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#### Assumptions on migration

## Potential Emigration of Youth From Georgia

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### *Summary*

After the break-up of the Soviet Union in the period of economic crisis labor emigration has developed with a high intensity in Georgia. Partially it took shape of educational and labor emigration. Through our study it was found that population from Georgia migrates mainly to the four major countries: Russia (62.3% of all emigrated), US (13.0%), Germany (7.2%) and Greece (5.8%). The share of the youth who combine work with study is high in the migratory streams directed to Germany and the US.

The study brought out the tight correlative ties between the intensity of educational migration and diasporas residing abroad. The number of Georgian students has noticeably increased in Germany and at present their number is still on the rise.

The sociological surveys conducted at higher educational institutions with the aim of studying potential educational migration found that most students and youth have a desire to get education in western European countries and in the US. The share of students and youth who tend to get education abroad gradually experiences a rise.

It was found that the part of potential emigrants has decided to stay abroad after getting education and find a job in their specialties. Their small share even desires to integrate with local population. In the case of mastering foreign languages it is easily achievable, since the Georgian students are well aware of western values and as our study suggests their adaptation period for labor and living abroad is short.

On the other hand youth's educational emigration from Georgia has many negative socio-demographic sides. Along with negative effect of "brain drain," youth's educational emigration entails acute depopulation process in Georgia. Low fertility rates and delayed marriages are common among migrants.

**Key-words:** *youth, potential emigration, employment, Georgia*

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## **I. Introduction**

1. After the dissolution of the USSR, Georgia became ethnically diverse country in the South Caucasus. In the modern world, it is so-called “migrant nation”. During the Soviet period, Georgians tended to remain in Georgia because it had pleasant climate and good geographical location. However, due to the socio-economic crises and ethno-political conflicts that started after the collapse of the USSR, Georgian citizens decided to flee to safer countries.

2. At the beginning of 90s, Georgia faced civil wars in Abkhazia and South Ossetia that turned many people into migrants. The central government has lost control over these territories and Russia-backed governments maintain control over them up until today.

3. Youth always were distinguished by their characteristic mobility in the normal migratory streams. It is generally considered that nearly two thirds of migratory streams are youth under age 30. This is a part of population who gets an education, starts or seeks a job, seeks own place for own career, creates families. Students and youth are the main part of migratory streams. Mechanical mobility of population above the 30-35 age group is much low. Those people who have built their own career, created their families and their children study at schools, they move from their residential places less frequently and they do this when there is such necessity. This is a stably mobile part of population. Then there is a slightly high share of pre-retirement-age and retirement-age population. This is conditioned by the fact that population of this category moves to live to their children inside and outside the country.

4. With the goal of studying social and demographic situation among students and youth in Georgia a wide-scale sociological research was conducted under our direct supervision. This research encompassed multifarious demographic problems. We paid particular attention to the study of students and youth’s potential migration. Accordingly, the respondents were asked the following questions: “which of your family members is gone abroad?” “if she/he is gone, in which country is she/he?” “how long has she/he been abroad?” “how is she/he treated in the recipient country?” “what problems did you solve with the material support of the relatives living abroad?” “do you have desire to leave Georgia permanently or temporarily?” “if yes, which country do you want to go to?” “if it is possible, indicate the reason for departure.”

5. The research showed that the socio-economic situation existing in our country, practically non-existence of employment sphere, uncertainty about their future compels a part of students and youth to emigrate abroad.

## **II. The Potential Emigration of Youth from Georgia**

6. After processing of the materials obtained through the sociological research we received rather interesting responses. The main results of the research are set out in this part of the work.

7. According to the surveyed respondents, out of their family members most frequently father goes abroad.

8. Since the direction and intensity of potential migration is to a certain extent depended on migrants' family members and diasporas living in various countries, in our research we studied distribution of respondents' family members by countries, their demographic characteristics, length of living abroad and their adaptation conditions.

9. Through the research it was found that respondents' family members basically were gone to the Russian Federation (see Table 1).

10. It should be noted that there was age differentiation in the directions of migratory streams. For example, respondents family members at or above the age of 40 were gone to the Russian Federation, population of young age was gone to Greece and Germany. The goal of the youth who were gone to the US and Germany along with employment is study too.

