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**DETERMINANTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION IN A  
SOCIETY UNDER TRANSITION. THE CASE OF GEORGIA, CAUCASUS\***

**Abstract**

Actual economic and political situation in the countries of former Soviet Union became a push factor for great masses of labor migrants that are basically considered as irregular in the countries of destination. The majority of them does not want to stay abroad permanently and stays there to improve the financial situation of their families. These migrants are characterized as well-educated, mobile, entering and leaving category of Georgian population and present the potential flows of irregular labor force from Georgia to Russia and other post-Soviet States, to Western European countries and USA. Presented paper is based on the results of a special survey of 1000 returned migrants, Georgian citizens, who had left for abroad during the period 1991-2002 with intention to work there and for moment of interview have returned back to Georgia. The survey has been conducted using a face-to-face interview with former migrants on the points of organization of trip abroad, problems of legalization of stay and working activity abroad, adaptation to new social environments, earning and remittances to families in Georgia and personal plans of former migrants and their family members for future migration.

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## **1. Introduction.**

Modern Georgia is quite a typical post-Soviet country seriously affected by population migration, especially emigration. After the collapse of Soviet Union the citizens of independent Georgia, as all other citizens of former Soviet Union, had the chance to travel abroad without any of the artificial impediments of the past. During the first three years of the nineties Georgia was confronted with a number of dramatic civil wars, which brought large flows of internal displacements and inflicted social-economic hardship on the whole population of Georgia. Country was almost at a standstill and the whole economy was paralyzed due to a pinching lack of energy resources and a highly unstable political situation. Many Georgian citizens decided to leave their country to look for a better life elsewhere and emigrated in a great numbers. A considerable part of these emigrants, especially in the first half of 1990s belonged to ethnic minorities, which preferred to settle in the countries of their ancestors, such as Russia, Greece, Israel, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Ethnic migration constituted the biggest flow of emigrants from Georgia in that time and was partly developed as a result of incorrect nationalities policy of the Georgian government at the beginning of 1990s.

A deep economic collapse of Georgia that has not been properly exhausted during first years of transition, revealed later in economic dislocation with the phenomena of inflation, corruption, unemployment and poverty contributed to the deep social crisis in the country. Due to the prolonged social-economic crisis and lack of realistic prospects for improvement in the near future many Georgians continued to migrate abroad for temporary or even permanent settlement, which caused the persistent intensive emigration flows of Georgians during whole period after independence. In the period between two population censuses, 1989 and 2002, due

to emigration Georgia has lost around one million of citizens that consisted a fifth of the total population.

In order to understand the peculiarity of migration situation in Georgia and its recent modification one must go far beyond presented statistics which, even if perfect, specify only one type of migration - i.e. foreign moves for long or permanent settlement. However, according to various evaluations, these long legal migrations are only the tip of a huge iceberg. Temporary moves abroad, the majority of which are caused by economic reasons, should be investigate because they are much more numerous, of a much bigger variety, include diverse groups of population, and react quicker to various socio-economic and political changes. Subsequently, their influence on the overall socio-economic development of the country is no less significant. Besides, in light of the decreasing possibilities permanent settled immigration to most developed countries, these temporary moves abroad, or as called by some scientists "incomplete migration", are replacing traditional migrational forms and will most likely be the dominant form of migration, at least in the near future.

Some positive results of international migration for Georgia can be attributed to the growth of remittances, which contribute to a certain economic stabilization (it is estimated that income from these remittances amounts to more than one billion US Dollars per annum). Besides working abroad permits Georgian emigrants to get acquainted with the values of Western culture, and ultimately will help to the introduction of the western style of life, adaptation to the principles of market economy.

But negative results of these migration flows definitely outbalance the positive ones. These results are revealed in the growing upsetting of the sex and age ratio of the population, worsening of the demographic situation in the country, the deformation of family structure, the

dramatic loss of intellectual resources and professional disqualification, the depopulation of certain regions of Georgia, growth of number of victims of trafficking. Besides, Georgian migrants have difficulties with adaptation to the social environment in unusual areas, there is open and latent tension between the local and migrant population, resulting sometimes in the violation of human rights.

Georgia is undergoing a process of serious transition. In such conditions temporary labor migration of the population became one of the active forms of socialization, adaptation and survival. The general understanding in society is that due to the present social-economic situation in the country in the near future many Georgian will be still intent to go abroad for working activity.

These great masses of labor migrants from Georgia are basically considered as irregular in the countries of destination. In spite of the fact that Georgian migrants have crossed the border observing due formal regulations of that time, their future activity and status, as a rule, do not meet the legal standards of the host country and do not correspond to the initially declared aims and duration of stay abroad. Migrants from Georgia often neglect the regulations envisaged by the legislation of the host country associated with the employment restrictions. In particular, the above implies that a part of migrants recently staying abroad, due to various reasons, is involved in various kinds of illegal activity. This, in its turn, leads to their exploitation and violation of human rights, on the one hand, and their criminal behaviors, on the other.

The majority of migrants does not want to stay abroad permanently and stays there to improve the financial situation of their families. These migrants are characterized as well-educated, mobile, entering and leaving category of Georgian population and present the

potential flows of irregular labor force from Georgia to Russia and other post-Soviet States, to Western European countries and USA.

On the other hand, the knowledge about this category of migrants, though increasing, is still very fragmentary in Georgia.

This article presents some of the main results of the special migration study, which was supported by Foundation for Migration, Population and Environment within the framework of the project "Research of illegal labor migration of Georgian Population".

