

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA**

**EDUCATION AND EMIGRATION: PROBLEM OF BRAIN DRAIN**

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## **Introduction**

Brain drain is the emigration of the educated elites from developing countries to the more developed ones in search of new job or education opportunities. The problem of brain drain has become actual particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the growing misbalance and the emergence of the huge gap between the developed and developing countries. Annually thousands of young people with higher education leave their home countries in search of better living conditions.

The problem of brain drain is actual in Armenia as well, since the collapse of Soviet Union, the transition from central economy to market economy, harsh economic conditions, and state of unfinished war serve as natural triggers for the emigration of the young people with higher education whose main destination is the United States of America or some European countries.

The aim of the current master's essay is to study the problem of brain drain in Armenia. Although this problem is of crucial importance for our country, there are almost no relevant studies on the issue and the current paper might serve as a kind of pilot study with further possibilities of developing the topic and expanding the scope of analysis.

The analysis of the paper are mainly based on the survey conducted in May 2012 among the BA and MA graduate students of four different universities with the purpose of finding out their general perceptions concerning the possibilities of their employability as well as their possible actions in case of failure. The paper also includes interviews with several work agencies to see the general trends of the most and the least demanded professions in the labour market of Armenia.

Along with surveys and interviews, the paper also looks at certain policy loopholes which might serve as triggers for brain drain. The analysis are done taking into consideration general

theoretical frameworks available on the topic as well as the study of the literature on the world trends and patterns of brain drain.

Based on the thematic and technical requirements the work consists of introduction, two chapters, conclusion, reference list and appendix.

The first chapter is devoted to the study of the available literature as well as the analysis of the survey and the interviews. The hypothesis and the research questions of the paper are also analyzed and discussed in the first chapter.

The second chapter is devoted to the observation of certain policy loopholes, like the introduction of foreign language schools in Armenia with its possible negative consequences, as well as the provision of scholarships to Armenian students with no definite mechanism in vision of further usage of their potential in the source country. The second chapter also provides certain recommendations which are based on our general observations.

The appendix includes the questionnaire used for the survey. The survey was a part of a joint project on emigration and only some questions from the questionnaire are relevant for the current study.

# Chapter 1

## 1.1. Literature Review

Emigrations have always been a kind of driving force for the development of human civilization. People have been in the habit of changing their place of living since ancient times and it has greatly contributed to the more or less balanced development of general world trends. The emigration observed before the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century usually included people of non-educated classes who left their country of origin in search of new job opportunities. The departure of this workforce generally had negative influence in terms of the development of the source country; however the financial support provided by the emigrants to their relatives in the homeland came to counterbalance this negative influence to some extent.

The emigration of more educated members of the society started to be observed particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it was conditioned by various factors not only of economic character but also political and racial issues. The first huge wave of emigration of educated people was observed from Italy and Germany under the influence of Nazi and fascist regimes (Andrés Solimano, 2005). Citizens of Italy and Germany of Jewish origin had to live their country of origin for the mere survival. The trend of such type of migration particularly from the Old Continent to the New World continued in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s. It was in this period that the Council of the Royal Society of London decided to conduct a research to gather information on the emigration of scientists. After a one-year study the Royal society published a report which showed that, after a study of a 10-year period from May 1952, the annual emigrations of recent PhDs was at least 140 a year, 60 of which went to the USA. The number of permanent emigrants with a recent PhD had increased by a factor of about three in the decade 1952–61. If one were to include those going temporarily, the

annual number of recent PhDs going to the USA was at least 260, or more than 22% of the total output. (Brian Balmer, 2009) The immediate impact of the Royal Society report was considerable, prompting debates in the House of Lords and in the press. In the Lords debate directly after the report's publication, the Minister for Science, Lord Hailsham, evoked the Americans' 'parasitizing' of British brains. In the press the report was also seized upon, with the Evening Standard<sup>1</sup> coining the phrase 'brain drain'. (Brian Balmer, 2009, p. 346). Thus, the term brain drain came into circulation denoting the emigration of highly educated professionals or the so called scientific emigration.

At the time the report was prepared the target groups were only university circles and particularly scientists with PhD degree and it was only in the 1970s that the notion of brain drain came to include larger circles particularly students from poorer countries intending to stay in the developed countries where they had studied .

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the gradual emergence of European Union as a developed power able to meet the challenges of the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world faced the gradual shift of centers of excellence and many Western European countries along with the US became potential desired destinations for the emigration of educated people, particularly young people who were provided with plenty of opportunities to live and to work or to study in those countries.

Emigration of educated elites from developing countries to more developed ones in search of new educational or job opportunities is an issue which has always worried the governments of the source country. A huge literature is available on the topic discussing the problem from different perspectives, introducing it either in the positive or negative light, illustrating examples of various countries prone to brain drain. In fact, in 1998 Anne Marie

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<sup>1</sup> London based daily newspaper which is now called London Evening Standard



Gaillard and Jacques Gaillard made a huge effort and created a bibliographic and conceptual itinerary of international migration which involves around 1816 references of published and unpublished works written between 1954 and 1995 on the international migration of high qualified manpower (Anne Marie Gaillard, 1998).

Brain drain is considered to be harmful for the source country in terms of its economic consequences (resources spent on the education of the person who leaves are lost forever) as well as loss of human resources (the more capable part of the society leaves the country). Brain drain as a social phenomenon is generally viewed from two large perspectives: national and global (Johnson, 1979). From the global perspective, brain drain is a relatively positive phenomenon which greatly contributes to the overall development of general world patterns and contributes to the 'collective development' of the world in general<sup>2</sup>. Brain drain might be considered as a positive phenomenon from the perspective of the recipient country as well. In fact the recipient country spends almost no resources on the formation of a capable specialist who will later greatly contribute to the development of the economy and science.

