of the phenomenon nowadays. The next sections are concentrating on the socio-economic and other factors that influence migration. After considering both triggers we aim to find whether the hypothesis of this paper is proved or disapproved.

The impact of socio-economic factors on migration in the RA

Migration is a hotly debated issue nowadays in Armenia. Several researches have been done during last years to understand the leading forces of the phenomenon (CRRC 2012, Vardanyan 2013). According to their results the first contributor is the poor socio-economic situation in the country. Besides, the results of the conducted in-depth interviews indicate that socio-economic factors are the major triggers, as all of the interviewed people pointed out those factors with the highest intensity and frequency. Thus, there is a mainstream opinion that migration flows are only a matter of poor socio-economic conditions.

For providing a comprehensive analysis regarding the factors of migration, it is also vital to refer to the push and pull factors. Push factors are those that force people to leave and in case that individuals stay, they will encounter some risks. Unemployment, poor economic situation, tense conflicts are among this category. Oppositely, pull factors are the ones that attract people, for instance, better life opportunities or promises of jobs (IOM 2013). The pushing factors have direct connection to poor socio-economic conditions. The representatives of State Migration Service and National Statistical Service stated that, in the case of Armenia, the push factors are mainly unemployment and low wages.

Hence, socio-economic hardships are the major push factors. The analysis of the focus group results indicates that only four participants out of 12 want to leave Armenia because of poor socio-economic conditions. They unanimously state that their income is not sufficient even for basic needs. The participant A is a diaspora Armenian, who came here after the war in Syria and will leave Armenia for Switzerland in the nearest future. The main difficulty that he encounters in Armenia is that he earns too little in his work place and his salary does not satisfy his needs. Besides, he is disappointed with the fact that his salary is not in compliance

with the efforts that he puts into his work. It is also noteworthy that he does not know what he will do in Switzerland, but he is sure that his economic conditions will be improved.

The participant F has many relatives abroad that live in different countries. Now he is deciding where to go. He has been doing business for several years but his expectations have never been accomplished. He is strongly assured that it is very difficult to earn money in Armenia, as there are no favorable conditions for small and medium entrepreneurs. Hence, the participant plans to continue his entrepreneurship in another country. On the contrary, participant E stated that many Armenian citizens decide to establish their businesses abroad, without trying to do some steps in Armenia. Similarly, the other two participants of the Group A supported this contra-argument.

Participant L annually applies for green card and wants to go to the United States of America. This potential migrant wants to leave the country, as he is sure that his financial situation will improve abroad. However, he does not know what is expected for him there. In this regard, participant G stated that unlike the Participant L, he knows what future is waiting for him in the United States after family reunification. In this context, it is necessary to mention that the half of the FG participants have unclear vision regarding their future. They just want to leave the country and that is what they are mainly concentrated on.

Participant J is a seasonal migrant that has been leaving Armenia for Russia since 2009. Usually he leaves in the beginning of spring and returns in winter. He argues that he has to leave because after he got married and had children he needed to take care of them. However, he did not have regular job in Armenia and his wife's salary was not sufficient. Furthermore, the Participant J did not rule out the probability that one day he would take his family to the Russian Federation and eventually become permanent resident there. The fundamental reason for this is that he wants to be with his family and that after the fall of the

Russian ruble exchange rate vis-à-vis dollar, it is unreasonable for him to send valueless Russian rubles to his family in Armenia.

The argument made by the representative of PVO is another evidence that the drop of Russian ruble's exchange rate leads to emigration from Armenia. It was stated that after devaluation of the Russian ruble seasonal migrants prefer to ask their family members to join them instead of working abroad and sending money back home. Thus, from seasonal migrants they become permanent migrants. Moreover, the family members who were in Armenia also leave the country.

During the semi-structured FG discussion the participants of the both groups were given the following question: "Suppose, you cannot go to your preferred country. Will you eventually leave Armenia for another country?" To our great surprise, seven out of 12 participants gave a positive answer. It can be inferred that the potential migrants want to leave the country regardless of the state that they prefer. Thus, the push factors are prevailing here, as the participants have vague notion about their future abroad, and simply they want to leave the country.