The study aimed to investigate the regularities and define the peculiarities of temporary labor migration of Georgian citizens along with the important causes and consequences of these phenomena. 1000 former migrants, Georgian citizens, who had left for abroad during the period 1991-2002 with intention to work there and have returned now back to Georgia have been questioned. The survey has been conducted using face-to-face interviews with returned migrants on the matters of former migration, as issues of departure process, problems of legalization of staying and working activity abroad, migrants' remittances to own families and their nearest plans for future migration.

## **2. Methodology of the survey.**

It should be mentioned that there are no reliable estimations to the current size of irregular labor migration from Georgia as well as does not exist an enough knowledge about demographic and socio-economic profile of temporary migrants. So the construction of the sample's design represented a serious problem of our study. Realizing this in advance we opted for a combination of research methods for constructing of the sample of former migrants, Georgian citizens, being abroad for work in the period 1991-2002 and returned back to Georgia.

For our sample twelve administrative regions of the country were combined into three survey strata, Tbilisi (capital of Georgia), Other-urban area (periphery cities) and Rural area. The separate sampling was performed in each survey strata. In the constructing of sample areas by urban and rural settlements an equal representation of East and West parts of Georgia has been taken into account. Grouping of the settlements by East and West was done taking into account their geographical location. We identified Tbilisi that is located in the West Georgia as a separate survey strata, because the previous studies on migration have proved distinction of Georgian capital-city from any other region by high intensity of temporary labor migration that initially started in Tbilisi.

Constructing the list of our potential respondents, former migrants, we have referred initially to the database of the longitudinal representative Household Survey, which is conducting by State Department for Statistics of Georgia from the late 1996. Questionnaire of this survey composes information about absent family members with the identification of reason for leaving of household (as working abroad, study and etc.). In this way we have randomly chosen households where at list one member has left Georgia in 1997-2002 with the purpose of labor activity abroad. We have accepted the similar sample size for our three survey strata and have chosen in this way 120 households in each. We realized in advance that in processing of the next stage of sampling we will meet with the returnees being abroad also in the same period, 1997-2002, and our desire sample size was 1000 respondents.

At the next stage the interviewers have visited the households according to the chosen addresses for conducting an interview with former migrant. Of course, not in all cases interviewers were lucky to meet with potential respondents as well as these persons might be still abroad or might leave family by any reason including a next migration. But the purpose of

this visit was not only the conducting of interview. Visit of chosen households included a definite fieldwork's activity for achievement of desire sample size. Interviewers were requesting to ask respondents or their family members to refer several people in their neighboring who were abroad for labor in 1991-2002 and were now back in Georgia. The number of persons, who interviewers had to find additionally, fluctuated from one to three per each household's address and depended on the certain conditions, in the first instance whether an interview with returned migrant has been conducted on definite address or not.

This method of finding of respondents, based on the main criteria of questioning the labor migrants-returnees, represents a complex of different sampling procedures. It starts from random systematic selection of households and fixing of household's address as a starting point for the next stage of sampling. Than other respondents are searching with the help of already chosen respondents or their households' members with the basic criteria that our potential respondents should be migrants-returnees and they should live in the same sample cluster. The last procedure of selection involves a so called "snow-ball referral method" that is used often in such kind of studies where respondents cannot be clear identified and found. Such an approach is based on the supposition that potential subjects would be revealed among people who the randomly chosen respondents (or their households' members) know personally among their nearest neighbors or about whom they have heard from others neighbors as being the former migrants. Traditionally not-formal relations among close neighbors in Georgia makes this searching method quite convenient and acceptable.

Using this method 1056 persons were contacted, out of whom 960 were chosen for interviews, among them 320- in Tbilisi, 317- in the other cities and 323- in the villages.

Based on that approach we are confident that the numbers of returned migrants interviewed have formed a sufficient basis for drawing the relevant conclusions that actually reflect the reality and potentials of irregular migration flows from Georgia.

### 3. Profile of irregular migrants

We shall start an analysis of migration determinants operating at the individual level with the testing of a basic hypothesis concerning the influence of principal demographic and social characteristics. We will pursue that task by conducting an analysis of the relevant distributions of labor migrants and by making a comparison between two categories of our respondents: migrants who have been at the territory of the former Soviet Union (now *New Independent States*, NIS), so called "*near abroad*" and those who have been for labor migration in all other countries, so called "*far abroad*", which consisted in our case Western European countries, Israel, USA, Turkey and Greece. The data contained in Table1 will serve as a basis for our conclusions concerning the diversity in profiles of migrants, Georgian citizens, were for temporary labor abroad.

**Table1.** Profile of the total sample of returned migrants, percentages (n=960) and a comparison between the profile of migrants who have been for labor at the NIS - territory (n=320) and those who have been far abroad (n=640)

Period of migration	Total sample	NIS-territory	Far abroad
<b>SEX</b>			
Male	50.7	70.3	40.6
Female	49.3	29.7	59.4
<b>AGE</b>			
Under 20	0.2	0.0	0.2
20-29	25.4	11.8	32.4
30-39	34.5	40.1	31.6
40-49	24.4	33.0	20.0
50-59	11.4	11.3	11.4
60-69	3.9	3.3	4.1
70 and more	0.3	0.5	0.2
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>			

Never married	27.1	19.8	30.9
Married	60.8	70.8	55.7
Widowed	4.7	5.2	4.4
Divorced	7.4	4.2	9.0
<b>CHILDREN</b>			
Yes	57.9	64.6	54.5
No	42.1	35.4	45.5
<b>EDUCATION</b>			
Secondary general or below	14.8	17.5	13.4
Secondary professional	24.2	26.4	23.1
High incomplete	6.3	4.2	7.3
High complete	54.7	51.9	56.2
<b>ECONOMIC STATUS</b>			
High	9.3	6.1	10.9
Average	67.4	66.0	68.1
Low	23.3	27.8	20.9

Most of the labor migrants are married people (60.8%) with children; the gender composition of migrants is almost similarly represented by both sexes (50.7% male and 49.3% female). At the same time women prevail among irregular migrants to the far abroad and men - among migrants to NIS.

