Volume 19 Issue 30
Originally issued as H6



Global Journal of human-social science: H
Interdisciplinary
Volume 19 Issue 6 Version 1.0 Year 2019
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

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By Arpie G. Balian

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GJHSS-H Classification: FOR Code: 160303



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I. Introduction

Anush Sargsyan [1] is a young woman born in Dalarik, a village in the Armavir District of the Republic of Armenia. She is 32, completed the local high school but did not pursue higher education. Her father was killed in the Karabakh war with Azerbaijan and her two older brothers, Gor and Hakob, went to visit their uncle in the United States and did not return. Anush lives with her mother, has never held a job, and is not interested in acquiring skills and competencies that might lead to a productive career. She is content and has no issue with the way things are given the comfort and decent life the steady remittances from her brothers in the U.S. afford. She even knows the names of certain American cities and places in North Hollywood where her brothers live and work. She speaks about them with enthusiasm but is not interested in visiting them in the U.S.

Traveling through rural Armenia, one comes across similar cases that make one wonder if Anush would have strived to earn a degree and become a professional had there not been the uninterrupted flow of remittances her two brothers sent home regularly? A series of similar questions emerge that merit attention, particularly from the perspective of a small developing state that relies primarily on human capital for economic and political development. Beyond the short- term economic impact of remittances sent by migrants, are there significant longer-term social effects to consider?

Interest among social scientists to study the consequences and impact of migration has grown considerably in the recent past. More precisely, migration outflows (whether for emigration or labor migration) have been issues of concern throughout the former Soviet Republics particularly because of large outflows since those states gained independence in the early 1990s. Migration is assumed to have a wide variety of social effects on the country of origin, although research in identifying the social impact on the source country is relatively sparse. Most studies have focused on the impact of migration on the receiving or destination country. Other studies have focused on the behavioral issues of migration, mostly of the migrants themselves, but not delving into the social problems that migration causes at home.

Hence, an examination of the social impact of migration on the community left behind may add new knowledge in the field and may invite the attention of policymakers on the issue. This study focuses on analyzing the effects of migration on the sending or home country. Considering that managing migration more effectively has become a policy debate in many post-Soviet developing countries, this study looks to measure the social impact of labor migration by way of analyzing those effects and providing relevant data for policy consideration. Such a study is particularly relevant today in view of the ongoing debate in the RA National Assembly, government and the media on migration trends. The high unemployment rate and slow-moving economy of Armenia combined with increased labor demand in the Russian Federation and in other countries have made migration a viable option for the local labor force.

II. Theories of Migration

Studies of migration define emigrants as those individuals or families that move to another country to establish permanent residence. In most cases, emigrants leave behind relatives (sisters, brothers, parents and grandparents, or distant family members, uncles, aunts, great uncles and great aunts, nephews, nieces, etc.) and friends. Also, there are multiple situations where emigrants have initially moved to find employment across borders and have ultimately decided to establish permanent residence. Somewhat different from emigrants and of central interest to the current study are labor migrants that are considered to be those citizens that cross their home state border for employment (at least initially). Both emigrants as well as labor migrants send home remittances to family and/or relatives and friends at home there by making a difference in the wellbeing of the home society.

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[1] While the case description is real, the names of people and places used in text are fictitious.

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Considering that statistics on labor migrants are most often unreliable and difficult to track and analyze, this study uses the definition of a labor migrant used by the United Nations (UN) 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers as "*a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national*." The main purpose of labor migrants is to find better-paying jobs across borders, mostly in construction and other jobs demanding skilled labor. Labor migrants also include men engaged in farming in certain months of the year and seeking seasonal work abroad in the down months.

A dominant theory that explains why people migrate, i.e., illustrating the causes and effects of migration, is neoclassical theory. In line with how these theorists posit in relation to development, here too the drivers of migration are assumed to be associated with economic considerations, unemployment, costs and benefits relative to working at home versus abroad (Todaro and Smith, 2006). Closely related to the latter is the push-pull theory of migration that sets forth push factors in terms of solutions to overcome hardships in the home country, including economic, political and social hardships. Logically, it follows that pull factors would include the advantages offered by the destination country, including better wages, living and working conditions, and political system. Narrowing down this argument to labor migration it is likely that highly qualified professionals would find more fitting opportunities and job security in developed countries as opposed to the confined labor markets of small developing countries. Whereas pull factors related to migrant laborers or unskilled workers stem from the availability of jobs and better pay (Arango 2000; Bauer and Zimmermann 1999; Czaika and De Haas 2012; Docquier et al. 2014; Kim & Cohen 2010; Lee 1966; Ruyssen et al. 2014).

