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The Impact of International Migration on Development: The Case of Return Migration to Armenia

Ph.D. dissertation

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Olomouc 2019

Statement of originality

This is to certify that the intellectual content of this dissertation is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this dissertation and sources have been acknowledged.

Olomouc, 2019

Acknowledgements

To everyone I met on the way.
Thank you for your kindness and generosity.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, prof. Vladimír Ira, who encouraged me to pursue the work on Armenia. I would also like to thank the head of the Department of Development and Environmental studies, assoc. prof. Pavel Nováček, who enabled me to write the dissertation at the department. I would like to thank my colleagues, from the university and beyond, and especially the co-authors of my publications, who were willing to discuss my work. I would like to thank the organisers of various PhD workshops and conferences (including the University of Oslo, the University of Maastricht and the University of Amsterdam), where I had the opportunity to present my work and receive useful feedback. I would also like to thank the anonymous referees of journal articles who helped to refine my ideas. Very importantly, I would like to thank everyone in Armenia who was willing to talk to me and made this work possible. A special mention goes to my friends Rimma and Nouneh who I met at Central European University (then still) in Budapest. I would also like to thank Caritas Armenia, who hosted me during my first stay in 2016 and the Yerevan Impact Hub, where I had working space during my second stay in 2018. I would also like to thank my interviewees who not only kindly shared their time with me but also made the entire process enjoyable and stress-free. This work would have never been possible without you. Finally, I would like to thank my husband and my family who are always there for me.

Abstract

This doctoral dissertation examines the role of return migration to Armenia and its potential impact on development of the country. This study aims to inquire about: (i) the return motivations for Armenian migrants and returnees; (ii) the factors that influence reintegration in a positive and negative way; (iii) the ways returnees are assisted in their reintegration to society; and (iv) the possible social change that is caused by return migration to Armenia. Existing literature on migration to Armenia has focused almost exclusively on outmigration and the effect of remittances on Armenian development. This inductive study advances our understanding of international migration and its effect on the society in the country of origin by discussing the phenomenon of return migration in a specific single country case study. It aims to map the return experience using semi-structured qualitative interviews and an in-depth survey. The findings from the research show that the impact of return migration on the development of Armenia is more complex than previously assumed. The findings offer broader insights into the phenomenon of return migration to Armenia and address the wider societal challenges that can be particularly important in the light of changes the country is undergoing.

Key words: return migration, development, reintegration, AVRR programmes, social remittances, Armenia

Abstrakt

Disertační práce zkoumá úlohu návratové migrace do Arménie a její možný dopad na rozvoj země. Cílem této studie je popsat: (i) motivace k návratu arménských migrantů a navrátilců; (ii) faktory, které pozitivně a negativně ovlivňují reintegraci; (iii) způsoby, jakým je navráceným osobám poskytnuta pomoc při jejich opětovném začlenění do společnosti a (iv) případné sociální změny, které jsou způsobeny návratovou migrací do Arménie. Stávající literatura o migraci a Arménii je téměř výhradně zaměrená na emigraci a možný vliv remitencí na arménský rozvoj. Tato induktivní studie posouvá naše chápání mezinárodní migrace a jejího vlivu na společnost v zemi původu prostřednictvím diskuse o fenoménu návratové migrace ve specifické případové studii dané země. Zároveň usiluje o zmapování zkušeností s návratem za využití polostrukturovaných kvalitativních rozhovorů a podrobného dotazníku. Zjištění z výzkumu ukazují, že dopady návratové migrace na rozvoj Arménie mohou být komplexnější, než se dříve předpokládalo. Výsledky výzkumu nabízejí širší pohled na fenomén návratové migrace do Arménie a řeší jeho širší společenské dopady, které mohou být obzvláště důležité s ohledem na změny, jimiž země prochází.

Klíčová slova: návratová migrace, rozvoj, reintegrace, programy asistovaných návratů (AVRR), sociální remitence, Arménie

List of abbreviations

AGBU	Armenian General Benevolent Union
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
CISP	International Committee for the Development of Peoples
EU	European Union
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
FADF	French Armenian Development Foundation
ICARE	International Centre for Agribusiness Research and Education
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
NELM	New Economics of Labour Migration
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OFII	French Office for Immigration and Integration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PIN	People in Need
RA	Republic of Armenia
SEA	State Employment Agency
TIA	Targeted Initiative for Armenia
TOKTEN	Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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INTRODUCTION

While international migration has received plenty of attention in the Global North in the last few years, there has been relatively less focus on return migration. Global migration flows numbers peaked in 2018 but it is important to bear in mind that the global population is on the rise so the proportion of international migrants in the global population has remained roughly the same – around 3% (IOM, 2018). The increasing inter-connectedness has been caused by globalisation which has brought about changes in communication and transportation. For some scholars, this has meant the emphasis on the transnational aspect of international migration (Vertovec, 1999; Portes, 2001). The phenomenon of international migration is not new as people have been moving around since the dawn of humanity and the same is true for return migration. While return migration has been gaining some academic attention in the past years, it is still less researched than other phases of the migration process.[1]

There are academic works dealing with return migration in different regions ranging from Cape Verde (Carling, 2004) to China (Sun, 2013). The body of literature on return migration is primarily discussed in the Chapters 2 and 3. The authors often highlight the benefits which can take place in connection with return migration. For example, Wolff (2015) found that the amount of personal savings sent to the country of origin is about twice as much by the migrants who intend to return. At least some migrants eventually decide to go back to their countries of origin and it is important for the states to be able to accommodate them by, in the ideal case, enabling them to use their skills. In the eventual years following the end of the Syrian conflict, some Syrian migrants and refugees may decide to go back to their country of origin. Therefore, it is important to start inquiring about the processes following the return

[1] These phases include pre-migration, migration itself, return migration (back to the country of origin) or re-migration (to another country).

migration and the benefits the returnees can bring to their countries of origin. There are also Syrian migrants of Armenian origin in Armenia, which was one of the topics that were debated during 2015 and in the subsequent years.

While it is only a part of the total impact of migration on the countries of origin, the political aspects remain salient and the possible pressure on democratic institutions is one of them. According to Collier (2013) and others, emigration can affect institutions in the countries of origin in two contradictory ways. First, institutions can be influenced through the creation of the diasporas who can put pressure on democratisation from the outside. Second, while a large number of the educated population can migrate from the country, the proportion of the educated population which remains in the society is lowered, and thus, the pressure on democracy remains low. So far, there has been no conclusive proof that one of these phenomena is more important than the other.

Research from Cape Verde, which has one of the highest outmigration rates in Africa, found that migrant households have a higher participation in political life (Batista and Vicente, 2011). A similar transfer of political engagement was seen in Mexico (Pérez-Armendariz and Crow, 2010). In Mali, Chauvet and Mercier (2014) found that return migrants are more likely to vote than other citizens. Furthermore, the non-migrants were more likely to copy their behaviour, i.e. those who lived close to migrants were more likely to vote. Among the neighbours, those with lowest levels of education were those who were the most likely to copy return migrants.

Return migration to Armenia has been an under-researched topic until recently with some notable exceptions including Lietaert et al. (2017) and Pawlowska (2017). There has been some policy-oriented research about the returnees, mainly targeting the group of temporary labour migrants to Russia (European Training Foundation, 2013; Bakhshinyan and Porsughyan, 2014). During the research period in Armenia, the so-called Velvet Revolution

took place in April 2018. While it would be an overstatement to suggest that the revolution took place because of the returnees, they were one of its ardent supporters. In the interviews the returnees often complained about the nepotism and corruption which were also the reasons which led to the overthrow of the former president (who was about to become the new Prime Minister). The influence of return migrants on social change will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.5.

While Armenia has large outmigration from the country, it nevertheless has a steady rate of return. The allure of migrating can be attractive for the people living in the semi-periphery of the world, yet there are people who come back. Contrary to the expectations, the Armenian returnees are not only those who had no other option but to return. There is also a group of spontaneous returnees who have diverse motivations from family-oriented to identity-related. The dissertation works with both groups, the forced (or euphemistically put, the 'assisted voluntary') returnees and the voluntary ones.

Before we proceed, it is important to define some key terms that are used throughout the dissertation. This dissertation defines the returnees as people with the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia (RA), who have lived abroad for at least one year before coming back to Armenia. This is in line with other studies on return migration such as King (2000: 9), on return migration to Greece, who defines returnees as 'Greeks who have lived abroad for at least one year and been resident back in Greece for at least a year'. Returnee reintegration will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 3.2. However, reintegration is a complex process, including psycho-social and socio-economic reintegration. It is connected to the concept of sustainable return, which involves the absence of re-migration (Black and Gent, 2005). In this dissertation, the term *country of origin* generally refers to Armenia, while the term *country of settlement* refers to the country where the Armenian migrants are or were staying.

So far, there has been no single grand theory of international migration (Castles, 2010). It might not even be plausible to come up with one due to the differences in migration contexts and the multiplicity of migration experience. However, some authors propose an integrated theory of international migration.

According to them it should contain:

> Four basic elements: a treatment of the structural forces that promote emigration from developing countries; a characterization of the structural forces that attract immigrants into developed countries; a consideration of the motivations, goals and aspirations of the people who respond to these structural forces by becoming international migrants; and treatment of the social and economic structures that arise to connect areas of out- and in-migration. Any theoretical explanation that embraces just one of these elements will necessarily be incomplete and misleading… (Massey et al., 1998: 281).

This dissertation works with all elements of this definition, albeit in a limited context. All push and pull factors in Armenian (return) migration are considered in this work. Moreover, the motivations, goals, and aspirations of the returnees are highlighted throughout this dissertation. Finally, the connections between the countries of settlement and the country of origin in the form of social remittances are considered.

The aim of this dissertation is to inquire about the relationship between return migration and development in Armenia from the perspective of the returnees and other relevant stakeholders. The specific research questions are posed in the next chapter on research aims. The subsequent chapter discusses the background of Armenian return migration. It is important to highlight that Armenians have always migrated but following the 1915 Genocide, a large Armenian diaspora was created around the world. Next, the theoretical framework of this work is presented. This dissertation draws mainly on three bodies of literature: i) the work on return motivations, ii) return and reintegration, and iii) return migration and development. The studies on the latter deal with its three important aspects,

mainly human capital, returnee entrepreneurship, and social remittances. The chapter on methods discusses the three main methods which have been used for the purposes of this dissertation – key informant interviews, returnee interviews, and an online survey.

The second part of this dissertation deals with the findings and possible recommendations for key stakeholders which are presented in the discussion. The chapter on Findings is divided into five sections. First, there is the part on return motivations (5.1) which is crucial for understanding the factors behind the decision to return. Second, return experience is discussed through the lived experience of the returnees (5.2) and observations of the key informants working with them (5.3). The key stakeholders working with the returnees in Armenia and their role are mapped in following section (5.4). Finally, the social changes taking place in Armenia because of the phenomenon of return migration (5.5) are discussed in the final part of the chapter Findings. This dissertation will conclude with a chapter on policy recommendations (discussion) and concluding remarks.

1 RESEARCH AIMS

Migration studies, while slowly emerging as a discipline in its own right, are also connected to other scientific disciplines. Therefore, this dissertation is not fully grounded in only one discipline but lies on the borderlines of human geography, political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines. Nevertheless, I have attempted to justify this interdisciplinarity by presenting a holistic approach that might be of benefit to other scholars as well as organisations working with returnees in Armenia and the returnees themselves. This doctoral dissertation aims to shed light on the return migration-development nexus using a single country case study (Faist, 2008; Skeldon, 2011). It attempts to avoid methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller, 2003) by considering the transnational aspects of migration by taking into account pre-migration, migration, and post-migration phases that take place in different countries, thereby avoiding the isolated migration-process discussion. This study is by no means exhaustive, but it aims to complement other research that had already been done on the issue of return migration to Armenia. Furthermore, it aims to present an important topic with policy implications not only for Armenia but also for the European Union, the EU Neighbourhood countries, and other countries with a large Armenian diaspora.

The aim of this inductive study is to map the phenomenon of return migration to Armenia and possible overlaps with human capital and development. While this is a large task, it aims to fill in the gap in the research on return migration and development by addressing the case of Armenian return migration and possible benefits of return migration in this specific context. Moreover, it addresses several issues which are crucial for understanding the role of return migration and the possible role of norm transfer and social remittances in Armenia. One of the issues it focuses on is mapping different groups of returnees to Armenia and potential returnees. It considers their motivations for return, obstacles during and after their return, and the factors that can contribute to the broadly defined development of Armenia. The notions of

human and social capital are used as a conceptual framework for this dissertation. Another important aim is to contribute to the practical policy issues of return migration in Armenia or possible caveats by mapping the organisations working with the returnees and their contributions to the return migration in Armenia.

The topic of return migration to the Republic of Armenia was chosen because of several reasons:

1. It is relatively under-researched (with some notable exceptions – see, for example, Lietaert et al., 2017; Johansson, 2008; Pawlowska, 2017).
2. A large proportion of the Armenian population resides abroad and as such, there is a relatively high number of returnees.
3. A large proportion of the Armenian population receives remittances from abroad (these can further contribute to the development of the country).
4. Armenia lies in the vicinity of the European Union and thus, is affected by its policies, which makes it a convenient case study for seeing the impact of these policies on return migration.

The aim of this dissertation is threefold. First, it attempts to inquire about the motivations to return to Armenia among the migrants and the returnees. Second, there is a need to understand returnee reintegration in Armenia. This part enquires about the factors that influence the lived return experience and impact reintegration in a positive and negative way as well as the role of organisations facilitating return in Armenia. Third, the dissertation focuses on the social change that can take place through return migration in Armenia. Finally, the discussion section incorporates the findings into the current research on return migration and attempts to tie the findings with the discussion on migration and development.

1.1 Research questions

This dissertation focuses on the overall barriers and opportunities for returnee reintegration in Armenia. In total, four research questions were selected for this study. They try to shed light on the issues connected to return and its perception among the returnees. Furthermore, the questions aim to stir a discussion about the role of external actors such as the state and international and non-governmental organisations and the ways how they can help foster development in Armenia. Table 1 shows the research questions, the chapter in which they are mainly addressed, and the source of information. The way how this information is extracted is discussed in the chapter on Methods.

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research question	***Chapter***	***Source of information***
RQ1	Chapter 5.1	Migrants, returnees
RQ2	Chapter 5.2 and 5.3	Returnees, key informants
RQ3	Chapter 5.4	Returnees, key informants
RQ4	Chapter 5.5	Returnees, key informants

RQ1: What are the motivations to return for different groups of migrants and returnees?

RQ2: How do the returnees perceive their reintegration in Armenia and what are the factors that influence sustainable return?

RQ3: In what ways are the returnees assisted by different stakeholders to reintegrate into the Armenian society?

RQ4: In what ways can the returnees contribute to social change in Armenia?

Source: author

1.2 Research limitations

This research has several limitations. With Armenia being a single country case study, it is important to bear in mind that the findings of this study cannot be transplanted to other contexts. Nevertheless, it is still important to inquire about various cases to see the diversity of different migration experiences and to be able to draw on this in policy responses. The fieldwork for this dissertation took place only in Armenia but it would have been beneficial to extend it to other sites and hence, create a multi-sited field research (Scheper-Hughes, 2004). This would be possible in some European countries with potential Armenian returnees. However, Czechia is not a prime European destination for Armenian migrants and some research on Armenian has already been done there (Klvaňová, 2010; Drbohlav and Dzúrová, 2007). Other countries were not feasible to research due to time and budget constraints. Hence, this dissertation focuses exclusively on returnees in Armenia and Armenian migrants across different countries (who were targeted by the online survey).

A longer timeframe for this study would have also been more beneficial as we know from previous studies that an impact of migration experience can take between 10 to 15 years to evaluate (Rogge, 1994). Therefore, following returnees for a longer time could have led to more insights into the return processes. However, researching for a dissertation is an event bounded by time and space so this was not possible due to time and budget constraints. Another issue is a relatively small number of returnees interviewed in Armenia during the first visit (n=20). However, similar studies have been published in academic journals with comparable numbers of returnees (see Lietaert et al, 2014). This result had to do with a limited period in the field. The sample representativeness was improved by returning to Armenia in January 2018 for a follow-up visit where another round of interviews was conducted and the total number of returnee interviews increased to 32.