The national perspective views the possible consequences of the emigration of the educated elites on the source nation and from this perspective brain drain is considered to be a relatively negative phenomenon seriously endangering the further development of the source country. The problem is that the source country spends certain amount of money, time and effort on educating certain individuals with the perspective that these individuals will further foster to the economic, cultural or social development of their country.

Brain drain is a problem peculiar to many developing countries and the reasons for brain drain or factors leading to it may vary from country to country. Among the general reasons for

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<sup>2</sup> Although this general development is not proportional and is generally misbalanced with only several centers of excellence

brain drain various authors underline political (political instability, social pressures, certain autocratic regimes) and economic factors (poor remuneration and wage, limited job opportunities, low living standards) which greatly trigger the emigration of highly developed professionals (Torbat, 2002) (Kaba, 2011) (Grecic, 2002).

Harry G. Johnson (1979) differentiates the following factors which may trigger the emigration of educated elites.

1. Political instability in the source country, which may hinder the further prosperous activity of the person.

2. Higher educational systems of certain countries produce a supply of certain types of educated people larger than the economic systems of those countries can absorb

3. Some countries have centers of excellence for certain professions (like music, art, or some sciences) which make them particularly attractive and contribute to the concentration of more or less significant specialist in this or that sphere

4. Massive support of research and development expenditure by the US

Thus, we can deduce that author differentiates two main types of factors according to their origin: internal and external. Unfavorable internal factors in combination with favorable external conditions give a serious motivation to the educated elites to emigrate. Johnson's contribution to the discussion of the problem is particularly important because of his analysis of external factors along with internal ones.

**Brain Drain in Armenia:** As it has already been mentioned brain drain is not a problem peculiar only to Armenia. Many post Soviet countries as well as other Asian countries like India suffer from this phenomenon which is considered to be an irreversible process annually including more and more young people not only with post-graduate level of education but undergraduate and

secondary as well. Younger and younger people, mostly the products of the private school system, are leaving the country - the vast majority never to return (Rajput, 2002, p. 3404). In the former Soviet bloc countries, there existed a specific set of stimuli propelling migration. The main reasons behind scientists' mobility included economic factors and the lack of political freedom, although restrictions on passport issuance considerably reduced potential emigration from the scientific community. The situation changed rapidly following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, where an increase in the outflow of science professionals could be observed even before 1992 (Bohdan Jalowiecki, 2004).

Besides, it should be mentioned that emigration is not something new for Armenians. It has been a widely spread phenomenon during the whole history of the Armenian nation because of various political and economic factors which are well known and there is no need for further clarification within the framework of the current paper. The problem became more acute particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union and with the establishment of the Republic of Armenia in 1991. Along with economic crisis the young republic had to face also the state of war and all these factors led to the several waves of huge emigrations (Chindea, 2008). Among the emigrants there were a large number of young and middle-aged scientists, people with high education and significant experience in various fields, particularly physics, chemistry, biology and other natural sciences. As the president of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia Academician Radik Martirosyan mentioned in one of his interviews in 1990 the Academy had more than 7000 employees and 60% of them were scientists while today this figure is halved (Martirosyan, 2009 )

Although emigration has been one of the actual problems for Armenia in recent years, the number of studies on emigration, and particularly on brain drain is quite limited (Armen

Yeghiazaryan, 2003), (Migration and Development: Armenia Country Study, 2009), (Kuddo, 2007).

The country report of International Labor Organization published in 2009 touches upon the problem of brain drain within the framework of emigration and development. The report particularly underlines the fact that there are certain problems with the professional education in Armenia. “It appears that currently the quantity of students, the professions lists, and the distribution of students by professions in both state and private HEI<sup>3</sup>s and SPEI<sup>4</sup>s in Armenia is affected more by the factors providing direct inflow of financial resources, such as the state funding and the solvent demand in the local education market, rather than the real demand of the local labor market” (Migration and Development: Armenia Country Study, 2009, p. 55). This phenomenon led to the formation of the hypotheses for the current paper which sounds as follows:

**Non-systematized recruitment of students at universities leads to brain drain.**

The term non-systematized recruitment, in fact, needs further conceptualization. By non-systematized recruitment of students at universities we mean the process when universities according to government decree offer certain amount of places for certain professions per year without any proper analysis of market demand. The result is the following: every year thousands of students graduate from university for certain 'popular' professions and they have to face the reality of unemployment. Actually our country is overwhelmed with economists and lawyers, as well as specialists of English who, because of lack of appropriate work places, either have to requalify and do some other job or have to leave the country in search of decent living and

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<sup>3</sup> Higher education institution

<sup>4</sup> Secondary professional education institution

chances of self-realization. Thus, it is assumed that the lack of appropriate policy for student recruitment may lead to the brain drain.

We intend to support the hypothesis in four steps which are as follows:

1. To study the student perspective of employability and their evaluation of the demand for their profession in the labour market of Armenia.

2. To study the actual facts and this includes analysis of secondary sources and interviews with work agencies

As for the second component of the hypothesis, i.e. brain drain, it should be studied in two steps:

1. To study the intentions of possible leavers through survey

2. To study current statistics of young people with higher education leaving Armenia.

Based on the purposes of the paper the following research questions have been put forward:

- **RQ1 Is there a difference in perspective of employability in terms of profession?**
- **RQ 2 Is there a relationship between the perspective of employability and intention to leave the country?**
- **RQ3 Is there a difference in possible actions based on perspective of employability?**
- **RQ 4 Is there a difference in possible actions in terms of profession?**

**1.2. Methodology:** For the purposes of the current study the following methods of data collection have been used:

1. A survey was conducted with graduate BA and MA students (N=140) from different universities in Armenia. The aim of the survey was to find out the general attitude of students concerning the perspectives of their employability as well as possible intentions in case of failure.