The above-mentioned argument can be backed by the results of the survey questionnaire and in-depth interviews. According to the results of the survey 53 percent of the respondents chose EU member state countries as their preferred destination, 20 percent of them chose USA or Canada, and only nine percent of the total respondents wanted to go to the Russian Federation. However, we witness completely different picture in reality. The provided interviews by the representatives of State Migration Service and National Statistical Service illustrate that eventually 70 percent and 95 percent of permanent and seasonal migrants respectively go to Russian Federation. In this regard, three out of six interviewed experts indicated that the main reason is a visa-free regime between Armenia and Russia. Nevertheless, we should also consider that there are other pull factors that also play a

significant role in the decisions of migrants. For instance, relatively similar culture, especially the factor of a familiar language (no serious language barrier because most of Armenians are still bilingual, mastering both their mother tongue and Russian) has an important role (this argument was stated by all of the interviewed experts). Taking into consideration the mentioned results, it can be claimed that the potential migrants from Armenia want to leave the country without having a specific destination.

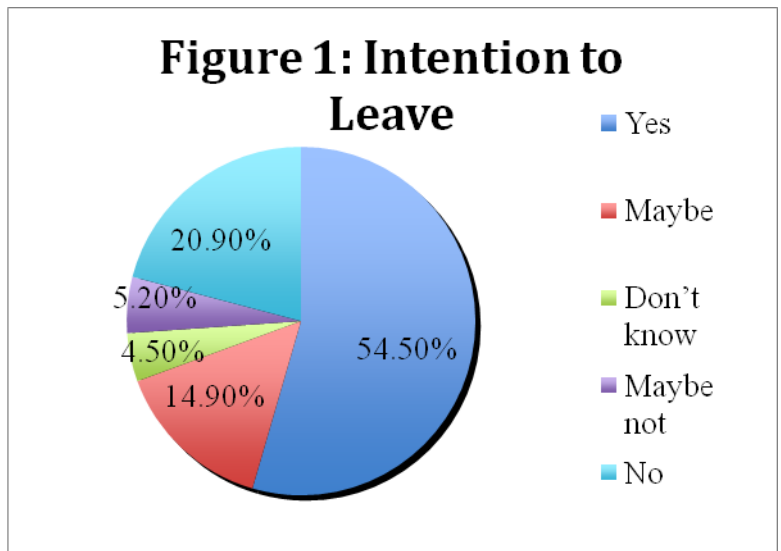
Therefore, the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data showcase that the Armenian migrants usually do not go to their first preferred country. And the example of the Russian Federation is a vivid manifestation of this argument. According to the interview results Armenian migrants go there mainly because of visa free regime.

Here, it is worth referring to the literature review. As presented, Nyiri (2002) put forward that migration flows from China to Hungary received a new impetus after bilateral agreements between the nations that allowed visa free regime. In this context, it is important to consider that the representatives of State Migration Service, International Office of Migration and NSS hold an opinion that from EU member states France is the preferred destination for Armenian migrants because of easier entry regime.

In addition, the former member of the National Assembly of Armenia, who was the co-author of Anti-migration Plan, stated “After Belgium loosened its regulations regarding migration policy many Armenians moved there”. Thus, it can be asserted, that ease of entry regime to receiving states promotes increase in migration from Armenia.

According to the results of the conducted survey 69 per cent of the respondents do not rule out the chance that eventually they will leave Armenia in the nearest future, and only 26 per cent are sure that they will not leave the country (see figure 1).

In our questionnaire there is also a question that asks to indicate how much AMD they spend monthly. Accordingly, 22.7 percent spend up to 50,000 AMD, 39.4 percent spend 51,000-100,000 AMD, 10.6 percent spend 101,000-150,000 AMD, 15.9 percent spend 151,000-



250,000 AMD, 3.8 percent spend 251,000-350,000 AMD, 6.8 percent and 0.8 percent respectively spend 351,000-500,000 and 501,000-700,000 AMD.

However, there is no correlation between these variables (see table 3). In other words, the decision to leave the country does not depend on the level of income. The level of significance in this table is contra-intuitively small .020. No matter how much people in Armenia earn they want to leave the country anyways.

Table 3: Correlation between the intention to leave and respondents' monthly spending

		Intention	Spending
Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.837
	N	316	316
Spending	Pearson Correlation	.020	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.837	
	N	316	316

This point is also backed by the results of the in depth interviews.

The representatives of State Migration Service,

Passport and Visa Office, People in Need (NGO) stated that people with high income have great determination to leave the country. The member of National Statistical Service also put forward that permanent migrants are usually the ones that have high income. The representative of IOM stated that Armenians who want to go to Canada have to be educated,

and have high income. Moreover, more and more educated and wealthy people apply for Canadian visa.

The results of the focus group also indicate that participants who do not face socio-economic difficulties have the same motivation to leave the country as those with low income. In particular, participant B is running a business in Yerevan and does not have any kind of financial problems, but wants to transfer his business to Russia, as he believes that the business potential of the company will be better utilized there.

