

**EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION FROM ARMENIA: A CASE STUDY OF
A GROUP OF OSF AND DAAD BENEFICIARIES**

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Abstract

This study addresses the present trends of educational migration from Armenia. The research scope includes only a segment of Armenian educational transmigrants that were recruited by two international organizations operating in the country, namely Open Society Foundations (OSF) and German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The transmigrants are closer investigated in terms of the following specific characteristics: the motivations guiding the studied group of educational transmigrants to go abroad for education; the rates of return versus the rates of staying in the country of study or moving forward to another country, and, finally, the efficiency of the knowledge transfer network created by them. Based on the case study, the research tries to examine the impact of the skilled human capital outflows on Armenia by using the concepts of brain drain, brain gain, and brain circulation. Although the two groups under study —DAAD and OSF beneficiaries— reflect differences with regard to some patterns and outcomes focused by the research, such as stay rate in the country of foreign education, the general tenor reveals mainly either brain drain or a poorly developed brain circulation. The study merely reflects a small portion of educational transmigrants from Armenia, given the short period of time and resources that I have as an MA student.

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INTRODUCTION

Due to economic and social crisis started in 1990s, only from 2002 to 2008 there were 800,000-1,000,000 permanent migrants from Armenia to Russia, Ukraine, USA and countries of Western and Eastern Europe. 2% of these immigrants left the country for the sake of education¹. Transnational educational migration is actual not only for Armenia but it is rather a widely spread phenomenon in our globalizing world, where the tendencies among youth to go abroad for education rises to significant numbers: in 2007, the number of students studying not in their home countries was about 2.8 million worldwide, while in 1999 it was only 1.8 million². Usually this flow of human capital takes place from developing countries to developed ones. According to the trends of students' outflow, educational migration has different impacts on different countries, and it becomes a big issue for developing countries where more and more young people aim at going abroad to more developed countries for education, sometimes considering it the first step for a permanent emigration.

As a developing country, Armenia is also influenced by these trends of the youth leaving for other countries with the purpose of higher education. As a consequence of highly skilled migration from Armenia, the problem of brain drain has been raised by the country's officials, international observers, and bloggers, thus being touched at different levels from official reports to blogs. Despite these debates, Armenia continues the course of a "laissez-faire"³ (Altbach, 1991:312) policy towards educational migration: anyone who wants to go abroad for education may go. More importantly, no policies have been developed for implementing professional networks between the migrants and those who stay. On the contrary, more developed countries implement different policies to attract highly skilled people: "these

¹ Returnee Survey 2008, by the OSCE Yerevan office

² UNESCO. (2009). *Global Education Digest*. Quebec, Canada: UNESCO-UIS.

³ The phrase in [French](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laissez-faire) literally means "let do" (source: Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laissez-faire>)

countries created some favorable rules to lure highly trained or skilled people, without paying any attention of its consequences for developing countries or any attempt to establish a fair game in the movement of talent.” (Damtew, 2005:233)

Furthermore, skilled migration takes place not only as a result of individual decisions, but also due to some international organizations which represent different universities or study programs and recruit young people to participate in educational or training programs abroad. These organizations actively encourage educational transmigration by organizing different meetings, conferences, and lectures about the possible destination-countries, application processes, deadlines, main requirements for acceptance, stipend or scholarship opportunities, and others. An interesting fact is that most of these kinds of organizations have their distinct policy that formally aims at coping with brain-drain. Thus, one of the requirements of the application package is to clarify how the enrolled student is going to use his/her future-gained knowledge back in the home country. In some cases the applicant must sign a declaration stating that after the education he/she is determined to come back. This type of organizations operates in Armenia as well, including, but not restricted to the following: Open Society Foundations (OSF), International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), British Council, TEMPUS (Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies) program, and Erasmus Mundus.

Chapter 1.

Theoretical background of the study of educational migration

Educational migration is a form of transmigration taking place when young people move from their home country to another country for the sake of a better education. According to the vast number of published articles and research in this sphere, educational migration and its impact on the countries involved remain an important topic of debates (Zhang and Ness, 2010; Brooks and Waters, 2009; Walker, 2010; Tremblay, 2005; Naidoo, 2006; Deumert et al, 2005; Lien and Wang, 2005; Woolley et al, 2008; Feliciano, 2005, Defoort and Rogers, 2008, Korner, 1998, etc.)

Many social scientists claim that educational migration is a negative process for the country of origin because it produces brain drain processes, influencing country's economic and social life (Zhang and Ness, 2010; Tremblay, 2005; Lien and Wang, 2005, Damtew, 2005). Meanwhile many others, especially migration policy researchers, see it as a way to development and rather describe it as brain gain or brain circulation that creates knowledge networks, enriching all the parts involved ([Schiff](#) and [Özden](#), 2006; Walker, 2010; Woolley et al., 2008; MENA, 2008).

1.1. Current approaches to educational migration

Nowadays, the majority of the research on educational migration is concerned with multiculturalism and with the counseling of the youth engaged in it. There is also research by psychologists on foreign students' adjustment issues. However, there is still not a lot of literature on foreign education that examines cross-cultural relations, the processes of transferring knowledge and related sub branches of the educational migration. The research on the topic is widely empirical and tends to concentrate on receiving countries, the so called First World countries, such as the USA and the member countries of the Organization for

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Also there is an increasing number of policy oriented papers on the Third World exporting countries discussing some specific problems that these countries meet as a result of the trends in educational migration. Meanwhile, the quantity of scientific research from the perspective of exporters, especially post-soviet countries, stands well behind from the amount of research examining the perspectives of the USA, Canada, Germany, and Australia as receiving countries.

The literature on educational migration also discusses the reasons that make young people to migrate with an intention to get higher education (Damtew, 2005; Walker, 2010; Brooks and Waters, 2009; Tremblay, 2005; Naidoo, 2006 Williams, 1981; Joel, 2008), which was also one of the main hypotheses of the research undertaken. As presented by many social scientists, these reasons or motivations vary from one person to another and one country to another: for some it is an opportunity for higher quality education, for others it is the first step in achieving their long-term goal of being established in a targeted country (Tremblay, 2005; van Parijs, 2000). Still for many it is a chance to get away from the political, social repressions or [injustice](#) (Walker, 2010), or just the change of the environment, the desire to have a new adventure, or as in case of the UK students who left for the USA, the “desire to gain entry to an elite higher education institution” (Brooks and Waters, 2009:1093)⁴.

By the same token, there is a wide range of factors that international students take into account when choosing the destination country or university. According to some researchers (Brooks and Waters, 2009; Tremblay, 2005), such factors include the level of the destination country’s economic development, the ranking status of the university, the amount of tuition fees, scholarships offered, living costs, family ties in the destination country,

Another motivation theorized by modern studies, that I especially focused on in this study is internationally recognized diploma as a way to higher positions in the labor market.

According to Alireza (2008), as the higher education becomes commercialized, more and

⁴ The research targeted on a rare educational migration-from a developed country to another developed one-from England to the US

more people consider education as a basic step towards higher occupational positions rather than as a way to cultivate knowledge and develop one's intellectual capabilities. Furthermore, Williams (1981) and Naidoo (2006) emphasize that nowadays students are keener to obtain "qualifications rather than knowledge and wisdom" (Williams, 1981) and even use the term "Diploma Disease", to characterize today's tendency to get education in another country.

