

Irregular Labour Migration From Georgia

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Introduction

Due to the profitable geopolitical location and pleasant natural and climate conditions, it should be stressed that Georgia has never been characterized as a country with intensive external migration processes; whilst there was no particular need for people to go abroad to improve their living conditions. However, social-economic crisis of the beginning of 1990s has caused unprecedented scales of emigration.

There is no exact statistics regarding migratory streams in Georgia (as in many countries of the world). According to the information of various researchers, from 1990 till now approximately 400 thousands-1 million people have emigrated from Georgia.

The main motivation of emigration is to escape economic hardship and to improve living conditions. As there are hardly any legal opportunities for labour migration from Georgia, these migration processes are basically irregular.

The aim of the research is: to point out main directions and causes of labour migration, ways of arranging migration, social-demographic structure of emigrants, the character of their employment in recipient countries, social-economic and demographic impacts of labour migration.

Methods

The research is based mainly on the quantitative resources including statistical yearbooks and surveys of Georgia and the First National Population Census of Georgia 2002.

There has also been used the information data provided by independent experts and the research of labour migration held in 2002 by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

It should be mentioned that although indicated sources give different figures and estimations, the tendencies of labour migration are similar everywhere.

Results

The research showed:

- Migration flows are mainly directed towards seven countries: Russian Federation, Greece, Germany, USA, Ukraine, Israel, Turkey (figure 1).
- 78.4 % of emigrants go abroad to improve their economic conditions (figure 2).
- Labour migrants leaving Georgia with the assistance of relatives and friends, travel agencies, private recruitment agencies, student exchange programs. The majority of emigrants who have left country on a legal basis, usually become irregular due to the abrogation of emigration rules of recipient countries.

- The major destination countries for the Georgian asylum-seekers are: Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, France, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Austria.
- 57.6 % of emigrants are men, 41.3 – women.
- 81.1 % of emigrants are able to work.
- Among the women emigrants 67 % are at the reproductive age.
- 57.0 % of emigrants are married.
- 43.0 % of emigrants with higher education (figure 3).
- The USA attracts those with the highest level of education; the share of labour migrants with higher education is the lowest to Greece and Russian Federation.
- The highest flow of young migrants is towards Germany. Migrants to Greece are the most senior. The young population tends to go to Germany for work and study. In the case of Greece, the purpose of migration is mainly to work in the domestic service.
- Among emigrants dominate: economists, engineers, teachers, doctors, lawyers; however they do not work by their profession (figure 4).
- The majority of labour migrants (more than 62 %) work and live abroad illegally; they are irregular migrants.
- 41.1 % of emigrants help their families in Georgia.
- 70.0 % of emigrants going to return home in the nearest future, 27.8 % have no desire to do it.
- There are certain cases of trafficking in people among the emigrants from Georgia in some countries.

Discussion

The research has shown that labour emigration has caused basically a negative influence on the demographic development of Georgia, for example:

- In 1991-2005 due to the emigration processes Georgian population has reduced nearly by 20 % (1989 – 5.4 million, 2002 – 4.4 million).
- Emigration caused imbalance of the sexual-age structure and demographic aging of the population of Georgia.
- Migration processes have caused extreme decrease of reproductive functions of emigrants.
- Labour migrants in the fertile age have higher education. That reduces the demographic potential of Georgia and causes “brain drain.” Only a small percentage of emigrants are able to raise their qualification, while the rest become disqualified. They are engaged in unskilled labour as auxiliary workers, such as nurses, nannies, waiters and cleaners.
- Due to the economic stagnation of the country, the emigration disposition is still high in population of Georgia, especially among families whose members have become labour migrants abroad. Their possible emigration would worsen the demographic situation of Georgia.

Labour emigration has also some positive consequences:

- Remittances of labour migrants to their families are often the only source of income for families.
- According to the information of various experts, money transfers fluctuate between 400 and 720 million US dollars per year. These sums essentially increase the national income and help to stabilize the rate of exchange.
- Labour migration reduces the loading of labour markets of the country.

- The young people who have received western education and working experience at certain level positively participate in the developing economic, political and social processes in Georgia.