While neoclassical theory places emphasis on financial drivers, such as wage differentials, the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory considers various other factors, questioning some of the elements considered in the former (Badie and Withol, 1993). The main divergence from earlier theories is that labor migration decisions in developing countries are influenced by the lack of state institutional safeguards or insurance protection from risks and market failures (Stark, 1991, 2003). Remittances are integral to NELM theory, particularly as they apply to the causes and consequences of migration (Faist 2000; Taylor 1999).

On the flip side, *World Systems theory* (Wallerstein 1974; Sassen 1988) views migration as a natural phenomenon of globalization and the existence of unequal development between the highly developed countries and the periphery. Along a parallel argument, *Dual Labor Market* theory (Piore 1979; Stalker 2000; Wallerstein 1974) regards migration as a structural phenomenon claiming that highly developed industrial economies are designed such that they would require migrant inflows to fill those jobs that are necessary for the economy to function but are generally unwanted by the native population because of their relatively less advantageous work conditions and lower wages.

Also, whereas neoclassical theory views migrants as utility-maximizing agents for the country of origin in terms of the money and skills they would bring back, the structuralist model presents a more pessimistic, adverse observation. Papademetriou (1985: 111-112) argues that for sending countries migration contributes to the "*uncontrolled depletion of their already meager supplies of skilled manpower — and the most healthy, dynamic, and productive members of their population*."

III. Understanding the Social Impact of Migration

Studies have shown that migration impacts the wellbeing of the household itself, as well as the home community and even the broader community in making development advances and growing the economy (Azam and Gubert 2006). In the current study, social impact of migration is analyzed in terms of the human and social consequences that occur, particularly within the context of influences that may require social services and/or corresponding policy legislation (national or regional).

a) The Value of Remittances

In order to understand the impact of migration on the social wellbeing of the country of origin, it is important to understand the impact of remittances sent home paying special attention to social non-pecuniary consequences of remittances. Included in this category is the "*impact on health, education, gender, care arrangements and social structures, and ethnic hierarchies in migrant communities*" (De Haas 2007). From a benefits' perspective, De Haas argues that

> *"Migration leads to a … transfer of investment capital and accelerates the exposure of traditional communities to liberal, rational and democratic ideas, modern knowledge and education. … The general expectation was that the flow of remittances—as well as the experience, skills and knowledge that migrants would acquire abroad before returning—would greatly help developing countries in their economic take-off"* (DeHaas 2007, p.3).

In contrast, a number of other scholars maintain that migration tends to augment the social effects of underdevelopment (Lipton 1981; Rhoades 1979; Hayes 1991; Rubenstein 1992; Binford 2003) and, aside from the 'brain- drain' effect, relatively stable village communities break down or even collapse when the

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pillars of the community depart. This leads to a passive community of elders, weakening skilled workforce, and a predominantly remittance-dependent community of unemployed citizens (Adams 1969). The lack of young working hands results in underutilized farmland and underproductive agriculture.

The use of remittances for different purposes is also viewed from a socio cultural perspective as being detrimental. Lipton (1980) and Hayes (1991) argue that the regularity and aggregate amount of remittances and parcels sent home by migrants result in a sort of liking for foreign products. This further increases the feeling of dependency thereby reducing the motivation to work and decreasing community solidarity, by way of weakening the opportunities for growing human as well as social capital and undermining *"the socio cultural integrity of migrant-sending communities"* (De Haas 2007, p.5).

b) Migration and Human Capital

Katseli et al. (2006) look at the impact of migration predominantly through an analysis of remittances sent by labor migrants and posit that the increase in household income often leads to reduced child labor and improved educational attainment (at least in terms of high school completion). But, this is not always the case and the opposite is more often true in small states. Thus, considering that education and work experience are important contributors to human capital formation, home countries are more often disadvantaged in this respect. This is consistent with what Carling (1996, p.50) states–that *"labor emigration has the potential to affect the stock of human capital in the country of origin,"* commonly labeled as 'brain drain'.