As the current study concentrates not on individualistic based migration but on the educational migration that takes place through international organizations, let me present some literature on them. In literature there is an assumption that the consequences of globalization, such as the hegemonic existence of international corporations, create increasing global mobility of skilled people, especially taking into account that "the decline of many Third World countries to provide commensurate and appropriate work and living standards have catalyzed the global trend in the mobility of highly trained personnel" (Damtew, 2005:230).

Altbach (1991) rightly argues that such agencies as DAAD, The British Council, and the Fulbright program have the assumption that the sponsored graduates will come home with strong links and some loyalty towards the country of study. "Such connections would yield dividends not only in terms of the friendliness of important elites but also through loyalty to host-country computers, scientific equipment, textbooks and the like." (Altbach, 1991:314) In short, receiving countries consider a variety of motivations when financing foreign students and scholars, and "[...] it is clear that national interest plays an important, if not a dominating, role in decisions regarding government sponsorship." (Altbach, 1991:314)

1.2. Educational migration as a part of highly skilled migration: the concept of brain drain

The debate concerning educational migration in literature is mainly connected to the migration of highly skilled individuals, whose post-migration behavior concerning the professional cooperation with those left behind directly influences the development of their

home countries (Faist, Fauser and Kivisto, 2011). For the purpose of the current study, educational transmigrants are considered as a part of highly skilled transmigrants with a graduate degree or an extensive knowledge in a specific sphere. Taking into account that the studied groups of educational transmigrants have already earned at least their Bachelor's degrees and migrate aiming at Master's, PhD or Postdoctoral degrees, we can evaluate that the two groups of transmigrants—highly skilled and educational – share similar characteristics. This creates the basis for the discussion of educational transmigrants as another consistent part of high ability emigrants.

In literature the migration of highly skilled human capital without proper compensation was described as “brain drain”. According to Woolley et al, (2008) this term was first used in 1963 to describe the outflow of English scientists to the US. Then in 1975 the US officials defined it as a process that “deprives the developing nations of much needed human capital for achieving their major national goal, namely, modernization” (2008:160, citing a report by “U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations”, 1977).

Barry and Goodin (1992) present the brain drain hypothesis as the movement of people from underdeveloped countries to developed ones that adds to the global inequalities as “the best educated and most talented are among the most likely to move in order to make advantage of the greater professional and economic opportunities in affluent societies. Even among the poor it is the most energetic and ambitious who move, and usually people from the lower classes rather than the worst off because the latter do not have the resources needed for migration.” (Barry and Goodin, 1992:32) Accordingly, they conclude that migration is a transfer of human capital from the Third World countries to the First World countries, and the greatest loss for the sending country is the loss of people who are qualified enough to contribute to its development.

Likewise, as claimed by Altbach (1991), the emigration of educational transmigrants that causes brain drain is connected with such features of international higher education as the

centralization of major research sites, as well as publications and data transfer chains in some industrialized countries and the widespread usage of English as a scientific language. In the case of Armenia, which is also a developing country, brain drain can be one of the possible labels of educational migration, as will be discussed based on the case study in Chapter 3.

The outcomes of the mobility of highly skilled individuals or types of “brain transformation” (Faist, 2008) that might occur as a result of educational migration were described by Faist (2008). He classifies the various forms of brain transformation, which include:

- 1) “Brain drain” that may take place in poor countries, when high ability human capital finds no or hardly any replacement in the job market, which leads to even more underdevelopment.
- 2) “Brain drain” followed by “brain gain” when highly skilled individuals leave for a more developed country but then come back to contribute to their home country, bringing their skills obtained during their migration experience.
- 3) “Global brain chain” or “brain circulation” that in this study implies the creation of knowledge networks when transmigrants transfer their knowledge and ideas from the host countries to the home countries. This also may imply physical movements of human capital creating brain drain for departure countries and brain gain for recipient countries, e.g.: medical doctors move from Canada to the US and, in their turn, are replaced by African doctors in Canada.
- 4) “Brain waste” that portrays the situations when professionals become employed as domestic workers in migration countries or return back to their home country and find no appropriate workplace into which to put their potential.
- 5) The worst resolution is called “brain desertification”. In this case highly skilled workers do not return and do not sustain any contacts with their hometown.

1.3. Historical development of the concept of educational migration

In order to better understand and analyze the concept of educational migration in the framework of the current study, let's look at its historical development in literature. During the 1970-80s, the accent of literature was on the migration of highly skilled individuals to fill in the labor market gaps in the North. This phase is called "traditional brain-drain literature" focused on the "brain drain" phenomenon which was viewed as "a curse for developing countries" ([Schiff](#) and [Özden](#), 2006:201). The next stage takes place from the 1990s and is emphasized with the co-development or win-win strategy as the dominant policy towards migration: in this case migrants themselves are seen as development agents. Indeed, today's literature largely admits such positive effects as remittances, foreign direct investment, and skills obtained in the host country by return migrants and focuses on the phenomenon of "brain circulation," where skilled and professional workers move between wealthy nations or return to their homelands after migrating to another country.

Thus, considering the knowledge transfer prospects through skilled transmigrants, this type of migration was re-considered as brain gain or brain circulation. If the first phases emphasized financial remittances as a way that adds to the development of the sending country, the recent phase, especially regarding globalization with its highly advanced technology to connect people globally, considers social remittances, such as transfer of knowledge. This is what was presented by Vertovec as "globalization of human capital", "network of skilled workers" or "brain exchanging" (2002:7). Here is a Report by the Global Commission on International Migration (2005) explaining their reason for dropping brain drain in favor of brain circulation:

Given the changing pattern of international migration, the notion of "brain drain" is a somewhat outmoded one, implying as it does that a migrant who leaves her or his own country will never go back there. In the current era, there is a need to capitalize upon the growth of human mobility by promoting the notion of "brain circulation," in which migrants return to their own country on a regular or occasional basis, having the benefits of the skills and resources they have acquired while living and working abroad. (Joel, 2008:341).

This dominant positive approach to the migration of highly skilled individuals is mainly presented by policy oriented literature that is financed or conducted by international organizations. They develop the argument based on the win-win assumption in the context of mobile individuals and societies. Faist, Fauser and Kivisto (2011) call this approach a “bird’s-eye view” when the departure country is examined based on the impact of the host country through transmigrants.

The World Bank reporters, for example, consider migration of highly educated people as “potentially a win-win game for both sending and receiving countries,” (MENA, 2008:271) which does not even create “bottlenecks in domestic labor markets” (ibid, p. 261). The reporters calculate the economic impact of immigration on the sending country by the following formula: Economic impact=remittances-forgone output and the education of the migrants received.

1.4. Educational migration as a form of transmigration

The study views the flows of educational migration as a part of transnational movements. A revisit to the concept of skilled migration from the perspective of transnationalism implies creation and maintenance of a network of transmigrants that serves to transfer their knowledge and ideas from the host country to the departure one. Transnationalism underlines the phenomenon of migration flows when those who have migrated don’t cease to be a part of their home country, and isolate themselves from it. They rather take relatively active part in the developments of the sending country, positioning themselves as nodes in “diaspora knowledge networks” (Mayer, 2001; De Haas, 2006).