Age seems to be a highly migration-selective factor despite country of destination: overall the majority of migrants (84.3 %) are in the best age from the point of view of labor efficiency - between 20 and 50 years. The age composition of the migrants fairly young among migrants to far abroad, those at age 20-29 make up to a third of the total.

As a matter of fact while young well educated Georgian women are more highly prone to migration in the Western European countries and USA, to the NIS - territory are coming for work mainly married less educated men in the age around 40 years. This may be explained by the peculiarities of labor markets in the recipient countries and different demands to employers far and near abroad. The average age of migrants consists 39.8 year for respondents who have been for labor at the NIS - territory and 36.7 - for those migrants who have been for labor far abroad.

As the survey data showed, for the moment of the interview people's evaluation of economic situation in their family is rather pessimistic; less than 10% of interviewed declared that they are spending money without big concern and easily satisfy every day needs, each forth respondent told that his family's income is enough only for food or even not enough for feeding, the rest of interviewed evaluated the financial status of their families as satisfactory.

Generally speaking, demographic characteristics of irregular labor migrants from Georgia are typical for any kind of migration, whereas their social characteristics are not. The study showed, that only 15% of migrants have the less than secondary level of education, over 55% of the labor migrants have university degree and almost 25% more- a college degree. The migrants-women are likely to be more educated than men. So, the current irregular migrants from Georgia have an extremely high level of education. In most cases labor migration does not require such high education and can therefore be characterized as a certain type of "temporary brain waste". Nevertheless, this "brain waste" frequently increases, sometimes significantly, a family's income and can be characterized as typical behavior of a population during a crisis situation.

#### **4. The pattern of trips of irregular migrants abroad.**

The pattern of trips of Georgian irregular migrants will be analyzed in the three time periods we have distinguished: 1991-1994, 1995-1998 and 1999-2002. These time periods of the equal length are distinctive from the point of view of political and socio-economic situation in Georgia.

First period under consideration is the period when country was involved in the three civil wars, including two ethno territorial conflicts. The huge mass of non-Georgian by ethnicity population has left the country in that time, but the share of temporary labor migrants

among them was comparably less. Those who go for temporary labor abroad in that time were mainly oriented to the Russia and neighboring Turkey. Open borders inside of NIS-territory and easier visa regime with Turkey, as well as possibility to reach these countries with reasonable travel expenses, using ground transportation means, supported the moves of Georgian citizens to the neighboring countries.

Economic collapse and disorientation of the state enterprises in Georgia in the period of shifting from planned to market economy, depreciation of the staff salaries and increased unemployment have caused the big flows of labor migrants in the next periods under consideration. In these flows was involved already whole Georgian population despite of ethnicity. The scales of temporary migration were increasing from year to year and labor migration became one of the active economic determinants of the country.

Economic factors are always among the main things that shape the development of international migration. The influence of economic factors increases even more during transitional or crisis period. Georgia is no exception, and this is especially relevant if temporary trips abroad are considered.

**Table 2.** Proportional distribution of labor migrants by period of migration and main countries of destination (in percentage)

Period of migration	Total	NIS-territory	Far abroad	Among them			
				USA	Greece	Germany	Turkey
1991-1994	13.9	25.2	7.8	4.3	8.5	5.8	17.5
1995-1998	38.8	36.6	40.0	47.3	46.1	30.2	32.5
1999-2002	47.3	38.2	52.1	48.4	45.4	64.0	50.0

Our survey showed that intensity of irregular labor migration Georgian citizens is increasing: almost half of movies of Georgian labor migrants for the whole period under

consideration is related to the last 3 years. The same tendency is confirmed also by other migration studies in Georgia.

As far as the range of countries is concerned for various periods, the moves of Georgian migrants became significantly more frequent than before in USA and Germany, the intensity of moves is also higher now than at the beginning of 1990s for Greece. Active visiting of Western European countries and USA by Georgians started in the second half of 1990s. The most attractive countries for Georgian citizens now are Greece, Germany, USA and Turkey. Russia and territories of the other former Soviet republics are still attractive for Georgian migrants, but those, who worked in Russia, are presented in our study by the less quantity. It seems that Georgian citizens working in Russia stay there for very long period of time, visit families in Georgia for short trip and are hardly associated in society and family with the image of temporary labor migrant.

In generally more than half of irregular migrants stayed abroad for period more than 1 year, each fifth migrant have been there during three years or more; only 6% of interviewed migrants returned to Georgia in the period less than 6 month. Taking into account that tourist visas issuing by foreign embassies in Georgia do not exceed as a rule the period of 3 months, the majority of Georgian migrants overstay abroad. They neglect the regulations envisaged by the legislation of the host country associated with the duration of stay as well as employment's restrictions.

##### **5. Organization of departure of irregular migrants and journey arrangements.**

As indicated before with the exception of people traveling to Turkey and Russia (until December 2000 when visa regime has been accepted), Georgian citizens need a visa for traveling abroad.