On the other hand, Yezer and Thurston (1976) view migration as an investment from the perspective of human capital theory. Along the same argument, Stark and Wang (2001) ague that migration can induce migrants to amass a socially desirable level of human capital. As a result,

"An economy open to migration differs not only in the opportunities that workers face but also in the structure of the incentives they confront; higher prospective returns to human capital in a foreign country impinge on human capital formation decisions at home."

These authors examine the relationship between the actual and optimal formation of human capital in an economy in comparison to providing public subsidies intended for human capital formation under normal conditions, absent migration. Their study shows that in the event that a state has in place a migration policy geared toward placing some restriction or control on migration, there will be greater tendency for pushing toward the optimal formation of human capital at home. By this, the authors claim benefit from migration policies that act as catalyst for brain gain (versus brain drain).

c) Migration, the Family Unit and Health

As stated earlier, it is often challenging to delineate precisely what the social impact of migration is on the source country, but clearly the immediate and extended family unit are affected both positively and negatively. A 1994 RAND paper highlights that although migration may have a negative impact on families, but this may not be large (Asch, 1994, xvi). In another study by the OECD Development Center (2006, pp.5-9) Katseli et al. (2006) argue that migration may directly or indirectly affect the source state's human capital accumulation, children's education and health, as well as the social wellbeing of the family unit, especially women. Aguila et al. (2012, p.34) bring out yet another important aspect of the social impact of migration, namely, that "*social networks reduce the cost of migration for other groups of non-migrants, inducing them to migrate and thus perpetuating the process*." Migration rates may grow more rapidly in the case of labor migrants, but also show growth patterns in the case of emigrants.

Migration also affects health taking on different forms. Hildebrandt and McKenzie (2005) argue that migration might influence child birth rates or the decision of parents in different ways. *"Migration may alter the fertility decision through a number of avenues, such as changes in household income and the opportunity cost of time and changes in knowledge about contraceptive practices"* (Hildebrandt and McKenzie 2005, p.11). [2] For small states, such as Armenia, this may be detrimental to development. In her study, Golinowska (2008) argues that labor migration firstly causes separation of family members when the head of the household migrates for work, often causing traumatic experiences to family members left behind. More importantly, the effect of migration on health could be serious in some cases culminating in further deterioration and disabilities. Some migrants are known to carry sexually-transmitted diseases that are subsequently transmitted to spouses causing health problems (Manasyan and Poghosyan 2012).

The effect of labor migration on families is also discussed by Carling (1996) who brings forth several illustrations. In his view, remittances "… *may also facilitate marriages in societies where dowry or bride wealth are common … Remitted earnings can also enable young couples to establish independent households earlier than what would otherwise have been possible*" (p.45). This argument is put forth as a positive force driving labor migration at the onset and probably serving as a decisive influence in some cases. But, in some conservative societies (where dowry is regarded as an advantage), labor migration of women is not always viewed as a positive standing for them, often

[2] The study looks exclusively at Mexico, using statistical data from 1997.

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having negative effects on 'men's choice' among other so-called candidates.

IV. Post-Soviet Migration Trends

The collapse of the Soviet Union triggered transformations in political, economic, social and cultural arrangements, beliefs and attitudes. Though hope and despair coupled with anticipation and anxiety prevailed, 'independence' also offered new opportunities for those who quickly found their way in chaos. For the most part, however, the shift created confusion for the vast majority of the population of the Newly Independent States (NIS)[3] who did not know how to function in a non- autocratic regime and hesitated to make a move.

In the case of Armenia, the pre-independence 1988 earthquake, the economic collapse following independence in 1991 and the political instability and conflict with Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave is believed to have exacerbated the effects of migration. It is assumed that migration is triggered primarily by economic factors and may fluctuate in intensity from time to time and, in spite of inflows from diasporic Armenian communities, migration outflows continue to occur at a relatively high rate.

In contrast, Georgian migration is different where more women than men migrate (Badurashvili and Nadareishvili 2012), which tends to be traumatic for the traditional Georgian society. Also, the migration experience is often challenging for Georgian women from the standpoint of the difficulties they encounter with reintegration and re-adaptation to ethnic traditions upon return home. This often incites more migration. Much like in Georgia, women are active migrants in Belarus, but this is largely in the form of urban-rural migration for better job opportunities and improved living standards (Bobrova, et al. 2012). At the same time, somewhat in line with the earlier depiction, migration impacts the family unit; urban migrants get married and have children later than the women that are left behind in rural communities.