Consequently, transnationalism implies the maintenance of multiple connections and interactions that link individuals and associations beyond geographic borders of nation-states (Vertovec, 1999, 2009; Schiller and Basch, 1995; Portes, 1997; Nagel and Staeheli, 2008; Kivisto, 2003; Brubaker, 2001.) Here is how Vertovec interprets it: “Transnationalism

describes a condition in which, despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders (and all the laws, regulations and national narratives they represent), certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a planet-spanning yet common—however virtual—arena of activity” (Vertovec, 1999:1). The advancement of technological systems, particularly the emergence of cheaper and faster telecommunications, transportations and other means of communication increasingly create easy access to connections throughout the world (Castells, 1996; Portes, 2001).

Thus, if brain drain views the migration of high ability people as a one-way paradigm, transnational migration positions it as brain circulation:

What at one time was a 'one way street' in which Third World professionals migrated to the West, maintaining few contacts at home, has been transformed into a complex set of relationships in which emigrant professionals contribute significantly to a growing world economy and to the flow of expertise - and sometimes of capital - from the industrialized nations to many Third World and newly industrializing nations. (Altbach, 1991:317)

1.5. Armenian perspective

Based on the approach, of policy oriented literature that view educational migration as a “zero-sum conception” (Woolley et al., 2008:160), we can assume that Armenia, as a developing country, wins from the outmigration of the highly skilled people. There is a scarcity of literature describing the tendencies and consequences of educational migration from Armenia. The contemporary studies on Armenian emigration are carried out by International Organization of Migration (2008⁵); International Center for Human Development, UNDP (2008⁶); World Bank (2009⁷) and International Labor Organization (2009⁸). Still even these reports don’t concentrate on and dig deeper issues concerning skilled migration, let alone educational transmigration. Most of these papers provide some statistical data on Armenian emigration, e.g. according to the World Bank report, in 2000 over 22

⁵ http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/Armenia_Profile2008.pdf

⁶ http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADS643.pdf

⁷ http://www.unescap.org/sdd/meetings/egm_mig_sep2010/pres_nilim%20baruah.pdf

⁸ www.ilo.org/publns

thousand of those 44 thousand Armenians who immigrated to the USA had higher education. But mostly the reports are policy oriented and present migration trends as a path to development:

While the large scale of economic emigration in the last decade has caused a significant brain and skill drain phenomenon, it has also brought a strong remittance benefit. Remittances constitute the largest source of foreign exchange surpassing both foreign direct investment and the value of exports. International Organization of Migration's report on Armenia, 2009.

By the same token, a paper by International Labor Organization argues that in the current labor market of Armenia there is “a mismatch between the supply and demand of the labor force” (2009:80). This “mismatch” is based on the fact that Armenian job market cannot absorb the available labor force of educated people. This situation may be fixed by outmigration.

To sum up, these reports and papers indicate such positive outcomes of outmigration from Armenia as financial remittances and relieving labor market from additional human supply: “emigration reduces the supply-demand gap for skilled workers in developing countries and ensures optimal allocation of unused human resources ” (IMO, 2009:80).

1.6. Migration-development nexus

As was mentioned above, despite the financial remittances what evoke more enthusiasm about highly skilled migration are the so called “social” remittances—knowledge and ideas that are being transferred from the developed North to South that facilitates the latter's development. Policy oriented literature interprets these social transfers as positive considering the fact that they are concerned with what is assumed to be development connected to modernity. These ideas are mainly about human rights, gender equity, democracy, and others. Another factor taken into consideration is the preference of temporary migrants who can more directly and in higher dimensions maintain this transfer and will not be a permanent loss of human capital for the sending countries.

Besides these positive claims concerning migration-development nexus, there is also a rather negative claim concerned with the development of sending countries. This claim is educational migrants' selectivity that is their demographic, professional and educational background in comparison with the population left. The issue was discussed by many researchers, such as Feliciano (2005), Zhang and Ness (2010), Barry, (1992), [Schiff](#) and [Özden](#), (2006), van Parijs, (2000), SOPEMI (2009). They assume that the probability of highly skilled people going abroad for the sake of education is higher in comparison to the less skilled. This assumption is often based on the logic that education makes people more successful abroad, and that it is less expensive for skilled people to migrate than others ([Schiff](#) and [Özden](#), 2006).

As a conclusion, I would like to add that the main concern in the migration of “best and brightest” is that it creates “lower average ability level for the educated people remaining in the source country” ([Schiff](#) and [Özden](#), 2006:203). After all, one may wonder how effective can be a nation's improvement in any sphere of its life if the most skilled ones of the population no longer work for the sake of their country's development:

“[...]it also leads to a loss of growth potential as a result of the loss of rationally thinking, innovative individuals prepared to take risks. The scope for innovation in business, society and government in migrants' home countries in the South therefore stagnates and the countries' ability to introduce reforms remains low.” (Korner, 1998:27)

Though brain circulation may be viewed as Damtew calls it “a panacea” (Damtew, 2005) for brain drain processes, in Chapter 3 I argue that without an improved and elaborated policy of knowledge transfer networks the existing amount of brain circulation cannot outweigh or counterbalance the ever-growing brain drain processes so active in Armenia.

Chapter 2

The Methods

In my study of contemporary Armenian educational migration I focused on particular organizations that recruit youth for studying abroad. Primarily I intended to concentrate on four organizations— Open Society Foundations (OSF), International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), and German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), TEMPUS (Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies). Later, based on the limitations of time and some specific issues raised from the representatives of the organizations, particularly the restricted access to the requested information on their beneficiaries, I limited my research scope to two of them—DAAD and OSF. Before approaching the discussion of the profiles of these two organizations, I would like to present the methods used during the research. Those methods are survey questionnaire and in-depth semi-structured interviews.

1. Survey questionnaire was at first created in Microsoft Word format, so that the respondents should have to open it and then, save the changes with their answers, and send it back to my e-mail address/es. The inconveniences for the informant of such a Word embedded questionnaire was that it was time consuming to fill it in and, most importantly, was not anonymous. Realizing the shortcomings of the word format questionnaire, I created the same questionnaire in a Google document form, so that the survey became online and anonymous.⁹

In June the questionnaire was sent twice to 45 DAAD and 150 OSF graduates, 130 of which were the alumni of Central European University. The e-mail addresses of the DAAD beneficiaries were provided by the program coordinators with the permission of the graduates. By the same token, the OSF Higher Education/External Education Programs

⁹ The webpage of the questionnaire: <https://spreadsheets.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dE0tWS1BQXc0ME1XdTIPVXFLSG1SOHc6MA>

Coordinator provided me with randomly chosen OSF scholarship recipients of 2005-2009, and the CEU alumni Armenian representative forwarded the questionnaire to 130 CEU Armenian alumni. However, the questionnaire was filled in only by 19 DAAD and 28 OSI/CEU alumni.

The questionnaire included 18 main questions, aiming to address the basic issues of the research. It contained both optional (with several suggested options to guide the informant) and open questions (see Appendix). In case of some questions, depending on the answers given, additional or specific questions applying to only a particular group were required. For example, in case of the question about what the informants did after completing the education abroad, depending on the response given (1. returned to Armenia; 2. stayed in the country of study; 3. moved to another country) they were guided to a set of questions applicable only to them.

2. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 beneficiaries of DAAD and OSF. The interviewees represented all the three main groups involved by the research: those who returned to Armenia; those who stayed in the country of study, and those who moved on to another destination country. I did some of the interviews in person, but the majority was conducted via Skype. The interviews were based on the same questions presented in the questionnaire; though during the interviews I did not restrict the questions to those in the survey but rather tried to manipulate the discussion in a way to get more explanations and insights towards the central issues of the study undertaken.

