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"Create democratic Armenia together. The problem of adaptation of the Diaspora Armenians in Armenian socium"

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Abstract

Սփյուռքում և Հայաստանի Հանրապետությունում համապատասխան քաղաքականության բացակայությունը 1990-կաններն տարերային ներգաղթի սոցիալական գինը շատ թանկ դարձրեց։ Թե եկվորների, թե տեղաբնակների համար նոր շփումները վերածվեցին հոգեբանական, սոցիալական և մշակութային հաղորդակցման փորձությունների։ Մեկ ազգի տարբեր մասերի միջև տեղ գտած խմբային մեկուսացումը որպես հիմնախնդիր աճի միտում արձանագրեց։ Իրականացված հետազոտությունը որակական և քանակական մեթոդով փորձել է հասկանալ հայաստանյան իրականության մեջ ներգաղթածների դժվարությունները, բացահայտել դրանում քաղաքականության իրականացման և գաղափարախոսական բացթողումները և ախտորոշել դրանք հաղթահարելու Հայաստանի և Սփյուռքի պաշտոնական և ոչ պաշտոնական կառույցների պատրաստակամությունն ու պատրաստականությունը։ Հետազոտական աշխատանքի ելքը Հայաստանում և Սփյուռքում քաղաքականություն իրականացնողներին և շահագրգիռ կառույցներին արված երաշխավորություններն են ուղղված այնպիսի քայլերի մշակմանը, որոնք կկարգավորեն տարերային և ոչ արդյունավետ գործընթացները երկրից դուրս ու ներս և կամավոր ներգաղթողների հարմարումը կդարձնեն առավել հարթ, իսկ Հայաստանը՝ գրավիչ Սփյուռքահայերի համար։

The spontaneous process of immigration of Diaspora Armenians to Armenia started in 1990s. The absence of a relevant policy in the Diaspora and in the Republic of Armenia the social cost of relocation for many immigrants make rather high. New contacts turned into a psychological, social and cultural ordeal for both relocated and local residents. The group isolation within parts of one unit as problem has a tendency to grow. Research use qualitative and quantitative methodologies to understand the challenges of immigrants in the Armenian reality, to identify policy and ideology gaps and to diagnose the organizational readiness and willingness of formal and non-formal structures to overcome those challenges. The output of the research is recommendation to policy makers and interested/relevant organizations in Armenia and Diaspora structures on the development of policies to regulate the spontaneous and ineffective processes in and out of the country and make the adaptation smooth for voluntary returnees and Armenia attractive for Diaspora.

Отсутствие в диаспоре и в Республике Армения соответствующей политики сделал высоким социальную цену стихийной иммиграции армян начатых в 1990-х годах. Как для иммигрантов, так и для местных жителей новые контакты стали испытанием социального, психологического и культурного общения. Проблема групповой изоляции проявившийся между разными частями одной нации преобрела тенденцию роста. Предлагаемое исследование представлят с собой попытку последством качесвенного и количественного метода описать имеющиеся трудности иммигрантов в армянской действительности, выявить упущения в

идеологии и политике, диагностировать готовность и подготовленность официальных и неофициальных структур Армении и Диаспоры преодолеть эти трудноси упущения. Результатом исследовательской работы являются адресованные осуществлющим политику в Армении и в диаспоре, а также другим заинтересованным структурам рекомендации, направленные на реализацию таких шагов, которые бы урегулировали стихийные и неэффективные движения в страну и из страны, упростили бы адаптацию иммигрантов и повысили превлекательность Армении для диаспоры.

<u>Key words:</u> adaptation, integration, isolation, democratization.

Introduction

After many centuries, the independence of Armenia opened up great opportunities for developing relationships among both Armenians in Armenia and Armenians in Diaspora.

What does this sudden transition from socialism to market economy really mean to people of the Post-Soviet Republic of Armenia? What does this essential change mean for the opportunity of new types of relations with Armenia, and even the possibility of returning home opened to Diaspora Armenians?

For Armenians of Armenia new realities bring about new challenges to democracy building. Within the framework of a declarative democracy and in the absence of a discourse and competition, the transition society is identified as: a) absence of the perception of social transition goals, b) weak orientation of political, economic and social institutions towards transition goals and inconsistency of actions of formal institutions, c) political naiveté of people in commenting and criticizing activities of state authorities and discussing culture.

The ability of the transition society to adapt to changing circmstances, without loosing track of the revolution (independence, equality), was rather weak and subsequent hard economic and social conditions soon created nostalgia but not the vision of the future democracy. Moreover, most of people related all their material and moral losses to that vision. The survey results of a number of organizations (IDHR-1999, ACNIS – 1995-1997, NGOC 2000-2003, CRRC – 2004-2007, etc.) show that the lack of the population's understanding of the direct relation between the establishment of democratic values and improvement of their own situation and that of the country is evident even after 10-15 years of independence.

The other part of 8,000,000[1] Armenians – Diaspora - lives outside of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in almost 60 countries. Only the one-fifth of the world's Armenian population lives in the former Soviet Republic of Armenia. Until 1920s their pre-World War I homeland once covered five or six times that of the present-day Armenia, including the eastern regions of Turkey, parts of Iran and Syria[2].

The independence of the Republic of Armenia crashed all kinds of walls (ideological, border), giving an opportunity to Diaspora Armenians to live and create in their homeland, succeed in business and finally try to slow down or suspend the process of increasing assimilation with other cultures. The independence of the Republic of Armenia

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[1] The figure is provided by the Diaspora Relations Department of the ROA Foreign Ministry, November 7, 2003

[2] "Armenian Diaspora" - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

also gave Diaspora[3] an opportunity to contribute to the market econmy, being developed in the post-soviet Armenia through investments, creating new job places, using the know-how acquired in foreign countries.

The process of relocation of Diaspora Armenians to Armenia started in 1990s. It was a spontaneous process, because of absence of a relevant policy in the Diaspora (home country) and in the Republic of Armenia (host country), lack of objective information about the host country, vague perception on phenomenon of the post soviet society.

The social cost of relocation for many immigrants was rather high. The existence of the Diaspora in countries with different religious and civic cultures, and at the same time conservation of the part of Armenians in the closed soviet structure marked many changes in characteristics of the two parts of the same ethnicity. These circumstances caused difficulties, as new contacts turned into a psychological, social and cultural ordeal for both relocated and local residents. The lack of support from Diaspora structures and the Armenian Government left immigrants' families alone with their problems in Armenia and hesitations to move to Armenia or not in Diaspora.

Thus, we have a new inner-ethnic social group, and a problem of group isolation within parts of one unit, which has a tendency to grow and needs serious and interdisciplinary investigation. Our research can be a small input in a huge research work. We use both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to answer the questions:
How to help to solve the problem of spontaneous immigration and adaptation of Diaspora Armenians in Armenia socium?
How it is possible to direct social forces of the Diaspora and Armenia socium towards the creation of the democratic Society in Armenia?
Answers to these questions became possible by investigating challenges of immigrants in the Armenian reality, identifying policy and ideology gaps and diagnosing organizational readiness and willingness of formal and non-formal structures to overcome those challenges.