The language barrier between the researcher and the research participants might have impacted the data collection in spite of the use of the interpreter, whenever necessary. However, it is possible that the returnees and key informants could not express themselves to the extent that would be comparable with their mother tongue. The language issue also arose with the online surveys that were originally in English. The Armenian version of the survey was available at a later date but unfortunately, it did not gather a comparable number of responses despite being promoted through the same channels. It is also possible that some potential participants who wanted to take part in the first round of the survey could not do so because of limited language abilities. In spite of all of these limitations, the research on various aspects of return migration to Armenia brings some valuable insights that can serve as a basis for policy making and future research.

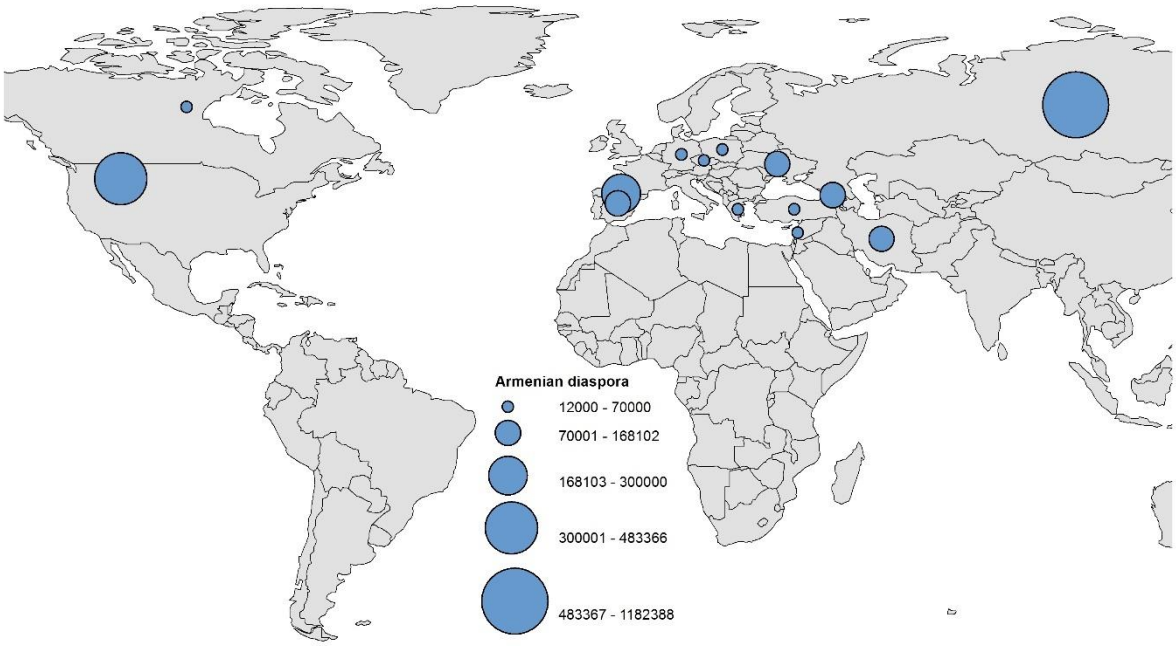
2 THE HISTORY AND CURRENT SITUATION OF ARMENIAN MIGRATION

Leaving Armenia has had a long tradition since the time of the Ottoman Empire, during the Soviet era, and more recently, during the 1990s and 2000s (Makaryan, 2012). According to the World Bank (2016), the percentage of Armenian population abroad is 26.3%. This makes it a country with one of the highest proportions of population abroad not only in the region but also worldwide. The number increases if we factor in the Armenian diaspora, i.e. people who might not have been born in Armenia but still consider themselves Armenian. The Armenian word for the diaspora, *spyurk*, is used to refer to Armenian communities outside of the country. The size of the Armenian diaspora can reach up to 8 million (Baser and Swain, 2009). Large Armenian diaspora communities are located in the United States, Canada, France, Russia, and other countries (see Figure 1).

One of the important moments in the history of the Armenian nation was the Armenian Genocide in 1915 when thousands of Armenians left Western Armenia escaping violence in the collapsing Ottoman Empire (Safrastyan, 2011). This led to the creation of the old/classical diaspora that settled in the Middle East as well as in the United States and some European states. The new diaspora was established in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union and many members of this diaspora now live in Russia and in other countries. In Czechia, there are currently around 8 000 Armenians (Wikipedia, 2018). However, many Armenians define themselves according to their heritage despite living outside of the country (even for several generations). Moreover, due to the historical experience of Armenians, it has been underlined that ‘for centuries there has been no single, clearly defined centre and periphery acknowledged by all Armenians’ (Pattie, 1999: 85). This chapter aims to present the background of migration from Armenia during different historical periods and information

about more recent return migration to Armenia. Furthermore, it aims to discuss the different processes, barriers, and opportunities that are connected with Armenian migration and its diaspora.

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF ARMENIANS LIVING OUTSIDE OF ARMENIA



Source: author, Wikipedia, 2018

2.1 The Armenian diaspora

It is impossible to discuss Armenia without discussing the Armenian diaspora first. The classical Armenian diaspora was established in the United States, Europe as well as the Middle East during the 20th century (Brubaker, 2005; Cohen, 2008). However, Armenians migrated even earlier and had a reputation as skilled businessmen and craftsmen. Some scholars have argued that Armenians have always been a diasporic nation, even before the genocide (Panossian, 2006; Adalian, 1989; Cohen, 2008). It is now generally accepted that a million Armenians were either killed or died of starvation during this mass displacement and moreover, 1.75 million Armenian people were deported to Syria and Palestine (Cohen, 2008: 3). The context of the Armenian genocide has been well explored in the academic literature – from the local elites who enabled the genocide to the role of the individuals (Kurt, 2018a; Kurt, 2018b). While historical Armenia included both Eastern (today's Armenia) and Western Armenia (nowadays in Turkey), many of the Armenians in the classical diaspora consists of people originally from Western Armenia and not the South Caucasus (Bakalian, 1994).

The term diaspora has been used by many different authors to denote a large group of members of one nation who reside outside their country of origin. In Greek, diaspora means scattering or dispersion. This term was first used with the 'classical diasporas' such as the Jewish or Armenian diaspora. Cohen (2008) defines the classical Armenian diaspora as a 'victim diaspora'. He also proposes other classification of diasporas – labour, trade, imperial, and cultural. The concept of the diaspora is understood not only as the physical entity including certain characteristics (Sheffer, 1986; Safran, 1991) but diaspora can also mean having this label ascribed by others. Diaspora can refer to real or imagined communities (Anderson, 1983) and Brubaker (2005: 12) described diaspora as a 'category of practice', i.e. acting as a member of the diaspora. The concept of the diaspora is central to the experience of

some returnees. In a different context, Darwish eloquently presented the realities for many diasporic people:

> I am from there, I am from here, but I am neither there nor here. I have two names which meet and part… I have two languages, but I have long forgotten which is the language of my dreams (Darwish, 2007: 176-177).

A similar experience might be encountered by the returnees who may no longer be familiar with their previous country of origin. The Armenian diaspora in the United States is discussed in Brubaker's seminal paper (2005). He believes that the 'Armenianness' is akin to a symbolic ethnicity and not every Armenian living outside of Armenia should be considered a member of the diaspora because it depends on their own perception of being Armenian.

Some authors are concerned with the political involvement of the diasporas and its impact on the nation-state:

> In other words, if the condition of diaspora provides certain perspectives on the status of the refugee, modes of living across temporal and spatial distance, practices of mourning, cultural transmission, including literature, music, film and the arts, modes of commemoration and alliance that take place within conditions of scattering and containment, then we may well ask, how do the political claims that emerge from the condition of diaspora continue to inform and disrupt ideas of the nation and the national? (Butler, 2012: 209)

There has been a shift in academia towards the transnational understanding of social life, in particular that of migrants. Baubock and Faist (2010) point out that the notion of diaspora has been politicised, while the notion of transnationalism is more neutral. The diasporas have engaged in political goals, for example, the Tamil diaspora in the conflict in Sri Lanka or the Irish diaspora in the Irish conflict (Cochrane, Baser, and Swain, 2009).

The Armenian diaspora is also active outside of Armenia, e.g. the Dashnak Party was founded in 1980 in Tbilisi and continues to be influential in Armenian politics (Dashnaktsutyun,

2018). Many of the activities of the Armenian diaspora centre around the recognition of the Armenian genocide by the state representatives and they regularly commemorate these events. The notion of symbolic ethnicity as described by Brubaker is important for these types of events. As Bakalian (1994: 45) asserts, 'symbolic ethnics have an interest in the events of the homeland, which they turn into another symbol, disregarding its domestic and foreign policy problems'. One example of a transnational diasporic organisation in Armenia is the AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union), which holds offices in 31 countries and declares to operate with more than 46 million USD as its annual budget (AGBU, 2018).

The Armenian diaspora can be located all over the world, but the largest number of Armenians live in the United States. According to the United States Census Bureau (2012), there were 427 822 Armenians living in the country. However, these numbers tend to be underrepresented as people can refer to themselves as American, despite having Armenian heritage or being of mixed descent. Therefore, some sources report a much higher number, up to 1 million people (Shain, 1999). Many of the Armenians in the United States live in California. Freinkman and Minoian (2006) estimated that the annual family incomes of Armenians living in California may be 15 times higher than the GDP of the Republic of Armenia. The Armenian diaspora in Europe is present in many countries, including France, Germany, Ukraine, Spain, the United Kingdom, and many others.

2.2 Current Armenian migration

The late 1980s and 1990s represented a turbulent era for Armenian migration. What used to be considered as internal migration flow, began to represent international migration with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. However, the direction of migration flow to Russia (and back) is not the only one and Armenia boasts migration flows in different directions. It is

imperative to note the environmental migration in Armenia caused by the Spitak earthquake in 1988, whose effects can be felt even today in the second largest Armenian city, Gyumri. This historical period was also affected by the war in Nagorno Karabakh (1988-1994) with occasional flare-ups in later years. This turmoil has contributed to situations of insecurity and widely felt a lack of prospects for the future of a majority of the Armenian population. Moreover, there was a perceived disintegration of social institutions in Armenia and a worsening of living conditions (Dudwick, 1997). From 1990 to 1995, the GDP per capita for Armenia was halved (Ohanyon, Serrano and Regamey, 2014: 4). With the recent 'velvet' revolution in Armenia in spring 2018, there may well be changes to future migration patterns to and from Armenia (The Economist, 2018).

The new Armenian diaspora emerged in the 1990s, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Makaryan, 2012). This is connected to work opportunities abroad with the majority of the cases being in the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, the labour migration to Russia has existed since the 1960s and is well established (European Training Foundation, 2013). To a lesser extent, Armenians have moved to European Union countries in recent years, as well as to the United States (World Bank, 2016). As there are very few formal ways to secure employment in these regions, some have applied for asylum or sought assistance in dealing with their medical problems on humanitarian grounds.

According to UN data, there were an estimated 937 000 Armenian migrants in 2015, amounting to 31.1% of the country's total population (UN DESA, 2015). Among them, 45% of Armenia's emigrants are based in Russia. According to the ILO (2009) study, the seasonal circular migration represents a large part of migration outflows from Armenia – 60 000 people leave annually. The official statistics show that more than 600 000 Armenians entered the Russian Federation in 2016 and it can be expected that a number of them undertook

employment activities (State Migration Service, 2016). However, the unofficial numbers can be much higher.

There are many different causes, or push and pull factors (Lee, 1966), for Armenian migration. The economic factors, including high levels of unemployment, can influence the decision to leave (Lucas, 2005). In 2011, the unemployment rate was 18.4% (European Training Foundation, 2013). There are various issues such as corruption, low quality of services, and low trust in political and public institutions, which all encourage emigration. Armenia is classified as partly free by the Freedom House Index (Freedom House, 2016) and in 2016, Armenia ranked 84th on the UNDP Human Development Index (UNDP, 2018a). The social factors also represent an important incentive to leave Armenia. By the same token, these issues might make it difficult to return to Armenia.

> Economic diversification and simpler regulations have increased the ease of doing business in recent years, but a lack of transparency and persistent cronyism continue to create unfair advantages for those with ties to public officials. Armenian law adequately protects property rights, though officials do not always uphold them (Freedom House, 2016).

Migration management in Armenia is largely coordinated by the State Migration Service. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs oversees labour migration. The Ministry of Diaspora, created in 2008, deals with projects encouraging repatriation. There are also various international organisations that deal with Armenian migration – IOM, UNHCR on the broader scale and various others that are concerned with specific aspects of migration. Moreover, there are various local and international non-governmental organisations that supplement the role of the large organisations. Some authors have suggested the term ‘migration industry’ to refer to the organisational matrix that is present in many countries that send or attract migrants (Castles, De Haas and Miller, 2014). This term can also be applied in the case of Armenia.

There are various legal instruments that govern migration in Armenia. In 2008, Armenia ratified the *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*. In 2013, Armenia signed the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*. Migration policies in Armenia are influenced by two strategic documents: *The Strategic Program of Prospective Development for 2014-2025* and *Strategy for migration policy for the years 2017-2021*. One of the goals of the latter is support for the return of Armenia's citizens and their further reintegration (State Migration Service, 2017).

There has been some research about Armenian migrants in various European countries. Let us take the Armenian migration to Czechia as a case in point. The research about Armenian migration to Czechia suggests that the Armenian migrants in Czechia tend to be highly educated and prefer self-employment (Maroušek, 2001; Drbohlav and Dzúrová, 2007). Drbohlav and Dzúrová (2007: 88) highlight that the Armenian migrants in Czechia show 'a clear assimilation strategy within Czech society in various areas of life'. Perhaps the best-known Armenian migrant in Czechia is Mr. Gevorg Avetisjan, the founder of Marlenka company in Frýdek-Místek, a factory that specialises in honey cakes and other pastries. Klvaňová (2010: 113) also describes the situation of Armenian migrants who have moved to Czechia and emphasises the role of social networks in motivations to migrate:

> The informants emphasized local and transnational social networks as particularly enabling, and in some cases even pressing, their migration. The social context of their lives in Armenia was described as an environment where migration was omnipresent. They faced a constant social pressure because their relatives, neighbours, and friends had been leaving which created a social atmosphere facilitating a decision to migrate.

The decision to migrate and the decision to return seems to be influenced by the social context. The next section discusses the role of return in Armenian migration.

2.3 Armenian return migration

As has been discussed previously, a large number of Armenians move abroad and there is a large Armenian diaspora in many countries. Yet some decide to return to Armenia. This section discusses Armenian return migration in more detail. There are different groups of returnees to Armenia. Probably the largest group is represented by the seasonal migrant workers who return from Russia. Most of the research has focused on this type of seasonal migration. According to the Returned Migrants' survey (European Training Foundation, 2013), Russia was the first destination country for 85% of the returned migrants. Moreover, a large percentage of the returnees considered re-emigration in the future – 68% of the returnees intended to migrate again (European Training Foundation, 2013). However, as the migrants to Russia usually spend less than one year abroad, they have been excluded from this study.

Clearly, the returnees bring in new skills after their stay abroad and it seems to have an impact on returnees across all skill levels. According to the survey, one third of the returnees said that their experience abroad opened the door to better work opportunities in Armenia after their return. Furthermore, 46% of the returned migrants who were working in Armenia after their return said that they use or used the experience they gained abroad in their daily work. Return migrants mentioned mainly vocational and technical skills (69%) and language skills (18%) as the new knowledge gained abroad (European Training Foundation, 2013: 62).

Repat Armenia, an organisation which helps skilled return migrants establish themselves in Armenia, registers 1 000 to 1 500 voluntary return cases to Armenia per year (21 July 2016, personal communication). However, this number excludes the Syrian Armenians whose numbers could be up to 20 000 (Al Jazeera, 2017) as well as involuntary returns due to deportations, especially from the European Union countries. According to the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora, there were around 65 000 returnees who have returned to Armenia since the early 1990s but only 35 000 of them ultimately remained (6 July 2016, personal

communication). This can be linked to the conditions in the home country not being conducive to employment or establishing a business.