The informants were chosen from those whose e-mail addresses I was provided with. For the balance of informants from DAAD and OSF/CEU, as well as from the three above mentioned groups of educational transmigrants (returnees, those who stayed in the country of study, and those who moved forward), I tried to do a pre-selection, although the eight of the 12 informants were CEU alumni who were eager to be interviewed due to solidarity with another CEU student.

The content of the questions aimed at revealing the main characteristics of today's educational emigration from Armenia—mainly targeting the motivations guiding the respondents to leave for education abroad; their decisions to return/stay/move forward, and, in the case of those who stayed in the country of study or moved forward, the type and intensity of their connections maintained back home. This allowed examining the informants' influence on the development of the country regarding their involvement in the knowledge transfer chains. The analyses of these questions are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Besides the questions striving to provide information of the main issue of this study, there were also other sets of questions aiming to give some supplementary insight about the informants. For example, the first set of questions was designed to provide some general information about the demographic profiles of the respondents, namely their age, gender, country of residence, as well as educational background and work experience before leaving for the education abroad. The latter helps to describe their potential as human resource capital, particularly giving basis for identifying them as highly skilled professionals (see question no. 7 in the Appendix). The second section of questions targets the informants' education abroad, particularly how long, where, and in what university they studied, when they graduated and, finally, what degree they received as a result of the study. This section also provides some background information about the respondents.

2.1. The profiles of the studied International organizations

The current research concentrates on the beneficiaries of two of international organizations functioning in Armenia—DAAD and OSF. The choice of the two is concerned with the fact that because of their funding and good academic programs, they are considered to be prestigious and very popular among Armenian graduates. The other reason for choosing these particular organizations is that their study-abroad programs are complete degrees—Master's, PhD, and postdoctoral.

Let me briefly present the profiles of the organizations, graduates of which and their impact on Armenia will be discussed in the research. The Open Society Foundations (OSF) globally funds different programs, such as education, public health, and business development. OSF was established in 1984 and is mainly funded by the philanthropist George Soros. It operates in more than 70 countries worldwide and opened its office in Armenia in 1997 “to assist democratic transformations and promote the values of an open society, the one characterized by rule of law, democratically elected government, respect for minorities and their rights, vigorous civil society”(<http://osi.am/about.asp>). Among the programs promoted and financed by the OSF some are targeted on minimizing the brain drain processes of some developing countries, including Armenia. For example, this organization has created the Returning Scholars Fellowship Program, which assists researchers who have studied abroad to establish and implement their knowledge for the sake of the development of their own country.

As a part of Soros foundations¹⁰, Central European University is internationally recognized and has a profile of postgraduate education in humanities and social sciences¹¹. My choice of targeting the OSF and particularly the CEU graduates is based on the consideration that as a CEU student, being a part of Armenian CEU network, I would have higher chances of collecting more data from them.

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is a governmental organization which, according to their website (<http://www.daad.de/portrait/wer-wir-sind/kurzportrait/08940.en.html>), is the largest funding organization in the world, supporting international academic cooperations. It was established in 1925 and until now has provided financial assistance to about 1.5 million exchange students and scholars/researchers. Besides funding functions, DAAD also advocates the German higher education system abroad, promoting Germany as a research and academic destination. As a national agency, its budget originates mainly from German ministries, as well as European Union and many other

¹⁰ Though formally CEU is not funded by OSF

¹¹ See the OSF webpage: <http://www.soros.org/about>

organizations. It has 14 regional offices and 50 information centers¹². The DAAD office in Yerevan opened in 2004, and, as declared by the DAAD Armenia webpage, one of the goals of the agency is “to promote academic and scientific advancement in developing countries and in the transformation countries of Central and Eastern Europe as a means of supporting the economic and democratic reform process there” (http://www.daad.am/arm_en.html). My choice of DAAD as another target of study is based on the assumption that it has comparatively higher number of beneficiaries, as each year about 50 people leave for education in Germany through DAAD, which would provide higher response rate.

2.2. The profiles of the studied educational transmigrants

As was mentioned above, those who filled out the survey questionnaire and were interviewed during the study are the beneficiaries of DAAD and OSF. The informants were mainly 25-35 years old: DAAD—16 respondents and OSF/CEU—18. The majority of those who filled in the questionnaire were women: DAAD—14 out of 19; OSF—23 out of 28. As for the interviewees, two out of four DAAD graduates and five out of eight CEU alumni were women.

The DAAD respondents studied mainly two and three years in such universities in Germany as University of Trier, University of Konstanz, University of Hamburg, University of Berlin, and others. The majority received Master’s degree as a result. The majority of OSF graduates are CEU alumni—23 people. The other 5 graduated from the University of Essex and from Michigan State University, USA. They mainly studied one (57% of all respondents) or two (18% of all respondents) years. OSF beneficiaries mainly studied for a year, receiving an MA degree.

The year of the graduation of my respondents ranged from 2004 to 2011, though at first I intended to include only those who graduated from 2005 to 2009 (which was mentioned in

¹² See DAAD webpage: <http://www.daad.de/portrait/wer-wir-sind/kurzportrait/08940.en.html>

the introduction of the survey as well). In case of DAAD alumni there were four 2011 graduates. Among OSI/CEU respondents there was only one 2011 graduate.

As the intention of the study was to reveal the characteristics of those educational migrants who migrated to receive MA, PhD, or Postdoctoral degrees, all of my informants had already received a higher education—depending on the degree requirements they had applied for, but the majority had BA degree and studied for an MA. It is important to note that for the purpose of revealing different and similar patterns of the targeted organizations' beneficiaries and the outcomes these patterns might lead to, the results of the survey questionnaire and interviews are mainly analyzed separately.

Chapter 3

The Characteristics of Armenian Educational Migration

The conducted research of the existing literature, as well as the carried out surveys and interviews provided an amount of information regarding the educational migration in Armenia. In order to identify the main characteristics of this type of migration in Armenia, I selected three main questions:

1. What are the motivations guiding the studied group of educational transmigrants to go abroad for education?
2. Does it bring to brain drain or brain gain?
3. Does it create cooperation networks?

These three questions summarize the collected data in the framework of my main research, which is finding out typical features of Armenian educational migration from the perspective of the studied small groups of DAAD and OSF/CEU graduates. The purpose of the first question, and the reason of analyzing it in the beginning is to find out what were the motivations of the studied group for leaving Armenia to study abroad. The answer to this question will be critical in identifying whether the educational migration results in brain drain or brain gain for the country, which is the main subject of the second question. Here I will analyze and compare the return/staying rates of the study group. The third question will reflect on yet another aspect of educational migration's impact on Armenia, analyzing whether it benefits from educational migration because of created cooperation networks between the graduates who stay abroad or come back and implement their knowledge obtained as a result of education overseas.

3.1. Motivations/reasons for going to study abroad

It is very important to understand the intentions that guide young people from Armenia to study abroad because this is what leads to brain drain, brain gain, or brain circulation—the outcome of such transmigration/migration. According to a report by independent analysts, government officials, and representatives of the international organizations¹³, one of the main reasons for brain drain in Armenia is the absence of an attractive job market:

¹³ The project (“Support to Migration Policy Development and Relevant Capacity Building in Armenia”) actually was a roundtable discussion and was funded by the European Union.