Mentioned and also the investigation of the practice of Reuit German and Israel help to prepare recommendations to policy makers and interested/relevant organizations in Armenia and Diaspora structures on the development of policies to regulate the spontaneous and ineffective processes in and out of the country and make the adaptation smooth for voluntary returnees and Armenia attractive for Diaspora.

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[3] This article is about only the old Diaspora - the Genocide survivors, because the problem of the returners from new Diaspora (people born outside Armenia and Nagorni Kharabagh after 1985) are out of this research interest.

The first trend of repatriation in 1921-82 and the immigration of the Diaspora Armenians since 1990s

Throughout centuries Armenians' emigration from their homeland was caused by economic, religious, and political reasons, ethnic persecution and oppression. They were forced to be established in different countries of the world, thus giving birth to the modern-day Diaspora. The activities in the Diaspora are carried out by various Diaspora institutions (Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenian Catholic Church, Evangelical organizations, political parties, cultural groups, compatriotic unions, etc.), which attempt to preserve their traditional identity and the community cohesion.

The active part of Old Diaspora Armenians are involved in traditional Armenian political parties, which differ from each other by their stance towards Republic of Armenia, nature of partnership with it and the methodology of fighting for complete admission of 1915 Genocide in the territory of Western Armenia. Among the main directions of their mission are establishing national schools and publications and implementing projects on cultural links with Armenia and countries with Armenian Diasporas.

The other part of Diaspora Armenians formally keep their national identity by participating in religious holidays and national commemoration events. Others are not involved in any community activities at all and prefer no communal life.

The longstanding seperation from their historical homeland, influences of foreign cultures and mixed marriages marked a number of changes in the national identity and norms of behavior of Diaspora Armenians, increased the social distance between Eestern Armenians, who live in another part of their historical homeland. Therefore, the percentage of Armenians who do not speak Armenian has a tendency to grow, and the assimilation is becoming a serious problem for the Diaspora.

The first attempt of merging the two parts of Armenians was in 1921. The first trend (from 1921 to 1982) of repatriation to Soviet Armenia was a terrible ordeal for the repatriated. Armenia's hard economic and social conditions on one hand, and the increasing number of repatriates (164000 from Iraq, Lebanon and Syria from Iran , from Greece , and France) on other hand, resulted in deterioration of their social and economic conditions and a permanent mistrust towards them by the local population. They were unaware of the economic and political system of the Soviet Armenia and faced many challenges in understanding and surviving in new conditions. Moreover, this process was fostered by the system: they were given the label 'enemy of people' and exiled to remote regions of the Soviet Union in 1949. They were isolated in special settlements. Contacts and marriages from both sides were not welcomed. Misunderstanding between repatriates and indigenous population of Armenia was a serious obstacle for adaptation. The intolerance towards Soviet values compelled many repatriates to escape from the Soviet

Armenia in 1975[4]. The final phase of the first trend of repatriation was in 1962-1982, when many Diaspora Armenians immigrated to Armenia.

Thus, the main difficulties of the adaptation and integration of the first trend of repatriation were connected with:

- ➢ absence of any opportunity for the immigrants to obtain objective information about the life of East Armenians in the Soviet Empire;
- ➢ concentrating repatriates in special areas by the Government;
- ➢ isolating repatriates' neighborhoods/communities from those of the locals;
- ➢ unfamiliarity of East Armenians with the West Armenian lifestyle, habits, meals and dialect.

Overall, in spite of many difficulties, repatriates and their children made their great and unique contribution to the development of Armenia, especially in the areas of culture and science.

The years of the Cold War increased and intensified the historical dissimilarities between the Western and Eastern Armenians. However, the 1988 earthquake and dreadful events in Azerbaijan towards Armenians speeded up relief activities by Diaspora organizations and many individuals provided to victims of these tragedies. The Diaspora Armenians provided enormous assistance to alleviate the severe social and economic crisis in Armenia and Karabagh, continuing up to date. Investments were particularly made in several sectors: ICT (since 1990); Gems and Jewelry (since early 90s from Belgium, Syria, US, Canada, Jordan, France:); Tourism (since 90s from Lebanon, Syria, US, France…); Agribusiness/Food Processing (since the first half of 1990s); Apparels (since 1994); Construction (mainly since 1998).

The percentage of country involvement is: Russia 29% of all investors, USA 17%, Iran 14%[5].

The first attempts of new types of relations clearly showed, that Diaspora has much to offer to, and at the same time to receive from Armenia as a Homeland. From an abstract and mistical homeland Armenia turned into an independent Homeland open to all Armenians in the world. However, the Diaspora was a fragmented body not only from the geographic perspective, but also from that of the mentalities, attitudes and habits. This fragmentation within a single ethnic entity was reflected in relations between Armenians and Diasporians, Old Diaspora and Young Diaspora, immigrated Diaspora people and local Armenians and their attitudes towards each other. There are many differences between the post-soviet Armenian and the old Diaspora Armenian, the old Diaspora Armenian born in a western cultural system and the one born in a Muslim one - family models, experiences, history, concerns, values, religious commitments and rituals, and

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[4] See Helsinki Final Declaration and the Treaty on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1975. The Soviet Union signed it, which allowed a limited emigration of the Jewish, German and Armenian population for 'reuniting with their families'.

[5] Hergnyan M., Makaryan A., "The role of the Diaspora in Generating foreign Direct Investments In Armenia". Available from: http.//www. ev.am., www.crrc.am

lifestyles. Theoretically, the shared national identity and memory of the historical country would have brought together Armenians, as representatives of the same national origin. However, in our case, years and the distance made many changes in our characteristics, becoming powerful enough to move Armenians apart from each other and make difficulties of adaptation. The need to develop a new policy of relations was obvious.

During the first decade of Armenia's independence (in 1999 and 2002), the Armenian Government organized forums on Armenia-Diaspora relations in Yerevan. Several TV marathons and business forums were jointly organized by the Diaspora and Armenian authorities. The two parts of Armenians were provided an opportunity to discuss together the challenges faced by Armenia under the current realities. The conferences voiced that through collective unity and accumulation and convergence of our human and material potential, we can accomplish much. The slogan "Armenia is the homeland of All Armenians" aims at calling every Armenian for readiness to bring his/her unreserved for progress and development of Armenia and Armenians. Declarations of meetings stated, that Armenia-Diaspora relations and cooperation assume qualitatively new approaches, levels and responsibilities. In 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2007 Armenia hosted Pan-Armenian Olympic Games, which brought together athletic teams from Diaspora communities. There are also small projects "One Nation and One Culture", "Birthright Armenia" and various sport events, which help Diaspora Armenians to see their country and learn the mother language. The Law on Dual Citizenship, adopted in 2007, proves that there is not any constitutional barrier, thus enabling every Armenian to establish a full-fledged presence in his/her Homeland.