In the same way, participant C states “I have no problem in Armenia, I have a car

Table 4: Monthly Spending of the Survey Respondents in Armenia. *Source: Author’s calculations, based on survey data*

Monthly Spending of the Survey Respondents in Armenia	
AMD spent monthly in Armenia (table 4)	Percentage
Up to 50,000	13
51,000-100,000	17.4
101,000-150,000	21.7
151,000-250,000	17.4
251,000-350,000	21.7
351,000-500,000	4.3
501,000-700,000	4.3
700,000 and more	0

which costs 50,000 USD, I have two apartments in Yerevan, I spend as much as I need, but I want to leave this country anyways. My life is boring here, and I want to live in the US. Besides, I do not feel myself secure here”

The participant D earns 400,000 AMD in Armenia and also wants to leave the country. As a fundamental reason for the decision he mentions that he had lived in different countries, but he had never felt so bored as he is in Armenia. He also states that at first he earned 160,000 AMD monthly and

his willingness to leave the country was the same as it is now. Thus, being a citizen of Georgia, he applied for Amrenian citizenship in order to go to Russia easily.

It is also interesting to look at the results of the survey that was sent abroad. Armenian migrants were given two questions concerning their financial situation. Firstly, they were

asked how much money they used to spend while living in Armenia and then how much money they spend in their current countries.

Table 5: Monthly Spending of the Survey Respondents Abroad. *Source: Author's calculations, based on survey data*

Monthly Spending of the Survey Respondents Abroad	
AMD spent montly abroad (converted to AMD)	Percentage
Up to 50,000	0
51,000-100,000	4.3
101,000-150,000	12.5
151,000-250,000	13.5
251,000-350,000	4.3
351,000-500,000	8.7
501,000-700,000	21.7
700,000 and more	34.8

These data (tables 4 and 5) show that the financial situation of respondents considerably improved after migration. Out of 76 respondents no one spent more than 700,000 AMD monthly while living in Armenia. However, after migrating, almost 35 percent of the respondents spend more than 700,000 AMD (if we convert to other currency).

While analyzing the results of the Armenian survey we can witness another interesting picture. There is no correlation between the intention of Armenians to

migrate and between the belief that their financial situation will be better after migrating (see table 6). The presented evidence is an example of a belief that Armenians

Table 6: Correlation between the respondents' intention to leave and expectations for better financial conditions

		Intention	Better financial conditions
Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.363
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	316	316
Better financial conditions	Pearson Correlation	.363	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	316	316

do not really know what is waiting for them abroad, but they want to leave anyways. Previously, we mentioned that the participants of our two focus group sessions were also not sure about their future after migrating.

Apart from financial situation, we also wanted to find the relationship between the intention to migrate and the belief among those people who think that there is relatively less corruption abroad (see

Table 7: Correlation between respondents' intention to leave and expectations for less corruption abroad

		Intention	Less corruption
Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.173
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.074
	N	316	316
Less corruption	Pearson Correlation	.173	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.074	
	N	316	316

table 7). Here as well, there is no significant correlation between dependent and independent variables.

According to the reports of FreedomHouse Organization (2014) corruption is an area of concern in Armenia. The level of corruption in Armenia is assessed 5.25 (where 1 = best, 7 = worst). Similarly, in the progress report by European Commission (2014) on Armenia, the word “corruption” is mentioned for seven times, and five of them have negative shading (the remaining two – neutral). Thus, both the report of EC and Freedom House indicate high levels of corruption in Armenia, however it is not a trigger for the potential migrants in RA.

The mentioned argument can be backed by the results provided by both of our qualitative tools. According to our FG results, 10 out of 12 participants are sure that there is high level of corruption in Armenia. However, none of them stated that their decision to migrate was mainly due to that factor. Moreover, one participant from each FG sessions noted that there are also high levels of corruption in Russia, but still Russian Federation is the main target country for our migrants.

The analysis of the in depth interviews show the same picture. The word corruption was mentioned a few times only with quiet low intensity. Thus, analysis

Table 8: Correlation between respondents' intention to leave and expectation for rights protection

		Intention	Rights protected
Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.182
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.060
	N	316	316
Rights protected	Pearson Correlation	.182	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.060	
	N	316	316

of the primary data showcases that regardless of the high levels of corruption, this phenomenon is not a trigger for Armenians to leave the country.

The analysis of the survey does not indicate a relationship between the intention to migrate and perception that their rights will be better protected abroad (see table 8). The level of significance is also quite low in this correlation.

In addition, there is no significant correlation between intention to migrate and the unemployment rate, low wages, inflation rate. These contra-intuitive results are also backed by the FG results where high levels of socio-economic hardships were mentioned, but they were not identified as major triggers.