Aside from individual decisions to migrate generally articulated in terms of solutions to economic issues, "*nationalism and separatism, territorial claims, and hegemonic ambitions have provoked ethnic conflicts, civil wars and, as a result, refugee flows and internally displaced persons*" (Tishkov et al. 2005, p.26). In the case of Armenia, the conflict with Azerbaijan has produced both internal and external migration. Internal migration flows have generally been movements away from border villages for more security. For those who have stayed, external migration has been exhibited both in terms of labor migration, as well as emigration.

[3] NIS includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

V. The Case of Armenia

Though internal migration has moved young people from rural communities to the capital Yerevan and, in much smaller numbers, to other major cities within the same district (*marz*), the current study does not consider the effects of internal migration. Rather, it tackles labor migration, which mostly involves male heads of households leaving to the Russian Federation and, to a lesser extent, to other CIS countries and Eastern Europe. This flow is dominated by 25-50 year old males who leave their families to find employment elsewhere (although many do not return).

The Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia (World Bank 2016) [4] presents data from the 2015 Integrated Living Conditions Survey (ILCS) showing that 5.3% of households and 10.3% or 130,000 of household members 15 years old and above were absent from home for at least three months in the period 2012-2015. Of the total number of absentees from home, 78.5% had migrated to other countries, of which 89.3% to the Russian Federation. Another study by the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development has reported that migration outflows as at 2013 account for 26.3% of the Armenian population (KNOMAD 2016).

In the case of Armenia, the dominant majority of migrants are males, which is mostly explained by two factors: first, males are generally considered to be heads of households, while females are considered to be the principal caretakers of the family, specifically the children. Secondly, labor migrants, especially men going to Russia for work, are primarily engaged in construction and agriculture (Manasyan and Poghosyan 2012). This trend of labor migration is consistent with the findings of a similar study on Latvia confirming that migrants' wives take care of the household and children, which also leads to an increase in household chores and other work they must do themselves. Similar to Armenia, there are cases of negative impact that lead to break up in the family, mostly as a result of the migrants' long absences, unofficial marriage abroad and need to provide for two families, or not returning home at all (Krišjāne and Lāce 2012; Manasyan and Poghosyan 2012).

VI. Research Propositions and Methodology

The study uses a mixed method within an explanatory design that explains (a) why migration is viewed as a negative force in Armenia; and (b) what are the non-economic social consequences and difficulties resulting from or caused by migration. Thus, the propositions considered in the study in relation to the research questions are as follows:

[4] The referenced publication uses a survey based on the UN definition and methodology of international migration.

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P1: Remittances positively impact education and human capital growth in the home state.
P2: Migration negatively affects families and especially the children left behind.
P3: Migration negatively affects the health of family members left behind.
P4: Despite the immediate financial advantages that remittances provide, social problems arise in the longer-term.

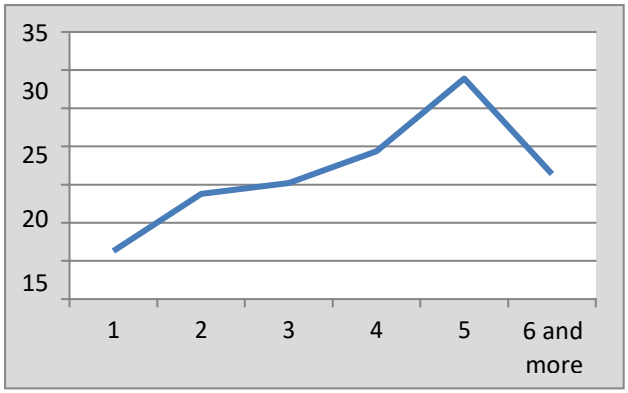
An explanatory case study approach was selected to explain 'social impact' and to fully understand the phenomenon of migration delving deep into the social effects it may have on the Republic of Armenia. The mixed method has facilitated understanding those impacts using a variety of data sources to answer the research questions and associated propositions. Data sources included government migration statistics; a survey of urban and rural households with at least one migrant worker (n = 536);[5] and informal conversations with select cases from the sample surveyed (n = 23). The variety of sources used and the continuous process of triangulating the findings provided the opportunity to establish agreement among independent sources or to clear inconsistencies. In unusual instances, direct observations were made to supplant information where the data raised questions of insincerity or imbalance. The testing of the survey questionnaire and actual administration were conducted in June 2016 through June 2018. The length of time was dictated by the necessity to return to the target sites multiple times for data verification and supplemental data collection or validation.