The spontaneous process of relocations of the Diaspora Armenians started since 1990s. The lack of reliable official data does not allow as to speak about quantitative characteristic of that process. The study of the qualitative characteristics reveals that the motivations of immigration are attempt to start a business in a new location, purchase of realty, seasonal visit, overcoming homesickness by elderly people, presenting Armenia to children by their middle aged parents, permanent residence, education, especially in University faculties related to culture, cheap education for students from Middle East countries.

This trend of immigration is mainly described by the following:
a) immigrants are free to choose their place of settlement
b) the level of awareness about each other is higher than during the first trend of repatriation (they have an opportunity of knowing each other before relocation),
c) the new economic and political system in Armenia formally has many similarities with countries they come from;
d) immigrants are isolated from the inner-ethnic perspective voluntarily,
e) contacts and intergroup marriages are welcomed mainly by natives as an opportunity to emigrate from Armenia.

Evidently, there are many differences between the situation of immigrants, who have arrived during 1921-82 and the ones who have arrived since 1990s. However, the problem of adaptation and existence of an inner-ethnic group within the Armenia socium is still apparent, which may be described as follows:

First, there is much more solidarity among repatriates from different regions and cultural models, than among relocated and local residents.

Second, within the country Armenians are splitted into West Armenians and Iranian Armenians, particular countries, those belonging to definite political parties or churches.

Third, local residents are offended by their own economic satus, since almost all relocated people are much wealthier than 70-80% of common local residents. Thousands of local residents with high education become unskilled laborers and house workers of repatriated bosses.

Forth, there is a conflict between various generations of immigrants: some of their children, who were small at the time when their families moved to Armenia, became more alike and close to local residents than their parents and grandparents.

Fifth two opposite tendencies are outlined within the immigrant communities: a gradual expansion due to new and narrowing down because of immigration of young people (middle aged parents children moved to Armenia in 1990s).

The above mentioned conditions cause tension among social groups, with a tendency to grow, especially after the adoption of the new Law on Dual Citizenship[6]. This situation is unfavorable for both segments of Armenians and consolidation of all social forces in the process of democratisation of the society.

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[6] The Armenian parliament approved the third and final reading of a bill allowing Armenia's large Diaspora to hold dual citizenship, February 26, 2007**.**

The opportunities for the immigrant's integration into the Armenia socium

The investigation of the process of adaptation[7] of immigrants in Armenia socium and particularly possibilities of cultural, economic and social integration[8] was carried out using the methodology of focus group sessions with members of inner-ethnic group of immigrants from North America, Europe, and Middle East. There were four age groups (15-18) (19-25) (26-35) (36 and over) engaged in 4 focus group sessions.

Immigrants of various countries were involved in single age groups in order to identify their pre-expectations and the level of the level of their satisfaction in the Homeland; ways and levels of integration problem overcoming during the first 2 years, after 3-5 years, 6 years and over; ideological and organizational gaps of integration.

Level of Awareness

The main sources of information on Armenia for Diaspora Armenians are the Public Television of Armenia (H1), fragmented stories and subjective impressions of tourists, Diaspora schools and associations. The latter two give poor information about the geography and cultural monuments, and nothing about the common lifestyle, rules, traditions, economy, legislation and educational/social welfare systems. The cognitive sense of the H1 TV is rather poor. And it is impossible to obtain on-line information from official structures.

An opinion was expressed about Armenia being often presented as something mystic and brighter, than the reality by some of the political parties.

The Internet was never mentioned as a source of information by any immigrant.

As the discussion members notice, the mentioned sources of information are not satisfactory for either seasonal visitors, or immigrants. Very often the information is outdated and not useful. It is even distorted when provided by representatives of the Young Diaspora (those emigrated from Armenia during the past 10-20 years), who therefore justify their leaving the Homeland.

The discussion and interviews results show that along with difficulties caused by the lack of awareness, most of immigrants do not suggest any idea for changing the situation. The

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[7] See "Adaptation" - refers to the ability of a sociocultural system to change with the demands of a changing physical or social environment. The process by which cultural elements undergo change in form and/or function in response to change in other parts of the system. Elwell's Glossary of Sociology. Available from: http://www.proz.com/translation-glossary-post/English

[8] See – "Integration" - is an inclusion or incorporation of a migrant into the host country's society. Integration means equal participation and at the same time preservation of one's own identity, religion and culture. The will to integrate on part of the immigrant and receptiveness on part of the receiving society are essential for integration. Integration includes an agreement on common values and is fundamental for the coherence and the stability of a society. Nationality can be one "objective" criteria for integration; the "subjective" sensation of integration though can differ significantly from that. Elwell's Glossary of Sociology. Available from: http://www.proz.com/translation-glossary-post/English

dominant sources of information are non-formal and all age groups of immigrants has lack the culture of using information. Local Armenians have this problem too as well.

So, the difficulties of adaptation among the immigrated first of all are caused by low level of awareness on the current life in Armenia, because of the several organizational gaps of Diaspora and Armenia formal and non-formal structures activity:

- ➢ Weak knowledge and information about Armenia by Diaspora structures;
- ➢ Vague and updated information and lack of complete picture of modern Homeland in Diaspora Community School programs
- ➢ Unaffordability for all strata of Armenians in Diaspora to watch Armenia TV channels.
- ➢ Lack of information in the websites of official structures of Armenia, of the Embassies and artificial obstacles created by their desks;
- ➢ Uncertain requirements by the "OVIR", quality of service and ongoing changes in the registration procedure;

The discussions helped us to identify several types of information needs, which hinder the adaptation:

Registration procedures list of "OVIR"
Taxation system in Armenia
The Law on Employment
Costs of rent and purchase of realty.

Cultural integration

The life within various cultural models influences and make changes in their perception of individual comfort zone, communication and language (verbal and non verbal), clothes and appearance, food, time, interrelation, behavior norms and values, belief and value system, themselves and others, events around, methods of teaching, working and attitude towards their job. Our investigation revealed many differences in valuing job/career, money, family, homeland, nature, environment with local Armenians. They cause difficulties in working with mixed group, inter group marriages, and contacts with locals families.

For example, immigrants notice that locals often do not relate to "successful career" with professional efforts and work discipline at both individual and organizational levels. They mostly show off their working (USA, Lebanon, Turkey). In the local job market the professionalism is somewhere in the third, or the fourth places (Lebanon, Iran, Turkey). Thus, immigrants don't prefer working in organizations owned by locals, since the relationships are not often upright there and the initiative is not encouraged (USA, Lebanon). Immigrants prefer working for immigrant employers, because:

1. there is a lack of discipline, lack of any written job description in locals organizations (Canada, Iran, USA)
2. local employers usually demonstrate gender and interethnic psychological discrimination in the workplace; (Iran)
3. immigrant employer appreciate his employees' job at its true value, salaries are higher, the psychological environment is healthy (Iran, Lebanon Canada).

The survey results done by Pyunik Partev show that, among terminal values, immigrant young people prioritize "having an active and interesting job" (ranked as the first value), and the locals do "material well being". "Having an active and interesting job" is ranked as the ninth one by locals[9].