Alternatively, in-depth interviews indicate socio-economic hardships as the major triggers. The socio-economic descriptors are mentioned both with high frequency and with quite high intensity. The following table 9 shows the mean of the descriptors of the reasons for migration both in frequency and in intensity.

Table 9: Descriptors of reasons for migration. Source: *Author's calculations, based on interviews*

N	Descriptors of reasons for migration	Mean	
		Frequency	Intensity
	Socio-economic factors		1-7
1	Social and economic hardships	5.3	7
2	Unemployment	1.5	6
3	Low salaries	0.8	6
4	Governmental policy	5.6	7
5	Problems related to entrepreneurship	1.1	4
7	Corruption	1	4

8	Inflation	0.6	3
9	Poverty	0.8	6
	Other factors		
1	Good education	1	4
2	Informational flows	1.3	4
3	Moral, psychological factors	2.3	5
4	Family reunification	0.5	4
5	Uncertain future	2	6
6	Professional development	1.16	5
7	Security issues (NK conflict, personal security)	2.5	5

As it can be seen from the table that according to all of the interviewed experts the most important triggers for migration is social, economic hardships and the governmental policy that have quite huge impact on the migrant's decisions. The very two descriptors received maximum level of intensity as they were mentioned with high confidence. These two answers were the immediate responses of the following question: "What are the main reasons of migration from Armenia?"

The descriptors "low salary", "unemployment", and "poverty" were mentioned seldom. However, the intensity of these three descriptors was relatively high. Three out of six interviewed representatives of different parties refused to speak about corruption that is why this descriptor has a low frequency and intensity. The lowest mean in both indicators received the impact of inflation. The impact of other factors is discussed in the next part of this research paper.

In addition, the literature review stresses that according to many researchers migrants are searching for better life conditions, and their decisions are driven by socio-economic factors (Rogarly 1998; Birindelli 1967; Light and Togunde 2008; R. R. Freeman and Borjas 1992). There is also a vast body of literature stating that migrants are leaving their home countries with low gross domestic product (per capita) for the countries with high gross domestic product (per capita) (Clark, Hatton, and Williamson 2002; Kamamera, Oguledo, and Bobby 2000; Borjas 1987).

Hence, the research paper correlates the migration saldo with GDP per capita in Armenia in order to find whether the years where the GDP per capita was relatively lower could affect the net migration rate. The presented correlation table 10 showcase that there is no significance level between these variables. Thus, it can be stated that the change of GDP per capita does not increase the levels of migration.

In the same way, the correlation between net migration rate and

Table 10: Correlation between GDP Per Capita of Armenia and NMR

		GDP_PC	NMR
GDP_PC	Pearson Correlation	1	-.118
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.688
	N	4	14
NMR	Pearson Correlation	-.118	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.688	
	N	4	14

unemployment rate is also measured (see table 11). Similarly, the Pearson correlation is not significant, which also indicates the lack of relationship between the variables. However, it is worth mentioning that correlation level of .424 is very close to be significant.

Thus, these are the analysis of our primary data that indicate the impact of socio-economic factors on migration in RA. All things considered, we can state that only interview results showcase that the dominant factors of migration from Armenia are socio-economic hardships. However, the survey and FG analysis show different results. Though they indicate that poor socio-economic conditions affect migration, but it cannot be derived that they are the dominant factor.

The illustrated data shows that socio-economic factors do influence the level of migration from Armenia. However, they are not the only drivers. The lack of correlation between the income of survey respondents and their intention to leave the

Table 11: Correlation between Migration Saldo and unemployment rate in Armenia

		Migration saldo	Unemployment rate
Migration saldo	Pearson Correlation	1	.424
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.131
	N	14	14
Unemployment rate	Pearson Correlation	.424	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.131	
	N	14	14

country proves this point. Therefore, the answer to the first research question is that socio-economic factors have significant impact on migration flows, but they are not the only triggers.

Other factors that influence migration from Armenia

There is a mainstream opinion that the phenomenon of migration is only a matter of harsh socio-economic conditions. Is it really so? This part of the research paper sheds light on the contributing factors on migration alongside socio-economic ones. Again, the analysis of the primary data is provided in order to find the other causes of the phenomenon.

In contrary to the accepted view about the root causes of migration, there are other researchers that are quite confident that there are other reasons behind migration, which are not economic (Hendrik P. van Dalen and Kène Henkens 2007; Sassen 1993; Shaw 1974). The already examined literature showcase that migration from wealthy countries is a common thing nowadays. The examples of Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, United Kingdom, Canada, are a vivid manifestation of the claim. In this context, it is worth mentioning that according to the results of the qualitative data there are many wealthy Armenians that want to leave the country.