VII. Data Analysis and Interpretation

In the initial phase of the study, the analysis used secondary data on migration available through the RA National Statistical Services to identify villages or towns with the highest outflows of labor migrants to countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). [6] These statistics were used to develop the sample size that would ensure the validity and generalizability of findings. The number of survey respondents is 536, which exceeds the valid sample size required for the population of labor migrants (N = 232,647).[7]

The data collected from the survey (n = 536)[8] was analyzed to depict the general characteristics of the population surveyed and to establish correlations among dependent and independent variables. Chart 1 depicts the size of the household, without counting in the migrant(s) from the households surveyed. In many cases, the household count included grandparents as is customary in Armenia and, in a few cases, great aunts and uncles. The graph peaks at the most dominant household size of five (5), usually comprising the migrant's wife, two children, and the migrant's parents. The trough level is one (1) representing the smallest household size, which in the sample surveyed is simply represented by the wife of the migrant left behind. The number of cases in this category is low and represented by newlyweds having a migrant husband.

Chart 1: Household Distribution



The percent distribution by age-group and gender of households in the sample surveyed is depicted in Chart 2. These data include the migrants themselves. The bar chart depicts that, except for the ≤15 and ≥ 71 age groups, where males have dominance over females by 0.2%, all other age groups are female-dominant, though the migrants themselves are mostly males (94% of total migrants). The female dominance of the sample surveyed (and also of the inferred population, in general) is largely attributed to the absence of males from the home country and also to the demise of Armenian soldiers in the conflict with neighboring Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh territory.[9] The ≤15 and ≥ 71 age groups evidently are not affected by this and reflect normal gender distribution trends.

[5] A larger number of households were approached randomly but were not administered the survey if they did not meet the key criterion of having a migrant family member. This number represents the actual number of survey respondents, i.e., the wives or mothers of labor migrants that took the survey.
[6] The countries included in the statistics are the Republics of Belarus and Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Russian Federation, the latter representing the destination with the largest proportion of labor migrants from Armenia.
[7] Armstat, 2017.
[8] This sample size far exceeded the valid sample size of 384 at a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. Considering that the surveys were conducted face-to-face, additional villages were added to increase variation to the extent possible.
[9] The war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which broke out before the declaration of the independent Republic of Armenia ended in 1994 but the conflict continues to be unresolved. Skirmishes across the border still cause fatalities. In Armenia, military service is mandatory for males 18-27 years of age.

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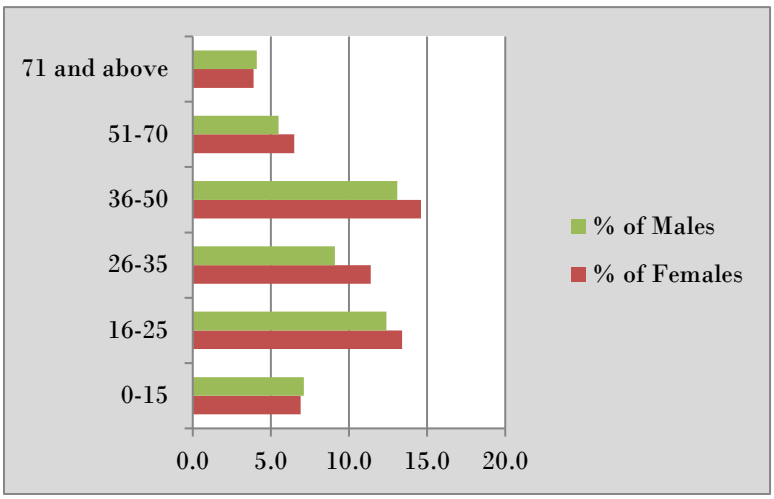
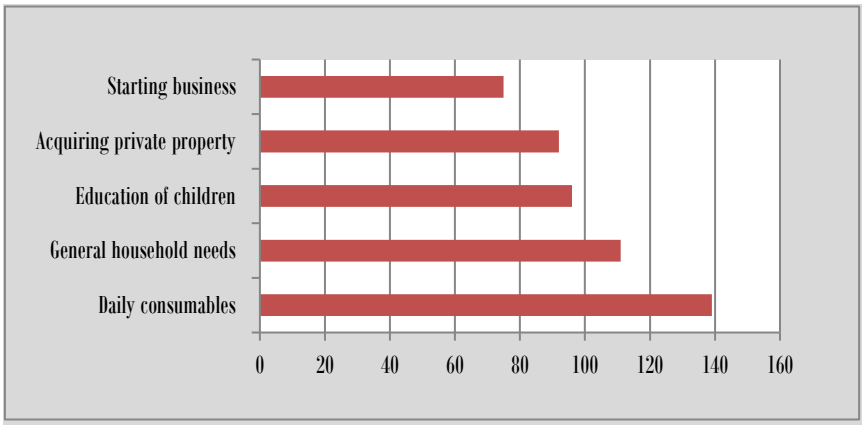
Chart 2: Distribution of Sample Surveyed by Gender and Age