Our focus group identify that representatives of all age groups from various countries have different from locals perceptions on value of money, the ways of its earning and spending, They notice that having as much money as possible is among the dominant ideas for the majority of locals. However, a few of them know how to earn money. Moreover, there is a lack of understanding of "the value for money both among the poor, and among the rich" (Iran, Turkey): local people are not good at cost sharing and justified spending, are shortsighted and spend money for showing off. 84% of local Armenians perceive the immigrants' feature of earning money with difficulty and spending it economically as a stinginess, 48,9% perceive it as a greediness, and as a prudence[10].

The next important difference identified by immigrant's is the perception of the role and the value for the family and the attitude towards women and children. The family, as a social institution, involves a group protection mechanism both in the Armenian socium, and in the Diaspora one. The family was the only institute for protection both in Armenia, where for centuries people have been living on their own territory under a foreign state power, and in Diaspora, where people have been living on a foreign territory under a foreign state power. During many centuries, there has been a hidden conflict between the Armenian family and the existing social and political structures. Thus, the family undertook functions above its capabilities. In Diaspora, the family actually remains the basic institution of socialization, and maintenance of continuance of the national identity. As for the Soviet Armenian family, it mainly implied the official ideology of the society, thus harming its mission of protecting and maintaining the ethnic identity.
The old system crash hurts Armenia family. The high level of unemployment, the individual's alienation from the society and the labor migration harm the family integrity,

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[9] See. Partev P., 1999 "The psychological peculiarities of the socialization processes of citizens of Armenia and Iranian Armenian teenagers". Pages 54-57. Unpublished thesis. Yerevan State University.

[10] See Karumyan N., "The Integration Process of the Repatriates as a Human Rights Problem: Obstacles and Tasks". Armenia In the Perspective of Human Rights; Publishing House of the Yerevan University; 2005; part 3.

rapidly increasing the number of households lead by women. This phenomenon is particularly common in rural areas. Immigrants are surprised by the marriage model of Armenia, by the great number of abandoned families and elderly parents. They state that this phenomenon never occurs in Armenian Diaspora of any country and at any time.

Immigrants find the psychological tension, and incompatibility between spouses in most Armenia families unfavorable for the wife, especially for the young daughter-in-law and children (Iran). The majority of mother's lives like slaves of their children and do not have their own interests, friends and leisure. The lack of equal sharing of tasks within the family resulted in taking the burden of everyday work by the wife, even if her husband is unemployed (Iran, USA, Canada). Families have not any culture of having rest: women never think about taking a vacation. Weekends are women's toughest workdays.

The husband's behavior and the level of his role implementation often harm family interests (Iran, Turkey). Young men get married without being ready for assuming responsibility for their wives and children. They don't view it discreditable to live at the expense of their parents and marry without having any profession or sufficient income (Iraq, Turkey, Syria). The most important thing is that both men and women equally share this opinion.

The immigrants find differences also in preparing children for an independent life and indulging the boy child. The survey results show that among instrumental values, the responsibility is never prioritized by local young people, while it is ranked as the third after discipline and ethics by immigrated Armenians. Locals never mention the "happy family" among their terminal values. Immigrants rank it the fifth after job, health, wisdom and independence[11].

The majority of locals assess the family as "good" or "bad" only from the financial perspective.

Since in real life Diaspora Armenians value the family differently from locals they express an opinion that they would like to keep their children away from ones of native families to avoid possible imitation of relations within those families.

While speaking about differences in lifestyles immigrants notices that the local do not have options for the leisure time. Group eating and drinking are popular types of leisure. The locals are unaware of the option of having leisure time without spending money. The above mentioned cause difficulties in relationships of young locals and immigrants.

The immigrants poor command of the East Armenian dialect (national language) is a problem only during their first year in Armenia. Locals poorly understand Western Armenians, particularly young people and Yerevanians, who "play jokes on our dialect at school, in the yard and in the workplace."(Iran, Canada, Turkey)

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[11] See Partev P., 1999 "The psychological peculiarities of the socialization processes of citizens of Armenia and Iranian Armenian teenagers". Pages 54-57. Unpublished thesis. Yerevan State University.

The immigrants find the attitude towards national symbols and the homeland ("the homeland is not as an idea, but a place for living") as one of the essential differences between the value system of locals and themselves. The immigrants noticed that the locals are not thrifty towards anything in their country: trees, Lake Sevan, doorway, yard, street, and the city in general. They don't value their national army, flag and anthem.

The immigrants are also offended by the indifference of the local population towards the dream of the Reunited Armenia. The memory of the lost country and the dream of the Reunited Armenia are part of the Diaspora identity and have their important role within the value system of all age groups. As for the local Armenians, these ideas were prohibited during Soviet times. The majority of local Armenians do not have such national vision.

This identified differences in value system and difficulties of cultural integration can be proved by other surveys, for example the one carried out by Nvard Karumyan among all age groups of Armenian immigrants and locals. She identifies, that the locals' opinion and perception of immigrant Armenians are conditioned by individual contacts (personal level of stereotypes) and that 59.2% of locals feel they are different from immigrants. This has an essential role in the formation of attitudes. Immigrants' stereotypes on the locals are conditioned by individual contacts and predisposition from the family. As a result, each group negatively and positively characterizes the other.

Locals positively characterized immigrants: "law-abiding" – 32%,   "polite" - 27.6%, "diligent"- 26.5%, "emancipated" 17.2%. Among the negative characteristics were: "stingy"– 84.6%,   "thrifty" – 48.9%, "less communicable"- 45.3%, "neglecting locals"- 35.4%[12]. The comparison of research results also shows that the locals positively assess those features of immigrants, who noticed that the locals miss them.

Thus, the possibility of cultural integration of immigrant Armenians into the Armenian socium is rather weak, because of a number of essential differences in values, lifestyle, dialect, moral principles and ideology peculiar to both groups. In Armenia immigrants find themselves in a situation, where some of their basic social and psychological needs can not be satisfied. They choose the option of isolation as a partial solution of the problem of the cultural integration.

Locals explain this isolation by the immigrants' less communicability and neglect towards locals.

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[12] See Karumyan N., "The Integration Process of the Repatriates as a Human Rights Problem: Obstacles and Tasks". Armenia In the Perspective of Human Rights; Publishing House of the Yerevan University; 2005; part 3.

Economic integration

The economic integration enabled the immigrants to earn their own living, using the know-how acquired in a foreign country, for promoting the economic and social development of their homeland. The focus group discussions show that despite absence of legal limitations for immigrants in Armenia, the economic integration is not smooth for them. Among the main hindering factors are corruption, fluctuations of foreign currency rates, instability of prices, unfavorable taxation system for small and medium enterprises, and unprofessionalism and poor corporate ethics of officials of state structures. In their new settlements the majority of immigrants fail to find improved societal contexts similar to the countries they left. They are well adapted to the rules of the free market competition, and the centralized system of the Armenian economy becomes unfavorable for efficient business and professional development of immigrants.