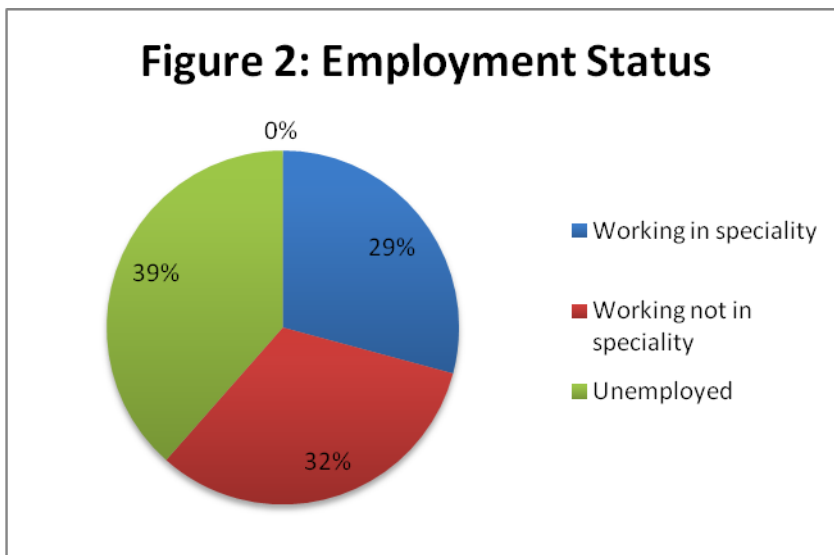
In the previous part, it is already covered that the participants of the focus group that have relatively high income are also about to migrate. Their decision is not driven by financial incentives. Only three participants of the focus group sessions mentioned that socio-economic hardships are the main triggers.

As it was derived from the analysis of the in depth interviews, moral and psychological issues were the most often mentioned ones. These factors got a frequency mean of 2.3 and the intensity of 5. So, let us understand what they considered by mentioning these factors.

The former representative of the National Assembly stated that the Armenians do not feel that they have a say on decision-making processes in Armenia. In other words, they do not believe they can change something in this country. Similarly, the representative of People

in Need stated, “There is a widespread thinking among Armenians that nothing depends on them. In these circumstances, they have no other choice, but to leave”. It is to be outlined, that during both focus group sessions the participants also mentioned about moral and psychological factors. Five participants stated the word “disappointment”. However, none of them gave a direct definition to this word. In each groups, one of the members stated that “disappointment” is a combination of different factors, and the others agreed with that. Also, the potential migrants emphasized that they need some changes that is why they want to leave.

The participant D argues that Armenian youth has limited opportunities in terms of entertainment. He particularly indicates that there are many limitations for the young generations because of the existing traditional thinking. Hence, he wants to leave for another country, where he will have the opportunity to “fully enjoy his life”. Two, other participants



agreed with him, but refused to give more explanations. However, the survey results show no correlation between the variable (I need changes) and the intention to leave. Hence, the argument

derived from the interviews and focus groups is not backed by the results of the survey.

Another main migration causing factor is that people in Armenia do not work in their profession. According to the survey results the latter state that they have unclear future in Armenia. One of the biggest reasons for migrating is the wish for developing their professional qualities abroad. The survey results indicate that only 29.2 percent of the

respondents work in their specialty field, 32.3 percent work but not in their specialty field, and 38.5 percent does not work at all (see figure 2). Hence, the people that either do not work or work, but not in their specialty field, indicate that their future is unclear in Armenia. The correlation shows significant relationship between these two variables, with the level of

significance 0.562 (see table 12).

Table 12: Correlation between uncertain future and working in the field of specialization

		No/not in specialty	Uncertain future
No/not in specialty	Pearson Correlation	1	.562**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	316	316
Uncertain future	Pearson Correlation	.562**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	316	316

Similarly, the results of the qualitative data also prove this point. Four out of six interview respondents stated that one

of the main reasons of migration is the professional development of migrants. The representative of People in Need (NGO) posits that there are nor big corporations in Armenia, which will satisfy the professional needs of educated Armenians that are considering migration. In addition, the representative of Passport and Visa Office people spend years in order to become professionals in their chosen field, but they cannot find a job in their expertise field. Thus, this leads to a thinking that they had studied for several years in vain and an employment opportunity abroad that will let them work in their area of professional certification is a major trigger of migration. Besides, almost half (seven out of 12) of the focus group members stated that their potential would be better utilized abroad.