Though there are no valid statistical data on what part of “studying migrants” from Armenia return to their country of origin and what part stays abroad in search of employment, still there are some research findings available which reveal that the number of those staying abroad is quite high. Actually, the major reason is not simply the attractive salary and availability of an affluent lifestyle as commonly held. Reasons for “brain drain” vary. For instance, one is the state which annually educates thousands of specialists using the taxpayer money and later on fails to attract these very alumni to state institutions or at least make it clear that it needs them. On the other hand, for people having studied in the best universities abroad or even for those who have had a significant experience in their own countries, civil service means a new, not always acceptable and at times even aversive relations and values (International Center for Human Development, 2008).

As in case of every type of migration, be it economically or politically driven, there are both the so-called ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors that influence the motivations of students from such a developing country as Armenia for studying abroad. Following the discussions of the literature and considering the socio-economic situation of the country I hypothesized the following options as the reasons/motivation for studying abroad which were also listed in the questionnaire: expectations for a better education; expectations that with an international diploma they could get a better job in Armenia; dissatisfaction with social/political/economic conditions in Armenia, possibility of immigration and finally attracted to lifestyle overseas

3.1.1. Expectations for a better education

According to the results of the questionnaire sent to the main subjects of my study, a small group of DAAD and OSF/CEU beneficiaries, the “expectations for a better education”, was the main motivation for studying abroad. The option was mentioned by 13 out of 19 DAAD and 22 out of 28 OSF/CEU graduates. This shows that the main motivation for educational migration in case of my studied group is that it gives young people from developing countries an opportunity to study in universities with more advanced technological and educational systems compared with the ones that their home country can offer.

The option was equally present among the answers to the question of motivations during the interviews also. One of my interviewees mentioned that considering the requirements of Armenian job market, she wanted to acquire a new specialization in human rights but being

aware that Armenian universities cannot provide an up-to-date education in this sphere she applied to CEU. Likewise, another interviewee reported:

I studied Economics at the Yerevan State University and the education there was outmoded: we learned theories that one would never apply to practice... I needed practical knowledge and that is what I found in CEU Business School. (R., CEU alumnus)

As it appeared during the interviews, my informants see education abroad as a source of obtaining knowledge which can be applied for the sake of career building: here knowledge and career come together.

My friends and the colleagues holding higher positions inspired me as I saw their competence and ability to solve problems and I believed that they became so much professional due to their education in which I felt lack” so knowledge and career come hand in hand... (G., DAAD graduate)

The question of applicability of the knowledge gained during the studies might have two outcomes. Sometimes after coming back home the graduates feel overqualified for the job they do, or because of the lack of more advanced technical and theoretical applications or other resources they cannot use the knowledge they gained:

I did my studies in Environmental sciences but my knowledge was not applicable in Armenia: environment-oriented NGO-s were just starting to appear and they just began to study the sphere. (N., CEU alumnus)

This is the negative outcome that was defined by social scientists as “brain waste” (see Chapter 1). Meanwhile the positive outcome that was reported by a couple of informants was the feeling of satisfaction they had towards their jobs. For example, an interviewee working in human rights protection sphere said she was quite happy with the improvements her organization achieved due to the techniques and knowledge she gained while her study abroad.

3.1.2. Expectations that with an international diploma they could get a better job in Armenia

In the questionnaire the second preferred option that was mentioned by my informants as a motivation for their study abroad is the expectations that with an international diploma they

could get a better job in Armenia. In fact, the majority of my interviewees also mentioned better education as a means to achieve higher career positions. Their main argument was that an internationally recognized university would provide not only knowledge but rather a diploma that would certainly add considerable value to their professional profile and make them quite compatible in the Armenian job market. Here is what one of my respondents said:

I wanted to work in an international organization and understood that for that I need the skills that I could obtain only studying abroad. Besides, it would provide me with the sufficient language knowledge: you know that one needs to practice it all the time in order to learn it properly... (A., CEU alumnus)

Surprisingly, almost all of them saw their future “dream-job” in an international organization, rather than in a local organization and that is why mostly considered education abroad as a guarantee for their success. Based on the interviews, the supposed reasons for considering education abroad as a path to a good career position in international organizations are the following: professional knowledge gained will be in accordance to the job profiles of international organization, while most of the local organizations fail to provide jobs where one can use the knowledge acquired during the education abroad; language knowledge and other qualifications, like critical thinking, good writing skills, and others gained during the migration/study period will allow them to be qualified for the job; international organizations seem to be a guarantee for more sustainable and challenging jobs; there is the assumption that the personal qualities are more valued in these organizations than the socio-economic status or personal acquaintances, so it is quite realistic to climb the career ladder, and of course the consideration that international organizations offer higher paid jobs.

3.1.3. Dissatisfaction with social/political/economic conditions in Armenia and attraction to lifestyle overseas

The third option chosen by both DAAD and OSF/CEU graduates in the questionnaire is dissatisfaction with social/political/economic conditions in Armenia. Thus, when deciding to migrate, the individuals consider not only better education and jobs with higher salaries but also such push aspects as difficulties and dissatisfactions with the living standards in their

home countries. When asking my respondents this question during the interviews I felt how they were trying to give some socially desirable answers: in fact, nobody directly complained about the social, political and even economic situation in Armenia. Their uncertain behavior regarding this question most probably was caused by their consideration of my, another Armenian's feelings towards our homeland, thus the cultural solidarity.

The fourth preferred option of respondents is their attraction to lifestyle overseas. A. reported that as a person, who has lived in Ukraine for a quite long period with more liberal moral rules he wanted to feel free from the traditional limitations of Armenian society, a conservative one regarding its social morals. Regarding this question again I felt that sometimes my informants were not honest with me, another Armenian from the same society: they did not completely refuse being dissatisfied with social or political conditions at home but also didn't confirm it openly.

3.1.4 Education abroad as the possibility of immigration

Surprisingly one of the least favored answers was education abroad as the possibility of immigration. For many foreign students who come from a developing country, education is the first step in achieving their long-term goal of being established in a country. When choosing a university some students firstly pay attention to the location of the university, considering the intention of staying in that country. The results of both interviews and questionnaire showed that this is not true in the case of my respondents. During the interviews even those who stayed in the country of study or later moved to another country assured, that they did have no intention of immigration through education. Just the opposite, they were very enthusiastic to establish themselves economically in Armenia through achieving career heights with the diploma earned abroad.

Thus, one of the main findings of my research is that my respondents do not study abroad for migration. They rather migrate for education and often stay in the country of education. All of

them wanted to come back and make a career with the help of the diploma and knowledge.

One of those who now live in the country of study said:

After finishing my MA studies I returned to Armenia but soon understand that there is no future there for me: I do not regret that I came to Germany again as here I have a more challenging job with five time higher salary, I can financially support my family (refers to parents) from here better than I would do working in Armenia.(B., DAAD graduate)

A CEU graduate who now lives in Yerevan and works in the Genocide Museum said:

My MA thesis was about Armenian genocide; I returned home full of plans and projects to implement into this sphere, but none of my suggestions is taken into account: they say it is not Europe for you... After all this I will use every opportunity to go abroad again! (M., CEU alumnus)

Another respondent who now lives in Switzerland said that despite the fact that she had a job in her professional sphere with a good salary in Armenia, after living abroad during studies she understood that she wants to live in a more developed country, and so left the country.

As we can see, in many cases Armenian students end up abroad not because they chose to do so initially but rather because of the absence of challenging and well-paid jobs, higher living standards, and others. More importantly, they know that with a diploma from an internationally recognized university and ‘saleable’ skills, as well as with the experience of living abroad, they can establish themselves in the country to which they choose to immigrate.