The sample is not representative and the survey was conducted on ad hoc basis aimed at interviewing graduate students of different professions. The choice of the professions was not limited or specified, but an important factor was their diversity. For this purpose graduate students of four different universities were interviewed: Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan, Yerevan State University, Armenian State University of Economics and American University of Armenia. All in all we got students with 16 different professions, which were later combined into five groups for the purposes of further analysis. The groups are as follows:

1. Linguistics, which includes teachers of English, Orientalists and Philologists.
2. Arts, which includes artists and art critics.
3. Natural sciences, which include geographers, physicists and engineers
4. Economics
5. Social sciences, which include sociologists, political scientists, theologians, lawyers, and specialists of international relations

Table 1 : List of the professions		
	Frequency	Percent
teacher of English	19	13.6
Artist	11	7.9
Lawyer	11	7.9
art critic	5	3.6
Linguist	10	7.1
Economist	19	13.6
Geographer	1	.7
Philologist	1	.7
Sociologist	1	.7
IR specialist	13	9.3
tourism manager	3	2.1
Political scientist	32	22.9
Engineer	6	4.3
Physicist	2	1.4
Theologist	3	2.1
Orientalist	3	2.1
Total	140	100.0

Table 2: List of the professions grouped into categories		
	Frequency	Percent
Linguistics	33	23.6
Arts	16	11.4
natural sciences	9	6.4
Economics	22	15.7
social sciences	60	42.9

The interviews were face to face, and all the interviewees were informed about the anonymity of their responses. All the requirements of IRB were fulfilled. The data was analyzed running SPSS. Based on the hypothesis and research questions the current study has five variables each of which is conceptualized in the following way.

Variable 1: Gender

Variable 2: Profession

Variable 3: Perspective of employability is conceptualized as interviewee's opinion concerning the possible perspectives of finding a job in the upcoming 5 months and in the upcoming year.

Variable 4: Intention to leave the country is conceptualized as interviewee's intention to leave Armenia for good.

Variable 5: Possible actions which might be undertaken is conceptualized as interviewee's further actions in case of failure in finding a job (see Appendix 1 for the survey questionnaire).



2. Along with survey, interviews were conducted with 5 different work agencies in Yerevan and the aim of the interviews was to find out which are the most and the least demanded professions. In order to avoid misinformation based on the seasonal character of this or that occupation<sup>5</sup>, it was asked to evaluate the demand in the labor market in the recent 1- 2 years. Besides, having already certain list of professions provided by the survey results, the interviewees were asked to evaluate the demand for those specific professions. The interviews were conducted on the phone and the interviewees were informed about the aim of the interview.

### **1.3. Findings**

Analyzing the overall results of the conducted survey we get the following information: 34.3% of all the respondents were male, while 65.7 % were female.

Perspective of employability is measured by asking the respondents to evaluate the possibility of their finding a job in the upcoming 5 months on the scale from 1-10 (1 = not possible at all, 10 = extremely possible). Some 20.9 % of the respondents evaluate their perspective of finding a job with 5. 8.6 % of respondents consider that they have no chance of finding a job in the upcoming 5 months, and only 3.6 % of respondents evaluate their perspective as extremely possible (see Table 3).

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, it is clear that in summer the demand for certain professions and jobs in service and construction is higher than in winter

Table 3 : Perspective of finding a job in 5 months				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not possible at all	12	8.6	8.6	8.6
2	4	2.9	2.9	11.5
3	14	10.0	10.1	21.6
4	15	10.7	10.8	32.4
5	29	20.7	20.9	53.2
6	10	7.1	7.2	60.4
7	22	15.7	15.8	76.3
8	23	16.4	16.5	92.8
9	5	3.6	3.6	100.0
Extremely possible	5	3.6	3.6	
Total	139	99.3	100.0	
Don't know/can't say	1	.7		
Total	140	100.		
Mean = 5.47 (1= not possible at all, 10 = extremely possible)				

In order to measure the perspective of employability the respondents were also asked to evaluate the demand for their profession in the Armenian labor market on the scale from 1-10 (1 = not demanded at all, 10 = extremely demanded). 53.2% of respondents rank the demand of their profession between 1 and 5, thus considering it to be somewhat or not at all demanded. The remaining 46.8% rank it between 6 and 10. Note, however, that the mean value for this variable is 6.4, thus being somewhat towards the positive end of the 1 to 10 scale(see Table 4)..

Table 4 : Demand for the Profession in the Armenian Labor Market				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not demanded at all	4	2.9	2.9	8.6
2	2	1.4	1.4	11.5
3	8	5.7	5.7	21.6
4	14	10.0	10.0	32.4
5	27	19.3	19.3	53.2
6	15	10.7	10.7	60.4
7	22	15.7	15.7	76.3
8	16	11.4	11.4	92.8
9	15	10.7	10.7	96.4

Extremely demanded	17	12.1	12.1	100.0
Total	140	100.0	100.0	
Don't know/can't say	-	-		
Total	140	100.		
Mean = 6.43 (1= not demanded at all, 10 = extremely demanded)				

As it was already mentioned in the methodology part of the paper, the professions of respondents were grouped into 5 for the ease of analysis. As it becomes clear, linguists consider the demand for their profession in the Armenian labour market the highest and the mean is 7.06, while the respondents with professions in the realm of natural sciences consider the demand for their profession the lowest and the mean is 6.00 (see Table 5).

Table 5: Means of professions and their demand in the labor market of Armenia	
Profession	Demand for the profession in the labor market in Armenia
Linguistics	7.06
Arts	6.19
natural sciences	6.00
Economics	6.32
social sciences	6.25

As to the perspective of finding a job, it becomes clear that the respondents with social science background consider their perspective of finding a job the highest and the mean is 5.88, while artists consider it to be the lowest with the mean of 4.06 (see Table 6).