Yet another factor of migration is family reunification. The representatives of the State Migration Service and Armenian Statistical Service stated that Armenian diaspora is a great pulling factor. Armenians that live abroad ask their relatives and family members to join them. As the results of the focus group reflects, three participants considers migration because of family ties. One of them (participant C) applied for US citizenship and wants to

join his parents. Participant G has a wife who is a US citizen and also wants family reunification. And the participant K has a father that lives in Bulgaria, and he travels there very often.

However, the last factor received a weak strength from the in-depth interviews, as the experts did not give much importance to it. Also, the word “family reunification” was mentioned quite seldom. The frequency level was only 0.5.

Uncertain future was also both mentioned during the interviews and discussed in the sessions of focus group. This very factor received quite high level of strength, as the respondents emphasized the importance of it quite emotionally. The frequency was also relatively high. Thus, the means of both indicators was respectively 6 and 2. However, according to the survey results no correlation was found between this variable and the intention to leave (see table 13). The respondents indicated that the lack of trust towards future is also a factor of migration, but the correlation showed that the variable could not be distinguished as one of

the triggers of migration from Armenia. Though, the relationship between the independent and dependent variable was very close to be significant.

Table 13: Correlation between respondents’ intention to leave and uncertain future

		Intention	Uncertain future
Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.444**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	316	316
Uncertain future	Pearson Correlation	.444*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	*
	N	316	316

During the in-depth interview, informational flows were distinguished as one of the pulling factors, nowadays. Nevertheless, both the intensity and frequency were not high, mainly because about this factor was only mentioned after the follow-up questions, without so much confidence. Some of the respondents mentioned that nowadays the picture of

migration had been changed in the world, mainly because nowadays people have access to information, which is a pulling factor.

Similarly, during the focus group sessions the participants did not mention about the impact of information flows until a question was given to them. One of them stated that Internet had a great role in the decision making process, as he knew much about the target country by the gained information. The other participant mentioned that she is already in touch with her friend living abroad, and their conversations triggered her willingness to change the place of location.

All the mentioned factors in this part can be described as pull factors, as they do not force people to leave and the potential migrants will not encounter risks in case of staying. Nevertheless, the push factors are also apparent here. The conflict of Nagorno Karabakh and mandatory military service make many Armenians to leave the country.

According to the interview respondents, one of the main push factors is that parents, who have sons under 14, try to send them away from the country at an early age so they can avoid military service. The representative of the State Migration Service posits that the conflict of Nagorno Karabagh is one of the push factors that make Armenians leave. Coming back to this point, we want to state the argument by the representative of the People in Need NGO, who stressed that because of the military situation in Armenia from 1992 to 1994 approximately one million people left the country.

Security related issues were mentioned often, because there was a question related to tense situation on the border with Azerbaijan and its impact on migration, which was derived from the results of the survey questionnaire. However, they were not mentioned with high intensity.

These were the factors that the representatives of the in depth interviews touched upon, and were also discussed about during the FG sessions. Some of their arguments were

also proved by the analysis of the survey. Thus, the mentioned results were the combination of the three used tools. Still, as we have witnessed from the analysis the interview respondents relatively underestimated the importance of the non socio-economic factors. However, the analysis of the surveys and FG sessions emphasize that other factors alongside socio-economic ones are also the main triggers of migration. From the presented table 14 it is obvious that the experts of the field gave relatively less attention to other factors.

Table 14: Descriptors of reasons for migration. Source: *Author's calculations, based on interviews*

N	Descriptors of reasons for migration	Mean	
		Frequency	Intensity
	Socio-economic factors		1-7
1	Social and economic hardships	5.3	7
2	Unemployment	1.5	6
3	Low salaries	0.8	6
4	Governmental policy	5.6	7
5	Problems related to entrepreneurship	1.1	4
7	Corruption	1	4
8	Inflation	0.6	3
9	Poverty	0.8	6
	Other factors		
1	Good education	1	4
2	Informational flows	1.3	4
3	Moral, psychological factors	2.3	5
4	Family reunification	0.5	4
5	Uncertain future	2	6
6	Professional development	1.16	5
7	Security issues (NK conflict, personal security)	2.5	5

As it can be viewed from the table 14, none of the non socio-economic factors received the maximum intensity. Besides, none of the descriptors surpasses the mean of 3. Oppositely, the assessment of the socio-economic factors showcases that the very triggers have an utmost importance among the experts.

In addition, it is also noteworthy, that during the interviews three of the respondents stated that after presidential and parliamentary elections people leave the country because of disappointment, as starting from 1998 the same authority is running the government. One of

them mentioned that the migration flows from Armenia received a new impetus after March the 1, 2008 when the post-election sentiments became a reason of mass violence.