Conclusions

Thus, the interviews and questionnaire show that the studied group of educational transmigrants decides to gain education abroad first of all considering it as a source of obtaining knowledge and qualifications. This is based on their assertion that the content of the courses offered in Armenia is not satisfying because of not being up-to-date. However, after completing the education abroad some of them cannot apply it to their everyday work life because the technological and theoretical infrastructures in the country don’t allow it. This can be described as a sort of “brain waste”, when after returning to their home countries, highly skilled individuals cannot appropriately apply their potential into their jobs (see

Chapter 1). Anyway, positive outcomes, such as achieving some results in integrating their knowledge were also reported.

For most of my informants diploma obtained as a result of the study abroad is considered a guarantee for a better job and higher career positions. It adds some value to their professional profiles making them more compatible in the job market. One of the discoveries regarding their job preferences was that almost all of them mentioned international organizations as desirable employers. Such kind of desirability to be hired by international companies rather than by local ones is based on their assumptions that international organizations can provide with more sustainable and challenging jobs with higher salaries. When speaking about their dissatisfactions with Armenia, the majority gave socially desirable answers trying not to complain about any current issues there.

When studying the reasons that motivated my informants to go abroad for education, the main finding that was revealed and was in contrast with the hypothesis emphasized by many social scientists (see Chapter 1) is that the study group didn't consider education abroad as a first step to a long term migration goal. Due to their patriotic feeling, their intention was to migrate temporarily for the sake of better education and then go back in order to implement their knowledge into development of their country.

3.2. Brain Drain or Brain Gain

Probably the most important question in this research is whether educational transmigration leads to brain drain or brain gain, since the main research topic is to find out the characteristics of current trends of the youth transmigration for the sake of education. After summarizing the results of the survey, the interesting discovery was that about the half of the students returned to Armenia after completing the education, though the percentages of return/stay were quite different between DAAD and OSF/CEU (see Table 1).

Scholarship provider/university	Return rates	The rates of staying in the country of study	The rates of moving forward
DAAD	42%	37%	21%
OSF/CEU	68%	14%	18%

Table 1: Return/stay/move forward rates

The main explanation for the difference of the return and stay rate between DAAD and OSF/CEU graduates is that Germany with a total of \$2.940 trillion (2010 estimate) of [Gross domestic income](#) (GDP)¹⁴ is a much richer country than Hungary with a total of \$187.627 billion (2010 estimate) of GDP¹⁵. Consequently, Germany having more job openings and lower unemployment rate can attract more young graduates, whereas Hungary is not that luring for youth from developing countries. I would like to emphasize also that Germany has a certain migration policy towards education: the Immigration Act enforced since 1 January 2005 declares:

After ending your studies, you can extend your stay and spend up to one year looking for a job in Germany that is appropriate to your qualifications. Highly-qualified foreigners, who have a job offer in Germany, can receive a (permanent) Settlement Permit (Niederlassungserlaubnis) without the need for any labour market checks or the approval of the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) (www.zuwanderung.de).

This shows how foreign students become targeted by the immigration policy of Germany, taking into account the human capital values they have as professional capabilities, and the fact that they must have been adapted culturally and socially during the studies. In contrast, Hungary maintains a more “passive” policy towards the integration of migrants¹⁶.

Another reason for such a difference of the return and stay rate between the two groups—DAAD and OSF/CEU, can be that the CEU alumni lack the advantage of the language knowledge as the courses here are in English, while the university itself is located in Hungary and consequently Hungarian is the official language in the country. Based on this we can

¹⁴ Source of information: Wikipedia—<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany>

¹⁵ Source of information: Wikipedia—<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungary>

¹⁶ Source of information: Network Migration in Europe—<http://www.migrationeducation.org/home.0.html>

assume that CEU students are not prepared for further settlement and integration into the new receiving country and maybe that is why only 14% of all the respondents stayed in Hungary.

One of the more interesting reasons for staying or later on returning to Hungary I learned are emotional ties. Two of my interviewees reported that they moved back to Hungary after a period of living in Armenia for the reasons of personal relationships.

Actually it was my girlfriend who found a job for me here and coming back here I was greatly inspired by the motivation to live with her... Now we are no longer together but I am still working here in the same place... (R., CEU alumnus)

The other informant said that he applied to the PhD program at CEU because when he was in his second year of MA studies, he fell in love with a girl who was in her first year studies (she also studied in a two-year MA program).

However, according to the survey questionnaire, even though about half of the OSF/CEU graduates returned to Armenia, the percentage of those who eventually stayed there is lower (see Table 2). The conducted interviews showed that the reasons for this are the above discussed personal relationships (as was reported by two CEU informants) or some others, e.g. dissatisfaction with the economic infrastructure of the country (as reported by R., CEU alumni). Whereas in the case of DAAD informants, according to the survey, there was no difference in the percentages of those who returned to Armenia, stayed in the country of study, or moved forward.

OSF/CEU graduates	The rates of return and eventual stay in Armenia	The rates of staying in the country of study	The rates of moving forward
Immediately after graduation	68%	14%	18%
Eventually, after a period of stay in Armenia	50%	21%	29%

Table 2: Comparisons of immediate and eventually return/stay/move forward rates, OSF/CEU graduates

3.2.1. Reasons for return/stay/move forward

Now let us discuss the main reasons for the studied group of transmigrants to return to Armenia/stay in the country they studied/move forward to another country after completing the education. For this purpose I identify and will separately discuss three groups of educational transmigrants: group 1: those who returned to Armenia; group 2: those who stayed in the country of study and group 3: those who moved on to another destination country.

Group 1: The reasons to return

In the case of DAAD graduates the first reason pointed out for the return to Armenia is that there was no option of staying in the country of study because of the restrictions and regulations of the study abroad program: “return was one of the requirements of my scholarship” (H, DAAD graduate). The second reason identified was the lack of opportunities of finding a job in the case of OSF/CEU graduates also because of the absence/limitations in the language knowledge. The third major reason for both groups is psychological: the respondents missed their families, friends and their homeland. Still many respondents sounded very patriotic as they stated that they wanted to contribute to the development of the country. Such kind of patriotic answers were given by both DAAD and OSF/CEU graduates many times not only during interviews but also in the questionnaire: “Can't live without Yerevan! Had my family situated there as well.” “I wanted to be back to my home country and work there using the knowledge gained at CEU.” “I was studying exactly for investing my skills back in Armenia.” (excerpts from questionnaire.)

As the interviews show, there is always the certainty that having an international education, people can market themselves more successfully in the labor market back home, which is mostly true. They have “salable” skills, better adaptability, and means of access to required

information which makes them highly competitive. Consequently, they can establish themselves in a better way in the given country's job market: that is why they have no intention not to return to Armenia. Two of my informants said that despite a job offer in the host country, they returned as they had left their boyfriends in Armenia. There were also some patriotic responses:

The reason was because I wanted to live in my own country, to improve the health system in Armenia and implement my knowledge, (R., CEU alumnus).

Group 2: The reasons to stay in the country of study

The likelihood that people would establish in the country where they studied is considerably higher. The reasons for that are that studying in a country is very beneficial in some issues for those who decide to stay. For example one can get country-specific knowledge and adjust to the country, acquire language knowledge, and the degree received will be recognized in the current country's labor market. The foreign students usually also know the techniques of job search and even do work practice, which makes their transition from a foreign student into the workforce successful. Besides, based on the diploma received from the local universities, the status of foreign graduates very often is similar to native-born graduates, but generally this implies only to the occupations that have scientific and technical profiles (SOPEMI 2009).