Table 6: Means of professions and perspective of finding a job in the upcoming 5 months	
Profession	Perspective of finding a job in the upcoming 5 months
Linguistics	5.45
Arts	4.06
natural sciences	5.56
Economics	5.36
social sciences	5.88

The respondents were asked whether they have thought of leaving Armenia for a long time or forever in the previous year and 93 out of 140 that is 66.4 % of all the respondents gave a positive answer (See Table 5).

Table 7: Have you thought of leaving Armenia for a long time or forever in the previous year			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	93	66.4	66.4
No	47	33.6	100.0
Total	140	100.0	

This was a contingency question and in case the answer was positive the respondents were asked about the possible reasons for their departure choosing from the given options: (1. I want to continue my studies abroad 2. I want to find a job, 3. I can't imagine my life in Armenia) or there was a possibility for giving any other option. 54.8% of the respondents who had thought of leaving Armenia, answers that they want to continue their studies abroad, while 19.4 % considers that he/she can't imagine his or her life in Armenia (see Table 6).

Table 8: What are the Reasons to Leave Armenia?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I want to continue my studies abroad	51	36.4	54.8	54.8
I want to find a job abroad	19	13.6	20.4	75.3
I can't imagine my life in Armenia	18	12.9	19.4	94.6
Other	5	3.6	5.4	100.0
Missing Values	47	33.6		
<b>Total</b>	140	100.0		

In order to find out which are the possible actions which the respondents might undertake in case they fail to find a job they were asked to answer the following two questions: *What will you do in case you don't find a job in the upcoming 5 months? What will you do in case you don't find a job in the upcoming year?* The options provided for both questions were as follows: *I will*

*continue looking for a job / I will requalify / I will find a job in another sphere / I will leave Armenia.* In case of not finding a job in the upcoming 5 months 40.7 % of the respondents expressed willingness to continue to look for a job, while in case of failure in the upcoming year only 24.6 % of the respondents will not give up. Meanwhile, 19.3 % of the respondents expressed intention to leave Armenia in case of not finding a job in 5 months and the numbers increased up to 31.9 % if the period of being unemployed lasted one year (see Table 7-8).

Table 9: What will you do, in case you don't find a job in the upcoming 5 months				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I will continue to look for a job	55	39.3	40.7	40.7
I will try to requalify	19	13.6	14.1	54.8
I will leave Armenia	26	18.6	19.3	74.1
I will try to find a job in another sphere	35	25.0	25.9	100.0
Total	135	96.4	100.0	
<b>Missing Values</b>	5	3.6		
<b>Total</b>	140	100.0		

Table 10 : What will you do, in case you don't find a job in the upcoming 5 months				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I will continue to look for a job	34	24.3	24.6	24.6
I will try to requalify	23	16.4	16.7	41.3
I will leave Armenia	44	31.4	31.9	73.2
I will try to find a job in another sphere	37	26.4	26.8	100.0
Total	138	98.6	100.0	
<b>Missing Values</b>	2	1.4		
<b>Total</b>	140	100.0		

As the options generally can be grouped into two variants, i.e. leaving and staying, we combined the first three options into staying for the purposes of the current research. Thus, 19.3 % of respondents answered that they will leave Armenia in case they don't find a job in the upcoming 5 months and this number dramatically rises up to 68.1 % if the respondents fail to find a job in the upcoming year (see Table 9-10).



Table 11 : What will you do, in case you don't find a job in the upcoming 5 months

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I will stay in Armenia	109	77.9	80.7	80.7
I will leave Armenia	26	18.6	19.3	100.0
Total	135	96.4	100.0	
<b>Missing Values</b>	5	3.6		
<b>Total</b>	140	100.0		

Table 12 : What will you do, in case you don't find a job in the upcoming 1 year

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I will stay in Armenia	44	31.4	31.9	31.9
I will leave Armenia	94	67.1	68.1	100.0
Total	138	98.6	100.0	
<b>Missing Values</b>	2	1.4		
<b>Total</b>	140	100.0		

As to the results of interviews conducted with work agencies to find out the most demanded and the least demanded professions, representatives of all 5 agencies informed that the professions of accountants, marketing specialists as well as occupations of waiters, office workers, cooks, hairdressers, are among the most demanded ones. As to the specific professions provided by the survey, it was revealed that the professions of theologises, artists, physicists, political scientists, IR specialists and engineers are among the least demanded ones if they are demanded at all. Linguists and economists are more demanded but reasons for this may be quite subjective and this will be discussed in the analysis section. As to the lawyers their profession was evaluated as moderately demanded.

#### **1.4. Survey Analysis**

To analyze the data gathered in the survey several statistical tests were run to see the relationship and correlations between the variables. Based on the character of variables the following tests were applied:

1. T-Test – to see the relationship between the perspective of finding a job in the upcoming 5 months and the intention of the respondents to leave Armenia forever or for a long time and to see the relationship between the perspective of finding a job in the upcoming 5 months and possible actions undertaken by the respondents.
- 2 Chi-Square – to see the relationship between the profession of the respondents and possible actions undertaken by the respondents as well as the relationship between the gender and possible actions undertaken by the respondents.
3. Pearson's correlation – to see the correlation between the perspective of finding a job in 5 months and the evaluation of the demand for the profession in the Armenian labour market.

4. ANOVA – to see the relationship between the perspective of finding a job and the profession of the respondents.

According to the results of the test there is a statistically significant moderate correlation between the perspective of finding a job and the evaluation of the demand for the profession in the Armenian labour market ( $p=.000$ ,  $r= .400$ ). Thus, it may be assumed that those who find it possible to find a job in the upcoming 5 months also consider that their profession is highly demanded in the labor market. To see the representatives of which professions consider their perspective to be high we run ANOVA, however the statistical test shows no significance and the only information which may be obtained is that social scientists consider their perspective of finding a job to be the highest: mean =5.88, while artists consider it to be the lowest with the mean of 4.06. What is interesting to notice is that if we unpack the group social scientists into its original professions we can see that theologians are the most pessimistic with the mean of only 2.67.