For example, Pawlowska (2017) argued that American Armenians who repatriated maintained a symbolic boundary between themselves and local Armenians and were forced to renegotiate their identity. Pawlowska also inquired about the ways how return Armenians were challenged by the local narratives:

> Importantly, by 'development' repatriates meant mostly growth in terms of economy and the human development index, which means external categories used by most of international organisations, not local standards of positive change and improvement. The narrative of contribution has been often complemented with the emphasis on personal sacrifice, resigning from the comfort or career opportunities available in the US (Pawlowska, 2017: 106).

The research done by Pawlowska focused on the 'returnees' who were from the second or third generation. These people have not actually lived in Armenia before moving there which might have impacted their perception of the country and their feelings of isolation.

In cases of unsuccessful asylum applications, the migrants can benefit from the so-called assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) schemes run by international organisations such as IOM or governments of different European countries (Belgium and Austria, among others). However, it is questionable to what extent these schemes are voluntary as many returnees report different levels of coercion to take part in these programmes (Lietaert et al., 2014). Upon their return, the returnees can receive social as well as medical assistance. These programmes can involve a business component which helps them with vocational trainings and small grants or loans for setting up their own businesses. Some of the returnees from Russia can also benefit from similar reintegration programmes (21st July 2016, personal communication). The Armenian return migration comes in many forms – from the labour migrants from Russia, spontaneous returnees with diverse sets of

backgrounds coming from different states to AVRR returnees. This dissertation enquires about their decisions to return and what they are dealing with after their return. The following chapter discusses return migration in various contexts in order to better understand this phenomenon.

3 RETURN MIGRATION

Return migration represents an important, albeit often overlooked, part of the migration cycle. In the ideal world, migration starts with pre-migration phases, migration itself follows, and return migration takes place, sometimes followed by re-migration (to the same or different destination). However, mobility often takes unexpected twists and turns and sometimes it is not straightforward. What could be seen as a short trip often becomes a lifetime journey and vice versa, some people venturing 'for good' decide to return later on. The pattern can also hold for return migration when the returnees first come back for brief visits and eventually decide to return. Or as Kasbarian (2009: 365) put it, 'sojourning can be a prelude to settlement, an experimental migration over a period of time'. This gradual return often corresponds to the notion of 'open-ended return' when the returnees first decide to stay for a shorter period of time (Porobić, 2017).

Return migration is relatively less researched compared to other phases of the migration process. However, it is important in terms of the implications for the country of origin and individual returnees. Return migration can take up different forms from permanent return to temporary return or other forms of circular movements. With the sedentary bias being the norm (Malkki, 1992), return migration was usually seen as the end of the migration cycle but return migration does not represent a new phenomenon. It has been estimated that between 1880 and 1930, one quarter to one third of all immigrants to America repatriated (Wyman, 1993). Moreover, return appears in various contexts from hearing about the right to return in the case of Palestinians dispossessed from the 1948 Palestine (Butler, 2012) or ancestors of the Sephardic Jews seeking to return to Spain from which they were driven out under the Spanish Inquisition more than 500 years ago (The Times of Israel, 2018). Importantly, the right to return is enshrined in Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN

General Assembly, 1948) which states that ‘everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country’.

According to the IOM, a return is:

> the act or process of going back to the point of departure. This could be within the territorial boundaries of a country as in the case of returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) and demobilized combatants; or between a host country (either transit or destination) and a country of origin, as in the case of migrant workers, refugees, asylum-seekers, and qualified nationals (IOM, 2011).

It is clear that there are various groups of returnees. This dissertation only discusses the international return migration and does not deal with internal returnees.

Gmelch defines return migration as:

> the movement of emigrants back to their homelands to resettle. Migrants returning for a vacation or an extended visit without the intention of remaining at home are generally not defined as return migrants, though in some settings it is difficult to distinguish analytically the migrants returning home for a short visit or seasonally from those who have returned permanently (Gmelch, 1980: 136).

Hence, the period of return needs to be longer than a ‘short visit’. King (2000: 8) argues that ‘return migration may be defined as the process whereby people return to their country or place of origin after a significant period in another country or region’. However, a significant period is loosely defined. For this study, a period of one year abroad is selected as the main criterion for defining Armenian return migration but there is no minimum stay in Armenia that would qualify returnees for this study (excluding the obvious cases of going to Armenia on holiday, etc.).

3.1 Return motivations

There are many types of returnees with different motivations and these motivations can change in time. A part of this dissertation also aims to deal with return motivations of the returnees and potential returnees. Cassarino (2004) asserts that due to the diversity of migratory categories, there is a need to distinguish between different types of returnees. The returnees coming from different locations face different possibilities and hardships when returning despite sharing the identity of 'returning residents' (Horst, 2007). Furthermore, the return is not only a personal issue but also a contextual one, affected by structural factors (Cassarino, 2004). Kuschminder (2017) asserts that differences in personal characteristics and the differences between the countries from which returnees come back from can affect the overall return outcomes. It is important to distinguish not only the countries which the migrants return from but also the migrants' different individual characteristics such as skill levels (in this case, measured by the levels of education) as well as the structural barriers that could affect the returnees across all skill levels. This chapter proceeds as follows. First, let us discuss the international migration theories that deal with return migration. Second, typologies that have been proposed to classify return migrants are presented. Third, the borderline between forced and voluntary return is explored.

While there are many theories attempting to explain international migration, Castles (2010) and Portes (2010) argue that researchers' ambitions should be limited to exploring migration theories relating to particular contexts. The 'push' and 'pull' factors are widely used to explain motivations to migrate (Lee, 1966) and they can be also used to explain return migration. Migrants evaluate various factors in the country of origin and country of settlement and decide either to stay or to move to their country of origin. Black et al. (2004) argue that there are both individual and structural factors influencing the return. Among the structural ones are the conditions in the country of origin and in the host country. The individual factors

include the personal attributes (such as gender or age) and social relations. The model also includes policy interventions (incentives and disincentives to migrate). Chobanyan (2013) discusses both push and pull factors in the return migration of Armenians, including worsening conditions in the receiving country, xenophobia, homesickness, and a desire to raise children in the home country. This dissertation presents the return motivations in the section on Findings.

There are two main international migration theories that deal with the return and explain it differently (De Haas et al., 2015). The first one is the neoclassical economic theory and the second is the new economics of labour migration (NELM). Neoclassical economic theory looks at the return through the prism of failure. It argues that the migrant failed to achieve his or her goals and therefore, was compelled to return. This theory maintains that migration is individuals' behaviour to maximise utility by moving to places where they can be more productive (Harris and Todaro, 1970; Massey et al., 1998). According to this theory, migrants are expected to integrate successfully and be more productive than in their countries of origin so there would be no rationale for returning. However, migrants might not be able to find a job or may not be able to improve their lives through migration. As De Haas et al. (2015: 416) put it, 'while "winners" settle, "losers" return'.

The new economics of labour migration (NELM) theory argues that international migration is a livelihood strategy employed by households and families to diversify risk and overcome market constraints (Stark, 1991). In the countries of origin, there is often a lack of insurance and obtaining adequate credit is difficult. Having a member of the household abroad aims to overcome these issues. Thus, the main motivation is to improve the situation in the country of origin and migrants return once they have accomplished their goals. Therefore, under the NELM theory, return signifies a measure of success. One study that combines both the neoclassical economic theory and NELM is the study by Constant and Massey (2002). This

study enquires about the probability of return among the migrants in Germany. The study found mixed support for both hypotheses. Therefore, it seems likely that there is no single way how to explain return migration because of different background and motivations of migrants. However, both theories might provide a useful explanation tool depending on different contexts.

There are different categories of return on the continuum between 'return of success' and 'return of failure'. Two main typologies are presented by Cerase (1974) and Carling (2004).

TABLE 2: TYPOLOGY OF RETURN ACCORDING TO CERASE (1974)

Return of failure	Migrants fail to adapt to the host society and return quickly to the homeland.
Return of conservatism	After a few years in the country of migration, where the migrant's orientation has been towards the country of migration and the migrant is active in sending remittances and savings to the home community.
Return of innovation	Migrants have stayed in the destination country beyond the 'target return', but realise they will never fully acculturate and opt for return, bringing with them new ideas, values, and ambitions to their home country.
Return of retirement	Migrants return at the end of their working lives.

Source: Cerase (1974)

TABLE 3: TYPOLOGY OF RETURN ACCORDING TO CARLING (2004)

Classic returnees	Migrants who spent much of their adult life abroad, they have managed to secure a relatively high standard of living in their country of origin.
Empty-handed returnees	Unsuccessful migrants who come back no better off than when they left, which includes deportees and voluntary returnees.
Intermediate returnees	They are between these two extremes, have not been abroad as long as the classic returnees, have accumulated fewer savings, and not secured pension rights.
Graduates from foreign universities	Students who return from study abroad.

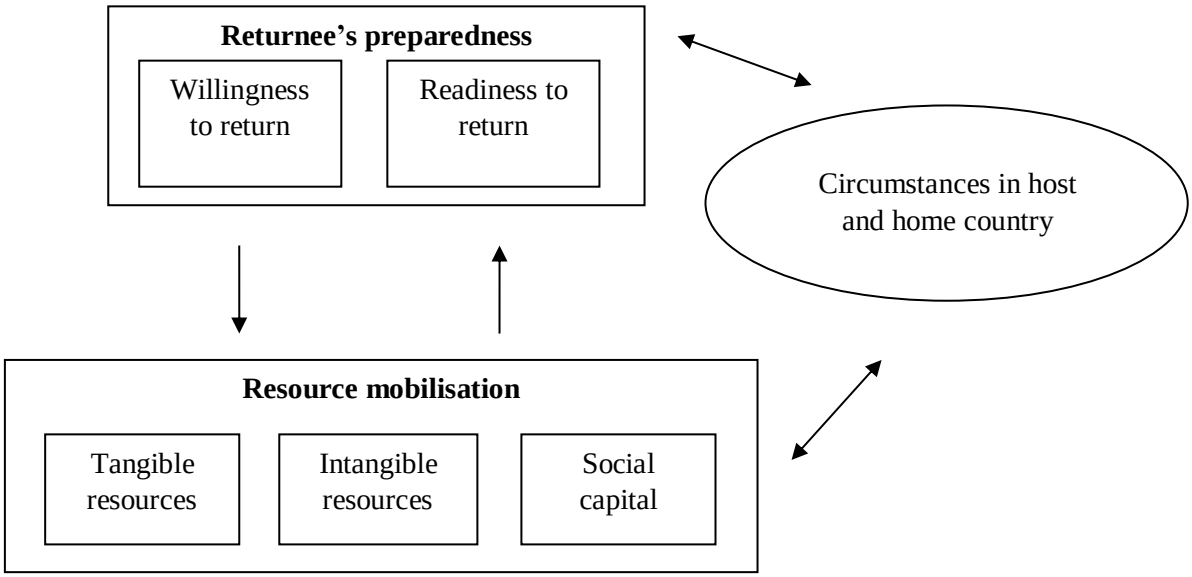
Source: Carling (2004)

Therefore, it can be seen that there are many different motivations for return and these may partly overlap. The 'classic returnees' correspond to 'the return of conservatism'. In some cases, the graduates from foreign universities with work experience may represent the 'return of innovation'. It is clear that these categories are not exhaustive but give an idea about the different motivations that influence return.

Cassarino (2004) argues that return motivations have two components – the level of the willingness to return and return preparedness. Even if migrants express the wish to move, it does not necessarily mean that they are ready for that move - they might not have enough tangible and intangible resources for the return. An early repatriation can have an adverse effect on returnees because they might not recover the resources that they had invested in their journey. Moreover, these returnees might not have enough experience from the country of settlement to be able to use it in the form of social remittances (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011), or when starting a new business. On the other hand, returnees who spend longer time

outside of their country of origin might face difficulties due to the changes that occured in the country as well as cultural or structural barriers. Cassarino (2008) inquires whether the return is *decided* or *compelled*. Decided return means migrants who 'chose on their own initiative to return, without any pressure or coercion', whereas compelled return refers to those 'who returns to his/her country of origin as a result of unfavourable circumstances and factors which abruptly interrupt the migration cycle' (Cassarino, 2008: 113).

FIGURE 2: THE MODEL OF RETURNEE'S PREPAREDNESS



Source: Cassarino (2004: 180)

While discussing international migration, a lot has been written about forced migration. Some scholars have rejected the dichotomy between voluntary and forced migration, suggesting a continuum between 'proactive' and 'reactive' migration (Richmond, 1993). Others have excluded individual motivations from forced migration. According to De Jong and Fawcett (1981: 45), 'forced migration is of course a topic of considerable interest and significance, but not with respect to individual decision making'. At this point, it is important to discuss the

distinction between voluntary and forced return. The widest definition that can be used for voluntary return is the absence of force in return (Black et al., 2004: 6). IOM distinguishes between three types of return: (i) 'Voluntary without compulsion, when migrants decide at any time during their sojourn to return home at their own volition and cost'; (ii) 'voluntary under compulsion, when persons are at the end of their temporary protected status, rejected for asylum, or are unable to stay, and choose to return at their own volition'; and (iii) 'involuntary, as a result of the authorities of the host state ordering deportation' (IOM, 2012).

If the return is forced or semi-voluntary (Sinatti and Horst, 2015), it is more difficult for the returnees to fully integrate because some of their objectives might not have been accomplished. Moreover, it is questionable to what extent these schemes are voluntary as many returnees report different levels of coercion to take part in these programmes (Lietaert et al., 2017). It has been argued that IOM employees are aware of this tension (Koch, 2014). To illustrate the gravity of forced return, in the Armenian context, one returnee was allegedly confronted with the following choice. The woman was told, 'If you don't go back to Armenia, you will be put in handcuffs and sent to Armenia as your son' (7 July 2016, personal communication). Therefore, even the returnees who benefit from the so-called assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes (AVRR), often struggle with the return that is not entirely voluntary. Finally, the return motivation is important for subsequent returnee reintegration.

3.2 Return migration and reintegration

Return migration and reintegration is probably one of the most widely discussed topics in return migration in recent years, often in the context of the AVRR programmes. The concept of reintegration is difficult to measure. However, it has been argued that sustainable return involves the absence of re-migration (Black and Gent, 2005: 2). Some scholars also argue that

return migration is more complex, it 'is not simply a matter of "going home", as feelings of belonging need to be renegotiated upon return' (De Bree, Davids and De Haas, 2010: 489). There are different aspects of reintegration, including psycho-social and socio-economic reintegration, which are connected to returnee embeddedness (Ruben, Van Houte and Davids, 2009). The tool of how to measure the sustainability of return has been proposed by Black et al. (2004) and is summarised in Table 4.

TABLE 4: MEASURES OF THE SUSTAINABILITY OF RETURN

	Physical	**Socio-economic**	**Political-security**
Perception of returnee	(Lack of) desire to re-emigrate	Perceived socio-economic status	Perception of safety, security threats
Objective conditions of returnees	Proportion of returnees who (do not) re-emigrate	Actual socio-economic status of returnees	Actual persecution or violence against returnees
Aggregate conditions of origin countries	Trends in levels of emigration and asylum-seeking abroad	Trends in levels of poverty and well-being	Trends in levels of persecution, conflict, and violence

Source: Black et al. (2004)

The AVRR programmes represent an important factor in successful returnee reintegration. For example, Black et al. (2004) argued that one factor that affects the sustainability of return is the availability of programmes for returnees. According to Van Houte and Davids (2008), returnees can become disappointed with the support that they receive from non-governmental and international organisations because of the unrealistic expectations they create. Another

issue is that the support is often short-term. Koser and Kushminder (2015) argue that a negative decision on asylum is a strong determinant for return but also a strong indicator of a lack of reintegration after return. Many Armenian returnees who returned within AVRR programmes had their asylum claims rejected. According to the literature, the availability of assistance upon return is not a key factor in determining whether migrants will return voluntarily. The threat of deportation can represent a far more important factor (Collyer et al., 2009).