The reasons for staying according to the survey questionnaire are mainly concerned with the labor market/job offer. The cultural preferences and lack of employment opportunities in Armenia were the second two preferred options, whereas personal reasons as an option were pointed out less.

Here is what one of my DAAD informants reported during the interview:

I clearly saw what I can do to climb the career ladder, which was absent in Armenia, a career that was many times intellectually challenging and financially profitable. (G., DAAD graduate).

Group 3: The reasons to move forward to another country

The last group of migrants discussed in my research includes those who move to another country, which excludes both their homeland and country of their study. None of the respondents, both from DAAD and OSF/CEU graduates, indicated that their reason for moving forward was the lack of employment opportunities. The results of the questionnaire show that the majority of the studied group stayed in Armenia after education abroad for a year and, less frequently, for two or three years. They decided to migrate again because they believed that with the diploma and migration experience they can achieve higher career positions abroad or as was reported by a DAAD beneficent it is about higher living standards in richer countries:

Socially I felt more convenient to stay as I was among family and friends. Also, it was not about economic conditions as I worked in Armenia and was quite satisfied with the money earned. It was mostly about the living standards: after living for a period of time in Europe I got used to its advantageous standards and couldn't get back to Armenian reality again. (K., DAAD graduate)

Conclusions

In this section I analyzed the rates and the reasons of my studied groups of transmigrants to return, stay in the country of study or move forward in order to find out whether it leads to brain drain or brain gain for the country of origin. One of the discoveries of this chapter was that though about half of the respondents returned back to Armenia, they somehow ended up in another country. The explanations for this, provided by the informants, are that after a short stay in their homeland they left Armenia again because of the expectations for a better employment opportunities (based on their diploma and qualifications obtained thanks to education abroad) and in a search for higher living standards.

Another issue that came up during my observations is the difference of stay rates between the DAAD and OSF/CEU graduates: DAAD beneficiaries were keener to stay in Germany (21%) than OSF/CEU-ers (14%), some of which reported that they eventually stayed in Hungary because of emotional ties. The explanation of this is that the economy of Germany is more

prosperous than in Hungary. Also, the former has distinct migration policy that targets highly skilled human capital, while Hungary has no such policy. Finally, DAAD beneficiaries mainly have the advantage of language knowledge which CEU graduates lack.

3. 3. *Brain Circulation*

This chapter examines how the subjects of my case study influence the development of Armenia based on their education abroad, how the knowledge circulates through Armenian educational transmigrants. For this intention this time I identify two groups of educational transmigrants: group 1: those who returned to Armenia, and group 2: those who stayed in the country of study or moved on to another country

3.3.1 Group 1: those who returned to Armenia

In the questionnaire the most favored two options in the case of both groups of graduates (DAAD and OSF/CEU) are implementing the knowledge they gained during the studies and transferring new ideas.

In Yerevan I work in the sphere of agriculture. During my studies in Germany I get acquainted with many techniques in this sphere and I try to realize those. Of course, if the resources and technology were at higher standards the results would be better [...].
(H., DAAD graduate)

The “feedback effects” as determined by Cinar and Docquier (2004), to describe the impact of return migration in the case of educational transmigrants, besides the knowledge and ideas gained during the studies, may also be the ties or the relationships they still maintain after returning. The most favored answer in the case of both studied groups is friendship ties,—mentioned by 100% of OSI/CEU graduates and 75% of DAAD graduates. The second preferred answer is academic ties, as 50% of DAAD and 32 % of OSF/CEU graduates mentioned this option in the questionnaire. Here is how one of my interviewees, who currently lives in Armenia, described her contribution after studying abroad:

After graduation through Soros networks I designed and implemented many projects concerning disability rights protection. Also the fact that I am a “child” of Soros

Foundations and have many connections inside OSF networks helped me greatly as the projects were collaborated with OSF and financed by it. (G., CEU alumnus)

The least preferred choice is business ties—0% of DAAD and 11% of OSI/CEU respondents.

It is true that in this era of globalization, economic integration, building business and cultural relationships with partner countries are very important goals for a country. These goals can be achieved by deep knowledge of the given country's economic and social situation, which in its turn can be absorbed the best way via international education. In this case I think the failure to do so is not the fault of the graduates but the economic situation of the country itself: it is far not easy to start a business in Armenia. Besides, those who leave for education are most likely not the kind of people who are oriented towards business, but rather to academia: the majority of the informants indicated the desire to gain knowledge as the first motivation for leaving to study abroad.

3.3.2. Group 2: those who stayed in the country of study or moved on to another country

In order to determine how these highly skilled individuals who don't return after education abroad compensate for their absence with the means of transferring their knowledge, let us examine the answers given to the question whether they cooperate with the colleagues in Armenia in the same professional sphere or not. The results of the questionnaire show that the number of those who maintain professional networks with Armenian fellows is almost equal to the number of those who don't. In the case of OSF/CEU beneficiaries cooperation takes place by organizing conferences with Armenians in the same sphere, giving advice in writing dissertations, and conducting a co-research or “join public discussions focusing on problems and discussing potential solutions.” (excerpt from the questionnaire.) DAAD graduates depending on their professions cooperate with Yerevan State University, Central Bank of Armenia, Ministries, “organizing international seminars and holding professional contact networks” (excerpt from the questionnaire.)

During the interviews some of those who stated the absence of any kind of professional networks with Armenia explained it with such conditions as geographic distance or lack of sufficient resources:

I am doing now a doctoral study I do not have the time to design projects that would develop the country in any way, besides, I do not think somebody there will be willing to accept my ideas. (N., CEU alumnus)

To those of my informants who either stayed in the country of study or moved forward to another country, I inquired about their intentions to come back to Armenia, trying to identify what concept is more describable for them—transmigration with transmigrants permanent intention to return or migration as a one-way paradigm (see Chapter 1). Here is what they said:

If I come back all I have learned during the studies and work experience will be in vain because the market is not developed enough to implement business practices I use in my everyday work life. Besides there is a question of working atmosphere there: though I have not worked in Armenia but from what I heard from my relatives it is not the place I would like to work in. If I go back I will not be able to do anything I get used to do, e.g. I cannot be a decision maker, as I believe that if you do not have acquaintances among the oligarchs you cannot hold a higher position disregarding your knowledge. (R., CEU alumnus)

But mostly people reported being eager to return pointing out their patriotic feelings:

I am doing PhD studies in political science so I have lots of ideas on how to improve political situation in Armenia and I am planning to go back and find a job in an international organization that applies some mechanisms to control political situation in such a developing country, as Armenia.

I don't want to have an extra high salary I just want to be able to work in my specialization and earn enough to live normally; that is to enjoy my job and my life out of job... I don't want to be afraid that some guy who has good connections can come and kick me out of my job. (A, CEU alumnus)

Conslusions

Based on the analysis, we can conclude that depending on the technological and some other issues, the returnees contribute to the development of their country by implementing their knowledge and ideas brought from abroad. The networks that the studied groups maintain with those they met during the studying abroad period are mainly friendship and academic-based.