Answering the first research question i.e. *is there a difference in perspective of employability in terms of profession*, we can see that there seems to be certain difference, however it is not statistically significant.

To find out the respondents of which professions are more prone to leaving Armenia we run a Chi-Square test which shows no statistical significance, however it can be obtained from the descriptive part of the test that artists are most prone to leave Armenia (81.3%) while only 57.6 % of interviewed linguists admitted that they had thought of leaving Armenia forever (see Table 13).

Table 13: The relationship between the intention of leaving Armenia and professions of the respondents				
Profession	Number of the respondents		Intention to leave Armenia	
	Yes	no	Yes	No
Linguistics	19	14	57.6 %	42.4%
Arts	13	3	81.3%	18.8%
Natural sciences	6	3	66.7%	33.3%
Economics	17	5	77.3%	22.7%
Social Sciences	38	22	63.3%	36.7%

Such division of opinions may be explained by the fact that artists were among those who had the lowest perspective of finding a job in the upcoming 5 months and thus are more prone to leave Armenia, while linguists who consider their perspective of finding a job the highest are prone to stay. Thus, it may be assumed that those who consider having a higher job perspective are more prone to stay.

Based on these facts, it is interesting to see the relationship between the main reasons for leaving Armenia and the professions of respondents. The Chi-Square statistical test shows no statistical significance, however it is interesting to notice that a great majority of social scientists (68,4%) want to leave Armenia for further studies while some 35.3% of economists want to find a job abroad.

The fact that linguists are among those who are less interested in leaving Armenia is supported also by the information obtained from the interviews conducted with the employment

agencies. According to their statistics linguists, and particularly specialists of English are among the most demanded employees in the Armenian labour market.

However, the situation with linguists is a bit specific in the sense that linguists, particularly specialists of English are considered to be demanded in the labour market of Armenia not due to the specific profession like a teacher of English or philologist. The mere fact of knowing English makes the chances of employability quite high but it does not suppose that these people will find a job based on their professions, for instance a teacher of English. This factor makes the case with linguists a bit ambiguous.

The same ambiguity can be observed with economists as well. Although according to the survey economists tend to leave Armenia, employment agencies claim that their profession is highly demanded in the Armenian labour market. This phenomenon can be explained by various factors some of which will be analysed below. First and probably the most relevant factor is the transition situation from central economy to market economy which Armenia had to face right after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The gap in specialists was and is still huge and this is one of the reasons why the Armenian State University of Economics continues to be a popular choice with many young people.

Another factor which we consider to be quite relevant is the misperception of the term economist which is quite large and supposes a series of specialties in the respective field, while according to the data obtained from the work agencies economists are mostly in demand in the spheres of banking and accounting. Thus, economists still have to requalify and retrain to gain appropriate knowledge and skills of respective specialties.

These observations are supported by the data obtained from the survey based on which 26.1% of linguists and 21.7% of economists will try to requalify in case they do not find a job in

the upcoming year. Thus, it is clear that due to the skills obtained through their profession linguists and economists can be more flexible in the labour market and if necessary will try to requalify, while the situation is difficult with people specialized in arts and natural sciences: only 8.7% of artists and 4.3% of natural scientists will consider the perspective of requalifying in case they do not find a job in the upcoming year (see Table 14).

This observation comes to answer the last research question put forward within the scope of the current master's essay, which was aimed at finding difference in possible actions undertaken in terms of profession. For this purpose we run a Chi-Square test for the possible actions undertaken in case of failure in 5 months and in 1 year. In both cases there are no statistically significant differences, however there seems to be certain differences since artists are more inclined to leaving while linguists will try to find some alternative sources like requalification or continuing to look for a job.

Table 14 : The relationship between professions and possible actions the respondents will undertake in case they do not find a job in the upcoming year					
	Profession				
	linguistics	arts	natural sciences	economics	social sciences
<b>I will continue to look for a job</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>
<b>I will try to requalify</b>	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>39.1%</b>
<b>I will leave Armenia</b>	<b>20.5%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>34.1%</b>
<b>I will try to find a job in another sphere</b>	<b>21.6 %</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>48.6%</b>

To answer the second research question, i. e. *is there a relationship between the perspective of employability and intention to leave the country*, we run a T-test and see that there is no statistically significant relationship between the two variables. This means that in fact the evaluation of employability does not influence the intention to leave the country.

The third research question, i.e. *is there a difference in possible actions based on the perspective of employability* required running a T-test and though there is no statistically significant difference the comparison of the means comes to show that in fact there is a slight difference (see Table 15).

Table 15: Means for the difference in possible actions undertaken based on the perspective of employability	
	Perspective of finding a job in 5 months
I will stay	5.68
I will leave	4.62

Summing up the results of the survey and the interview, it becomes clear that the hypothesis was supported only partially. In terms of economics and linguistics although there is non-systematized recruitment at universities the profession is still in demand and thus those with these professions are less inclined to leaving Armenia. While in case of arts and natural sciences the hypothesis is clearly supported and people with these professions are inclined to leaving Armenia in search of new job or education opportunities.

### **1.5. Limitations:**

The study is surely not void of serious limitations. First factor that seriously hinders the process is the size of the sample which is quite small and leaves out representatives of certain professions and thus cannot provide comprehensive picture of the situation in question. For instance, the sample does not include such important professions as that of doctors and IT specialists. On the one hand it may be considered as a serious limitation since the representatives of these professions are considered to be highly demanded abroad and thus they are more prone to leaving the country providing a serious portion of 'brain drainees'. On the other hand, their inclusion in the list might cause certain bias in terms of the perspective of leaving since their departure is far easier in the sense that they will find jobs in their perspective fields far more easily.

The second serious limitation might be the fact that only graduate students participated in the survey. One of the reasons for this is the fact that the survey was conducted in May and the interviewees were going to graduate in some two weeks and they were going to face the reality of finding a job or considering other alternatives. That is the reason why the survey was interested in their perception of finding a job or in their perceptions of employability. For a more thorough analysis it would be recommendable to conduct surveys with alumni of the universities defining certain age limit.