As to the reasons supporting labor migration, the analysis revealed that labor migrants generally opt to work in countries other than their home state to increase earning potential. This is driven by several underlying factors, not mutually exclusive, the most dominant being unemployment or seasonal unemployment (45%); pursuing better-paying job opportunities (42%); inspired or encouraged by friends (38%); or simply responding to job announcements (3%). Considering that drivers or reasons of migration, albeit important, are beyond the boundaries of this research, no further analysis was performed on this component.

Next, the analysis centered on variables related to spending patterns of remittances sent home by migrants as those are distinctly related to social issues. To answer this question, the survey respondents were asked to indicate only one spending priority (even though they also could be spending some smaller proportion of remittances on other things). As shown in Chart 3, 26% of the households surveyed spend the remittances they receive principally on daily consumables (mostly food items) and 21% spend them on general household needs, including utilities, supplies and purchases of personal items. Whereas the former was dominantly representative of city dwellers, the latter represented the spending pattern of villagers that grew fruits and vegetables and had animal farms (albeit on a small scale for household consumption).

Chart 3: Spending of Remittances



Spending remittances on the education of children, especially on higher education, was ranked as a priority by 18% of the sample surveyed, but prevalent only among city dwellers with children in higher education. The respondents that ranked education as priority for spending remittances were in the 36-50 age-group, i.e., families with near or at university-age children. Equally important for 17% of those surveyed, also among city dwellers as in the previous case, was investing in owning a home (real property) either for themselves or for a son (not daughter, as specified by respondents) preparing to get married. This is a preferred investment that stems from the desire for future stability and security (generally evident among peoples that have been displaced or driven out of their homes because of war or political unrest).

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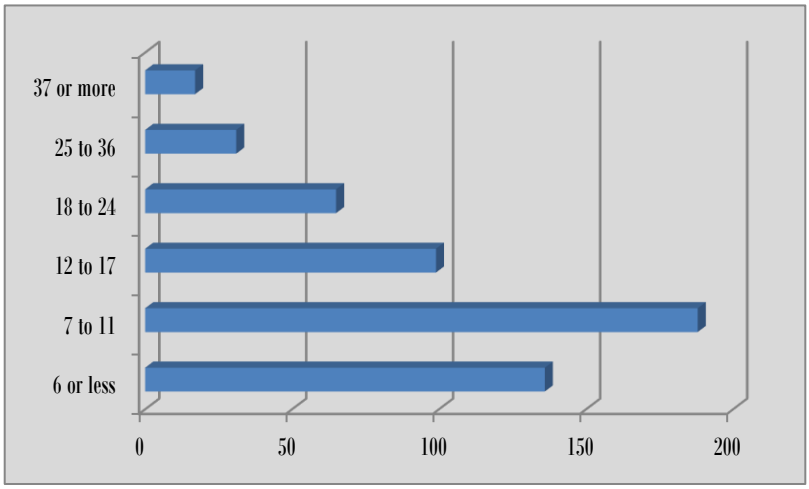
Chart 4: Months Migrant Away from Home



The much less popular preference for spending remittances is investing in private business, at 14%. This too was found to be dominant among city dwellers who understood the long-term advantages of starting a business. Of the 75 respondents indicating business investment as a priority spending category, 51 were women engaged in micro retail with no physical outlet. Among those whose husbands were earning more or sending home larger remittances, a prevalent practice was to stash away money to be able to accumulate savings for a business startup (without adequate proof of realization). The remaining 4% of priority areas included eleven (11) cases of spending on health issues (usually major surgery, though this could have been a priority at time of survey only); eight (8) cases of saving for upcoming weddings (mostly of a son, though there were three instances of dowry for daughters); and four (4) cases of saving to buy a vehicle (those were farmers who were on seasonal work abroad and aimed at making enough money to buy a truck for agricultural use).