According to our survey almost half of returned migrants (46%) managed to arrange themselves documents required by foreign consulate offices for issue of tourist visa. The definite factor in these cases is that using networks of Georgians abroad people wishing to migrate obtain an original invitation from citizen of recipient country. Other interviewed had to find any other solution for obtaining a foreign visa, as pursuing of tourist trip abroad, joining to the sport delegation of any other formal groups and etc. 13% of migrants turned to a mediator, which can be an acquaintance, but most likely a visa broker advertising in the media or through social networks.

During the interview respondents were asked to identify how much did it cost for them to arrange visit abroad. Our survey confirmed that there is a certain pattern in the prices for travel per destination countries and by different journey arrangements. While the average costs of journey for total sample of migrants who arranged the trip by themselves (having an original invitation of foreign citizen) consisted 844,1 US\$, those, who applied to mediators for arrangements of travel documents, paid almost in 1.5 more (1216.7 US\$); travel costs of labor migrants reached a foreign country by tourist trip consisted 1049.6 US\$ in average.

**Table 3.** Proportional distribution of migrants by the prices that have been paid for the travel arrangements (in percentage)

Sum in US\$	Total sample	NIS-territory	Far abroad	Among them			
				USA	Greece	Germany	Turkey
Up to 500	49.9	95.3	26.5	2.4	31.8	41.4	81.3
500-1000	18.5	2.8	26.5	21.7	22.3	34.3	18.7
1000-1500	11.1	0.9	16.3	21.7	14.2	12.9	0.0
1500-2000	9.8	0.0	14.8	28.9	11.5	11.4	0.0
2000-5000	3.9	0.0	5.8	21.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
5000 and more	0.3	0.0	0.5	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenses have been supported by someone else	6.5	1.0	9.6	1.2	20.2	0.0	0.0

North America is the most expensive destination for Georgian migrants. This cannot be explained only by more expensive plain tickets, because a flight tickets to USA is probably only about of US\$ 500 more expensive than to any destination in Western Europe. It seems that in case of USA many applicants turn for help to mediators for having more chances to receive a positive decision during interview in American Embassy that officially cost in Georgia 100 US\$ despite of its outcome.

In generally, aside from USA, the migrants' travel expenses depend very much on the transportation costs. Almost 30% of interviewed spent for travel arrangements between 500 and 1500 US\$, that is quite a big amount for Georgians. Half of the former migrants in the total sample spent less than 500 US\$ for organizing of trip. Majority of them were for labor in the neighboring to Georgia countries, which is easy to reach by ground transportation means: Russia (65%), Greece (15%) and Turkey (9%). At the same time one fifth of migrants, who have been in USA, spent the sun between two and five thousands dollars for the travel arrangements.

It is not surprised that migrants made up a big expenses, sometimes have been fallen into debt for organizing a trip, are very keen to stay abroad in case of finding the appropriate work as long as possible. Almost half of former migrants told during the interview that already initially planned to be abroad at least 1 year, over 60% of migrants actually stayed abroad between one and three years and 18 % more- were in foreign country during period longer than 3 years. In average Georgian labor migrants stay abroad around two years' period.

In our study we tried to define an asylum migration of Georgia citizens posing to the former migrants the question whether person had an intention of applying for status of refugee

in the country of destination. According to our findings, every tenth interviewed applied for asylum, 25% among them succeeded the goal.

It should be mentioned once again that asylum and permanent residence abroad seems not to be a main goal of Georgian labor migrants, they go abroad for earn some money. According to the our survey's results 12.5% of those, who applied for asylum, did not wait for the official decision on their asylum claim and returned back to Georgia. However, while being abroad many Georgian citizens try to obtain a legitimate basis for overstay in the economically best safe country. They apply for asylums in the country that can offer best economic and social condition for the refugees and sometimes even are granted by desired status make decision to return in Georgia after succeeding the goal of stay abroad. As a matter of fact is that according to our survey the majority of respondents (78%) continued to stay in the foreign country although their asylum application has been rejected.

Our survey confirmed that economic considerations are dominant among irregular migrants from Georgia. Only comparable big profits along with very poor employment opportunities in Georgia force people to continue migrating. Respondents were asked during the interview where would they prefer to live permanently, in Georgia or abroad, if suppose that economic situation in Georgia is better. The absolute majority (up to 90%) of respondents indicated Georgia.

#### **6. Employment abroad: good luck or heavy fate?**

Hardly without any exception irregular migrants from Georgia go abroad to find a job. This was a prime motivation of migration for well over total sample of persons interviewed. Many people in Georgia nowadays find it hard to secure a sufficient income at the homeland and resort to migration to earn additional money. According to our findings a half of former

migrants decided to migrate because that were not able to ensure the daily demands of own family, 35,2% more were motivated to migrate by the wish of earn additional income.

Georgian migrants going abroad for work usually do not rely on employment mediation, but rely instead on their own not-formal contacts and networks abroad such as friends, relatives and family members. Two-third of our respondents found a job abroad with a help of acquaintances settled there earlier, 21% found it by themselves and only less than 10% of Georgian migrants found a job threw intermediate firm in Georgia or abroad. In the absent of official mechanisms for legal organization of labor migration of Georgian citizens abroad these networks replace them.

The migration networks are among the most important determinants influencing the direction and intensity of trips made abroad. Networks significantly diminish the cost of migration, providing with the information and support, consequently minimizing the risk involved. With the networks growing, they may become an independent factor of international movements.