As to the interviews with employment agencies there might be the following limitations observed. Surely, in order to study the demand for this or that profession a deeper and more thorough analysis are required, which will include not only work agencies in Yerevan, but also in other regions as well. Besides, the demand for the labor market should not include only the profession but other criteria like age, gender, as well to come to more sophisticated conclusions.



Another serious limitation might be the fact that employment agencies are private organizations and only private sector of the labour market (by the way not all of it) searches for its potential employees through work agencies. State institutions as well as certain types of private organizations (like private universities, hospitals, schools, etc) do not apply to employment agencies. Thus, the study of statistics provided by employment agencies may give only partial understanding of the demand for certain professions in the labour market of Armenia. However, due to the fact that there are no thorough studies on the demand and supply issues in the labour market of Armenia, the information obtained through employment agencies surely provides us with general understanding of the situation. Thus, it is clear that the analysis are not void of limitations, however being a kind of pilot study in this sphere this analysis may somehow contribute to the further elaboration of the issues in question.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Policy Review and Recommendations**

The survey and interview analysis provided in the first chapter of the paper come to prove that the threat of brain drain is, in fact, actual in Armenia and there is a need for further elaboration on the issue to insure possibly lower level of immigration of highly educated people. The reasons and possible trigger factors were discussed in the first chapter and the aim of the second chapter is to study certain policy loopholes present in our reality leading to brain drain as well as to come up with certain policy recommendations which might somehow improve the situation and turn the brain drain into brain gain.

Brain gain is a contrastive term for brain drain which was coined in the 1990s to describe collectively the attempts, efforts, programs and projects aimed to draw scientific workers to a given country. “While brain drain basically refers to spontaneous phenomena accompanying scientists’ decisions regarding where to work and live, without any attempts at influence by policy-makers or state administration, brain gain is associated with the deliberate efforts of various institutions to influence scientists’ decisions; the latter denotes planned efforts aimed to attract science professionals to a given country or organization, be it academic, research or industrial” (Bohdan Jalowiecki, 2004, p. 299).

Prior to the discussion on brain gain and its possible implications in Armenia it is necessary to discuss certain policy loopholes which directly or indirectly create appropriate conditions for the emigration of the educated elite, and particularly of young graduates with BA or MA degrees. Surely, the factors discussed in the first chapter, i.e. economic conditions peculiar to countries in transition, high unemployment rate, low salaries, poor living standards

as well as political instability, state of unfinished or frozen war, serve as reasons for leaving Armenia. However, we have observed some policy loopholes which give an opportunity to leave forever and some of such loopholes will be discussed below.

Since 2000 Ministry of Education of Armenia has signed cooperation contracts with various Asian and European countries among which are China, Bulgaria, Romania, Russian Federation, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Islamic Republic of Iran, etc.<sup>6</sup> The main purpose of the cooperation is the exchange program of students providing them with scholarships during the process of the study respectively 4 years for BA degree, 2 years for MA degree and 3 -6 years for PHD. The students are also given an extra year to gain appropriate language skills of the respective host country. The scholarship and the living expenses should be covered by the host country.

On the one hand such programs are surely important in the sense of contributing to cooperation between the countries and in the current age of globalization their role might be crucial in terms of world integration.

On the other hand, however, such programs indirectly contribute to the emigration of the educated young people since the source country and in this particular case Armenia has no leverage to guarantee the return of the students. During the interview with the head of the department of foreign relations at the Ministry of Education of Armenia, Vahe Grigoryan, it became clear that there is no statistic data available on the return of the students. As to the question whether there are any leverages or any contracts signed which would contribute to the return of the students, Mr. Grigoryan mentioned that in case of male students the only leverage might be their responsibility to the Ministry of Defense, in the sense that any male up to 27 should join the army in case there are no health problems. In case of female students Grigoryan

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<sup>6</sup> <http://edu.am/index.php?topMenu=6&menu1=-1>

mentioned that they have more liberal approach, which means that the return after graduation is left to the students' choice.

Thus, it becomes clear that we have a serious policy loophole in the sense that although we need specialists educated in Europe, we cannot be sure that they will be willing to return.

In this context the notion of brain circulation instead of brain drain might be applied by some scholars. The notion of brain circulation was first introduced by Johnson and Regets (1998) and the main idea is the following: "More recently, however, the mobility of highly talented workers is referred to as "brain circulation," since a cycle of study and work abroad may be followed by a return to the home country to take advantage of high-level opportunities" (Jean M. Johnson, 1998). Thus, brain circulation is a more positive phenomenon which contributes to the net benefit in the global sense. In the literature analysis of this paper we discussed the two main approaches to the brain drain, i. e . global and national perspectives and influences of brain drain and in the context of global benefit brain circulation should surely be encouraged. As to the national perspective on brain drain it is clear that brain circulation might be profitable in case there are respective conditions for brain circulation.

Although there is no relevant statistics available on the current rate of brain circulation, intuitively it is clear that brain circulation is almost impossible between two unequal entities, i.e. between developed and developing countries. While clear brain circulation is possible between EU countries and US, or US and Canada and in fact this is in place, since they have almost the same level of development in terms of economy and political situation, the same is almost impossible between two countries of quite different economic standards.

Recently the issue of brain circulation has received even a state coverage in Armenia with the Prime Minister Tigran Sargyan's vision on the creation of the so called Armenian World.

“Armenian World is a new territory of development, which unites Armenia and the Diaspora in one organism. Armenian World is a united mind activity platform of Armenian metropolis and representatives of Diaspora. That means that the ontology we represent, the logic of our thinking must be understandable for Armenian World and we must unite around us the people who are able to understand these new ideas and principles. Armenian World is a creation of pan Armenian global net and we are working on that. Meaning that Armenian World is our answer to the challenges of contemporaneity in a way of new architecture of world order” (Sargsyan, 2009).