Conclusions

There is less possibility for the reduction of migration scales and levels in the country, unless the economic situation of Georgia improves.

The government should focus on creating vacancies, that at the same time will facilitate the return of emigrants as well as the decrease of the further migration flows.

It is necessary:

- to legalize labour migration.
- to prepare the regulatory draft of the labour migration.
- to develop inter-state agreements regarding legal employment, including contract system, that could secure social and labour rights of emigrants.
- Georgia should work towards ratifying conventions of the UN and ILO that provide the international legal basis for the regulation of labour migration.

References

1. Results of the First National Population Census of Georgia 2002, Vol. III, 2004
2. State Department of Statistics of Georgia, "Statistics of Migration", Tbilisi, 2002
3. International Organization for Migration and Association for Economic Education, "Labour Migration From Georgia," 2003
4. International Organization for Migration, "Hardship Abroad or Hunger at Home (A Study of Irregular Migration from Georgia)", September 2001
5. Tbilisi State University, Migration Research Center, "Migration Processes in Modern Globalized World", Tbilisi, 2005

Figure 1

Distribution of Migrants according to their destination

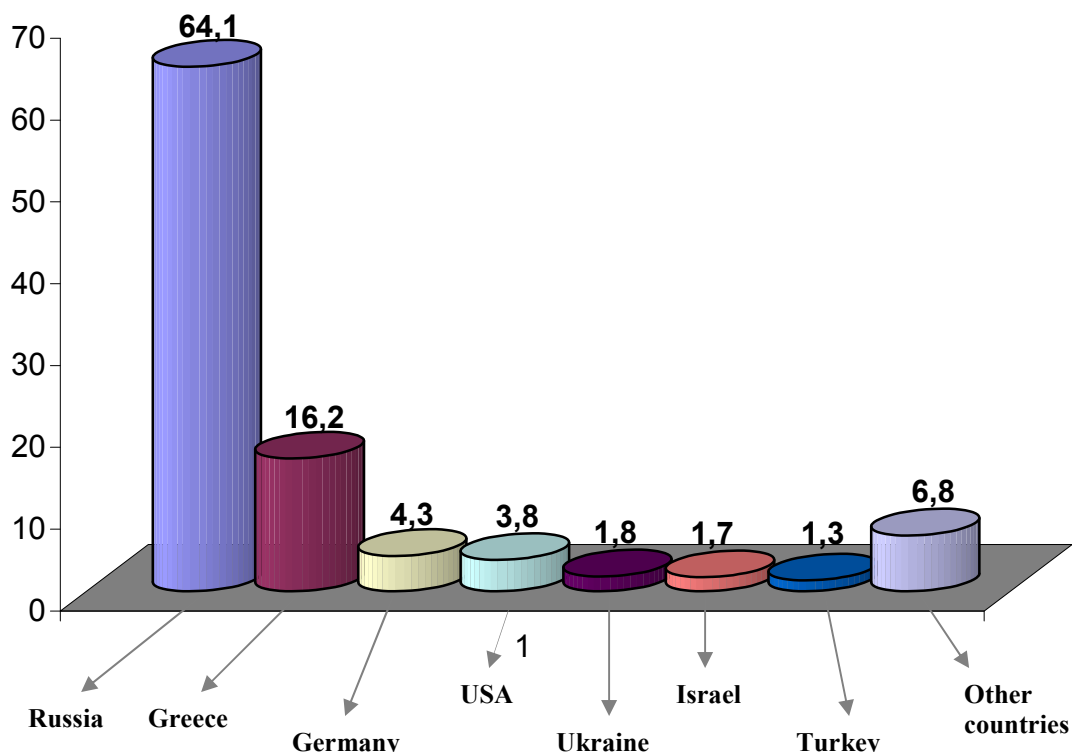


Figure 2