Currently the realization of person's desire to work abroad mainly depends on his/her own efforts, relationships at the destination, support mechanisms, networks, etc. The possibilities for organized, legal migration for the purpose of work are rather poor in Georgia, and may remain such for a long time. At the same time the flows of irregular labor migrants from Georgia increase by years. This is the process that does not comprise only Georgians, but involves also the labor markets of recipient countries. It seems that foreign employers are much more interested in a cheap, illegal labor force, in order to avoid both, paying taxes and taking any responsibility in case of any accident.

One of the basic criteria to distinguish between trafficking and other types of irregular migration is whether coercion, deception and labor exploitation took place. Our study was not focused on the revealing of the victims of trafficking among Georgian migrants, but we have included in our interviews some questions providing insight of the labor activity of Georgian irregular migrants abroad.

According to our survey, most of the Georgian migrants (73%) did not hold an official contract with their employer. In a very few cases (2%) the contract was drawn up, but formally on the other person. So two thirds of Georgian migrants worked abroad illegally.

Illegal status of Georgian migrants abroad makes enough preconditions for pressure from the different administrative bodies. According to our survey 14% of former migrants whilst were abroad on the more or less regular base were paying some money (except taxes) to representatives of the local administrations or police. These facts were mainly pronounced by the migrants returned from Russia and other NIS-countries, who also told us that law enforcing bodies and criminals oppress many of illegal migrants in these countries.

Majority of former migrants declared during the interview that they were discriminated by employers in the matters of work compensation. Every tenth respondent mentioned that when he has been working abroad he had at least one or two cases, when he did not receive the compensation for performed work or received less amount of money than was promised.

Besides, respondents were required to answer on the question: "Approximately how more did the employer pay to the local citizens for the same kind of job?" Obtained information is presented in the table below.

**Table 4.** The proportional distribution of respondents by comparison between their earnings and salary of local citizens for the same kind of work (in percentage)

Local citizen was paid for similar work:	Total	NIS-territory	Far abroad	Men	Women
The same amount I was paid	39.9	90.0	14.0	51.1	28.3
1,5 time more, than me	17.3	4.7	23.8	12.7	22.0
2 times more	22.1	3.3	31.9	17.8	26.6
3 times more	14.2	0.9	21.1	14.3	14.1
4 times or even more	6.5	0.9	9.3	4.1	8.9

Our study showed that irregular migrants are discriminated by employers in the matters of compensation for work, especially those who were for labor in the Western European countries and USA. This problem almost did not pronounce among the migrants returned from NIS-territory where 90% of Georgian migrants had the same salary as local citizens for the similar work. But among those, who were for labor far abroad, only 14% mentioned that had there the proper salary. Aside from Russia and other NIS-countries, the least discrimination in the earnings observes among Georgian labor migrants in USA: the biggest number of interviewed former migrants mentioned that were in the similar with local citizens positions regarding work compensation. At the same time for those, who were discriminated abroad in the wages, the gap in the earnings appeared to be the highest in USA: a fifths of female respondents had salary in 4 times less and 35% of males earned 3 times less than local citizens for the same kind of work. In generally, women are almost twice more likely to be discriminated in the compensation of work than men. Gender differences in discrimination of Georgian migrants concerns especially Germany and USA. It is interesting that according to our findings Georgian women, worked in Turkey, were luckier in the compensation of work than men; almost fifth of them responded that had the proper compensation abroad while nobody among men-respondents mentioned that had in Turkey the similar salary as local citizens.

In generally North America is the most attractive country for Georgian migrants due to the highest level of earnings there. According to our survey Georgian migrants in USA earned in average 1410,4 US\$ per month. Even compare with Germany (736 USD\$) it is almost twice more and significantly higher that in Greece (582,1 US\$) and Turkey (457,6 US\$). The monthly earnings in Russia and other countries of NIS-territory are around 607 US\$ per month. It is true that the costs of living also differ by countries, but advantages of some destinations for labor migrants from Georgia are obvious.

Consider the gender differences in the earnings one may be noted that they are the most significant for migrants being for work at the NIS- territory: 662 US\$ for men and 471US\$- for women. But we should keep in mind an evident gender-distinctive employment structure on this territory that causes the gaps in the salaries among men and women: male migrants from Georgia in Russia are engaged mainly in own business activity or perform contractual work that profit more than auxiliary work activities of Georgian women on CIS territory.

Analyzing the incomes of Georgian migrants by some social characteristics of respondents, we can conclude that factor of education became significant only in the sample of migrants being far abroad: more educated migrants earned there more, than less educated; former migrants from Tbilisi (capital-city) earned abroad most of all, migrants from other cities earned more than those from rural area. It seems that ability of better adaptation to a new social environments abroad including the possibility to find a well-paid job, are closely related to the social status of respondents. While at the NIS-territory married migrants had a highest level of earnings, in the sample of former migrants from far abroad the better incomes were found among the divorced respondents.

**Table 5.** Average size of monthly earnings of Georgian migrants by their level of education and marital status (in US\$)

	Total	NIS-territory	Far abroad
<b>LEVEL OF EDUCATION</b>			
Secondary general or below	590.6	650.0	544.4
Secondary professional	639.9	556.9	691.0
High incomplete	722.4	542.9	779.5
High complete	841.6	630.4	947.8
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>			
Never married	734.1	584.6	796.8
Married	744.2	638.2	814.7
Widowed	619.6	500.0	711.5
Divorced	861.4	310.0	953.3

Our survey has established the spectrum of employment of Georgian labor migrants that appeared to be very different at the NIS-territory and in the countries of far abroad.