Those who stayed in the country of study or moved forward to another country maintain only random and not regular contacts with their colleagues in the homeland. Some of the reasons for not keeping in touch with their compatriots engaged in the same professional sphere that were mentioned by the informants are based on the lack of resources and geographic distances that do not allow sufficient cooperation. Some of those who said that they keep professional networks with Armenians left behind indicated holding conferences and seminars, or professional consultations. This kind of cooperation is not sufficient to conclude that brain circulation or knowledge transfer networks take place from developed countries to Armenia through its educational transmigrants. Circulation of knowledge through the studied groups of educational transmigrants lacks organization and is quite irregular because of the absence of any Armenian state policy to control and orient brain circulation. Any transfer of knowledge and ideas from highly skilled Armenian immigrants takes place based on the initiatives of the immigrants themselves. Thus, based on the literature presented in Chapter 1, we can evaluate that what is considered to be brain circulation requires much dense, regular, and goal targeted collaboration between the countries and their individuals involved, which is absent in the case of studied transmigrants.

CONCLUSION

The hypothesis of brain drain, brain gain, or brain circulation is very much present in the debates of social scientists, politicians, and economists both in literature and public debates. There is no one answer to the hypothesis of the above mentioned forms of brain transformation for the countries involved. This study was another attempt to deal with the concept of migration of highly skilled human capital from the perspective of a sending country, like Armenia. It will be overambitious to regard the current research as a substantial work to add to the actual debate. The study has been conducted in a very limited way to truly assess whether Armenia is exposed to brain drain, brain gain or brain circulation, because this requires statistical data with much representative scope of population. These limitations have been taken into account when interpreting and analyzing the data gathered.

The current circumstances are that on one hand the outflow of youth leads the country to underdevelopment. On the other hand, from the point of individuals' view, if the country cannot offer its "best and brightest" citizens sustainable workplaces with higher salaries and intellectually challenging jobs, it is quite reasonable to expect them to leave their homeland for higher living standards.

The question regarding the common practice for students from such a developing country as Armenia, i.e., whether they return or stay/move forward and how extensively they cooperate

with the colleagues left in the country, remains widely uncovered. Whether a brain drain, brain gain or brain circulation is the dominant trend taking place depends to a large extent on the decisions and actions of individuals themselves. In the conditions of absence of any targeted policy to regulate the flows of educational migration, a win-win situation cannot take place; it will rather remain brain drain. This is the job that I believe should be done by the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia. The policy maintained by the international governmental or non-governmental organizations recruiting youth from developing countries might seem to be oriented towards development based on the exclusion of brain drain, but quite often the practice shows just the opposite.

Even within the framework of the studied small group of educational transmigrants it is still difficult to give a definite answer of what the impacts of these brain outflows are on Armenia. The situation is that very often my informants returned to their home countries guided by patriotic feelings, but still many of them, after a period of time, leave Armenia and establish in more developed countries without any proper compensation for the country in the form of social remittances, which is the transfer of their knowledge and ideas. I want to conclude with a romantic quote by one of my interviewees: “In a country with more opportunities you can reach higher positions. I want to establish and achieve what I want and I know I can, but I’ll come back to retire in Armenia, at that time I will have the resources to make changes for better... ” (S., CEU alumnus). How many of those will eventually return and how successfully they can contribute to the development of their country are question for a future more thorough research.

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APPENDIX

RESEARCH SURVEY:

The Impact of Educational Migration on Armenia

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ARMENIAN GRADUATES FROM UNIVERSITIES ABROAD

1 In which age group do you fall?

☐ 5-25

☐ 25-35

☐ 35-45

2. You are

☐ male

☐ female

3. In which country do you currently live in? _____

4. What do you do now (and tick as many answers as apply to you)?

☐ Study

☐ Work in my professional sphere

☐ Work not in my professional sphere

☐ Volunteer

☐ Unemployed

☐ Other – please specify _____

5. What is your job/academic position? _____

6. Where do you come from in Armenia? _____

7. What degree did you get as a result of your study in Armenia?

☐ BA (Bachelor's)

☐ Master's

☐ PhD/Doctoral

☐ Postdoctoral

☐ Other – please specify _____

8. How soon after graduation did you leave for study abroad?

☐ Immediately

☐ Less than a year

☐ 1 year

☐ 2 years

☐ 3 years

☐ 4 years

☐ 5 and more years

8a. Those who didn't leave for the study abroad immediately after the graduation

What were you doing after graduation?

☐ Studying

☐ Working in my professional sphere

☐ Working not in my professional sphere

☐ Volunteering

☐ Unemployed

☐ Other – please specify _____

Did your activities match the professional field that you graduated from?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. Did you change the sphere of your previous degree when studying abroad?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9a. If Yes, why?

☐ Change of interests

☐ Regarding the requirements of the labor market

☐ Personal reasons

☐ Other – please specify _____

10. How long did you study abroad? _____

11. In what university/where did you study abroad? _____

12. When did you graduate? _____

13. What degree did you get as a result of study abroad?

☐ BA (Bachelor's)

☐ Master's

☐ PhD/Doctoral

☐ Postdoctoral

☐ Other – please specify _____

14. What percentage of your tuition fee and living costs was covered by a scholarship?

☐ Full (tuition waiver + living costs)

☐ Partial –how many % _____

14a If partial, please indicate your financial source for covering the other costs

☐ Family

☐ Work during studies

☐ Other – please specify _____

15. What were your main reasons for studying abroad (**tick as many answers as apply to you**)?

☐ Expectations of a better education

☐ Expectations that with an international diploma I could get a better job in

Armenia

☐ Dissatisfaction with social/political/economic conditions in Armenia

☐ Possibility of immigration

☐ Attracted to lifestyle overseas?

☐ A temporal escape from personal problems

☐ Other – please specify _____

16. In what way do you think you can contribute to the improvement of Armenia regarding your education abroad?

☐ building business ties

☐ building academic ties

☐ building other kind of connections/networks

☐ implementing the knowledge you gained during the studies

☐ transferring new ideas

☐ Other – please specify _____

17. Please explain your role in circulation of knowledge and ideas between the country you studied in and Armenia.

18. What did you do after you had finished the study course abroad?

☐ Returned to Armenia

☐ Stayed at the country where I studied

☐ Moved forward to another destination country- please specify

18a *Those who **returned to Armenia**:*

What were your reasons to return? _____

What type of relationships do you maintain now with those you met during the studies abroad?

☐ Business

☐ Academic

☐ Friendship

☐ Other – please specify _____

18b *Those who **stayed at the country of study**:*

What were your reasons not to return (**tick as many answers as apply to you**)?

☐ Lack of employment opportunities back at home

☐ More attractive labor market/job offer in the host country

☐ Preference in cultural matters

☐ Personal reasons

☐ Other – please specify _____

Do you cooperate with your colleagues in the same professional sphere back home?

☐ Yes– please specify _____

☐ No

☐ Other – please specify _____

If yes, how?

please specify _____

18c *The ones who **moved forward to another country**:*

In how many years after the study abroad did you move to the other destination country?

please specify _____

What were your main reasons to move forward (**tick as many answers as apply to you**)?

☐ Lack of employment opportunities back at home

☐ More attractive labor market/job offer in the host country

☐ Preference in cultural matters

☐ Other – please specify _____

Do you cooperate with your colleagues in the same professional sphere back home?

☐ Yes– please specify _____

☐ No

☐ Other – please specify _____

If yes, how?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Please return this questionnaire to:

e-mail: tbadikyan@yahoo.com

or Badikyan_Tamara@student.ceu.hu