Two lines of development are distinguished in the process of economic integration of immigrants in Armenia. First, the occupational characteristics of migrants and the modalities of their economic inclusion show that professionals are able to maintain their position especially in companies owned by immigrants or in international organizations. Here the work culture and professional requirements differ much from those of the local ones.

The second line of the development is the partnership of leaders of large projects with state authorities, ensuring "support" of the ruling clan, privileges and patronage. This line enhances illegality and increases the number of Diaspora employers, who adopt "Armenian rules" – evading the labor legislation and abusing employee rights – actions not dared in their countries of origin. The absence of direct contact of investors and managers with employees and final users does not contribute to forming a civilized job culture, advancing the professionalism and ensuring legality and culture of the service provision. These two lines make the interaction between professionals of the two groups minimal.

There is also a group of immigrants, who failed or does not want to follow none of these lines and therefore suffers equally with locals. The inefficient functioning of the trade market results in challenges faced by the unemployed in the society. Only 1/3 of the unemployed in Armenia use services of employment agencies, since their staff is circumlocutional, rude and unprofessional, the job descriptions and missions of organizations are unclear[13]. This situation mainly harms professional and personal self-affirmation of young immigrants, who have come to Armenia alone in Armenia and have not many contacts with other immigrants. They are rather pessimistic, which often compels them to leave Armenia or advise others not to come to their homeland.

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[13] See Mkrtchyan A., "The difficulties of women's formal and non-formal training and employment in transition Armenia society", www.crrc.am.

It was identified that of all spheres of economy the service industry and construction markets are the most favorable for immigrants, since they can fairly apply the know-how in this spheres acquired in foreign countries. Immigrants are particularly competitive in the service industry, since locals do not have knowledge, skills and practice relevant to the free market. Even local consumers prefer immigrants to natives working in the same sphere. They justify it by trust towards immigrants both professionally and personally.

Currently Armenia needs professional and skilled immigrants in management of almost all spheres. However, their experience is still not appreciated and Armenia remains not attractive for them**.**

Social integration

The social integration supposes incorporation of newcomers into social structures of Armenia: creating a personal network (friends, relatives, neighbors) and developing civil society structures (associations, self-help groups and other organizations).

The focus groups discussions identify "friendship" especially among young immigrants and locals. Various motivations and manifestations of friendship are distinguished.

First, "stable friendship" initiated by newcomers. They experienced difficulties in establishing relations with natives. Immigrants notice, that the locals are excessively cautious, because they are afraid of being deceived. So they keep a distance for a long period of time. It is the immigrants who initiate those contacts. They succeed and are happy for the friendship. Within this group marriages with locals also are successful.

Second, "inconstant friendship" initiated by young immigrants. They have tried to find friends among locals, but found out differences in their childhoods related to terrible memories of 1990s of locals. Differences in financial situations also hinder many local young peoples' participation in joint events, keeping them in some distance from immigrants. Some psychological reasons hinder the establishment of stable relationships. This group of immigrants adequately views the situation and does not demonstrate intolerance towards locals. They rarely meet, their relations are situational, but warm. This makes them happy.

Third, absence of any contact with locals, as young immigrants thinks that their differences are incompatible. This group of young people is never interested in establishing contacts with locals and is rather influenced by the family, stating "My mother thinks and conducts this way, so do I."

The immigrants aged 26 and above are more passive in establishing relations with locals. This is justified by their statement "friendship must have history." and that in new

relationships locals pay much attention to the material status of their peers. They think that self-interest plays an essential role in the relationship.

However, immigrants also mention that friendship is richer in Armenia, since in Diaspora similar relations often do not go beyond the same political party, national association, etc. In Armenia it is much more easier to establish stable relations with colleagues, co-students and neighbors. This phenomenon is positively assessed.

The first attempts of immigrants to contact with their neighbors disappoint them, because the latters are over-curious about the private life of others, not aware of shared responsibilities in case of joint ownership (e.g. an apartment building), gossip, and lack respect towards others. These are the main reasons for the isolated life and leisure immigrants'.

The examination of possibilities of adaptation and social integration shows that half of those local Armenians, who mention about differences between them and immigrants, state that social networking is conditioned by these differences. However, the differences mentioned by them are not always negative.
The locals mention such positive differences of immigrants, as "patriotism", "politeness", "respect towards women and parents", "diligence", "optimism", "law-abiding." "Flattery", "prudence", "egoism", "isolation" and "self-conceit" are among negative differences.

Newcomers mention the following main differences of locals as hindering factors for social networking: "roughness", "absence of respect towards women, elderly, handicapped", "carelessness about anything outside their flat", "deriving benefits from the relationship", "pessimism."
Ch. Ozgyut's semantic differentials ranking system with 7 divisions shows that on the individual level the locals are more positively oriented towards immigrants than the latters. Immigrants rank natives as 3.7 (nearer to negative) and themselves as 5.6. The locals rank immigrants as 4.5 (nearer to positive) and themselves as 5.3[14].
As you notice, the basic value and other differences between Old Diaspora and post soviet Armenians are much more than those within various Diaspora communities, be they in Muslim or Christian cultural models.

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[14] See Karumyan N., "The Integration Process of the Repatriates as a Human Rights Problem: Obstacles and Tasks". Armenia In The Perspective of Human Rights; Publishing House of the Yerevan University; 2005; part 3.

The Diaspora involvement in democratization processes of Armenia

Republic of Armenia, as a state, officially offered every Armenian the chance of complete involvement in the process of state-building, its consolidation and development, prioritizing democratic principles and human rights and freedom significance in the functioning of state and community structures in the homeland and Diaspora. Armenian state authorities declare their readiness to henceforth ensure functioning of our state, national and local institutions and structures in accordance with democratic principles, providing necessary conditions for everyone to fully realize his/her capabilities. [15]

Alas, in the transition Armenia socium of 2007 the declared democracy values are not perceived as guarantees for establishing social justice and equal opportunities for all citizens of the society. The high level of poverty, lack of accountability of various sectors and weak institutional capacities of formal structures characterize Armenia as a country making its first steps towards democratization. The civic passiveness is one of the features and causes of the mentioned situation.

However, it is interesting that the passiveness is evident not only among local Armenians. Despite material well-being, former practice in open market environment, absence of soviet past biography, immigrants demonstrate individual and group civic passiveness, even those arrived from Western democracies. The examination (by focus group discussions, meetings and observing the list of NGOs registered in Armenia) shows that the immigrants demonstrate such a behavior even when faced by many problems needing solution. For example, immigrant Armenians very often prefer not to have Armenian citizenship, because they are sure that the Embassies of their countries can protect their rights from being infringed (common phenomena towards citizens of Armenia) by local authorities. Young immigrants face problems within educational structures, where students' have no possibility to know about their rights and responsibilities: e.g. they can't get a written document from the administration, even the organizational manual. Sudden changes in corporate policy are unknown to students, causing many moral and financial losses for immigrant Armenian students.