**Table 6.** Proportional distribution of migrants by sphere of employment (in percentage)

Sectors	Total	NIS-territory	Far abroad	Men	Women
Agricultural works	6.6	1.4	9.2	6.6	6.5
Building/construction works	19.6	28.3	15.1	37.7	1.0
Babysitter of housekeeper	25.0	1.9	37.0	0.9	49.8
Auxiliary staff in service sector	16.2	11.8	18.5	12.0	20.5
Trade or small business	18.9	44.8	5.6	25.9	11.7
Work at the factory	4.5	2.8	5.4	6.0	2.9
Other work	8.2	8.5	8.0	10.1	6.2
Did not have a work	1.0	0.5	1.2	0.6	1.3

Among the returned migrants that have been worked in Russia or other countries of CIS-territory prevails a business activity that comprises also a trade. For sure it is supported by social networks of Georgians in this sector that has established already before the dissolution of former Soviet Union. The recent labor migration flows from Georgia to these countries are connected with the employment of migrants on building or contractual works. The employment of Georgians in Western European countries and USA are mainly connected with the domestic

works and auxiliary activities. The share of people employed far abroad in the domestic job (as nurses, nannies, housekeepers, etc.) consists 37% of total number of migrants and this sphere is prevailing among all others. The peculiarities of labor markets near and far abroad actually create the gender differences in labor migration flows from Georgia. While to the CIS-territories go for labor migration mainly men (share of men among former migrant in Russia exceeds 70%), Georgian women are keener to migrate far abroad (up to 60% of respondents). In general, feminization of transnational migration in the world in the recent period has been prompted by rising global demands for labor in specific female-type domestic jobs and occupations.

On the base of our study we have identified some interesting features of labor activity of Georgian migrants in different countries. Because of the system the professional education that was similar on the whole post-Soviet territory and knowledge of Russian language migrants from Georgia can easier satisfy labor market of Russia and manage to get a more qualified work there than that of far abroad. On the background of general prevalence of migrants on the domestic jobs in all countries far abroad with exception of Turkey, there are also significant number of migrants from Georgia who worked as an auxiliary staff in the service sector in Germany (33%) and Israel (27%). In Greece and Turkey many Georgian migrants (17% and 22%) worked at the building works. At the same time, the dominant sector of employment of Georgians in Greece, after domestic works, is an agricultural sector in which were employed a fifth of those being in Greece. In spite that trade and business are the dominant spheres of labor activity of Georgians at the NIS-territory, this sector seems to be attractive also for those who were in Turkey and Israel (25% and 13% accordingly). Our study

found that there are some people (up to 7% in Greece and Israel) who while being abroad were employed there at the factories.

The majority (65%) of Georgian migrants abroad had a stable work, 31% more managed to find a work for some period (more than 1 month). In spite of fact that migrants are mainly involved in the less-qualified work, the employment abroad require a knowledge of foreign language; a fifth of migrants declared during the interview that were refused by employer due to the insufficient knowledge of language.

One of the most striking features of the labor migration from Georgia is a high level of education and professional qualification of irregular migrants. The work that labor migrants perform abroad actually does not require such type of employee. During our survey only a quarter of respondents mentioned that their labor activity abroad corresponded to their professional qualification.

It should be mentioned that going abroad for work requires from person a necessity to be well informed in the foreign labor market's situation, to posses foreign language's skills and to be flexible in terms of territorial mobility. The well-educated stratum of Georgian society is the social community that meets all these requirements. These people have a high ability to establish contacts in foreign country and adapt the new environments. But on the other hand, only unrealized potentials of this category of population in own country push Georgians to go abroad for seeking a job that mainly does not correspond their previous labor activity in homeland. At the same time, despite of high level of education Georgians are often not adequately qualified to work in particular field in foreign country. Besides illegal status of labor migrants abroad as well as restricted range of available working places create a particular requirements of employers at the non-prestige and badly-paid professions. As it was mentioned

before, irregular labor migration of Georgian citizens can be characterized as a certain type of "temporary brain waste", as a typical behavior of a population during a crisis situation. Nevertheless, for many Georgians employment abroad, even unskilled, will continue to be the best possibility to earn money for years to come and therefore an irregular labor migration will most probably dominate in the migration flows from Georgia in future also. So, it is expected that all these perspectives will lead to a further depreciation of Georgian human capita in the long run.

#### **7. Remittances to Georgia. Consequences of labor migration.**

Our survey has confirmed that the most important motivation of Georgian citizens, who migrate, is related to the socio-economic conditions in Georgia and the need to secure a sufficient income by working abroad. Economic migrants as a rule support their families in own countries and regularly send them some money. Remittances or money, that migrant earn working abroad and then send back to their countries of origin, are among the most visible impacts of the migration phenomenon for migrants-sending countries. Donor countries as a result of export of labor receive a significant amount of hard currency that plays a significant role for countries being in crisis situation.

According to our survey, majority of Georgian migrants (72%) while being abroad were helping their families in Georgia. During our interviews we have asked to former migrants to estimate how much in average per month by money and goods were they sending to the family in Georgia with money and goods. The results of our questioning are presented below.