**Table 1. Distribution of departures by sex and age (%)**

	Russia	UUSA	Turkey	Greece	Germany	Other	Total (%)
<b>Males</b>							
15-29	44.3%	5.7.0%		33.3%	16.7%		100.0%
30-39	42.8%			28.6%	28.6%		100.0%
40 and over	100.0%			0.0%	0.0%		100.0%
Total	62.2%	1.0%		21.0%	15.8%		100.0%
<b>Females</b>							
15-29	29.4%	11.8%	5.9%	41.2%	11.7%		100.0%
30-39	66.6%	0.0%	6.6%	6.8%	20.0%		100.0%
40 and over	42.8%	9.5%	28.6%	0.0%	14.4%	4.7%	100.0%
Total	45.3%	7.5%	15.1%	15.1%	15.1%	1.9%	100.0%

11. The existence of large contingent of those who went to work to Russia can be explained by comparatively tight historical ties with Russia, better knowledge of Russian language compared with other foreign languages, a large number of relatives, friends and acquaintances, geographical proximity, cheapness of transportation and demand on labor force in the Russian labor market. However it should be noted that in recent years after the tense relations between Russia and Georgia and introduction of visa regime the barriers increased to labor force moving to Russia. This is a regressive phenomenon in the development of political and economic relations between two neighbor countries. Russia's tremendous natural and industrial potential will always create a wide spectrum of demand on labor force in the local labor market. Due to the significant deceleration in Russia's demographic development the experts seriously discuss about population permanent migration in the future from other countries, in the first place from the CIS to Russia.

12. Labor migration gradually becomes more intensive in the direction of Europe and the US. The researches conducted by us in recent years showed that the share of the US in the whole streams of migrants leaving Georgia is 14%, the share of Germany is 13% and Greece – 14%. The share of migrants leaving for Turkey significantly decreased. The main reason for this is that the Turkish labor markets are saturated with labor force. At that, labor force is cheap there as compared with the markets of western countries. One of the reasons for that is also the absence of knowledge of Turkish language. It should also be noted that in the first years of crisis existing in our country the migratory streams from Georgia to Turkey were rather of high intensity, then labor ties developed with the US and other western countries. The youth intensively started learning of English and German languages, small Georgian “colonies” appeared abroad and labor emigration shifted to the West. Employment abroad became more lucrative. At the same time one of the serious drawbacks of population emigration from Georgia is its illegality.

13. The size of migration flows to Greece is partially conditioned by the specificity of demand on labor force in the labor market of this country: in the secondary labor market there is a great demand on maids on condition of rather high remuneration. Through our research it was found that respondents’ family members at the age of 15-29 who were abroad 41.2% were in Greece.

14. Germany is a very attractive country to all kind of Georgian migrants. This can be a businessman, student who goes there for study; or a fortune seeker who are attracted to the welfare of this country. Comparatively a great number of those who go to Germany can be explained by the fact that many emigrants who stay in Germany for a certain period manage to move to other Schengen countries.

15. Thus, the main labor emigration country for Georgia’s population still remains Russia, though the share of western countries gradually grows noticeably. It should be noted here that new destination countries of immigration (Portugal, Spain, England, Ireland, Italy, Australia, Poland, Belgium) emerged in recent years for Georgian labor migratory streams, though their share is so far low.

16. At present the share of female emigrants in the total migratory streams is noticeably high. The increase of females share in migratory processes is also conditioned by the fact that the demand increased on female labor force (maids, nurses, cleaners and other low-skilled jobs in the service sphere), on the other hand Georgian women were forced to go abroad to make a living and maintain their families living in Georgia. Unfortunately, some of them fell prey to traffickers. Our research doesn’t provide information about this because the respondents don’t possess such kind of information or they don’t disclose such information about their family members’ employment in the sex industry or sex-related services because public opinion on prostitution is very negative in our country.

17. As our research showed, emigration from Georgia is rather steady. The respondents noted that 52.9% of their family members had been abroad for 5 and more years. The potential for return migration is weak so far because of economic stagnation in Georgia. Thus, it is not anticipated that intensity of population emigration from Georgia will decrease significantly in the foreseeable future. This is because of economic crisis in Georgia and it needs time to bring the country out of the crisis. In the respondents responses there are provided conditions in which their family members would return to Georgia but it is impossible to create such conditions in a short period of time. These conditions for their return are the following: highly paid employment, if their family members get prestigious jobs,

when they have earned the amount of money to purchase homes, when they have saved the amount of money to start their own business, if life conditions and living standards will improve in Georgia and so on.

Table 2. The length of staying abroad of the family members of interviewed respondents (%)

	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years and more
Total	8. 82%	16. 18%	13. 24%	8. 82	52. 94

18. Respondents' responses to the question how their family members adapted to the new labor conditions showed that the attitude towards 50% of their male family members is good, towards 31.3% – common, and 6.2% are treated badly. The attitude towards 48.0% of females is good and towards 52.0% - common.