The need for better market, health and educational opportunities is evident and many problems connected with them may be solved by creating or getting involved in civil society organizations or horizontal networks[16]. The mentioned structures can represent the interests of immigrant groups in relation to the Government and other

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[15] See Materials of Armenia-Diaspora Conferences organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia in September 1999, May 2002 and September 2006. Available from: http://www.armeniadiaspora.com/ .

[16] Civil Society working definition: the civil society is that of an intermediate associational realm situated between the state on the one side and the basic building blocks of society on the other (individuals, families and firms), inhabited by social organizations with some degree of autonomy and voluntary participation on the part of their members. London School of Economics Available from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_School_of_Economics

sectors of the society, mobilize social actors in increasing their consciousness and impact, regulate and monitor the state's performance, as well as behavior and actions of public officials, and improve the well-being of their own or other constituencies. However, immigrants do not attempt to make changes in the situation. On individual and group levels, they view the situation in Armenia as datum and have chosen the option of reconciliation. At the same time they live an isolated life, establish their own small infrastructures and intercommunity relations, i.e. "a society within the society."

Particularly imigrants justify their isolation from modernization processes of the Armenia socium and civic passiveness by:

> - not feeling themselves part of the Armenian socium (even those who live here for 5 years and more);
> - being nominal members of political parties in the Diaspora and obliged to be involved in the Armenian branch of the same party;
> - dependency from political parties being an obstacle to create or be involved in other structures (as party leaders assure that it will harm the mother party);
> - insufficient intellectual capacity of the management of horizontal structures and participative democracy culture, even if they are from countries with a Western culture;
> - low level of knowledge of the local legislation.

The low level of development of democracy in Armenia harms individual and group interests of both locals and immigrants, challenges harmonious coexistence of various social groups and respect for diversity. As the level of applying democracy values influences the level of tolerance and coexistence of the pluralism, we are sure that democratic values can play the role of value agreement as their functioning can be helpful to all segments in finding a way of thinking, feeling and acting. The existed level of tolerance in Armenia socium limits the ability of cooperation, dialogue, recognizing the problem of displacement, facing the unknown and negative, acknowledging other's needs and problems and tolerating diversity[17]. The individual and group varieties can indeed coexist in the Armenian society if the socium implies social justice, political equality, freedom of expression and socioeconomic opportunities provided to collective Armenians and to each member individually. Moreover, the group solution of the problem will enrich the social capital of all and each role player, concentrating the attention on organizational means of the problem solution and not on isolated searches of the ways of solution or escapism.

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[17] See Mkrtchyan A., "Tolerance and regional peace building". Innovation – The European Journal of Social Science Research. http://www.iccr-international.org/whatsnew.html.

Ideological and organizational gaps in smooth adaptation and integration; Armenia and Diaspora perceptions on the need for a policy

It is a trivial belief, when one goes home he/she should be welcomed. However, in real life no one waits and meets immigrants in Armenia. They faced unexpected challenges on personal, professional and financial levels especially during 1990s. They were alone and unprotected in their Homeland. Old Diaspora Armenians arrive in a new country without having complete and reliable information about it and without any organizational support from Diaspora and Armenian structures. This situation became problematic for both immigrants/local Armenians on the individual level, and immigrant groups/Armenian society on the community level. Our investigation reveal policy and ideology gaps related to organizational readiness and willingness of formal and non-formal structures of Armenia and Diasora in supporting potencial and factual immigrants……. The conducted expert interviews (face to face, telephone and e-mail with a sample group of 50 experts representing cultural, educational, governmental/political and religious structures and NGOs from Armenia and Diaspora), aknowlegement with missions, the human and technical resource capacities of sample group organisations helped us to identify absence of missions or any strategy on integration. Moreover, we revealed that both parts of Armenians demonstrate emphatic precaution and some time even **a**voidance to adopt repatriation and integration policies. The focus group discussions and interviews revealed an interesting list of reasons, attitudes to the issue explained by various groups of Armenians.

1. Why do local authorities avoid having repatriation and integration policies?
➢ immigrants may become competitive on the top management level;
➢ immigrants will be competitive in the big business and dismantle the existing system
➢ costs on realty will be increased;

2. What ordinary people do *not* avoid?
➢ negative influence on the labor market[18],
➢ low unemployment risk for natives, because of small number of repatriates and differences in labor quality and spheres of occupation of repatriates. They will take jobs which natives most likely would not or could not take.
➢ great number of employers among repatriates: the unemployment risk for some groups will decrease, because repatriates offer workplaces especially in construction and home service.
➢ filling in the place of almost 1 million emigrated, who left Armenia during the past 10-15 years,
➢ despite the high educational level of native Armenians, immigrants are more skilled than natives in spheres where they are involved.

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[18] See Sahakyan Z., The impact of immigration and repatriation on labor market: Literature review and implication for Armenia. University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, AJPP Special issue , December 2006.

3. <u>What is scaring away potential immigrants?</u>
- ➢ distrust in local partners;
- ➢ distrust in the application of the local legislation.

4. <u>What is not scaring away potential repatriates?</u>
- ➢ forced repatriation.

5. <u>What is scaring away immigrants?</u>
- ➢ flows of other repatriates and increased competitiveness for them;
- ➢ being unprotected by the local legislation;
- ➢ being deceived by natives;
- ➢ clash with lack of work culture in all spheres in the host country.

6. <u>What is not scaring away repatriates?</u>
- ➢ Their returning back home, or to another country at any time.

The results of expert interviews also identify a number of differences in viewpoints Armenian and Diaspora experts on having repatriation and integration joined policy in general.

Some of the experts of local organizations (namely leaders of educational structures, NGOs and political scientist) are sure there is a serious need for the policy on integration and repatriation, as:

- ➢ it can   effectively involve all Armenians of the world and all social groups of Armenia in democratization processes of the Homeland,
- ➢ repatriates will become able to cultivate culture, legitimacy and civic attitudes in our society;
- ➢ Armenia must offer secure life for Armenians from conflict zones of the Middle East.

The other group of experts of local organizations (namely representatives of state structures and academicians) thinks that there should not be any policy on repatriation and integration, as:

- ➢ the Armenian Government should first of all think about returning back half of its citizens, who had left the country during the past 15 years
- ➢ the Armenian Government is unable to offer favorable living conditions even to its own citizens: everyone is escaping from the country;
- ➢ Armenia has no moral right to promote repatriation, since it is not ready to offer minimal level of social justice to its own society. Immigrants will have serious moral and material looses in Armenia.