**Table 7.** Proportional distribution of Georgian migrants by monthly size of remittances to own families (in percentage)

Sum in US\$	Total	NIS-territory	Far abroad	Men	Women
Up to 100	25.0	29.2	22.9	26.6	23.5
100-200	23.1	21.2	24.1	22.8	23.5
200-300	10.0	9.4	10.2	11.1	8.8
300-400	4.3	3.3	4.9	3.8	4.9
400-500	3.7	3.3	3.9	3.2	4.2
500 and more	3.4	1.9	4.1	3.5	3.3

The average amount of remittances varies according to the different countries. The biggest remittances Georgian migrants were sending from USA (298 US\$ per month in average), than is coming Turkey (194 US\$) and Germany (178 US\$). The average size of remittances of Georgian migrants being on CIS-territory consisted 176 US\$.

It is clear that the amounts of remittances are related to the incomes of migrants abroad. Except of Turkey, countries where Georgian migrants enjoy higher salaries are in the list of countries where migrants extended greater financial support to the household members. At the same time, the living costs in the countries of destination also play a significant role in the migrants' remittances. Turkey is exactly such a case where, in spite of comparably low salaries, living costs are less and Georgian migrants manage to help more significantly to family's members.

The average amount of remittances according to our survey composed 176 US\$ per month for total sample of migrants, who were sending money to their families in Georgia. This is a sum that may provide families in Georgia with the bare subsistence only. But these remittances allow to many families in Georgia to survive on the background of massive unemployment and lowest level of local incomes in the country.

In the scientific literature on migration the issues of gender differences in migrants' remittances are under a wide discussions. Actually, our study did not show any significant differences in remittances between male and female migrants among Georgians. The average amount of remittances composed by our study 178.2 US\$ for women and 190.2 US\$ for men. Under the assumption that living costs abroad are similar for men and women, the existing gender difference in remittances might be attributed to the minor (with an exception of Russia) gap in earnings between men and women. In generally, while Georgian men send back to the households about 23% of their earnings abroad, women - 26%.

Aside from the systematic supporting of families in Georgia, labor migrants try to make some saving in the period of migration. Our study revealed many cases when migrants did not send money to families in Georgia because preferred to save them and bring to Georgia when will be back. According to our survey, 63% of interviewed managed to make savings while being abroad.

During our interviews we have asked to former migrants, at what extent the economic position of their families has improved thanks to their migration. According to our finding, 65% of former migrants have improved an economic position of their families thanks to migration and the half of them has managed to improve it a lot.

It seems that in many present cases, migration becomes the main activity and the main source of income for a significant portion of the Georgian population. Taking into consideration that up to 7-8% of households in Georgia currently have at least one member being abroad for migration, it is obvious that economic consequences of labor migration are extremely significant and they cannot be neglected in the analysis of social and economic situation of Georgia.

## **8. Adaptation of migrants to the environments abroad, incentives for next migration.**

Adaptation of migrants to the new social environments in the country of destination depends on many external circumstances and is not easy for labor migrants from Georgia. According our survey, only 26% of returned migrants indicated during the interview that have definitely liked local lifestyle and traditions in the country of destination, approximately the same number of Georgian migrants have not liked them at all, the rest of interviewed liked foreign lifestyle more or less. Being abroad Georgian migrants had contacts with local people at the work as well as in neighboring and social environments. Half of respondents indicated that being abroad they had friendly relations with some of the local citizens and 17% mentioned that their relations with local citizens were only in frame of business contacts.

As well as labor migrants go abroad for making a money, as a rule, they try do not waste them. We were asking during interview our respondents how did they spend a free time abroad. Less than 20% of interviewed mentioned that go somewhere to enjoy, visit in a free time bars, discos and restaurants; 26% of interviewed mentioned that felt fatigue after the work and preferred to have a rest at home in any free time. More than half of former migrants spent a free time at the one's home together with friends, they did not go somewhere because wanted to save money.

Analyzing the issues of adaptation of Georgian labor migrants abroad we would like to present the obtained information about specific conditions named by former migrants as a reasons prompted them to return in Georgia. One is surprising, that among these reasons the problems connected to their illegal status abroad are among the least important; only 10% of interviewed mentioned that problems connected to their overstay abroad prompted them to return.

**Table 8.** Proportional distribution of migrants according to the named reason of returning to Georgia (in percentage)

	Total	NIS-territory	Far abroad	Men	Women
Succeeding the goal of the stay abroad	19.2	13.7	22.1	14.8	23.8
Did not want anymore to stay abroad	12.0	11.7	12.2	11.5	12.6
Did not want to stay because of bad luck	15.7	23.4	11.7	19.0	12.2
Problems in the family in Georgia	16.9	18.5	16.0	15.4	18.4
By the request of family	20.5	23.4	19.0	21.6	19.4
Troubles with local authorities concerning duration of the stay	7.5	3.4	9.6	8.9	6.1
Deportation	2.5	0	3.8	3.3	1.7
Other	5.7	5.9	5.6	5.6	5.8

Our survey showed that only a fifth of Georgian migrants has returned to homeland after the succeeding a goal of stay abroad. The rest of migrants returned to Georgia due to the other specific conditions, as problems of family in Georgia or not wishing to stay abroad anymore.

The decision of migrate is formed by person under the influence of specific external circumstances; by the individuals, migration is perceived as a best solution to the existing problems. Thus migration is undertaken as an answer to the problems, with some specific goals in mind: as we know from the previous chapters, in case of our study, the goal is almost exclusively an economic one. However, the actual consequences of migration may be quite different from what people could predict or expect. Taking into account our findings revealed that migrants stay abroad even longer that predicted, we may assume that if gainful employment is found by Georgian migrant, any other circumstances including any kind of discrimination, practically do not play significant role while a definite period of migration is not over.