Looking into the social impact of labor migration, the survey first measured the length in months of the migrants' longest absence from home.[10] As depicted in Chart 4, the most prevalent length is seven (7) to eleven (11) months with 35% of those surveyed in that band, 18% in the band of 12-17 months and 12% representing those who have spent up to two years abroad in one tour. Outside of these bands, there are those seasonal migrants who usually travel abroad to work for part of the year and work on their farms for the rest; this group spends six (6) months or less working abroad and constitutes 25% of those surveyed. In the last two bands are those that were working abroad for more than two years (6% for 25-36 months and 3% for longer). Many of the spouses of migrants in the last two bands (and a few in the third band) cast doubt on their husband's return home and struggle to get adjusted to their situation.

The next set of questions related to the types of social problems encountered by the family left behind. Respondents were asked to check up to four (4) answers from the provided list and were given the option of adding-in items excluded from the list. Analysis of the data from respondents helped to identify the dominant social problems related to labor migration, as shown in Chart 5.

Unquestionably, the most dominant social issue caused by labor migration is that those left behind are bound to assume added roles in the family. In this respect, the follow-on interviews with mothers and wives of migrants helped to draw common themes among urban and rural households. Whereas the latter claim that not only do they have to assume additional household chores, but also have to take care of responsibilities in the family farm; urban residents spoke about additional chores related to children's curricular and extra-curricular activities. As one interviewee explained, *"I never had to worry about my son's schoolwork before. That was something my husband loved doing. Now, that too is on me and I am not as good at it."* In contrast, a rural resident raised the shortage of productive labor in the village to sustain agriculture. "*My husband and his brothers are not here, which makes us women having to work on the farm in addition to looking after our children. Often, I pull in my son to help out with those chores."*

[10] The length of time in months the migrant has worked abroad every separate time travelled or tour of duty.

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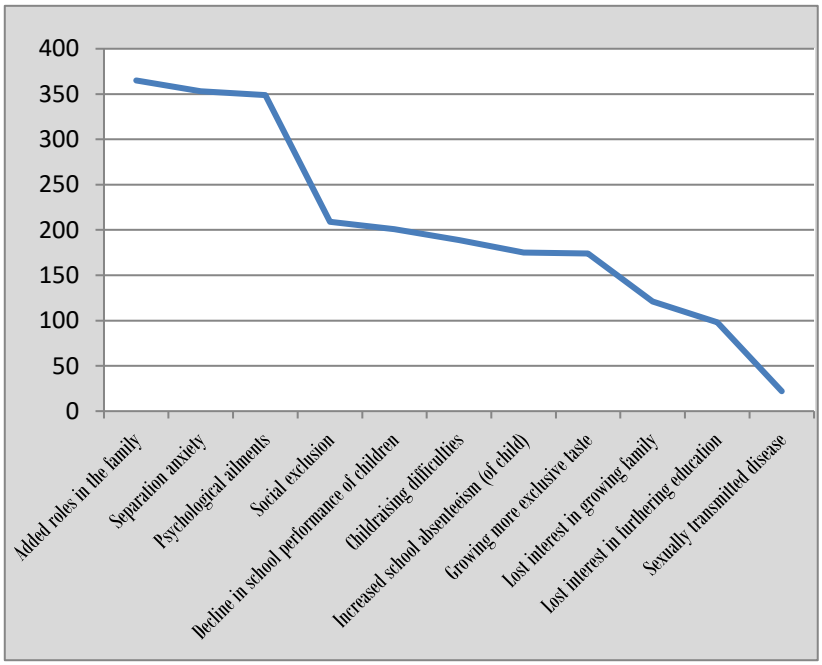
Chart 5: Social Problems Encountered by Family at Home



Another dominant theme was found to be anxiety disorder caused by the absence of the father; 66% of respondents marked separation anxiety as a problem that has had negative behavioral consequences. This type of health condition is described by those interviewed further as being "*fear of being among people so as to avoid people asking me questions or not participating in public events afraid that others are pointing to me or they are judging me*," elaborated a young woman whose husband had been away for over two years. Another interviewee talked about the negative encounters that her son, a twelve year-old, had in school. "*Just before the holidays, a classmate asks him if his father is coming home for the New Year. He goes ballistic and starts pushing and shoving that boy, throwing around books and notebooks in the classroom. He is a good boy and helps me around the house, but he is incapable of dealing with comments or questions about his father*."