The socio-economic situation in the country of origin can be another key factor for subsequent returnee reintegration. According to the survey done by the Caucasus Research Resource Centre and European Training Foundation (European Training Foundation, 2013), 42% of the returnees were able to find a job in Armenia (most of them finding a job within a year after the return). In general, skilled returnees were able to find salaried jobs, while those with lower levels of education were more often self-employed (European Training Foundation, 2013). However, self-employment should not be taken as a replacement for access to the labour market. Portraying returnees as responsible for their own plight alleviates the responsibility of the state to address structural barriers and improve access to the labour market for the returnees (Sinatti and Horst, 2015). Moreover, it suggests the failure to reintegrate successfully is the individual responsibility of the returnee who did not take the given opportunities. However, if successful return and reintegration happen due to personal characteristics of the migrants, organisations can take the credit for its AVRR support.

3.2.1 Social networks

Migrant social networks seem to facilitate returnee reintegration. For example, Cassarino (2004) argues that different post-return experiences can be explained by different factors such

as social networks as well as human capital, transnational contacts, integration in the country of destination, legal status, and gender. Migrant networks are also connected with transnationalism, as is shown by the following quote:

> In an age of swift and cheap transportation and communication, emigration no longer represents the break with the home country that it once did. And in this context, social and economic capital can no longer be neatly segregated analytically. Many students of migration agree that these transnational networks are today the most important developmental resource associated with international migration (Newland, 2003: 6).

There is a two-way relationship between networks and migration. First, migrant networks may help establish the initial migration, i.e. setting on a journey. They enable an individual to get insights into the initial phase of migration and its perpetuation (Massey et al., 1993). For example, Dolfin and Genicot (2010) found that migrant networks help with loans, information about border crossing, and obtaining jobs upon arrival. Rindoks et al. (2006) found that networks can provide financial resources, lower costs of business operation, facilitate cooperation, disseminate information, and make the hiring of employees more effective. The migrant networks work also in the next stages of migration.

Second, once established, migrant networks may influence developments in the country of origin (Lucas, 2005). Lucas (2005: 209) also argues that migrant networks serve a major role in promoting bilateral trade and capital movements. Third, social networks can also be an effective tool for sustainable return. It can be done by promoting connections and acceptance within the local community (Cassarino, 2004; van Houte and de Koning, 2008). However, there is less research on how migration networks work during the return phase. Participation in social networks can be considered a source of social capital (Putnam, 2000). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 119) define social capital as ‘the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’. Therefore, social

networks have an important role in return migration. There is one further connection between social capital and return migration and these are social remittances which are discussed in the following section on return migration and development.

3.3 Return migration and development

Since 2000, there has been an increase in research studies on return migration. However, so far, no clear consensus on the impact of return on development has emerged. Moreover, there is not even an agreement about the role of migration in international development. De Haas (2012) described the pendulum in the public discourse about migration and development oscillating between optimism and pessimism. On one hand, it has been claimed that brain drain is impacting developing countries in a negative way. On the other hand, remittances were seen as a panacea to solve all developmental issues and migrants were hailed as 'the heroes of development'. While the issue of brain drain was explored in the literature previously in the 1970s (Bhagwati, 1976), the issue later turned to brain gain (Lucas, 2005) or brain circulation (Docquier and Rapoport, 2011; Saxenian, 2006). Brain circulation is perceived as a win-win situation for many actors, including the European Commission (Vankova, 2018).

Scholars found that migration contributes to raising the living standards for those left behind and increases human capital (Adams, 2006; Adams and Page, 2005). However, others describe these situations as 'deskilling' or 'brain waste' (Nowicka, 2012). Therefore, the relationship between migration and development is not a straightforward one. Migration can lead to the potential development of an individual by allowing him or her to move to a place where they are the most productive. However, it may also lead to the phenomenon of

deskilling when the migrant takes any job not corresponding to their qualification and skills.[2] This can be the case because migrants may derive their own identity from their position in the country of origin where migration is seen as prestigious and bringing a higher financial gain than could be obtained from a job in the country of origin.

In recent years, migration and development have become increasingly important in the global fora. For example, *the Global Forum on Migration and Development*, *the High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development*, and the two Global Compacts (*the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* and *the Global Compact on Refugees*) all look at migration from the developmental perspective. The Sustainable Development Goals also explicitly mention migration in several of its targets. Therefore, it is important to understand the linkages between migration and development. IOM claims that the implications of return migration vary significantly based on several factors such as the volume of return migration, characteristics of migrants, reasons for return, and situations existing in the countries involved in the migration (IOM, 2001). Similarly, according to Radu and Straubhaar (2012), the impact of return migration depends on the magnitude of the migration flows and selection of migrants.

There are various channels how migration can lead to development, either on the individual or country level. It is important to understand the distinction between the two. A diaspora member may have skills and resources that they can use to promote changes in their countries of origin, which may or may not contribute to actual development (Castles, 2010). As has been argued, migration can be 'personally developmental, rather than nationally developmental' (Raghuram, 2009: 113). However, the focus is often on the national

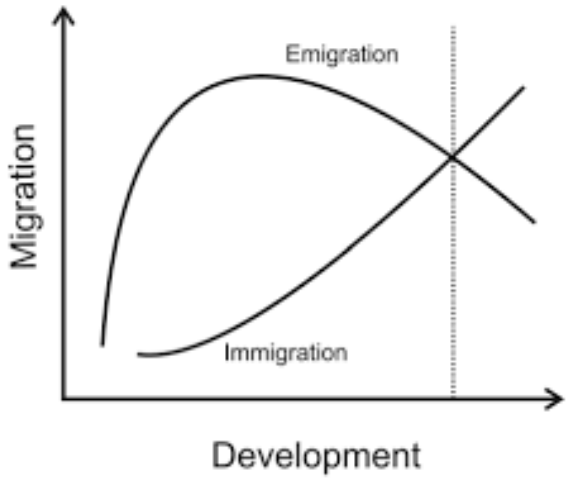
[2] The dual labour theory (Reich et al., 1973) stipulates that there are two segments of the labour market in the receiving state. One for the local population and the other for the immigrants. The former is better paid, more stable, and with possibilities for further career growth. The latter provides difficult jobs with little remuneration. In the past, this segment of the market used to be occupied by women or teenagers. Nowadays, migrants work in this segment of the market.

development, where it can be harder to establish the actual links between migration and development.

The issue of human development at the individual level needs to be introduced at this point. Human development refers to 'expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live' (UNDP, 2018b). There are several dimensions measured by the Human Development Index that deal with directly enhancing human abilities and creating conditions for human development. The former relates to a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. The latter discusses the participation in political and community life, environmental sustainability, human security and rights, and gender equality. Some of these dimensions can be influenced by migration.

There is a large body of literature on migration and development. Some scholars speak of the migration-development nexus (Faist, 2008; Skeldon, 2011). According to Castles and Delgado Wise (2008: 2), "development and migration are part of the same processes and are interacting". The basic diagram showing the relationship between migration and development is the 'migration hump' (Martin and Taylor, 1996). This chart represents the macro (i.e. country) level and shows the curve many countries typically go through. First, there are high levels of outmigration from the country. However, as the country's economy develops, there are higher levels of immigration. Let us take the example of Italy. It used to be a country of emigration in the first half of the 20th century with many Italians heading to the United States or Argentina. Only later it became a country of immigration as its economic growth progressed.

FIGURE 3: MIGRATION HUMP



Source: De Haas, 2010

Therefore, there are different ways how return migration can impact development and it seems that knowledge, innovation, and skills transfer are central to these changes. The following sections discusses their various aspects - first, the role of human capital; second, returnee entrepreneurship; and third, social remittances.

3.3.1 Human capital

The role of human capital, or skilled return migration, represents an important avenue for the impact of return migration on development as it can lead to the phenomenon of brain gain. One way how this can be done is through schooling, either in the country of origin or in the country of settlement. According to Collier (2013), this type of migration is the most beneficial for the country of origin. Return migrants not only bring back their human capital from the country of origin but also possible additional human capital acquired in the countries

of settlement (Docquier and Rapoport, 2011). As Lucas (2005) argued, the accumulation of human capital can take place through schooling and in the process of on-the-job training when the level of skills increases. Knowledge transfer frequently occurs through informal training, learning by example, and sharing new ideas (Kuschminder, et al., 2014).

The increase in human capital can impact the productivity of labour and in turn, affect the economic growth in the country. Human capital models of migration represent an effort to give the migration theories also a micro perspective (Taylor and Martin, 2001). According to these theories, the young are expected to be more mobile than the old because they expect to reap returns from migration over a longer period of time. Similarly, migration is influenced by specific human capital variables that yield a positive return in certain regions. Therefore, migration that produces a higher return in region A than in region B is positively associated with migration from region B to A (Taylor and Martin, 2001: 9).

Some states encourage the return of skilled workers. One example is China where the returnees are called 'Sea Turtles' (Sun, 2013). However, Sun (2013) argued that the better capital accumulated overseas by the returnees who work in venture capital does not translate directly into increased productivity in the Chinese market. There are other returnee 'target groups' who are incentivised into returning back to their countries of origin and working in the strategic areas of growth. This approach is used in India, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Ghana who encourage the return of workers in the fields of IT, biotechnologies, and research and development (Jonkers, 2008). Armenia could benefit from this approach. The study 'Science and Technology in Armenia: Toward a Knowledge-Based Economy' (National Research Council, 2004) argues that there should be grants for returning scientists. However, in practice, the Armenian salaries for scientists remain low and it is not unusual for them to re-migrate.

One large-scale example of attempting to 'bring in knowledge' is the UNDP TOKTEN (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals) programme. This programme was created in 1977 and connects migrant professionals to specific programmes in their countries of origin who are called upon to volunteer their services on a short-term basis (Mahroum, Eldridge, and Daar, 2006). TOKTEN is seen as a tool to circumvent problems commonly associated with traditional development assistance, including the lack of knowledge about local circumstances. Since its inception, TOKTEN has operated in around 50 countries and has recruited 5 000 participants (Mavroudi and Nagel, 2016). Based on this programme, some participants have decided to permanently return to their country of origin. The human capital can be transferred from one person to the next and create a spill-over effect. In general, return migration incentive schemes distinguish between experts and entrepreneurs. The experts are channelled into research institutions, while the entrepreneurs work mainly in the private sphere. The next section discusses returnee entrepreneurship and its impact on development.

3.3.2 Returnee entrepreneurship as conducive to returnee reintegration

There have been several studies focusing on labour market performance of the returnees. Some of them focus on occupational choices and returnee entrepreneurship (Wahba and Zenou, 2012). Yet others discuss the wage premium gained because of foreign work experience (De Coulon and Piracha, 2005) or the occupational mobility of return migrants (Masso et al., 2014). The global competition for talent or brain gain can turn the other way around if persons return back to their country of origin. For example, China and India have greatly benefited from their returning overseas nationals. Some of them have brought in capital, multinational companies, or have reformed businesses. However, it is important not to see returnee entrepreneurship as a panacea. Some returnees might be forced into entrepreneurship because of difficult access to the labour market and difficulties with

obtaining a job. These returnees have been labelled the ‘necessity entrepreneurs’ (Constant and Zimmermann, 2006).

Black and Castaldo (2009) suggest that work experience abroad is the most significant predictor of entrepreneurial activity among return migrants; other factors included savings, reasons for return as well as the frequency of home visits. However, they also find that the types of businesses started up by returnees often do not have a large-scale impact on development. Wahba and Zenou (2012) assert that experience, savings, and length of stay abroad matter for returnees in Egypt. They also find that the decision to become an entrepreneur comes simultaneously with the decision to move back to the country of origin so there might be a bias in returnees being more entrepreneurial.

Research has found that the migration of highly skilled individuals has substantial benefits (Gibson and McKenzie, 2012). According to Klagge and Klein-Hitpaß (2010), return migrants can act as both investors and innovators and hence, influence the development of the country of origin. However, this contribution depends on their skill levels. For example, Sturge, Bilgili, and Siegel (2016) found that highly skilled migrants to the Netherlands are in a better position to contribute to the development in their countries of origin, by the way of economic and social remittances.

The recent survey by OECD found that return migration to Armenia tends to boost self-employment in rural areas for both men and women (OECD, 2017). The same was not reported for the cities. This survey has more to say about the labour market conditions in Armenia and the structural factors than the role of the returnees. It seems that the situation in the regions is even worse and returnees have no other option than to take up self-employment. However, IOM seems to hail this trend. IOM staff stated that ‘more and more, there is the agricultural business such as cattle breeding. Before the trend was that many people went to Yerevan because there were more business opportunities but nowadays they try to go back to

their village' (13 July 2016, personal communication). Other organisations concur that 'agriculture has the main potential. It is along the state approach that they want to develop agriculture and we decided to go on with agriculture' (13 July 2016, personal communication). There are different ways how returnee entrepreneurship can develop but only some of them might have developmental effects, including effects on human development.

3.3.3 Social remittances

The concept of remittances is well known in the migration literature. However, remittances need not be only financial but can include other forms of transfer – they may take the form of ideas, values, and practices as well as political and economic contributions (IOM, 2010). Transnational practices, or exchanges across borders, include the transfer of ideas, the concept known as 'social remittances' (Levitt, 1998). Social remittances also include transfers of knowledge, ideas, and experience from migrants and returnees. An example of such transfer can be know-how learned in the country of settlement that is later transferred to the country of origin. This transfer can take place gradually during regular contacts with the country of origin or upon return. Moreover, migrants may influence ideas in home and host societies by spreading different views about social and political norms or by different practices.

It is important to note that 'people's experiences before migrating strongly influence what they do in the countries where they settle; this, in turn, affects what they remit back to their homelands' (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2010: 1). Not all migrants and returnees exert social remittances as they are also dependent on their levels of social capital and the frequency of contact. Return migrants continue to exert social remittances after they return to their country of origin. For example, returnees coming from countries with low levels of corruption can be

less tolerant towards this in their countries of origin (Paasche, 2016). Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2010) argue that social remittances can scale up from the level of the individual and affect regional and national change. Hence, they can contribute to the development in the country of origin.

Levitt (2001) describes three different ways how migrants interact with their host society. At one end of the spectrum are *recipient observers* who do not come in close contact with the host society. In the middle are *instrumental adapters* who alter their routines for pragmatic reasons to be better able to meet the challenges of their migrant lives. The third group is *purposeful innovators* who seek out to absorb new things and combine them with their existing ideas and practices. However, it does not mean that people who are more integrated into their host societies are less transnational. On the contrary, it has been shown that there are many similarities between integration and transnationalism (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013). Under the right conditions transnational ties can contribute to economic development or democratic transformation while improving access to ideas and networks abroad (Baubock, 2009).

We can see social remittances at work in the form of social protests. Recently, it has been acknowledged that returnees from Romania sparked protests in the summer of 2018 (The Guardian, 2018). A similar dynamic can be seen in Armenia. We can expect the returnees to change the social norms and transfer new ideas to their countries of origin. The concept of social remittances and its usefulness for the returnees further explored in this dissertation.

4 METHODS

In order to understand the experiences of return migration, this dissertation adopts an interpretative framework. Findlay and Li (1999: 56) argue that drawing from more than one paradigm and methodology is necessary to uncover multiple meanings of migration. Furthermore, the perspective on return migration is elicited from different actors – the returnees themselves, the potential returnees, and the key informants working in the migration field in Armenia. This structure attempts to uncover different aspects of return migration to Armenia. A mixed methods approach is taken so that it is possible to identify various key elements of return migration to Armenia. Various actors (returnees, key informants, and migrants) are interrogated to enable the understanding of the multiple meanings of return migration to Armenia.

The dissertation opts for a country-specific approach that allows for an in-depth exploration of the context of the study. This approach is in line with Long and Oxfeld's (2004) conceptualisation of return migration as a situated concept, which positions return migration as impacted by particular contexts and experiences. Because of the differences in individual perceptions, the research attempts to include returnees from various countries, different genders, and age. While the research findings are not meant to be representative of all Armenian returnees, they do provide an important insight into various ways how return migration in Armenia is perceived, what are the main challenges faced by the returnees, and what are the meanings they attach to them.