Analyzing the consequences of irregular labor migration the most important question is whether migration, despite its consequences, creates incentives for next migrants and next

migration for former migrants. Obviously, returned migrants make for the next one the way abroad easier and on the other side former migrants often feel by themselves an aspiration to go abroad again. Returned to own family after some time (by our study in average in 2 years) they realize that neither they themselves, nor their environments are the same as before.

During our interviews we were asking for our respondents to provide us with some information about the family members that are going to leave Georgia in the nearest six months (including themselves). Our survey showed that a fifth of former migrants plan to go abroad again in the nearest 6 months; 10% more mentioned during the interview that other family members plan to go abroad and around 3 % - that whole family is leaving Georgia in the nearest six months.

Thus, in whole more than a third of interviewed mentioned that in the nearest six month at least one member of their family is leaving Georgia, over 75% of potential migrants go abroad temporary for work. It should be mentioned that according to the migration surveys, based on the universal sample of Georgian households, the share of families where at least one person is going abroad in the nearest six months does not exceed 4%.

Thus, according to our findings, a previous migration experience is a significant factor for future migration, positively correlating with the incentive to migrate not former migrants only but also their family members. Families that have at least one former migrant are more likely to be involved in migratory processes again; the presence of the "experienced" migrant is a factor influencing on migration decision taken by Georgians households and positively increases the chances for other household members to migrate. So, migratory experience cumulated *via* trips made by various household members, may be considered not only as a

consequence of migration, but also as an important determinant of potential labor migration from Georgia.

### **Conclusions.**

In this paper we tried to examine the main determinants and consequences of irregular labor migration in Georgia during the recent decade after the dissolution of Soviet Union.

Our main objectives were to present the demographic and socio-economic profiles of labor migrants, to discuss the problems of adaptation and working activity of Georgians abroad, to evaluate the earning and remittances of labor migrants and to identify the potential scales of future migration in Georgia. The research focused on migrants-returnees being abroad in the period of 1991-2002.

As a matter of fact is that labor migration of Georgians is basically considered as irregular in the countries of destination. Despite migrants cross a border observing due formal regulations of that time, their future activity and status, as a rule, do not meet the legal standards of the host country and do not correspond to the initially declared aims and duration of the stay abroad.

Our research revealed that Georgians as a rule overstay abroad trying to succeed in gainful work and making money. Henceforth, migrants neglect the regulations envisaged by the legislation of the host country associated with the employment restrictions. Because of that they mainly work abroad without any official contract with employer. Illegal status of Georgian migrants creates enough preconditions for pressure on them. Data showed that irregular migrants are discriminated by employers in the matters of compensation for job and social security at the work.

Our research has shown that demographic profile of irregular labor migrants is typical for any kind of migration, whereas their social characteristics are not. As in other donor countries, labor migration of Georgians involves fairly young population with the high ability to work. But the social status of Georgian migrants is very high and clearly indicates the situation typical for the societies being in a crisis situation. In irregular migration flows prevails a mobile, flexible and well-educated category of population with the enough skills of foreign languages. These people go abroad for working at the unqualified and not-prestige job.

While at the beginning of 1990s Georgians used to go for work mainly to the neighboring Russia and Turkey, later on they have expended the geographical boundaries of temporary moves and turned to the Western European countries and USA also. The most recent migration flows from Georgia are mainly oriented to Greece, Germany, USA and Turkey.

According to our study North America seems to be the most attractive country for Georgian migrants due to the highest level of earnings there that are twice more than for example in Germany and even more significantly higher than in any other foreign country. But it is true that the financial expenses of migrants for arrangement of trip to USA are also the biggest.

Contrary to popular belief and to scattered arguments in the literature that men send more money to families than women the analysis reported here reveals that there are not significant differences in migrants' remittances between Georgian men and women. That is, since men are making more money than women (and under the assumption that expenses are roughly equal for the two gender groups), men are able to send larger portions of their earnings to the household, and hence, to contribute more than women to the income of the household in

Georgia. Our study showed that Georgian men were sending to their families about 23% of their earnings abroad and women - 26%.

The average amount of remittances according to our survey composed 176 US\$ per month for the total sample of migrants supporting their families in Georgia. This is a sum that may provide families in Georgia with the bare subsistence only. But these remittances allowed to many families in Georgia to survive in the conditions of massive unemployment and lowest level of local incomes in the country. Indeed, an increasing number of Georgian households are becoming heavily dependent on the flows of migrants' remittances for economic survival. But on the other hand, a job that is performed by Georgian migrants abroad mainly does not correspond to their level of education and previous labor activity in homeland. Only unrealized potentials of Georgians in own country push people to go abroad for temporary labor migration.

Analyzing our findings on intention to migrate in the nearest six months among returnees and their family members, we found that existence of former migrant positively increases the chances for other household members to migrate in future. Thus we concluded that previous migratory experience accumulated threw trips abroad should be considered not only as a consequence of migration, but also as a significant determinant of potential future migration. Georgia is undergoing a process of serious transition. In such conditions temporary labor migration of the population became one of the active forms of socialization, adaptation and survival. The general understanding in society is that due to the present social-economic situation in the country in the nearest future many Georgians will be still keen to go abroad for work, labor migration will continue to be the best possibility to earn money for years to come and therefore an irregular labor migration will most probably dominate in the future migration

flows from Georgia. So, it is expected that all these perspectives will lead to a further depreciation of Georgian human capita in the long run.

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