To examine it, a correlation is made to find whether the numbers of net migration rate changes because of elections (see table 15). Thus the presented statistics showcase the correlation of the net migration rate with election years. For this purpose dummy variable has been created to indicate the years of the elections in Armenia. Dummy is equal to 1 if there were either parliamentary or presidential elections, and 0 for other years. Thus, it can be stated that the election results does not lead to migration from Armenia.

This chapter shows that migration from Armenia is also influence by various factors other than socio-economic difficulties. Hence, the second research question can be answered the following way. Non socio-economic factors also play a vital role in the level of migration from Armenia. Many people, who do not have major financial issues, still want to leave the country for the above-mentioned reasons.

Table 15: Correlation between Migration rates and elections

		Migration	Dummy for elections
Migration	Pearson Correlation	1	.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.994
	N	14	14
Dummy	Pearson Correlation	.002	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.994	
	N	14	14

Conclusion

The presented findings of the research indicate that the drivers of migration from Armenia are more complex than they appear to be. The analyzed data shows that alongside socio-economic conditions there are other factors that have significant impact on migration from Armenia.

The interviewed experts argue that the socio-economic factors are the main drivers of migration from Armenia. The impact of these factors become apparent also in the survey results, where respondents stated unemployment and low salaries are the main triggers that make people leave the country. In this regard the push factors of migration have a strong influence, as many respondents just want to leave the country.

However, the results of the mentioned research tools also indicate that socio-economic drivers are not the only ones that cause the current level of migration. In particular, the collected data shows that people, who do not face socio-economic hardship, want to leave the country as well. This is clearly seen in the survey results; the desire to leave the country has no correlation with the level of income. The participants of the focus groups, who were in decent social conditions, but wanted to leave the country, also indicate the importance of factors other than socio-economic issues.

The findings of this research show that professional objectives, family reunification, and security matters also have a significant impact on the level of migration. Many of the survey respondents and focus group participants aim to leave Armenia, as they believe that abroad they will develop their professional skills and their potential will be utilized better. The results of the focus groups and expert interviews also show that many people aim to

leave Armenia for uniting with their family members who leave abroad. This is a vital pull factor that should be taken into account as well.

In addition, unclear vision towards the future and certain psychological issues also has an impact on migration from Armenia. In particular, many young Armenians want to leave the country because of the lack of entertainment opportunities. Besides, they also believe that their future in Armenia is vague and unclear. They believe that abroad they will have better opportunities. Finally, the fact that Armenia is in a protracted conflict over Nagorno Karabakh also influences the decision of people to leave the country. As stated above, many parents are concerned about the security of their sons. Therefore, they try to leave the country for avoiding military service.

To sum up, the results of the conducted analysis show that there are multiple factors that influence the level of migration from Armenia. The mainstream thinking that this issue is mainly caused by the existing socio-economic conditions does not show the comprehensive picture of the matter. As mentioned above, there are other factors that have a significant impact on migration from Armenia. Therefore, the paper rejects the presented hypothesis; migration from Armenia is not strictly determined by socio-economic factors.

The other factors that are indicated in this paper have received relatively little attention. Therefore, future studies should analyze these drivers as well, which will help to build a better understanding on the causes of migration from Armenia.

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Appendices

Appendix A 1

Survey questionnaire

1. Do you want to go abroad for working or studying purposes?

- Yes
- Probably yes
- Not sure yet
- Probably no
- No (In case of answering “No” pass to question 5)

2. Choose the option that best describes your situation.

	Agree	Disagree
I do not exclude the possibility of leaving Armenia		
I plan to leave Armenia in near future		
I have a specific country for which I want to leave		
I already took some steps		
I already have my tickets		

3. In which country would you prefer to reside for working or studying purposes?

- In one of EU countries
- In other European countries
- In Russia, Ukraine, Belarusian, or Moldova
- In Georgia
- In Middle East and Persian Gulf (including Arab countries and Turkey)
- In South -East Asia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines and others, including China
- In USA and Canada
- In South American countries (Argentina, Uruguay, etc.)
- Other _____

4. Rank the reasons causing you to leave Armenia according to their importance (from 1 to 11).

- Unemployment, having no job or insufficient employment
- Inflation
- Low salary (I have a job but the salary is not sufficient)
- Corruption
- Sense of injustice
- Security issues, war (avoiding military service)
- Expectations for a better life
- Schooling, better education for me or my children

- Political pressures
- Need for change
- Uncertain future

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

A) Going abroad will improve my financial conditions.

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Undecided
- Partially disagree
- Disagree

B) Going abroad will foster my professional development

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Undecided
- Partially disagree
- Disagree

C) There is no or little corruption abroad.

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Undecided
- Partially disagree
- Disagree

D) My rights will not be violated abroad.