Table 3. Attitude towards emigrants (%)

	Good	Normal	Bad	Other response	Total (%)
Males	50.0%	31.3%	6.2%	12.5%	100.0%
Females	48.0%	52.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

19. The degree of emigrants' adaptation to their activity and living environment, effectiveness of emigration, emigrants' socio-economic and legal situation significantly depends on emigration reasons, demographic, professional and qualification structures, ways of emigration and methods, its organizational forms, the length of stay abroad, the attitude towards them in recipient countries.

20. Through the research it was found that those who went abroad from Georgia had a high level of education. 73.7% of male and 66.7% of female migrants had higher and incomplete higher education. More ability of adaptation and contact to foreign environment, also, sharp reduction of the demand on specialists on the Georgian domestic market incur the growth of their territorial mobility and, generally, high emigrational potential.

21. In recipient countries there is complete irrelevance of profession to the employment. Unfortunately, through the research of the respondents' family members we couldn't get information on emigrants' education levels in different countries separately. We can assume that those who had higher education they went to remote foreign countries, and those who had comparatively lower education level – to Russia, Turkey, Greece and the CIS countries.

Table 4. Distribution of departures by sex and education (%)

		General secondary education	Specialized secondary education	Higher and incomplete higher education	Total (%)
1.	Males	5.3%	21.0%	73.7%	100.0%
2.	Females	3.7%	29.6%	66.7%	100.0%

22. Thus, Georgia's population emigration is characterized by sharp selectivity. The contingent of migrants who leave Georgia has high education potential that worsens our country's labor resources qualitatively. On the other hand there is no appropriate realization of emigrants' human capital in the international labor market.

23. Family members who are abroad provide financial support for their family members living in their home country. Through labor emigration many families in thousands receive subsistence in Georgia, and the country receives significant amount of foreign currency through the export of labor force. According to the estimates of experts and various sources Georgian emigrants sent home about 1.5 billion US dollars annually in recent years.

24. Through our research it was found that the most part of remittances sent home by labor emigrants was spent for the satisfaction of their family members' minimum requirements in Georgia. For example, 31.2% of those polled noted that through the financial support received from their relatives living abroad they resolved food and clothing problem, 24.6% - housing conditions; 18.0% did not manage to solve any problem.

Table 5. The share of the polled who resolved problems with the material support of relatives living abroad

	food and clothing problem	housing problems	healthcare	started business	Purchased a car and other stuff	not a single problem was solved	total (%)
Polled	31.2%	24.6%	13.1%	4.9%	8.2%	18.0%	100

25. Today in Georgia in the conditions of protracted economic crisis the importance of remittances sent by emigrants from abroad is invaluable. The remittances fill budget of family members living in Georgia up to subsistence minimum and even exceeds it. At that, it should be noted that labor emigrants satisfy their personal requirements on the ground.

26. Generally it is a known fact that family members who are abroad and the degree of their adaptation have significant influence on emigrational disposition of family members staying in their home country. Through our research it was found

that emigration potential of students and youth in Georgia is rather high and it coincides with the spectrum of actual migration directions.

27. Most of the males and females polled have a desire to go to the US or Germany permanently or temporarily (see Table 6).

28. Percentage distribution of males polled by the countries they want to go to is as follows: the US (16.8%), Greece (8.3%), Germany (33.3%), Turkey (8.3%), Russia (0.0%), other countries (33.3%); for females – Russia (10.2%), the US (29.8%), Germany (16.7%), Greece (12.0%), other countries (22.2%). It should be noted that the intensity of emigration towards Russia decreased and it increased towards the US. One of the reasons for this is the introduction of strict visa regime by Russia with Georgia.

Table 6. Distribution of the polled by the countries where they want to go to (%)

	Country	Permanently		Temporarily	
		males	females	males	females
1	Russia	0	10.2	5.3	6.5
2	USA	16.8	38.9	29.8	23.5
3	Turkey	8.3	0	0	0.65
4	Greece	8.3	12.0	5.3	7.8
5	Germany	33.3	16.7	25.5	29.4
6	Other	33.3	22.2	34.1	32.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

29. It should be noted that the share of those females who want to go to the US permanently is rather high. To my mind this is conditioned by the fact that there are many opportunities for women’s employment in this country, also by specificity of employment and high labor remuneration.

30. The percentage rates of those who want to go abroad temporarily show that the main immigration countries are the same – the US and Germany.

31. The main reasons for leaving Georgia among potential emigrants are also of economic nature. Through our research it was found that 35.3% of males and 31.6% of females want to go abroad with the goal of improving material conditions; 29.4% of males and 21.0% of females indicated education as the reason for going abroad.