Creswell (2007: 202-207) presents four different criteria of quality in qualitative research – a longer fieldwork stay, triangulation, consultation with other researchers, and reflexivity. All criteria have been considered when designing the research and during the next phases. The dissertation combines different research methods to ensure triangulation of the data. As

Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 4) claim, 'the combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, and depth to any investigation.' Brewer and Hunter (1989: 17) add that mixing methods is about trying to attain validity in research:

> Triangulated measurement tries to pinpoint the values of a phenomenon more accurately by sighting in on it from different methodological viewpoints... when two reliable instruments yield conflicting results, then the validity of each is cast into doubt. When the findings of different methods agree, we are more confident.

Many migration-oriented scholars call for more interdisciplinary and multi-method research. The distinction is now less between quantitative and qualitative data and research practices usually lie on the continuum between the two (Newman and Benz, 1998). For example, Findlay and Li (1999) draw attention to the need to use mixed methods and call for blurring the lines between quantitative and qualitative methods. While this dissertation uses mixed methods, it deals mainly with the qualitative research framework. The methods used include qualitative semi-structured interviews with the key informants and returnees in Armenia as well as an online survey with the Armenians who currently reside abroad. The aim is to inquire about the migrants' motivations for their return and possible ways how they perceive their return experience and how they can contribute to the development in the country of origin. The research methods for this dissertation have been chosen in line with similar studies conducted on the issue of return migration (e.g. Lietaert et al., 2014; Paasche, 2016; Gillespie et al., 1999).

This study takes the social constructivist and interpretivist perspectives as its starting point (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Neuman, 2000). It assumes that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they work and live and they develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2002). This leads researchers to look for the complexity of views

rather than narrowing them into certain categories. The goal of this study is to rely on participants' own views of their lived experience. Moreover, it is important to note that these subjective meanings are embedded in the social and historical settings. Crotty (1998) identified several key assumptions: 1) meanings are constructed by individuals as they engage with the world they are interpreting; 2) individuals make sense of the world based on their historical and social experience; and 3) the generation of meaning is always social. Therefore, the meanings we attribute to concepts and our knowledge are formed through interaction with others. Given that, the role of the researcher in the interpretation of data needs to be acknowledged. While it was attempted to attain objectivity by consulting with other researchers, the interpretation of the data follows the author's own personal and cultural experience.

There were some ethical issues to be taken into consideration with this type of research (Hammersley and Atkison, 1995). First of all, all interviews were conducted under conditions of anonymity and confidentiality. With the experts, some additional care is taken so that their responses used in the dissertation or research articles would not jeopardise their situation in Armenia. Therefore, their names are not mentioned in the text. The returnees in Armenia are only identified by their gender and age range and no real names are used. When conducting some of the interviews at the offices of Caritas or Impact Hub, it was made clear to the returnees that there is no connection between my research and the services they could receive from the organisation. Therefore, their participation was purely voluntary. The online survey mentioned the following disclaimer: 'Feel free not to answer all the questions or withdraw from the research at any point. All the information provided is anonymous and confidential', and it is treated as such.

The main part of the research in Armenia was conducted from July to September 2016 and in January 2018. The preliminary part of research included desk research and document analysis

with the aim to get acquainted with the Armenian context and state-of-the-art research on return migration. Another part of the research included a period of fieldwork in Armenia (mainly in Yerevan) in the summer of 2016. During this time the assistance at Caritas Armenia was offered. Another period of fieldwork took place in early 2018 by carrying out the final interviews with skilled return migrants at Yerevan Impact Hub. The research in Armenia also included periods of participant observation, following social workers of Caritas non-governmental organisation in their daily work with return migrants and participating in the events organised by the Yerevan Impact Hub. The research period also allowed for observation of some return migrants in their dealing with Caritas and frequenting some places run by the return migrants. The online surveys with the migrants of Armenian origin were conducted at the beginning of 2017. The first version of the survey was in English and subsequently, the survey in Armenian was launched. All the methods and their benefits and limitations are described in detail below. The final part of this chapter discusses the evaluation of the selected research methods.

4.1 Key informant interviews

The first period of fieldwork in Yerevan took place between July and September 2016. During this time, key informant interviews with 32 experts on international migration were conducted (see Annex I). Dexter (1970: 136) defines interviews with experts as a 'conversation with a purpose'. The key informant is able to supply information regarding the research topic and can serve as the point of entry into the field. Moreover, the expert interviews can serve as 'crystallisation points' for insider knowledge (Bogner, Littig, and Menz, 2009: 2). The interviews were semi-structured and were conducted around key themes of return migration with the aim to grasp the complexity of the phenomenon and elicit answers to the research questions.

The majority of the interviews took place in Yerevan due to the fact that a vast majority of organisations dealing with migration, state institutions, and academic institutions have their seat in the capital. The majority of interviews were conducted in English. In a few cases, they were in Armenian with the help of an interpreter. The interviewees were selected due to their engagement with the issue of international migration and included employees of state authorities, international organisations such as the agencies of the United Nations, non-governmental organisations, and academic institutions. A combination of snowball sampling (Creswell, 2002) and personal and organisational networks was used in order to engage further interviewees. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. After the interviews, coding was used to analyse the data. First, open coding was used to come up with new ideas and second, axial coding connected to the text emerged.

TABLE 5: THE KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS ACCORDING TO THEIR INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION

Institution	**n**
Non-governmental organisations	12
Governmental organisations	6
International organisations	5
Private sector organisations	4
Academic institutions	3
Diplomatic representations	2
Total	**32**

Source: author

4.2 Returnee interviews

Returnee interviews emerged as another important data source. DeMarrais (2004: 55) defines an interview as 'a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study'. First, 20 interviews with returnees were conducted during the period of fieldwork from July to September 2016. Additionally, a further 12 interviews were conducted in January 2018. In total, there were 32 interviews with the returnees in Armenia. The recruitment took place through a combination of snowball sampling and personal and organisational networks. The interviews revolved around the themes of diaspora engagement, return migration and reintegration, and development in Armenia and its obstacles. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions and interview notes were coded. The majority of interviews was conducted in English. In a few cases, they were in Armenian with the help of a translator.

To have a balanced sample representing different views, an effort was made to recruit people from diverse groups of return migrants (highly skilled vs. other skill levels, returning from various countries, assisted by an organisation during the process of return or not). In total, there were 32 interviewees (17 males, 15 females). Out of them, 21 had higher education, and 7 of them finished secondary school. All the returnees had lived abroad for at least one year within the last decade but many of them lived abroad for longer periods of time. The return migrants who were interviewed returned from Europe (Germany - 4, Belgium - 4, Hungary and France - 2, Ukraine, Slovakia, and Austria - 1), North America (USA - 6, Canada - 3), Middle East (Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Qatar, Egypt - each 1), Russia (2), and Georgia (1).[3] In total, 19 returnees were employed, 7 self-employed, and 6 unemployed. They spent different periods of time in Armenia; 12 of them less than a year, 5 one to two years, 7 two to five years, and 8 more than more five years. Table 6 shows the background of the returnees who

[3] In the cases where the person lived in more than one country, only the last country of the settlement was listed.

were interviewed including their gender, education, previous country of settlement, occupation, and the period of time spent in Armenia. The full list of returnee interviews can be seen in Annex 2.

TABLE 6: OVERVIEW OF RETURNEES' BACKGROUND

	Total group (n=32)
Gender	
Male	17
Female	15
Education	
Secondary	7
University	21
Unknown	4
The previous region of settlement	
Europe	15
North America	9
Middle East	5
Central Asia	3
Work situation in Armenia	
Employee	19
Self-employed	7
Unemployed	6
Period of time in Armenia	
Less than 1 year	12
1 to 2 years	5
2 to 5 years	7
More than 5 years	8

Source: author

4.3 Online survey

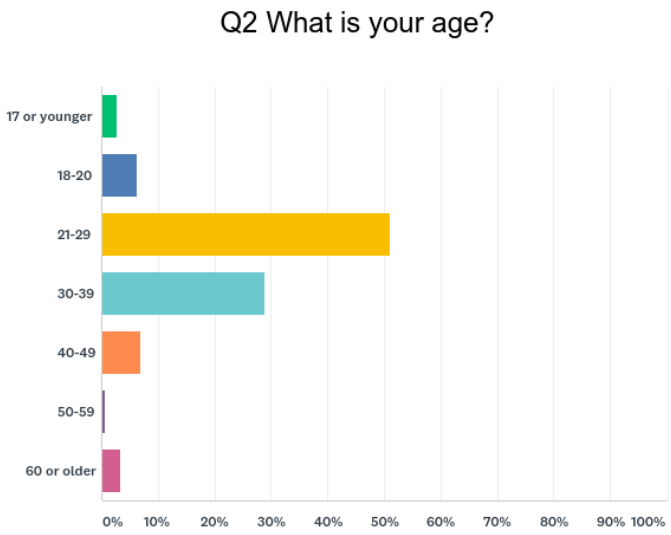
An online survey titled ‘Are you an Armenian national currently living abroad?’ was launched on the SurveyMonkey platform from January to March 2017. The survey was in English and included a total of 25 questions divided into two categories – demographic data and the possibility to return to Armenia. A second version of the questionnaire in Armenian was launched later but received only a few responses despite the use of similar channels of distribution. The questionnaire was mixed, i.e. including both closed and open-ended questions. In order to disseminate the survey, networking websites such as Facebook and LinkedIn were used. The link to the survey was posted on various groups for diaspora Armenians on Facebook (e.g. Armenians in Germany, Armenians in France, Armenians in Czechia, and Slovakia). Personal and institutional networks were also used to disseminate the survey.

Purposive sampling was used in this survey. Because it is a non-probability sampling approach, it does not allow the researcher to generalise the population (Bryman, 2016: 408). However, it allows us to select the participants with relevance to the research question. The participants fulfilling a particular criterion were sampled, i.e. resulting in criterion sampling (Palys, 2008). The criterion used in this survey was the Armenian nationality and the period of stay abroad (at least one year). There can be several limitations with this type of survey, mainly because it is self-selected. Another limitation was the online form, which is not accessible to everyone. The third barrier was the English language in the first version of the survey. However, designed as such it shed light on a relatively little-researched group of Armenian migrants – those who speak English, are well-educated, and have professional jobs or are students in tertiary education. In Armenia, the seasonal migration to Russia and the effect of remittances is relatively well researched (Grigorian and Melkonyan, 2011; Agadjanian and Sevoyan, 2013). Therefore, this type of survey enabled us to learn more about

this group of potential returnees who can have the highest impact on the development of Armenia due to their high skill levels (see e.g. Sturge, Bilgili and Siegel, 2016).

The respondents participating in the survey are described in more detail here. In total, there were 146 respondents, 93 (64%) of them female and 52 (36%) male. More than one half of the respondents (51%) were in the age group between 21 and 29. The second most represented age group were Armenian migrants aged 30-39 (29%), followed by the 40-49 (7%) and 18-20 (6%) age groups (see Figure 4).

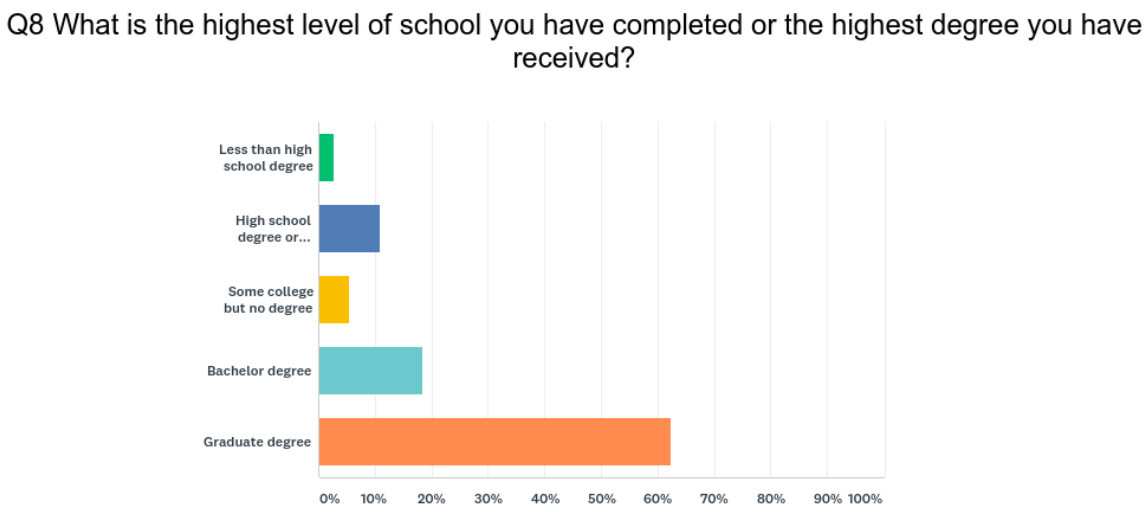
FIGURE 4: AGE STRUCTURE OF THE RESPONDENTS



Source: the survey

The educational levels of the respondents are connected to their age structure as younger and more educated respondents answered the survey questions. In total, 62% of the respondents had a graduate degree, while 18% had a bachelor's degree, and 11% had a high school degree (see Figure 5). The marital status of the respondents also reflected this younger age bias with 59% being single and 30% being married. The majority of the respondents (74%) did not have any children.

FIGURE 5: EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS



Source: the survey

The Armenian migrants who answered the survey questions lived in a variety of countries, including the USA (11%), France (9%), and Russia (4%). There were 28 respondents from Czechia (19%) which was also due to the channels through which the information about the survey was disseminated. Other respondents lived in China, Poland, Germany, Turkey, Canada, Hungary, and Slovakia. However, these percentages do not reflect the structure of the Armenian diaspora (see Figure 1 in Chapter 2).

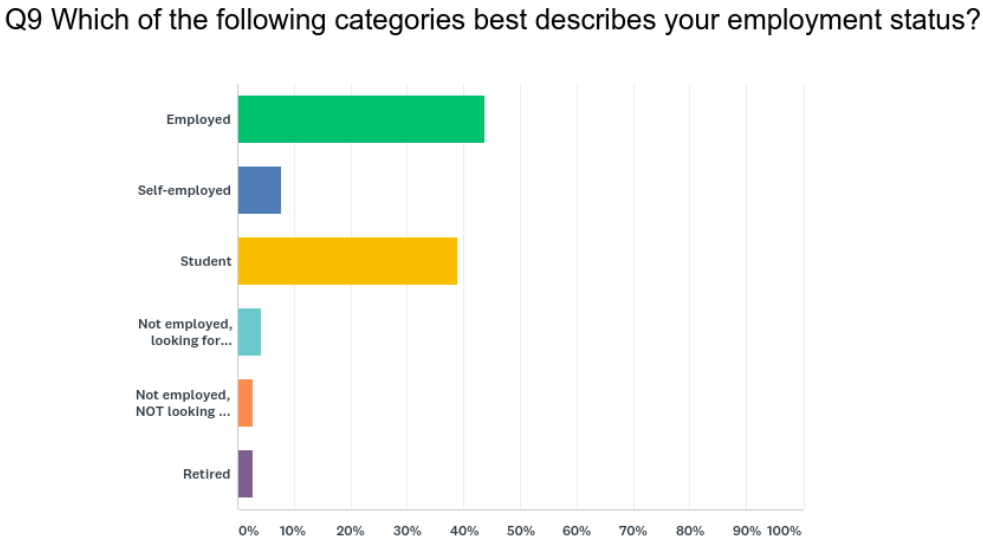
Next, the returnees were asked about their length of stay abroad. Almost one half (48%) stayed abroad for more than five years. The second most frequent period of stay was between one year and three years (24%), 15% migrants stayed less than one year, and 13% migrants stayed between three to five years.

FIGURE 6: THE LENGTH OF STAY ABROAD

Source: the survey

Finally, the respondents were mainly employed (44%) or students (39%). Some of them were not employed and were looking for work (4%), while those who were not in employment and not looking for work numbered 3%. The percentage of retired migrants was also 3% (see Figure 7). The survey results are discussed in Section 5.1 on the return motivations.