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Undecided
- Partially disagree
- Disagree

E) A better future is expected for me abroad.

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Undecided
- Partially disagree
- Disagree

Personal information

6. Choose your age group.

- 18-24
- 25-35
- 36-50

___50+

7. Choose your sex.

___Male

___Female

8. What is your highest completed level of education?

Primary

Initial professional

Basic

Vocational

Secondary

Higher

None

Postgraduate

9. What is the nature of your employment?

Hired employee

Retired

Entrepreneur

Leading household economy

Unemployed

Disabled

Student

Other _____

10. Please specify your professional field.

11. Do you have a job?

___ Yes, I work in my speciliazation (in case of answering yes, pass to question 13)

___ Yes, but not in my speciliazation (in case of answering yes, pass to question 13)

___ No

12. What is the reason that you do not work?

___ I cannot find job

___ I am on vacation

___ Illness

___ I am on a strike

___ I am a student

___ I am a housewife

___ I do not need to work

___ Other _____

13. How much do you spend monthly (expressed in AMD)

___ up to 50.000

___ 51.000-100.000

___ 101.000-150.000

___ 151.000-250.000

___ 251.000-350.000

___ 351.000-500.000

___ 501.000-700.000

___ 701.000 and more

Appendix A 2

Survey questionnaire (abroad)

1. How long have you been living outside of Armenia?

- up to 6 months
- 6-12 months
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 years and more

2. Rank the reasons that caused you to leave Armenia according to their importance (from 1 to 11).

- Unemployment, having no job or insufficient employment
- Inflation
- Low salary (I have a job but the salary is not sufficient)
- Corruption
- Sense of injustice
- Security issues, war (avoiding military service)
- Expectations for a better life
- Schooling, better education for me or my children
- Political pressures
- Need for change
- Uncertain future

3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

A) Going abroad improved my financial conditions.

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Undecided
- Partially disagree
- Disagree

B) Going abroad fostered my professional development

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Undecided
- Partially disagree
- Disagree

C) There is no or little corruption abroad.

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Undecided
- Partially disagree
- Disagree

D) My rights are not violated abroad.

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Undecided
- Partially disagree
- Disagree

E) A better future is expected for me abroad.

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Undecided
- Partially disagree
- Disagree

Personal information

4. Choose your age-group.

- 18-24
- 25-35
- 36-50
- 50+

5. Choose your sex.

- male
- female

6. What is your highest completed level of education?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary | <input type="checkbox"/> Initial professional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> Higher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate |

7. What is the nature of your employment?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hired employee | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneur | <input type="checkbox"/> Leading household economy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed | <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

8. Please specify your professional field.

9. Do you have a job?

- Yes, I work in my specialization (in case of answering yes, pass to question 13)
- Yes, but not in my specialization (in case of answering yes, pass to question 13)
- No

10. What is the reason that you do not work?

- I cannot find job
- I am on vacation
- Illness
- I am on a strike
- I am a student
- I am a housewife
- I do not need to work
- Other _____

11. How much were you spending monthly in Armenia? (Expressed in AMD)

- up to 50.000
- 51.000-100.000
- 101.000-150.000
- 151.000-250.000
- 251.000-350.000
- 351.000-500.000
- 501.000-700.000
- 701.000 and more

12. How much are you spending monthly in you current country of residence? (Expressed in AMD; 100\$ = 50.000 AMD(approx.))

- Up to 50.000
- 51.000-100.000
- 101.000-150.000
- 151.000-250.000
- 251.000-350.000
- 351.000-500.000
- 501.000-700.000
- 701.000 and more

Appendix B

Interview questions

1. Which are the main reasons for migration from Armenia?
2. How does the corruption affect migration from Armenia?
3. How does the inflation affect migration from Armenia?
4. How does tense military situation affect migration from Armenia?
5. Which are other factors affecting migration in Armenia?
6. To what extent does the prospective of professional development affects migration?
7. What is the influence of political situation in the country on migration?
8. How does the vision of the future life in Armenia influence the decision to migrate?
9. What expectations of change people have and how does it affect migration?
10. In which years and which seasons is migration more intense and why?

Appendix C

Focus group questions

1. Do you want to leave Armenia? Why?
2. What socio-economic hardships have you faced?
3. What are some other conditions or factors?
4. What event(s) caused you to make the decision to migrate?
5. What practical steps did you take in that direction?
6. What are some expectation you have from the life abroad that cannot be realized in Armenia?
7. Will you be more successful in your professional field abroad? Why?
8. What factors can make you change your decision and stay in Armenia?
9. Do you plan to return to Armenia? In which cases?