This idea is reflected in another state sponsored organization founded by the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan and Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsyan called the “Luys Foundation”. “Under the aegis of the president of Armenia the “Luys” foundation has been created, the mission of which is the funding of education in world’s most elite education centers. The students must have the chance to get education in world’s best universities and the “Luys” foundation will take care of all the expenses. And that concerns not only the citizens of Armenia, but also those who live in Armenian World. You surely remember our president’s famous speech “Armenia doesn’t exist without Armenian World and there is no Armenian World without Armenia” (Sargsyan, 2009).

The main purpose of the foundation is expressed in their answer to the question whether their mission contributes to a kind of brain drain or brain circulation. “Luys works at creating "brain circulation". This means that we encourage all people with knowledge and know-how to come to Armenia and contribute to seeding projects that make a difference. Luys actively seeks out experts and invites them to think of creating branch activities in Armenia. The goal is to make sure Armenia occupies an active place in the world global economy and contributes to

setting trends.<sup>7</sup>” Thus, the foundation provides scholarships to students of Armenian decent to ensure the presence of Armenians in the world’s leading universities having an active participation in the world’s global trends and economy. In the duties and obligations section, however, there is no mentioning of the obligation for graduates to return to Armenia. “Be a Luys Ambassador and an Ambassador of Armenian Culture wherever you are”.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, it is quite controversial whether students of “Luys’ Foundation, which works with the top 10 Universities of the world either in Europe or in the US would ever return to Armenia upon the graduation.

The elaboration of this policy loophole brings us back to the hypothesis of the paper discussed in the first chapter, which stated that the non-systematized recruitment of students leads to brain drain. Studying the recruitment methods for providing scholarships it becomes clear that the choice is again not based on the analysis of the labour market, but on the choice of students. That is students apply to this or that foreign university choosing the profession or specialization they want and the government supports them with no further expectation of any feedback in form of future employment.

**Recommendation 1:** The government should develop certain mechanism of not **enforcing but encouraging** young graduates to return to Armenia<sup>9</sup>. My vision of the process is the following: the government should undertake a serious study of the market demand and provide scholarships for those specialties which are indispensable for the further development of our country. The student who gets the scholarship must be sure that upon the completion of the

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<sup>7</sup> <http://luys.am/en/fag/>

<sup>8</sup> ibid

<sup>9</sup> By some very superficial and informal sources such practice is available in some countries, for instance Syria, however the experience of other countries should be studied more thoroughly and be adapted to our reality

course he or she will be employed in Armenia with a salary compatible to those of European countries and this mutually profitable cooperation must be legalized by a binding contract.

Another serious condition triggering brain drain might be the introduction of foreign language schools the process of which started quite recently. The whole process started with the idea of founding an international school in one of the cities of Armenia, in Dilijan and the establishment required appropriate amendments in the laws on language and general education. The idea of these amendments and their consequent impact on the educational system caused a series of discussions and revolts and practically divided the public opinion into two halves. A special civil initiation group named *We are against the reopening of foreign language schools* was created which held various rallies, public hearings and demonstrations.

However, despite the protests the amendments in the “Law on General Education” and “Law on Language” were made on 22 December, 2010 allowing the establishment of foreign language schools with the permission of the Government of Armenia. According to the amendment in the Law on General education, foreign language education can be organized only by non-state educational institutions as well as institutions established by international or intergovernmental agreements<sup>10</sup> Thus, the law clearly stipulates that the establishment of foreign language schools in Armenia is legal despite its contradiction with the Constitution of Armenia, Article 12 which states: “The state language of the Republic of Armenia is the Armenian” (The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (with amendments), 1995) and consequently the introduction of foreign language schools where all the subjects will be taught in English is in direct contradiction with it (Khodikyan, 2010).

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.edu.am/DownloadFile/4208arm-Hanrakrt.PDF>

After the amendments were adopted by the National Assembly in 2010, there is an opportunity of opening 11 foreign language schools, 2 of which will be private and 9 intergovernmental. However, there is still one intergovernmental agreement in place, consequently only one school has been redesigned into an international school<sup>11</sup> and as to 2 private schools they are still to be opened. Immersion education is a model of teaching when pupils learn all the subjects through the target language. “ Language immersion is a method of teaching language, usually a second language, in which the target language is used as both curriculum content and media of instruction” (Center, 2010, p. 1).

Again intuitively it becomes clear that if one takes all the subjects in certain foreign language later integration into the society will cause certain difficulties in the sense that the person will not feel comfortable working or studying in an Armenian environment where language might become a barrier for communication.

**Recommendation 2:** In order to avoid further emigration of educated elites it is necessary to avoid the introduction of immersion education since the threat of brain drain is a threat not only to the economic development of the country but also is an issue of national security. It is highly advisable to provide high level of foreign language education by increasing the quantity and improving the quality of teaching. However, the improvement should not be done at the expense of mother tongue and in the form of immersion education.

Thus, the analysis provided in the paper come to show that brain drain is actually present in our reality and certain government policies or their absence in fact trigger the problem. As it has already been mentioned brain drain is not a phenomenon typical of only Armenia, but

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<sup>11</sup> Gymnasium “Quant” was redesigned into an international school in 2011, but it has classes only for high school pupils. (Հայաստանում արդեն օտարալեզու դպրոց կա, 2011)



various countries in the world have to face it. Some countries have found certain solutions to the problem and the main aim is not to stop it but to turn brain drain into brain gain. The thorough study of the international practice on the issue is out of the scope of the current paper; however a huge literature is available on the various mechanisms of coping with brain drain using the resources of Diaspora if available, providing grants and scholarships for the graduates to return and to find ways of self-realization in their source country.