FIGURE 7: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS



Source: the survey

4.4 Evaluation of the methods

This dissertation provides a glimpse into the lived realities of the Armenian returnees. First, the key informant interviews offered some context and an outside view on the return. They served as a good entry point into the field, which enabled us to learn about the organisations who work with returnees and the different target groups of these programmes. They also enabled us to acquire further contacts with the returnees and networking opportunities. The organisations were selected through online searches and official publications (IOM and the State Migration Service). There was an attempt to contact all of them but not everyone was able to respond. The list of key informant interviews can be seen in Annex 1. However, the key informant interviews may not offer neutral information because there can be a certain agenda in promoting the type of programmes their organisations run in Armenia. Therefore, there might be an overestimation of the importance of work they do and to what extent they help the returnees with reintegration in Armenia.

Next, the returnee interviews provide the crux of this research. As there are different groups of returnees, it is advisable to reach out to as many of them as possible. First, the interviews were selected through the personal contacts and through the networks of the non-governmental organisations working with the returnees. They included both participants of the AVRR programmes and the voluntary returnees. During the second stay in Armenia (January 2018), there were more interviews with the voluntary returnees who were working at the Yerevan Impact Hub or were close connections of people working there. This group of returnees provided interesting insights about skilled returnees who were attempting to re-integrate in Armenia. However, there were diverse groups of returnees within this group – returning from different countries and some of them were the members of the Armenian diaspora and genuine repatriates. Therefore, this distinction had to be reconciled in the research as the returnees and repatriates might have different needs.

In addition, the survey was conducted along the main research in order to learn more about Armenian migrants living abroad. The respondents were selected through social networks (including specifically Facebook and LinkedIn groups), personal contacts, and organisational networks. Later on, the survey was translated into Armenian in order to attract a larger sample of migrants (including those who did not speak English). However, it only received few responses in spite of being promoted through the same channels. This was due to several factors. First, the people who wanted to take part have already done so. Second, migrants might have already heard about it during the first round and became desensitised towards the information. Third, when the survey in Armenian was launched in the beginning of 2018, Armenia started to undergo a deep social transformation; people were involved in it and had to follow the news closely. Hence, they had little spare time to fill in the survey.

All of the methods worked together closely and brought to the fore different aspects of the return migration experience. The interviews with the key informants illustrated the importance of the organisations working with the returnees (which is further discussed in Chapter 5.4) and also shed light on the return experience as the key informants were in a daily contact with the returnees. Next, the returnee interviews showed motivations to return (among the people who already returned) and highlighted some aspects of the return experience such as return preparedness and the role of social and human capital. It also pointed to some social changes which are taking place through return migration. Finally, the survey showed some aspects of the migration experience among a specific group of Armenian migrants and the possible motivations for a return to Armenia among this group.

5 FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the dissertation. First, it discusses the return motivations for Armenian migrants living abroad and for the Armenian returnees. There are various factors that influence the decision to return and it often is a mix of various motivations. Next, the return experience is discussed through the viewpoint of the returnees and key informants who work with the returnees. There is interplay between the structural forces and the individual agency of the return migrants that leads to different return experience. However, certain key characteristics such as return preparedness, the role of social, and human capital appear to be important for a sustainable return experience. Next, the role of the key actors in migration management in Armenia is presented including the state, IOM, and non-governmental organisations in Armenia. Finally, the possible social changes that take place because of the return migration to Armenia are introduced based on the interviews with returnees and key informants. They relate to different programmes which attract diaspora Armenians and returnees with the rationale of sharing their skills or to the perceived changes that the returnees themselves see in the society. All sections attempt to shed light on the issue of return migration to Armenia and its possible impact on the human development.

5.1 Return motivations

The motivation to return seems to be an important factor for returnee reintegration. While there is a complex array of overlapping reasons why returnees go back, several of them emerged as important ones among the Armenian migrants and returnees. These motivations and expectations are discussed in the following section on return motivations. It emerges that the motivation to return is often a mix of various reasons for Armenian migrants and returnees alike. While the motivations to return generally did not differ too much for the returnees and

migrants, migrants did not see Armenia as conducive to work-life balance, but many actual returnees thought about it differently as is shown in the following sections.

5.1.1 Return motivations for Armenians living abroad

We enquired about the motivations to return in the survey as well as in the returnee interviews. The return motivations are similar for the Armenian migrants residing abroad and the returnees. In both groups, familial reasons (being close to relatives and friends) and work-related reasons were mentioned frequently. The themes related to human security, patriotic reasons, the overall environment in Armenia also appeared both in the surveys and interviews. As for the surveys, various reasons were cited for the possible respondents' return to Armenia, the main one being family (n=80), employment (n=33), and safety (n=23). Among other answers which did not directly relate to the previous options, the migrants mentioned factors such as patriotic reasons, reasons relating to the rule of law, political and social situation, lifestyle reasons, and future projects in Armenia, which were all listed in the 'Other' category (see Table 7).

TABLE 7: REASONS RELATING TO RETURN AMONG MIGRANTS

Factors	**Examples of statements**
Family	'my child', 'home', 'parents', 'friends and family only'
Employment	'work in the tourism sector', 'ability to grow in the field of IT', 'stable income'
Safety	'comfort zone', 'sense of belonging', 'community', 'peace'
Patriotic reasons	'belonging to the motherland', 'homeland', 'be useful for the

	country where [I was] born', 'patriotic feelings', 'love for Gyumri'
The rule of law and political situation	'law and order', 'trust in the Armenian government', 'freedom from corruption', 'change of the ruling regime', 'better economic situation, [an]other president'
Social situation	'healthy social environment', 'the social state of the country', 'change of living conditions'
Lifestyle reasons	'despise the lifestyle of Americans', 'work-life balance', 'nature', 'ecology, nostalgia, sun, people of Armenia'
Future projects	'business', 'to open my own clinic', 'aim to improve my skills'

Source: the survey

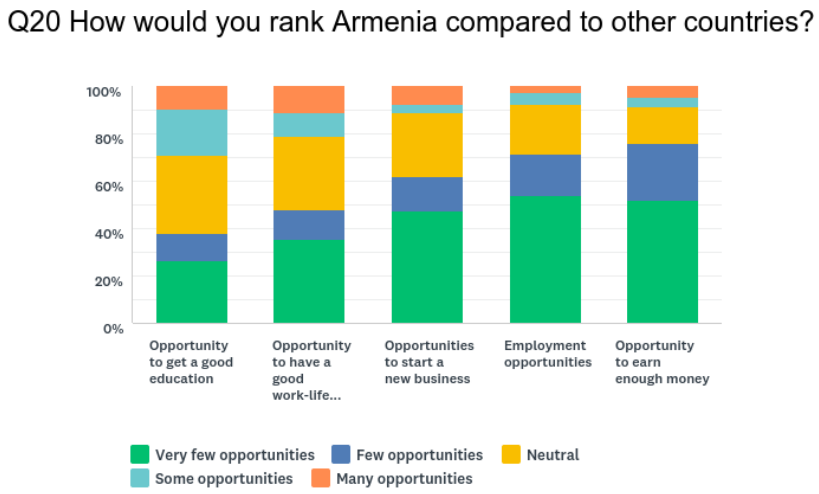
The motivation to return due to the familial relations in Armenia was a general feeling echoed by many migrants across all skill levels. These sentiments were often mixed with patriotic reasons. Some of the survey respondents remarked that they wanted to return because they wanted their children to grow up in Armenia and be close to the grandparents. Similar factors influencing return also appeared in the interviews.

The likelihood of return is difficult to determine unless having the actual numbers of people who repatriated. In the surveys, the likelihood of return was approximated by the question, 'How often do you think about returning to Armenia?' In total, 121 people answered this question – 27 never thought about returning to Armenia, 38 thought about it less than once a month, 29 only once a month or more often, and 24 once a week and more often. It is also important to note that the skill levels have increased for the majority of the migrants during their stay abroad – for 69 from the sample, they increased significantly and for 40 they increased to some extent. Only nine returnees claimed that their levels of skills stayed the

same during their stay abroad. Therefore, the majority of the potential returnees have also some skills which they obtained during their stay abroad.

In the online survey, the migrants rated the opportunities for a good work-life balance compared to other countries. About one third (35.3%) of the survey respondents thought that Armenia offered very few opportunities for a good work-life balance and only 11% thought there were many opportunities for a good work-life balance. However, the returnees thought about it differently with many of them praising Armenia for a comparatively better work-life balance (see Section 5.2.1).

FIGURE 8: COMPARISON OF ARMENIA WITH OTHER COUNTRIES



Source: the survey

While opportunities to earn enough money (52% - very few), employment opportunities (54% - very few), and opportunities to start a business in Armenia (47% - very few) were ranked as rather unfavourable by the Armenian migrants, the opportunity to get a good education was rated more favourably (26% - very few opportunities vs. 28% some or many opportunities).

Importantly, the majority of migrants believed that they would be welcomed upon their return to Armenia (this is reflected in the question 'If you were to return to Armenia today, how welcomed would you feel?'). Only 12 people would not feel very welcomed, whereas 69 people would feel welcomed. The rest of the respondents (40) felt neutral about their possible return to Armenia. The findings are encouraging because they reflect on the group of migrants with a higher level of skills who might potentially contribute to the development of the country should they decide to return.

5.1.2 Return motivations for the returnees

The returnees came back because of a mix of reasons. Familial reasons were important for most returnees. One returnee mentioned how important it was for her that her daughter has 'a full Armenian identity' and is close to her grandparents (woman, 43, returned from the US). Familial reasons related also to the returnees who decided to come because of their aging parents. Another woman returning from Germany stated that she returned to Armenia to take care of her elderly mother. However, her motivation was a mix of reasons because when she was in her previous country of settlement, she 'did not feel to be a part of it, and [she] missed Armenia' (woman, 52, returned from Germany). This person was also assisted by the AVRR programme so for her there was much lesser choice whether to return or not.

The reasons connected to 'not belonging' and patriotic reasons often appeared in the interviews. One returnee stated that he returned for 'identitarian and pragmatic reasons' (man, 33, returned from Canada). Another returnee noted:

> I liked living in Europe, but I felt it was my neighbour's home. And I have to create the same effort in my home, meaning my country. I am Armenian. I have to work for some change and help people (woman, 27, returned from France).

However, the reason of belonging can also be connected to discrimination in the country of settlement. One of the interviewees (woman, 31, returned from Iran) stated that 'as a member of a minority [she] felt discriminated'. Another interviewee, when discussing the situation in his previous country of residence, mentioned that 'you feel like you don't belong there' (man, 29, returned from Syria). In the case of Syria, the security situation also directly influenced the decision to move to Armenia.

For many returnees, security, which relates to having a stable job as well as to general levels of security in the country, was important. The returnee stated, 'I moved here for the job as well as the security. I had arranged my first job before coming here' (man, 29, returned from Syria). The safe environment and general levels of security in Armenia were perceived as favourable by many returnees. One of the interviewees asserts:

> There is less stress here; the type of worries is different. For example, in the daycare in the US, I had to be aware of strangers and had to teach my child to beware of strangers (woman, 43, returned from the US).

Unlike the survey respondents, many returnees enjoyed the lifestyle in Armenia that was perceived as relaxed and conducive to work-life balance:

> Here you have the small city lifestyle. You can walk everywhere. You can sit down and have a coffee without thinking that you'll be late (man, 42, returned from the USA).

However, for other returnees, Yerevan was seen as a quiet city. One of the returnees complained about the slow pace in Armenia but later mentioned that she actually enjoyed the pace:

> First, I hated the slow life pace here. [It is] so slow. In Lebanon, there is this active lifestyle. I had two jobs. I ran from one to the other (woman, 28, returned from Lebanon).

Generally, the motivations for return are a mix of various reasons. As one returnee succinctly put it,

> There are various reasons why people return - physical safety, people want to be engaged with Armenia because Armenia cannot exist as a network. Being Armenian means that the assimilation is quick, and they also want their children to speak Armenian. There are professional reasons, too. People studied abroad and they can turn their skills into comparative advantage. Life is easier here, for example, the commute is shorter. The work-life balance is good. There are activities for children if you have money. The changes that you do here [in Armenia], you can feel them (man, 36, returned from Russia).

Another motivation often cited by both the migrants in the survey as well as by the returnees in the interviews is the importance of the future projects, for example, one returnee noted:

> Now it is happening that smart people return to Armenia when they have young kids. They see it as a future for the kids. They have some emotional ties with the country. First people who returned were the revolutionary types who started the movement to the country. Now the new types look for housing, better quality of life and schools for children. They decide to come here for three years and see how it is. They already come with a job as a CEO or start their own company (man, 45, returned from USA).

In case of voluntary returns to Armenia, returnees usually come back because of their relations in the country or for work-related and patriotic reasons. These returns are generally planned in advance and the returnees can make use of their social networks in Armenia in order to start their new projects. In contrast, as a result of a return that is hasty and not prepared in advance, returnees often struggle with reintegration. This is usually the case during the so called ‘assisted voluntary returns’ during which returnees might be coerced to leave the country of settlement. Some of the assisted voluntary returnees came back because they had no other option. As for others, they decided to take up the offer of AVRR programme while waiting for the asylum decision because of various reasons. Some people fell ill, while others returned because ‘things were expensive [in the country of settlement]’

(man, 33, returned from Austria). Another family decided to leave because they 'didn't like the communal accommodation, it was crowded. But [they] couldn't pay the rent; [they] did not have work' (woman, 32, returned from Belgium). Some AVRR returnees might have sold their belongings before leaving which can make them even more vulnerable and dependent on the assistance of various organisations.

Therefore, the type of return is important for the subsequent reintegration experience: it is apparent that a strong motivation to return is important for the preparedness of the returnees to reintegrate (Cassarino, 2004). Moreover, the return motivation, in connection with the resources the returnees have, becomes the key to subsequent reintegration. Sustainable return and reintegration through the lens of returnees and key informants is discussed in the following chapter.

5.2 Return experience of the Armenian returnees

This chapter discusses different returnee experiences to illustrate the lived reality of return migration to Armenia and it highlights the differences between the groups of returnees and the status of their return (on the scale from voluntary to forced). It starts with discussing the role of return preparedness for the returnees and it will be argued that return preparedness is necessary for the subsequent returnee reintegration. Next, it assesses the importance of social networks and social capital in return migration. For many migrants and returnees, networks represent the most important resource when returning back to their country of origin. However, their networks might not be working very well after a longer period of absence. Finally, this chapter enquires about the role of skills (human capital) for the returnees. It shows that education and skills of the returnees matter for their successful engagement upon

return. However, it might be problematic for some skilled returnees to find a job that matches their levels of skills.

5.2.1 The role of return preparedness

Cassarino (2004) cites returnee's preparedness and resource mobilisation as two important factors for returnee reintegration. Return preparedness means the willingness to return as well as the readiness to return. The circumstances in both the host and home countries are important for a sustainable return (Black and Gent, 2006). As Ghosh (2000: 185) points out, return 'is largely influenced by the initial motivations for migration as well as by the duration of the stay abroad and particularly by the conditions under which the return takes place'. Spontaneous returnees are aware that there is a need to prepare before going back to the country of origin. Some of them have arranged jobs before returning to Armenia. However, the same might not be true for the returnees assisted by the AVRR programmes, which often have a limited timeframe and ask returnees to return in a short period of time such as two weeks (man, 61, returned from Belgium).

Therefore, the degree of voluntariness during the return process is to be questioned for AVRR returnees and sometimes these programmes are seen as a softer alternative to deportation (Leerkes, Os and Boersema, 2017). Some returnees face the dilemma whether to go back without adequate preparation. The support that is given to them takes place mostly post-return but even then, they might not have enough resources to be able to start a sustainable return project. Therefore, the level of willingness to return is connected to the subsequent return experience. The returnees taking part in the AVRR programmes need to have some time to think about their future in Armenia and need to be prepared for their return.

Some spontaneous returnees also face issues with their return and despite careful planning, they might face some disillusionment when it comes to work-related opportunities.

> This is the age when you can try but opportunities here [in Armenia] are slim. I do not exclude going back to Europe (man, 31, returned from Germany).