A group of representatives of Diaspora structures is sure that this policy is important, because:
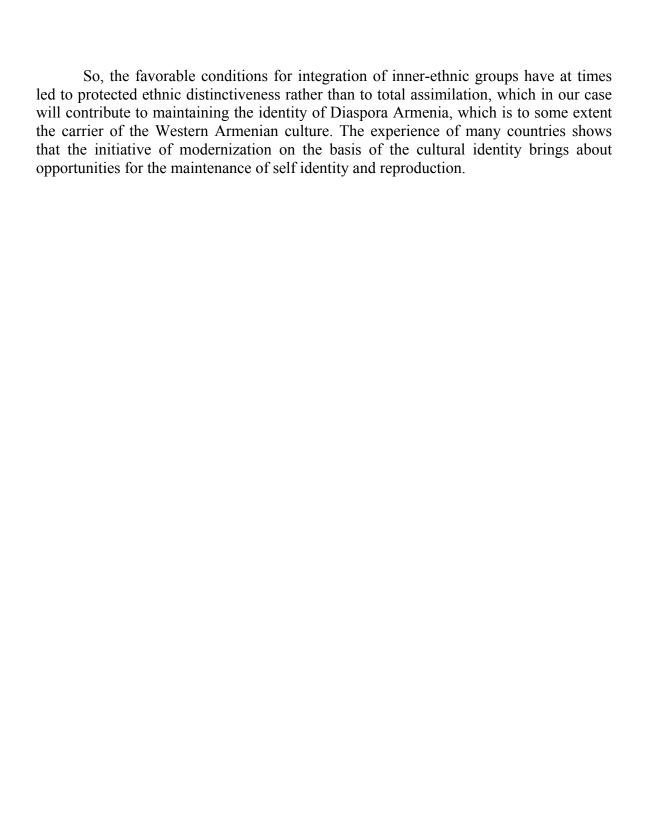
➢ Diaspora faces a serious problem of assimilation, and there is a lack of sense of patriotism among young people and those of middle ages
➢ In all countries the Armenian is a second-quality person. Only in his Homeland we can and should struggle for equal rights and justice.
➢ The homeland must encourage every Armenian to come home, especially those from Iraq, Lebanon and Pakistan, to stop the tendency of resettlement of Armenians from the Middle East region.
➢ The absence of the consideration of Armenians of both parts as a single unit made many activities ineffective, and even harmed the process of choosing methodology of efforts directed at recognition of the Armenian Genocide.
➢ The motivation for Diaspora investing should be changed from "the good heartedness to good mindedness" in orders to make them more effective.
➢ The Republic of Armenia and Karabagh have many abandoned territories, which need human protection.

The other group of experts representing Diaspora structures thinks that Diaspora does not need such a policy, because:

➢ The concentration of half of the ROA population in Yerevan, poor functioning of infrastructures and their absence in rural regions make Diasporians normal life in Armenia impossible.
➢ Low quality of education and healthcare systems causes anxiety among Diaspora Armenians for the future of their children and security of their families.

Based on above mentioned we dare to do conclusion that there is a need of integration policy, because even the various good examples of Diaspora investments in Armenia are fragmental, there is not any policy on attracting Diaspora professionals and young people to Armenia, there is not an national agreement on basic values and maintaining rich and interesting diversities of West and East Armenians. The assumed policy must take into considerations all opinions and suggestions mentioned above and remember that the inner-ethnic differences (but not antipode) illustrate diversity of the social life and are rather useful for healthy society. The last is important for understanding the problem of individuality and social consolidation within one society. The investigation carried out by ethno-sociologists Ranson S., Stewart J., Beauregard R., and Bounds A. in various social groups' shows that the civic activity is more effective in those communities, where people have an opportunity to maintain their individual peculiarities[19].

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[19] See Ranson S. and Stewart J., Management for the Public Domain, Basingstoke. Macmillan; 2000; p. 112-119;

So, the favorable conditions for integration of inner-ethnic groups have at times led to protected ethnic distinctiveness rather than to total assimilation, which in our case will contribute to maintaining the identity of Diaspora Armenia, which is to some extent the carrier of the Western Armenian culture. The experience of many countries shows that the initiative of modernization on the basis of the cultural identity brings about opportunities for the maintenance of self identity and reproduction.

Beauregard R., and Bounds A., Urban Citizenship in Democracy. Citizenship and Global City, London and New York. Routledge, 2000. p. 243-256.

Conclusion

The declared vision "Armenia is the Homeland of All Armenians" is very bright and on the operational level can contribute to the flow of the national human capital to Armenia. It can establish economic, political and cultural interdependence between the two parts, even if there appear countries not willing their citizens to become citizens of other countries. It can direct all efforts of Armenians at democratization of the post-soviet Armenia socium.

Our investigation shows that the spontaneous process of immigration of Diaspora Armenians to their Homeland, the unfamiliar socioeconomic conditions they face and the differences between characteristics of the newcomers and locals make the process of adaptation harmful for all immigrants, irrespective of their age, gender, country of birth, etc.

Overall, the adaptation process is characterized by several features:

In most cases the time of arrival in Armenia has no essential influence on types of difficulties of adaptation. They were the same in 1990s and 2000s.

The process of adaptation became smoother for those immigrants who understood peculiarities of life in Armenia and became flexible in some situations. They often demonstrate different behavior outside their home and at their home.

The forced coexistence in definite locations and contacts (at school, university, sports and dancing clubs) contribute to children's and teenagers' overcoming the differences and finding themselves not in the same situation as their parents and grandparents. Even in long-term and spontaneous process of adaptation this age group is more successful, as they share their life experiences and cultures with native children.

The stratification plays an essential role in social networks. Belonging to the same strata makes the integration easier. Differences enrich their relations and self-expression, and they slowly overcome difficulties of contacts.

The basic value and other differences between Old Diaspora and post soviet Armenians are much more than those within various Diaspora communities - be they from Muslim or Christian cultural models.

Indifference of official structures towards immigrants' problems and differences in main values and ways of living make immigrants choosing physical and psychological isolation from locals, creating normal infrastructures in the locations they live (elite buildings) in order to become closer to conditions of the countries they left. This is not isolation for isolation, but one for protection.

A number of reasons of difficult adaptation and integration were identified through our focus groups, interviews and literature review.

First, low level of awareness on economic and social conditions, and the legislation of Armenia, causing convergence in the immigrants' pre-expectations and the reality in their Homeland. The dominant and trustful source of information before arriving in Armenia is non-formal. The difficulties caused by low level of awareness on the current life in Armenia are reason of organizational gaps in activities of Diaspora and Armenia formal and non-formal structures. However, most of the immigrants don't make efforts for changing the situation for newcomers. None of the interviewed organizations suggested any idea on the problem solution or expressed willingness with this respect. All age groups of immigrants and organizations demonstrate low level of culture of using and exchanging information.

Second, remote possibilities of cultural integration of immigrant Armenians in Armenia - differences in values, lifestyles, moral principles, ideologies and etc. Half of the locals think that in establishing contacts with immigrants, the differences between them and the immigrants (even if they have such positive characteristics as "patriotism", "politeness", "respect towards women and parents", "diligence", "optimism", "law-abiding") are determining factors with negative orientation. The locals positively assess those features of immigrants, who noticed that the locals miss them.

Third, difficulties of the immigrant's economic integration related to:

- low awareness of the legislation of the Republic of Armenia;
- unfavorable taxation or behavior of tax officials for business activity;
- lack of healthy competition in the market;
- corruption of state structures and unprofessionalism of employees of state structures; absence of corporate ethics and artificial obstacles by official structures;
- low quality of services and ineffective work of employment agencies in Armenia.