32. Thus, both actual and potential emigration from Georgia are basically of forced nature and are associated with grave economic conditions existing in the country, employment problems and deterioration of living standards. If such conditions hold, the number of those who want to leave Georgia permanently will increase more.

Table 7. Distribution of the polled who wants to go abroad permanently or temporarily by the reasons of departure (%)

	Reason for departure	Permanently		Temporarily	
		males	females	males	females
1	Material conditions	35.3	31.6	26.1	8.2
2	Housing conditions	5.9	10.5	1.0	1.1
3	Political situation in the country	0	5.3	1.8	1.6
4	Education	29.4	21.0	29.7	41.8
5	Reunification with family members	0	0	0.9	3.3
6	To explore other countries	23.5	21.1	36.9	39.6
7	Other	5.9	10.5	3.6	4.4
	Total	100	100	100	100

33. The noted fact confirms that improvement of economic situation in Georgia, acceleration of development, formulation and realization of correct policy are the most immediate objectives. In parallel with this it is necessary to devise the strategy of Georgia's migration policy which must be based on the country's development and the requirements for better usage of population's labor potential.

34. The impact of students and youth's emigration on Georgia's demographic potential can be examined from both sides. On the one hand, fairly a great number of students and youth are at fertile age and during their being in emigration fertility rates among them are very low that significantly worsen population reproduction rates during the period of crisis in Georgia. On the other hand, the remittances sent by emigrants partially fill resources which are necessary for demographic growth and from this point of view they play even a positive role in reproduction process. Also, the knowledge gained by students and youth in the West and the values brought from western countries will fulfill a great role in future socio-economic and cultural development of Georgia.

35. Finally we can conclude that existing situation requires from the government to pursue an appropriate migration policy. For this it is necessary to conduct wide-scale and thorough study of population emigration. Its results will be a basis for establishment of the concrete mechanism for strategy and regulation of migration policy. One of the most important objectives is legalization of labor emigration and for this it is necessary to prepare legislative basis as well as organizational conditions; to formalize agreement between states on labor emigration that can increase effectiveness of migration and regulate not only population migration but it can solve many acute social problems.

### III. Conclusion

36. Emigration of students and youth from Georgia is associated with economic factors and the desire to get education abroad. This is confirmed through the concrete sociological research. According to this research the main motive for emigrants' departure abroad is the improvement of material conditions and study. It should be noted that male respondents didn't name political motive at all by now as a reason for departure abroad.

37. Family members of students and youth are basically in five countries. These countries are: Russia, Greece, the US, Turkey and Germany. As the analysis of potential emigration showed, emigration intensity gradually decreased towards Russia and increased towards Europe and the US. One of the reasons for this is also the strict visa regime with Georgia introduced by Russia. Realization of students and youth's potential emigration will accelerate the intensive depopulation process going in the country and will reduce fertility rates even more.

38. In the 1990s until the nationwide crisis in Georgia women's labor emigration was absolutely unacceptable for public opinion. And at present, economic hardship impelled a significant part of women to find the solution by employment outside their country. Feminization of migration in the West (*Castles S. Miller. The Age of Migration. International Population Movement in the Modern World. Washington 2000*) is considered as a new stage of the development of labor emigration and as one of the progressive signs of the achievement of gender equality.

39. The essential characteristic of population emigration from Georgia is particularly high level of education. Departure from the country of those who have high level of education significantly decrease labor potential of Georgia.

40. The research showed that the most part of emigrants had not experienced any serious problems in adapting to new social and living environment.

41. It was found that respondents' family members' emigration is rather steady and it is not anticipated that intensity of population emigration from Georgia will decrease significantly in the foreseeable future. Return migration potential is weak so far because of economic stagnation; Reintegration process is complicated even for the most of returnees.

42. It was found that emigrational potential of students and youth is rather high. Geography of their potential emigration almost coincides with the spectrum of their family members actual migration directions.

43. Students and youth's emigration abroad has both negative and positive side. Fairly a great number of students and youth are at fertile age and during their being in emigration fertility rates among them are very low that significantly worsen population reproduction rates in the country. The knowledge gained by students and youth in the West and the values brought from western countries will fulfill a great role in future socio-economic and cultural development of Georgia.

44. Through the research it was found that respondents resolved food, clothing and housing problems by the remittances sent by their family members. By selling the labor force on the international market Georgia receives a great amount of foreign currency from abroad which fulfills a great role in covering foreign deficit and it is basically consumed for satisfaction of the population's minimum requirements

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