Another returnee, a university lecturer, was contemplating re-migration to China after the working conditions in the Armenian academia were not comparable to the ones he experienced in Italy and Germany during his PhD studies. He felt that in Europe he was 'legally out of competition'. Yet China seemed to offer him a better perspective:

> If someone told me that I would go to China a couple of years ago, I would not believe them (man, 32, returned from Germany).

Therefore, it is reasonable for the returnees to try to engage in some strategies such as gradual return when they first come to 'see how things are' in Armenia and only decide later if they will stay in the country permanently or not. There are some organisations such as Repat Armenia or Birthright Armenia that try to engage skilled returnees and offer them some initial support that can help them with adjustment to the Armenian environment. For some, the return can be accidental:

> First, I was only going for a year, I wasn't planning to stay, I just intended to spend some time here [in Armenia]. I only had a job for a year but then gradually, I decided to stay (man, 33, returned from Canada).

The return preparedness is a key component for successful return experience. Many returnees who face a return that happens in a short period of time struggle with subsequent reintegration. For the returnees who planned their return in advance, it can be much easier to reintegrate and both social and human capital play a role in this. The returnees highlighted the importance of planning about the job in Armenia in advance and having a good business plan.

One returnee noted that ‘everyone wants to open a hairdressing salon, a kebab [stall]. People complain about the taxes, but even if you don’t need to pay taxes but you don’t have any ideas, you’ll fail’ (man, 36, returned from Russia). Another important factor that has been mentioned by the returnees is age. The older the returnees are, the more difficult it is for them to reintegrate in Armenia. One returnee warned, ‘They suffer a lot here if they are not entrepreneurial types. If you are running away from something, for example if you were not successful, it is not going to work. It is also hard if you are middle age’ (man, 45, returned from USA).

5.2.2 The role of social capital

Social capital and personal networks are important for returnee reintegration. Diaspora practices used by the returnees, such as building their own institutions and networks of support, can help but they can also be problematic because they create divisions between them and the mainstream society (Pawlowska, 2017). If the returnees’ networks are not sufficient, they try to use the next available option which is the support offered by the organisations that provide reintegration programmes. However, these might not offer the same outputs as the genuine personal networks. The return experience is dependent on the motivation to return; if the return is seen as forced, the returnees might struggle with their social capital and creating their networks in Armenia. It is not to say that the returnees who return voluntarily do not struggle with their day-to-day lives, but they can use their social networks which they can capitalise on. The return for some categories of returnees can be extremely difficult as is illustrated by the following quote:

> I am alone here. It is a torture for me. If I had a safe chance to go back I would go (man, 61, returned from Belgium).

This person had his family members in Belgium and he struggled with the return to Armenia that was 'semi-voluntary' (Sinatti and Horst, 2015). After the return, he was assisted by one non-governmental organisation but its level of support was not the same that could have been expected from his social networks. However, his family and his social networks were in Europe and this person could not engage with them aside from the occasional call.

On the other hand, some returnees reported that the help received from their networks was crucial for their decision to return and to stay in Armenia. Many people noted that their families and friends were supportive of their decisions to move. For some returnees, the migration experience was so life-changing that they had to create new social networks. One returnee had the following experience:

> I have been in Yerevan for two years now and I have already built new friendship networks (woman, 27, returned from France).

Networking, or being able to capitalise on their social contacts, emerges as an important strategy for a successful returnee experience which is needed in order to secure means of income generation. As one woman remarked, 'networking is all that we have left' (woman, 25, returned from Hungary). Returnees are dependent on their own social networks; should this fail, they depend on the work of non-governmental organisations. However, the level of support is not the same.

Other returnees mentioned their neighbours and local communities who were able to help with their reintegration. One returnee claimed that the neighbours were initially helpful because they cooked food for her (woman, 27, returned from Iran). Moreover, in her previous country of settlement, she 'missed the opportunity to be involved in the community'. This is something that changed for her in Armenia where she attends various workshops or events where she can network with other returnees and residents.

Therefore, social capital is important for returnees and they can avail from it, for example, when looking for a job or in their day-to-day lives. However, the returnees who lack their own social networks often struggle with reintegration and the organisations who offer the AVRR programmes might not be able to replace the returnees' personal networks. Organisations for skilled returnees such as the Yerevan Impact Hub might help the returnees with broadening their networks. For returnees who do not have their networks in Yerevan, the return experience is difficult regardless of the type of return (spontaneous or forced).

5.2.3 The role of human capital

Human capital (or the levels of skills and education) can be obtained before leaving the country of origin, after migration, and after return. For some returnees, the skills they have learnt during their stay abroad may be an important factor for obtaining a job in Armenia. The skills can include professional or language skills as well as soft skills. However, increasing the skill levels during migration is not a guarantee that returnees will obtain a job after their return. One returnee mentioned the difference in the work environment and emphasised the skills that she learnt while living abroad.

> I also learnt about the working relations. You have to be effective and create some value. You know how the Armenians work. They say another day has passed at work, I got my salary. [...] During my studies, I learnt things about business but that was secondary. The most important was how I started to perceive the reality (woman, 27, returned from France).

It was quite common for the returnees to develop their skills and competencies while living abroad as is shown in the following quote:

> I didn't change too much by going abroad. I was always on time, even before going to Germany. But it helped me develop my way of working (man, 31, returned from Germany).

The returnees mentioned that for them, the experience of living abroad was important in order to develop their skills or increase their levels of education. This was also true for the sample of migrants outside of Armenia, for the majority of whom the skill levels increased during their stay abroad – for 109 of them they either increased or increased significantly. However, if the returnees are older, have lower levels of skills, or lack the motivation for re-training, it might be more difficult to reintegrate in the job market. However, even the younger and skilled returnees might still face difficulties when looking for a job in Armenia due to the socio-economic conditions in the country. If the returnees with high skill levels are able to get a job upon return, it is mainly due to perseverance and their social networks. However, their employment can be beneficial for everyone due to their experience and skill-sharing with their colleagues. One returnee was looking for a job upon her graduation in the United States. She went to Armenia with Birthright Armenia (an organisation providing short-term internships for Armenian repatriates). She recalls, 'I worked for a few months in social media, but it didn't lead to a job offer. I did have a second job with a [US] company remotely' (woman, 32, returned from USA). This experience led to obtaining her next job where she worked at the time of the interview.

An alternative to employment is self-employment. Some organisations assisting returnees in Armenia work with the premise that returnee entrepreneurship can be beneficial for the development of Armenia regardless of the returnee skill levels or their personal characteristics. However, not all the returnees have the prerequisites to become successful entrepreneurs. Even if people are self-employed they complain about the low earnings in Armenia. One returnee works as a taxi driver in Yerevan and his family is still in Russia. When he lived in Russia, he worked as a hairdresser. However, he complained that by working as a hairdresser in Yerevan he would not earn enough to make a living. 'What I earned in Russia was good, about three times more than I would get here' (man, 35, returned

from Russia). That is why he chose to work as a driver instead, driving a taxi in Yerevan, and occasionally going to Moscow as a long-distance driver transporting other migrant workers.

Some of the returnees with high levels of skills did not see many obstacles when it came to reintegration or starting a business. As one returnee noted:

> In order to start a business, there are no barriers, no differences [but it] is dependent on the sector. Possibly in commodities, it is different because of the oligarchs but the wine sector is different. Wine is the pride for a country (man, 45, returned from USA).

Another skilled returnee agreed.

> There are no obstacles to people who want to work in Armenia. If you want to start a business, nobody will discriminate against you. There can be problems with culture and language. You have to speak Russian if you want to do business in Armenia but other than that, legally, it is not a problem (man, 41, returned from USA).

This means that some returnees or repatriates (who might have left as children or who are the members of the Armenian diaspora) might need to learn the Russian language in order to function in the Armenian working environment.

Therefore, there are various issues with reintegration that affect returnees across all skill levels. Even some highly skilled returnees might need to learn a new language (e.g. Russian). Returnees with other skill levels might find it difficult to obtain a job after a prolonged period of absence and possibly go without having a job in the meantime. Hence, it is important to target the returnees with different skill levels in order to enable them to reintegrate in the Armenian society.

5.3 Return through the lens of key informants

This section focuses on the reality of return which is a difficult experience for many returnees who struggle with reintegration. There are various organisations that attempt to ease the reintegration process for the returnees and who work with the returnees on a daily basis. Therefore, both negative and positive factors influencing returnee reintegration on the individual as well as structural levels are investigated from the perspective of the key informants. It has been found that the returnees' personal characteristics such as skills, networks and social relations, and their willingness and preparedness to return are necessary for the returnees to be able to reintegrate successfully. However, the broader environment in Armenia, including the economic factors and other social and structural factors (such as corruption) affect reintegration in a negative way.

The barriers to returnee involvement in the economic activities in the country of origin tend to be largely structural. Poverty, low salaries, and high levels of unemployment create conditions that push people to leave in the first place and make it difficult for people to return. Despite some improvements in the past two decades, the labour market conditions in Armenia are problematic (European Training Foundation, 2013). Clearly, there are some obstacles for the returnee engagement in Armenia, but the question is to what extent they differ for different groups of return migrants. For the returnees who do not have the opportunity to become self-employed and lack the relevant networks, finding employment can be difficult. This can be an issue for both low skilled and high skilled returnees.

5.3.1 Returnee entrepreneurship

Generally, the perspective of the key informants is similar to the one of returnees. Among the factors affecting reintegration in Armenia in a positive way emerge the resources which can be tangible (such as money) or intangible (such as strong personal networks or sense of initiative). All of these are related to being able to obtain a job or becoming self-employed. Generally, the key informants mentioned the various types of projects supporting the returnees' resources, which can be conducive to reintegration. The key informants thought that there are opportunities in Armenia but one's own effort or initiative is needed from the returnees.

> I think opportunities in Armenia are increasing for others to come and share skills. I think this creates more opportunities. Many people are just living their lives and to go to a new country to share skills is an effort, it takes planning it. It takes some investment. And that practicality of life is what sometimes gets in the way (personal communication, 12th July 2016).

The innovative ideas and access to start-up capital being conducive to reintegration have been mentioned by the returnees and key informants alike. Some organisations try to support innovative ideas and returnee involvement. The UNDP attempts to work in the regions and its staff members argue that 'these entrepreneurial activities are […] fighting against this sense of apathy amongst the population which is very high. We try to attract ideas from outside Yerevan, in the regions' (personal communication, 22nd July 2016). However, they acknowledge that the best ideas generally come from Yerevan. Another key informant discusses the inherent contradictions in supporting the returnee businesses.

> We assist small businesses. […] People are afraid of mobilizing their resources and being creative and the government is afraid of supporting the creative industries because these are the areas that challenge the governmental structures. However, it is going in this direction anyway, even without the support of the government (personal communication, 25th July 2016).

The Italian organisation CISP (International Committee for the Development of Peoples) works with the premise that remittances can be invested by the returnees and their families. This organisation works in the rural regions.

> We were working with the migrants' families who receive remittances to inspire them, to have the idea that these remittances should not only finish in the shops. You can collect them, you can save them and make investments. We give them the grant but they also have their matching fund which is formed by remittances and this is the kind of idea to show that these remittances can really work if they're directed towards local economic development (personal communication, 12th July 2016).

Many organisations also offer vocational training to help returnees become self-employed. However, the trainings can sometimes have unintended consequences. One staff member at the Targeted Initiative for Armenia (TIA) discusses how the trainings for the returnees are run by their organisation and various implementing partners.

> We work with the State employment agency (SEA) and these people [returnees] mainly want to get some extra education or training and sometimes they even use it to go back to Russia. You never know the motives. You cannot say that everybody who comes here just wants the skills in order to work here. It is not 100% like this. We can say that many people get employment after these trainings but we don't have the statistics yet. Maybe some of them will not be hired by companies but they will be self-employed and work at home (personal communication, 22nd July 2016).

In another organisation (Kasa Swiss Foundation), the programmes specialise in trainings for women. Their main areas are 'cooking, hairdressing, manicure and make-up' (personal communication, 28th July). According to the key informant, 'the women are good with their hands (…) These activities can also be done at home' (personal communication, 28th July 2016). GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation) worked with different implementing partners who were in charge of finding the training needs.

> We worked with different companies. We usually had a partner who identified the need for the training and also potential participants. For example, in case of

> jewellery, we were cooperating with Development foundation of Armenia, we did needs assessment with them, identified that in the jewellery sector there would be a big interest to conduct this training and through the network of Development foundation of Armenia we have invited jewellery associations, also students from colleges and also individual jewellers to participate in this training. With ICARE in agribusiness there was a big demand for these trainings in the extension phase of the project. Many people participated (personal communication, 15th July 2016).

Therefore, the projects on returnee reintegration often work with the premise that the returnees can become entrepreneurs. However, the projects risk pushing returnees into the already established areas of training such as high-tech industries (if they live in the capital city), agriculture (if they live in the villages), or activities that are perceived as stereotypically female (if they are women).

5.3.2 Barriers for sustainable return and reintegration

Migrants face numerous problems when returning 'home' (Lepore, 1986). While positive experience with reintegration can be largely attributed to migrants' individual characteristics and expectations, the barriers to their involvement in the economic activities in the country of origin tend to be largely structural. Not all the returnees encounter difficulties but are more likely encounter them than not. Furthermore, there are different obstacles for different groups of returnees. As noted above, there can be some cultural and language difficulties but are quite rare for first generation returnees (i.e. returnees who were born in Armenia). However social and economic factors such as personal networks, obtaining employment, or start-up capital tend to be seen as obstacles for returnee involvement if they are lacking.

Some key informants also stressed that the difficulties in reintegrating await everyone, even the highly skilled returnees who have been targeted by the project of German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ). One of its staff claimed that,

> moving back to Armenia is not a one-day decision, they should come to this idea gradually. Of course, there can be a lot of barriers they can have in mind. Therefore, our idea was also to present the cases how these difficulties can be overcome. If a person wants to return, it is his (sic) decision and he should know beforehand that there will be problems (personal communication, 15th July 2016).

For example, a Targeted Initiative for Armenia (TIA) employee asserts, 'the first and the most urgent issue that they face is unemployment. When they come back, they have no economic resources to support the family. These are the reasons why they decided to migrate in the first place' (personal communication, 22nd July 2016). Therefore, the lack of resources can affect reintegration in a negative way. According to the key informants, another factor affecting reintegration in a negative way is being in an asylum procedure before returning to Armenia. For example, another TIA employee claims,

> whenever they go to Europe, they get some allowances, accommodation. They cannot work and get paid to cover their basic needs and become lazy and used to living without working. When they come here, they are not very interested and passive and I'm sure this is because of the fact that they used to live without working and now they become demanding. They say, we are in our country and you are not helping us (personal communication, 22nd July 2016).

This view was generally held by other key informants who claimed that there was a sense of entitlement and learned helplessness. This can also be explained by lacking personal networks in Armenia which would otherwise take up the role of the organisations helping returnees. Another key informant from OFII (French Office for Immigration and Integration) in Armenia agrees,

> They have sold everything, their house. They don't have anything. It is necessary to accommodate them, to give them a course of Armenian for the children who cannot integrate in the Armenian school. It is necessary to find a job for the husband, trainings. It is what we do. We try to help those who took a voluntary decision to return to their country (personal communication, 21st July 2016).

Corruption is yet another problem that is encountered when returnees try to engage in entrepreneurial activities. This issue is experienced as a problem especially by the returnees who return from countries with low levels of corruption (Paasche, 2016). Transparency International (TI) in Armenia is one of the authorities on staving off corruption. The current Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) that is produced by TI places Armenia 95th out of 168 countries observed. While this index has its limitations, it nevertheless illustrates the stark differences between Armenia and neighbouring Georgia which placed 48th (Transparency International, 2018). The following statement is by TI's Executive Director in Armenia:

> Because of corruption we have a small market. People leave the country so there are fewer consumers. People cannot import goods because it is very monopolized because we cannot touch certain areas. If I wanted to start a business importing fuel, I would be asked not to do that. So is the market small or maybe more illegally regularized? (personal communication, 29th July 2016).