The above mentioned challenges compel immigrants to stay away and minimize contacts with local structures, and work with immigrants or "understand and keep the rules of the game of economic survival in Armenia."

Fourth, differences in perceptions on ways and types of personal networks.

Fifth, lack of problem definition by organizational structures of both parts of Armenians.

The absence of an integration policy directed at not only newcomers, but also at Diaspora and Armenia in general cause serious problems for both units and particularly for common Armenians. Our investigation reveals that the organizational structures of Armenia and Diaspora demonstrate a low level of willingness to adopt a mission on

contributing to repatriation and integration. Moreover, these structures are not ready to adopt such a mission, because of lack of any scientific base for policy development, professionals, technical capacities and budgeting for these. The vision "Armenia is the Homeland of All Armenians" still remains a slogan and immigrants' attempts to live a ghetto life in their Homeland. This deepens the problem of the fragmentation in the society and hinders the involvement of Diaspora and Armenia people in democratization process.

Recommendations

The goal of the research - to prepare recommendations for policy makers in Armenia and Diaspora structures - became possible, as we identified the main hindering factors of adaptation and integration processes on individual, group and organizational levels. Namely, we identified a) pre-expectations of immigrants before arriving in Armenia, and ways and levels of their overcoming during the first 2 years, after 3-5 years, 6 years and more; b) ideological and organizational gaps and difficulties in integration; c) peculiarities of adaptation processes in 2007 and attitude of repatriates of various age groups and authorities of Diaspora and Armenia structures towards the adaptation; d) level of readiness and willingness of repatriates of various groups and structures of Diaspora and Armenia to change the situation.

Analysis of experts' suggestions revealed similarities and differences in ways of problem solution by different parts of Armenians. For example, both parts agree that Armenia (local governmental structures, Union of Writers, NGOs, Mass Media and immigrants and Diaspora experts) may become attractive for Diaspora and the adaptation process may become smooth if there are more favorable conditions for the economic integration of immigrants, particularly for starting small and medium enterprises in Armenia (benefits for the first 3-5 years of their activities, etc.) However, locals add that these conditions should be mutually beneficial both for Armenia and immigrants.

Each unit of Armenians also made a number of suggestions:

Local experts
1. creating a database on all Armenian cultural workers and scientists (in the Republic of Armenia and separately in every country with Armenian Diaspora);
2. creating "Diaspora networks";
3. creating mechanisms for teaching and understanding the West Armenian dialect and literature in the homeland and the East Armenian dialect in Diaspora;
4. generating the interest of Diaspora scientists, physicians and engineers in getting involved in definite spheres of economics of Armenia.

Diaspora experts
1. initiating sales (symbolic) on expenses for granting visas to all people of Armenian nationality, as a moral assistance;
2. translating the slogan "One Nation, One Homeland, One Culture" into definite activities carried out by relevant structures of Armenia and Diaspora;
3. creating a special state structure to deal with Diaspora-Armenia integration issues, with an expert representing a definite country with Armenian Diaspora, nominated by rotation (every year);
4. revising the module of Diaspora investments in Armenia;
5. improving and modernizing the education system to ensure quality education and acquiring a profession for immigrants' children.

Based on the above mentioned suggestions and findings of other researchers, several integration pinciples were identified:

First, consolidation of Armenian and Diaspora structures around two parallel missions and joint involvement in their realization aimed at:

> ➢ democratization of the Armenian society;
> ➢ meeting the basic needs of Diaspora to generate national values and maintain the identity and sustainability of the Armenian culture.

Second, a nation-wide integration program directed at better coordination of integration measures, offered on national and local levels. Involvement of trade unions, welfare structures, voluntary and social advocacy organizations and neighbourhoods in drafting the adaptation and integration programme.

Third, occupational integration should be a priority line in the integration policy, which supposes:

> ➢ creating a database on scientists, physicians and engineers of Armenia and Diaspora;
> ➢ creating a network representing the human capital of Diaspora Armenians and connecting professionals; involving immigrant students and youth structures as mediators among their young colleagues representing local, Diaspora and international professional communities; organizing conferences, seminars and discussions on problems in definite spheres in Armenia.

These principles should be applied in both scientific and organizational activities.

The first activity should answer the following research questions for development of the repatriation and integration strategy:

1. How the regional distribution of world Armenians between 1915 and 2005 influenced characteristics of the hereditary Armenian: the changes in Christian context Diaspora Armenian and Muslim context Diaspora Armenian, Communist context Armenian.
2. Which are the substantially similar origins in the appearance of the Armenian of Armenia and the immigrant groups of Armenia?
3. How to assess the immigration size and its other sociodemographic characteristics and which are the changes over time?
4. How do we assess changes occurring among immigrants and their descendants in Armenia?
5. What can be human capital input brought by immigrants from other countries and impacts from it?

6. Which is the preferable model of life for Armenians, Armenia and immigrants group? Are their contradictions with democracy culture?
7. Under which conditions and until when does immigrants remain isolated group/inner-ethnic group?
8. Which are the results of correlation between of immigrated Armenians life quality in Armenia and in countries they previously lived. Comparison between local Armenians and returned Armenians quality of life after appropriate period of time when starting conditions are the same.

We believe that answers to these and some other questions suggested by other researchers will support the development of an integration strategy.

The second activity should be creating information, orientation and education centers for those who have already arrived and for those planning to migrate to Armenia in future. These centers will implement the following activities:

1. Intake conversations:
   ➤ conducting needs analysis to identify issues of concern to potential emigrants and immigrants in Armenia;
   ➤ designing a program, based on the key immigration issues identified and addressing beneficiary needs, level of adaptability, cultural values and work styles, cultural sensitivity, effectiveness of mixed work groups;
   ➤ providing a program recommendation for beneficiaries and relevant organizations (educational, employment, health, housing) in the host country to meet their needs.

2. Preparing recommendations on supporting individual immigrants by both public and private structures

3. Organizing integration courses

   ➤ Language teaching on two levels: independent usage of the language in everyday situations, conducting conversations in East and West Armenian;
   ➤ Orientation workshops to give immigrants an understanding of the system of the government and state administration in Armenia, geografical and administrative division, structure, the welfare system, constitutionaly promised rights and religious freedom.
   ➤ Training programs on taxation, legislation and housing conditions in Armenia.

4. Support early returnees to create self-help non-profit organizations, which will:

   ➤ Control/monitor activities of relevant state structures;
   ➤ Establish formal or non-formal networks of immigrants;

➢   Draw the attention of relevant state structures on issues of concern;
➢   Foster dialogue on integration issues on all levels, and
➢   Endorse a country policy on repatriation support procedures.

We believe that the suggested recommendations will be helpful in developing a strategy and overcoming ideological and organisational gaps in activities of Armenian and Diaspora organisations, contributing to the immigrantion of Armenians and the integration of all Armenians.

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