Distribution of Migrants according to the Departure Causes

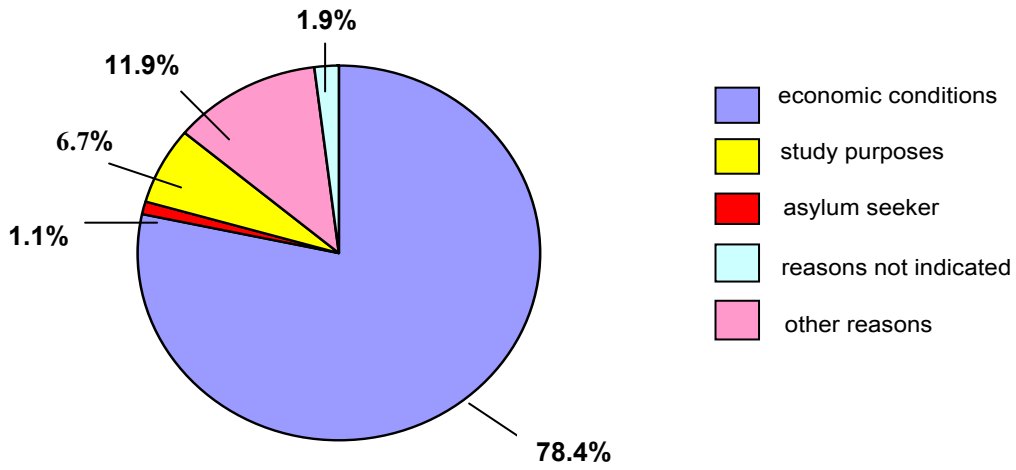


Figure 3

Distribution of Labour Migrants according to Levels of Education

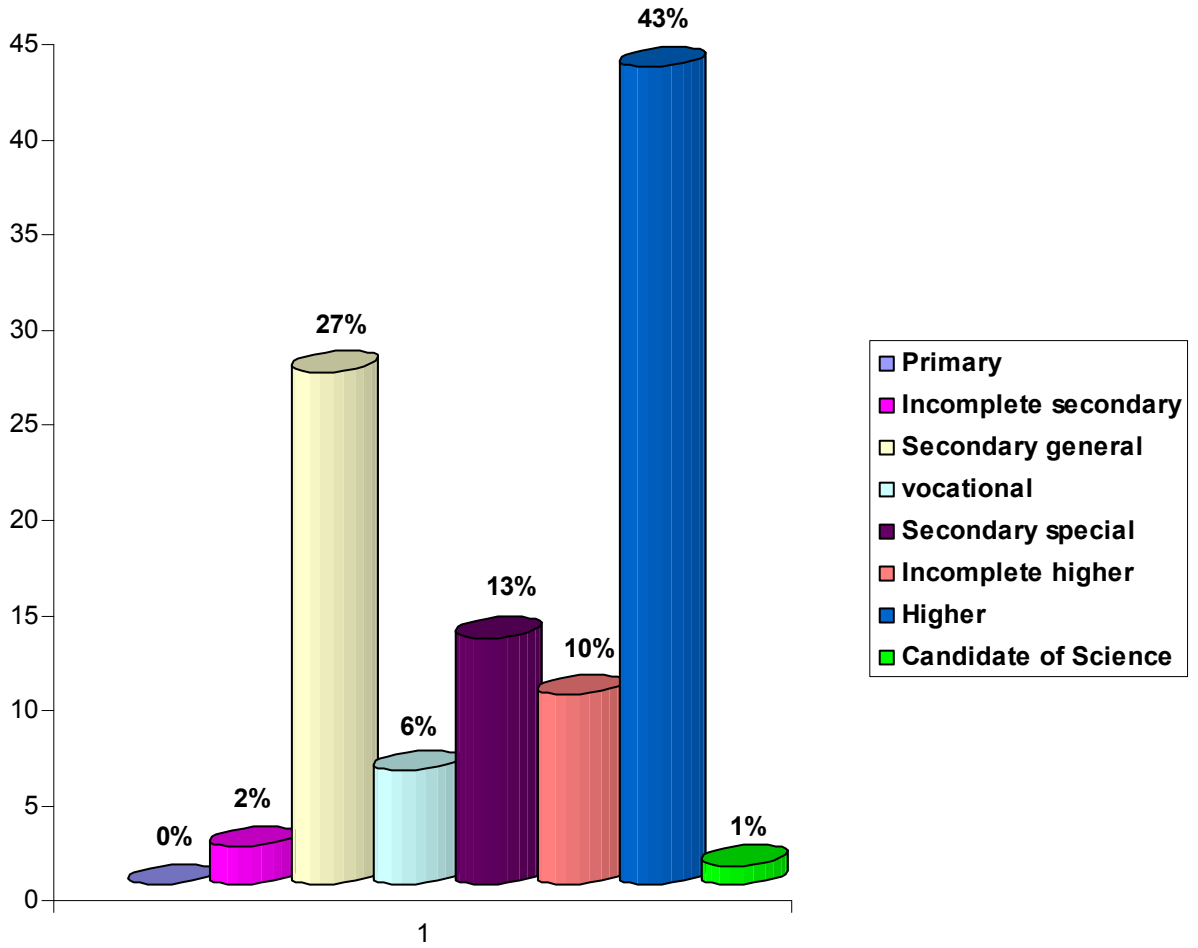
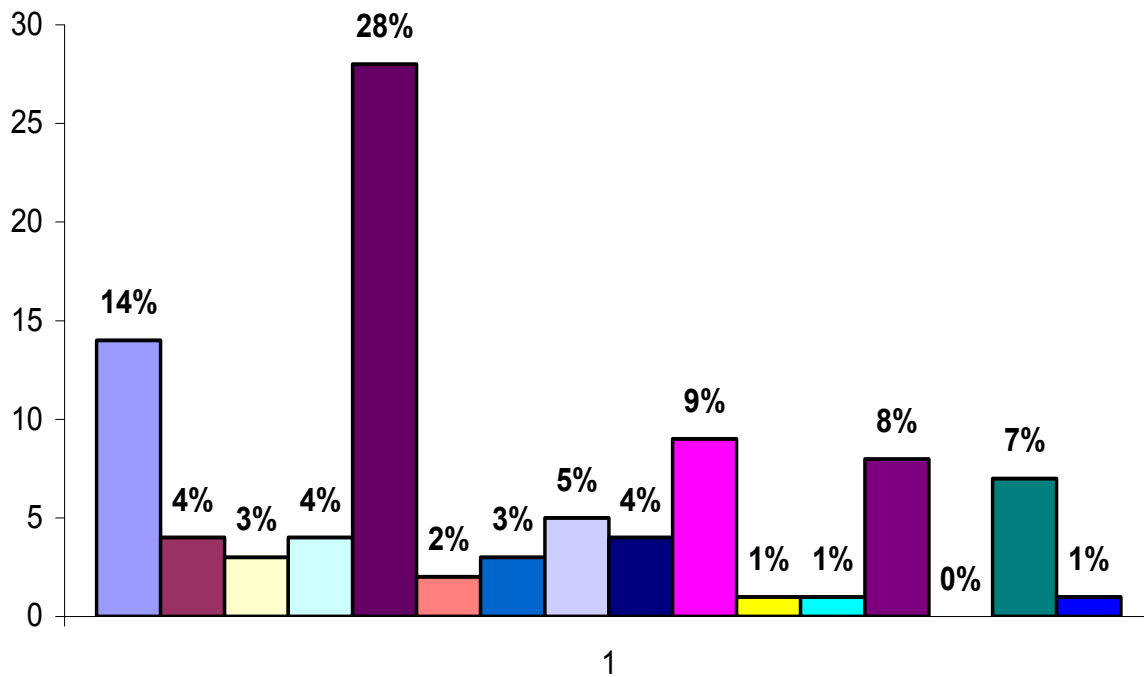


Figure 4.

Distribution of Labour Migrants according to Types of Work in the Country of Destination



Nurse	Nanny
Waiter	Cleaning person
Auxiliary worker	Mechanic
Seasonal agricultural worker	Driver
Salesman	Self-employed
Doctor	Hospital nurse
works in his/her field of expertise	studies
works and studies	Tradesman

Figure 5

Employment Legitimacy

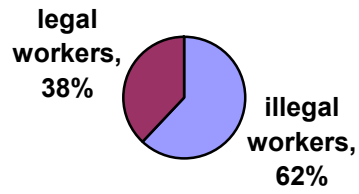


Figure 6

Disposition of Family Members of Labour Migrants to Migrate