The majority of respondents who had indicated having separation anxiety, also indicated suffering from other psychological disorders, such as depression, eating disorders, and even obsessive-compulsive behavior (65% combined) and social exclusion (39%). Follow-on interviews showed that respondents with such disorders suffered from feeling helpless and worthless or did not hope they would be together again; and some had developed extreme undereating disorder (though this can be manifested in the opposite way). As one woman elaborated, *"his long absence makes me wonder what the future holds for us. I am always at home, doing housework or working on the farm. Well, I don't even visit or meet with my friends anymore. I've lost touch with everything."*

The picture presented by an older woman in a relatively smaller village was more alarming. "*Take a walk through our streets and you will understand why our village is depressed, economically and socially. Our men are gone, we don't have enough working hands to work on our lands.*" This is consistent with what Adams (1969) describes as a passive community of elders, weakening skilled workforce, and a predominantly remittance-dependent community of unemployed citizens. In larger rural communities, however, passiveness also was observed in the younger generally content with their lives "*just the way it is*," as indicated by a 23-year-old female living at home.

Among family members included in the sample, 18% showed indifference toward learning and were disinterested in education (much like Anush introduced at the opening of the study), though a few indicated that they may want to learn sewing or needlework. All of those were 16-35-year-old village residents with migrant brothers or spouses who also had not attended university. This shows that, particularly in small rural communities, individual educational decisions are led by the quality of life and attainments of those in their immediate surrounding. This refers to the relative position of individuals in a community as characterized by economic capital and human capital (Weeden & Grusky 2005). Here, economic capital means one's material resources like income and assets as indicators of social status (Oakes & Rossi 2003).

VIII. Conclusion

Among the propositions considered in the study, the analysis has shown that remittances positively

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impact the education of the younger generation in the home state, particularly providing for the higher education of children left behind, though this is reflected in 18% of the population surveyed and ranked third among the priorities of spending remittances, after daily consumables and general household needs. Moreover, this spending priority was not found to be true outside the capital, which could partially explain the slowdown of human capital growth in rural communities and the unequal distribution of wealth and economic growth between urban and rural populations. Also, 21% of migrants who were away from home (in a single tour) for over 18 months, were all from rural Armenian villages. This too has contributed to the slower growth in human capital in rural Armenia, which could be improved if intangible resources, such as skills and knowhow that migrants acquire working abroad, were used for narrowing rural-urban inequalities with returning migrants' investment in human capital at home.

Moreover, the male figure, mostly father, is perceived by Armenian society as an important influence on children's upbringing, particularly with respect to their educational attainment and prospects, but the 'breadwinning' obligation was found to be dominant. Though patterns of child behavior varied by social context, the findings agree with much of social science and policy research on the negative impact of fathers' absence on children's socioemotional development (Lamb, 2010; Shwalb et al., 2013). Among the adults surveyed for this study, 38% mentioned a decline in their child's school performance and 33% referred to the rise of school absenteeism. Overall, 35% indicated experiencing child raising difficulties, some verbalizing the envisaged *"father's role in authoritative parenting, which would lead to better emotional, academic, social and behavioral outcomes for our children."*

The negative impact on the health of other than children was observed in the form of separation anxiety disorder in women among younger spouses who feared that their separation would be unending and gradually became unsociable, withdrawn, and irritable. Only 4% of those surveyed checked "sexually transmitted diseases" caused by labor migration but, when probed further, none admitted that their migrant was infected by the disease. Social taboos placed by Armenian society on sexually transmitted diseases is probably the reason why people didn't like talking about it or referring in any way to their husband's promiscuity.

The last proposition considered dealt with the longer-term social problems arising from remittances sent home by migrants. Though many of the negative impacts of migration mentioned above also are true in the longer-term, what is specifically relevant to remittances is the panacea for the poor to gain a "foothold on the ladder" as argued by (Sachs 2005) which, however, turns to a permanent way of life. Admittedly, migration reduces socio-economic inequalities to some extent, it also decreases migrants' desire to find a job locally and increases migration propensities by others. Families get used to the steady flow of income and are not willing to do with less and want to avoid a downward spiral.

Adopting a controlled and somewhat restrictive migration policy is not necessarily an effective instrument to curtail labor migration. Rather, considering that job opportunities in the regions are relatively lacking, state policy should be focused on creating incentives that would be attractive to potential migrants gradually affecting the multiplier effect of labor migration.

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