## **Conclusion**

Brain drain, i.e. the emigration of the educated young people in search of new job or education opportunities is a phenomenon common to many developing countries and Armenia is no exception. Various factors peculiar to other developing countries like economic hardships, high unemployment rate, low salaries, and low standard of living are in fact present in Armenia as well.

The current master's essay aimed at looking at another factor which might be a reason for brain drain and this factor served as a base for the formation of the hypothesis, which stated that non-systematized recruitment may lead to brain drain. The hypothesis, in fact, is quite extended and was supported only partially. In terms of economics and linguistics although there is non-systematized recruitment at universities the profession is still in demand and thus those with these professions are less inclined to leaving Armenia. While in case of arts and natural sciences the hypothesis is clearly supported and people with these professions are inclined to leaving Armenia in search of new job or education opportunities.

As to answering the research questions put forward within the scope of the paper, it was necessary to run various statistical tests most of which showed no statistical significance due to the small sample size. However, the descriptive data provided by the survey is rather informative and gives idea about the general tendencies and patterns concerning the perceptions and attitude of people with higher education concerning their perspectives of employability, job demand in the labour market of Armenia as well as attitude towards leaving Armenia. Among such findings it is worth mentioning that artists are most inclined to leaving Armenia and in case they do not

find a job within five months they will consider leaving Armenia forever, while linguist will try other opportunities like requalifying or searching for a job in other fields.

Another striking fact was the dramatic change in the number of potential leavers within 7 months. To the question what they will do in case they do not find a job in the upcoming 5 months 19.3% of all the respondents considered the option of leaving Armenia, while 68.1 % of all the respondents were ready to leave Armenia in case of a failure in finding a job in one year.

Analyzing the situation in Armenia in regard to the issue at question, it turned out that there are certain policy loopholes which create a sound ground for the emigration of young people with higher education crucially depriving the nation of its 'potential power'. For this purpose several recommendations were put forward in the paper addressed to potential policy makers, and particularly to the Ministry of Education of Armenia.

The paper is surely not void of limitations among which the small sample size, not representative sample, not a large diversification of profession are worth mentioning. However, the paper is a pilot study in the field and is mostly aimed at pointing certain crucial issues the solutions to which cannot be limited to only one paper. This work is only a small contribution to the field which will hopefully give rise to more thorough studies.

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## APPENDIX A

### Sample Questionnaire<sup>12</sup>

May 2012

ID: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Survey on Brain Drain and Emigration

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview date: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview time: \_\_\_\_\_

*All instructions to the interviewer are in the bold italics and are in parenthesis. Please make sure to follow all instructions completely and to fill out the separate page for sampling information . We are interviewing undergraduate(BA) and graduate(MA) students. Read all questions exactly as written and use only the probes and explanations reviewed during training. Write any anecdotal information on the blank page attached to the end of the questionnaire – you should be recording everything said even if it does not seem related to the question itself.*

- 1. Do you have a job? This job may be part-time or full-time, or you may be officially employed, informally employed, or self-employed, but it brings you monetary income. (If not, then go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> question)**

Yes	1
No	0
(Don't know)	-1
(Refuse to answer)	-2

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<sup>12</sup> The questionnaire is a part of joint project on emigration and only certain questions are relevant for the current study (3, 4, 6, 7, 10)

**2. Please tell me, overall, how satisfied you are with your job?**

Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	[In the middle]	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	<i>(Don't know)</i>	<i>(Refuse to answer)</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<i>-1</i>	<i>-2</i>

**3. On the scale from 1-10 where 1 is not possible at all and 10 is extremely possible evaluate your perspective of employability in the upcoming 5 months.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK
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**4. On the scale from 1-10 where 1 is not demanded at all and 10 is extremely demanded evaluate the demand for your profession in the labour market of Armenia.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK
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**5. Which of the following factors do you consider most important for getting a good job in /country/?**

<i>Age</i>	1
<i>Appearance</i>	2
<i>Connections</i>	3
<i>Education</i>	4
<i>Hard work</i>	5
<i>Luck</i>	6
<i>Professional abilities</i>	7

<i>Talent</i>	8
<i>Work experience</i>	9
<i>Doing favors for the 'right' people</i>	10
<i>(Other)</i>	11
<i>(Don't know)</i>	-1
<i>(Refuse to answer)</i>	-2

**6. In case of not finding a job in the upcoming 5 months you will**

- a. continue searching
- b. try to requalify
- c. leave Armenia
- d. try to find a job in another sphere
- e. another option \_\_\_\_\_

**7. In case of not finding a job in the upcoming year you will**

- a. continue searching
- b. try to requalify
- c. leave Armenia
- d. try to find a job in another sphere
- e. another option \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Have you thought of leaving Armenia forever or for long in the passing year. (If not, then go to question 7)**

- 1. Yes
- 2. No



**9. If yes, what are the reasons?**

- a. I want to continue my studies abroad
  - b. I want to find a job in Armenia
  - c. I cannot imagine my life in Armenia
  - d. another option
- 

**10. What is your profession?**

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**11. If you had a chance, would you leave /country/ for a certain period of time to live somewhere else?**

<i>Yes</i>	1
<i>No</i>	0
<i>(Don't know)</i>	-1
<i>(Refuse to answer)</i>	-2

**12. If you had a chance, would you leave /country/ forever to live somewhere else?**

<i>Yes</i>	1
<i>No</i>	0
<i>(Don't know)</i>	-1
<i>(Refuse to answer)</i>	-2

**13. Generally how comfortable would you feel travelling to the country the language of which you didn't know? Would you feel**

<i>Extremely uncomfortable</i>	1
<i>Rather uncomfortable</i>	2
<i>Rather comfortable</i>	3
<i>Quite comfortable</i>	4
<i>(Don't know)</i>	-1
<i>(Refuse to answer)</i>	-2

**14. In what year were you born?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**15. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

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**Gender**

Male\_\_\_\_\_

Female\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your support!