The state is the most important player when it comes to addressing corruption. Even though some of the returnees stated that the situation concerning corruption is better than it was several years ago, it still represents an important problem for the Armenian returnees as well as for the development of the country.

The factor that was seen by the key informants as affecting reintegration in a negative way – being in an asylum procedure before return – can come from the fact that these returnees did not stay in the country of destination for a long time and did not have enough opportunities to mobilise adequate resources and plan for their subsequent return.

5.4 Role of various migration management actors in Armenia

This chapter aims to present various migration management organisations working with the returnees in Armenia and their role in facilitating migration management. There is a multiplicity of actors in migration governance in the world and the same is true for Armenia. International migration management, while focusing on the relationships between the states, has also been criticised for its top-down approach (Bader, 2012). This work does not want to neglect other forms of governance such as migrant associations and local grassroot organisations and they are partly discussed in the final section about the role of non-governmental actors. First, this chapter looks at the AVRR programmes and the role of the states in their facilitation. Second, it enquires about the role of IOM which is the major actor in migration management in Armenia. Third, it explores the role of non-governmental organisations working with the return migrants in Armenia.

There are various organisations assisting the returnees and they differ by the audience they aim to cater for and by the type of assistance they aim to provide. The programmes offer assistance to various groups of returnees on the scale from forced to voluntary returns, including both the participants in the AVRR programmes and the spontaneous returnees. Some programmes only offer basic assistance while others allow returnees to enhance their skills. However, returnees might struggle with finding programmes that would fit their exact needs. Many of these programmes are very similar in content, levels of assistance, and the targeted recipients.

TABLE 8: MAIN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT ACTORS IN ARMENIA

State organisations	**International organisations**	**Non-governmental organisations**
French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII)	International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)	Armenian Caritas Benevolent NGO
German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)	International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	Armenian Relief Society
Ministry of Diaspora	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) - closed as of 2017	French Armenian Development Foundation (FADF)
State Employment Agency	Targeted Initiative for Armenia (TIA)	International Committee for the Development of Peoples (CISP)
State Migration Service	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Kasa Swiss Foundation
	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Mission Armenia
		People in Need

Source: IOM (2016), author

It has been argued that the technocratic approach of migration governance can lead to depoliticising highly contentious issues such as migration (Geiger and Pécoud, 2010). The key stakeholders in the field of (return) migration in Armenia can be divided into three main groups: state organisations, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations (see Table 8). While the role of some organisations such as the OFII (French Office for Immigration and Integration) or GIZ (a German organisation under its Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) is ambiguous because they are state organisations of another state who work as international organisations, other organisations are deeply rooted in the Armenian realities.

The organisations working with returnees can be classified into two categories – those working with the assisted voluntary returnees and those working with the spontaneous returnees. However, some organisations work with both target groups (see Table 9). This chapter further discusses the assisted voluntary return and integration (AVRR) programmes, the role of IOM as the most salient actor in AVRR and the role of other organisations. Finally, the role of these organisations and the recommendations for their work are also addressed in the discussion chapter.

TABLE 9: MAIN ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH THE RETURNEES

Name of the organisation	**Assisted voluntary return**	**Spontaneous return**
International organisation for migration (IOM)	YES	YES
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	YES	YES
State Migration Service	YES	YES
Armenian Caritas Benevolent NGO	YES	NO
French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII)	YES	NO
French Armenian Development Foundation (FADF)	YES	NO
People in Need	YES	NO
Mission Armenia	YES	NO
German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)	NO	YES
Repat Armenia	NO	YES
Birthright Armenia	NO	YES

Source: IOM (2016), author

5.4.1 Assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes in Armenia

The role of the states is crucial in the AVRR programmes as they are promoted by the EU states' governments and by the Armenian state alike. Eurostat data show that there are around 1 000 registered returns from Europe to Armenia per year (Eurostat, 2016). Out of them, IOM assisted 499 returns from the European Union countries to Armenia in 2015 and 433 in 2016 (IOM, 2017). In both years, the top three previous countries of settlement for returnees assisted by IOM were Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. This makes IOM the largest organisation providing AVRR programmes in Armenia. The role of IOM as the main migration management actor when it comes to AVRR in Armenia has been consistent over the years. According to the State Migration Service (2017), in 2010-2016, over 12 000 returnees were provided with reintegration assistance, mainly with funding from international organisations.

The priority of return in migration policies in Armenia is not only highlighted by the existence of numerous programmes supporting return migration but also by the official Republic of Armenia legal documents. The state formulated a clear strategy *2017-2021 Strategy for migration policy of the Republic of Armenia*, which replaced the *State Action Plan for Migration for the years 2012-2016*. Return migration is considered in this document which, unlike the previous one, stresses the role of the Armenian state in the support and facilitation of the reintegration programmes. In Article 3 it mentions the 'efforts [which were] made in the matters of creation of mechanisms facilitating the return of citizens of the Republic of Armenia and re-integration thereof…' and Article 11 highlights that the 'development of return policies for returning RA citizens is considered an important objective in the light of continuous population decrease.' Therefore, return migration is accounted for and encouraged by the Armenian state.

There are various international organisations working with returnees apart from IOM. For example, OFII (the French Office for Immigration and Integration) runs its own assisted return programme for persons who come back from France. In 2015, OFII worked with around 250 people (personal communication, 21st July 2016). However, the role of the organisations sometimes overlap as some of them admit that returnees can be assisted by multiple organisations. One staff member of Caritas Benevolent NGO who also work with the returnees, asserts, 'We do not mind double assistance. If these people are assisted by the IOM and we see that they are still in need, we try to help them' (personal communication, 6th July 2016).

Upon their return, the returnees can receive social, housing, medical, or entrepreneurial assistance. These programmes often involve a business component which helps them with vocational trainings and small grants or loans for setting up their own businesses. The levels of assistance or even the areas covered are not the same and are a prerogative of the organisation. One of the key informants noted that 'IOM is a bit more generous [than other organisations] but only works with voluntary returns' (personal communication, 25th July 2016). Usually, only persons whose stay abroad was regular can benefit from the AVRR programme offered by the IOM. This is different for some other service providers who also work with persons undergoing a forced deportation who might be in a similar need of assistance as persons returning voluntarily. However, it seems that this 'stick and carrot' strategy of policy-making (Black et al., 2004) is in place to reward 'good returnees'.

The support in the AVRR programmes consists mainly of developing business-related activities and offering grants for this type of activities. The business grants provided by IOM, unlike by those provided by other organisations, do not need to be repaid. IOM also stated that they 'usually purchase [their] business assets, around 2 000 EUR per person on average. If there are more members of the household, each of them is eligible and we provide support

in developing a business plan' (personal communication, 13th July 2016). The amount is dependent on the previous country of residence and budget. However, not all the returnees have the prerequisites to become successful entrepreneurs. Yet many of the organisations assisting returnees work with the premise that returnee entrepreneurship can be beneficial for the development of Armenia regardless of the skill levels of returnees or their personal characteristics.

Even some of the key informants were quite sceptical about the one-size-fits-all policies of the AVRR programmes in Armenia. One of the key informants warned that 'the economic growth cannot come from reintegration programmes. This type of assistance is not really sustainable, it is a temporary measure' (personal communication, 25th July 2016). In some cases, IOM can also offer housing support while, for example, OFII does not provide rental fees. This was evidenced by an Armenian family of four practically living on a bench in front of the French embassy for many months in the summer of 2016 to protest the return policies and insufficient say that they had in their own return and subsequent disenfranchisement with the situation in Armenia.

The returnees who only spent a short period of time abroad are seen as being more capable of reintegrating which might not be the case due to the resources that they might have needed for their journey. On the contrary, some interviews with the returnees showed that what mattered for them was not the amount of time that they spent away but their social networks in Armenia and their social capital. The returnees are dependent on their own social networks. Should this fail, they depend on the work of organisations providing the AVRR programmes but it can be difficult to understand their roles and the assistance they provide.

5.4.2 The role of IOM in Armenia

Undoubtedly, IOM represents the most important migration management actor in Armenia. One of the avenues of their involvement is through the AVRR programmes. However, it is hard to evaluate what impact the AVRR programmes have had and what the outcome for individuals would have been without them. The lack of transparent information about the AVRR programmes and their evaluations makes it difficult to assess their efficiency. While some of the IOM evaluation reports for the AVRR programmes have been published, they are usually more concerned with project targets and its costs. IOM works very closely with EU member states and its work reflects the EU member states' policies while attempting to promote them in the Armenian context. As suggested in the literature, international migration organisations often align themselves with the agenda of the receiving states, also because a large part of their funding comes from the AVRR programmes. There is a clear connection between the policies of the countries of destination or the EU in general and how the return policies are enacted in Armenia.

There have been instances of overlap in the work of different organisations. While the AVRR programmes offered by different organisations are similar in the levels of support provided (with various exceptions discussed above), some organisations admitted that there was an overlap in the assistance given by different organisations. For example, a representative of a non-governmental organisation stated that 'one family received money from IOM to buy a house. They had a sick daughter and this family was very poor so we [another organisation] still helped them' (personal communication, 6 July 2016). This can indicate the fact that the levels of assistance provided by IOM are not sufficient in some cases or it can hint at wider issues incorporated in the AVRR programmes. The organisations providing the AVRR programmes want to engage as many returnees as possible to secure their funding from donors. However, there is only a limited number of returnees in Armenia.

The engagement of returnees with IOM starts before people leave their country of settlement and continues to their country of origin. In some cases, the returnees being assisted by other organisations only approach them after their return and in this case, it might be difficult to ascertain the type of stay they had in their previous country of settlement. However, the circularity of movement and possible future migration trajectories might be hard to grasp by many of these programmes which presuppose a migrant trajectory from the country of origin to the country of destination and back. With the transnational attachments of the migrants and returnees, there is a space to reconsider some of the projects proposed by the international organisations and non-governmental organisations, who are transnational in their work but do not necessarily work with the returnees' aspirations and possible future journeys. For example, the returnees who take part in the AVRR programmes are legally prevented from entering the EU states for a period of several years. Some Armenian organisations hinted at a trend to take part in the trainings in Armenia offered by organisations working with the returnees and an onward move to Russia which is an important migration destination in the region. This is because the returnees taking part in the AVRR programmes cannot return to their previous country of settlement and possibly see no meaningful engagement in Armenia.

Some of the other organisations working with the returnees were quite critical of IOM, which is not surprising given that they work on the same agenda. One of their main complaints is information-sharing. For example, one of the professionals working in the field of migration in Armenia stated that 'IOM is too secretive. We do not know what they are doing and they do not tell. But they want to know everything about other organisations' (personal communication, 7 July 2018). There have been some attempts to improve information sharing by the international, governmental, and non-governmental organisations in the field of return in Armenia by holding regular informative 'round table' meetings. However, the position of the main organiser (PIN) shifted from one organisation to the next (ICMPD) in 2016 and

these meetings were related to the project funding and were limited by the duration of the project. One of the other organisations working in this field mentioned that there might be certain difficulties when navigating around the work with IOM:

> It is not easy to make it. You know, IOM is a big structure and they are not very flexible, they are quite rigid. The procedures are ponderous. I know that IOM wants to work with us but I see that it would be difficult to integrate them. So we don't really work together (personal communication, 21st July 2018).

This chapter discusses the role of IOM vis-à-vis different migration management actors in Armenia. While IOM's engagement with returnees worldwide dates back 30 years, the field of return migration in Armenia has only recently sparked wider interest. IOM is not the only organisation working in this field and there is an overlap in the work of different organisations, the content of their programmes, and their roles. Information sharing among organisations could improve the situation, but a larger question remains to what extent the AVRR programmes can make a difference for individual returnees.

5.4.3 The role of non-governmental organisations in the AVRR programmes

This section enquires about the non-governmental organisations working with the AVRR returnees. Apart from IOM and OFII, which work as international organisations, there are various other stakeholders in Armenia assisting returnees. It is difficult to estimate the importance of these organisations and the extent of their assistance, but the following ones regularly worked with the AVRR returnees in 2016 – Caritas Armenia, French Armenian Development Foundation (FADF), People in Need (PIN) and Mission Armenia. Among these, Caritas and People in Need were the main actors among the non-governmental organisations so they are discussed in more detail.

In 2015, Caritas worked with around 40 families (personal communication, 6th July 2016). They cover social expenses (700 EUR per person), medical expenses[4] (500 EUR per person) and a start-up capital which can be between 500 and 1 500 EUR depending on the case (personal communication, 6th July 2016). In 2016, they worked mainly with the returnees from the Netherlands and Belgium and in many cases, the returnees had already been contacted and assisted in the respective countries by the local branch of Caritas. Armenian Caritas had two projects related to return and reintegration – 'Sustainable Reintegration after Voluntary Return' and 'Migration and Development' project. However, in practice, these projects mainly differed by the donor countries and analogically, the target group of migrants returning from the very same countries.

People in Need works in similar areas and they offer social support as well as small grants and retraining courses. Within their project, 150 people have been trained and 17 people received a grant to start a business (personal communication, 13th July 2016). Interestingly, among them only one person (a beekeeper) did not succeed but was later replaced by another person who could use the same equipment. The level of returnee engagement can seem very high but needs to be taken into account that these returnee entrepreneurs are carefully preselected before the start of the project. In 2016, People in Need worked with OFII who interviewed the returnees and decided about the levels of support they might need. In the framework of this cooperation, they assisted 30 people in social, vocational, and business areas within the first three months of the project (personal communication, 13th July 2016).

People in Need introduced the innovative Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), which were first created between 2009 and 2012 in the north of Armenia and between 2013 and 2016 in the south. These regional offices were created within a framework of a project which aimed at providing information to prospective migrants. However, the project ended in January 2016

[4] Many returnees in Armenia are facing health issues which might have started even before their migration.

and the offices were handed over to the State Employment Services. So far, more than 8 500 persons have been assisted by these MRCs (personal communication, 13th July 2016). However, it has been indicated that the level of state support was not the same and some of the offices had to close down or downscale the number of staff. The information about the prospective migration mainly concerned the labour migrants to Russia:

> We provided information about the new migration law, we warned people about employers who did not pay their employees [in Russia]. They didn't know that 1 000 USD was not their nett earning and would have to pay for accommodation, transport and other things. Many migrants went to Russia without any information (personal communication, 7th July 2016).

CISP is another organisation that deals mainly with the returnees from Russia. Hence, these are not recipients of the AVRR programmes. During the interview, it was highlighted that there is a gender imbalance in the business grants in favour of men.

> All our businessmen in the villages are men. There is one woman in the project. […] The problem with women [not applying for business grants] is their motivation, their self-confidence. We were really for women to get the grants. Those who wanted to apply in the end said 'no, I'm not… I'm not sure' (personal communication, 12th July 2016).

A similar situation can be expected in other organisations. Generally, the level of support provided by the non-governmental organisations is comparable. The difference is in the previous countries of residence of the returnees and the type of return which is supported, i.e. whether they support voluntary or forced returnees. The non-governmental organisations often work with the state actors as well as the international organisations and depend on external funding, which often comes from the EU states. The non-governmental organisations often work as the implementing partners for other key stakeholders that deal with the returnees directly. However, their position is influenced by the type of funding that is available.

5.5 Social changes in Armenia in connection with return migration

It can be argued that various changes in the social fabric of Armenia are taking place, partly due to return migration. There are various ways how return migrants contribute to social changes and many of them are connected to social remittances. It has been argued in the literature that social change can take place through migration and specifically, return migration because the returnees can bring social remittances (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011). Social remittances can relate to social norms, technological know-how, or ideas. Returnees can take up gainful employment in their country of origin and share the knowledge they have gained while living abroad. Similarly, they can start a new business in a field which is unusual in Armenia or bring innovation to an existing business. However, for this they need strong social networks which support them.

5.5.1 From diaspora engagement to the AVRR programmes

It is important to bear in mind that the groups of returnees are varied and may have different needs. There is a new tendency to draw on the diaspora discourse in the AVRR programmes with the aim to make these programmes more attractive and marketable for the donor states. While the contribution of the diaspora Armenians to the development in Armenia (e.g. through the means of sending qualified nationals for short-time assignments in Armenia) has been used in the discourse of these programmes for a long time, evoking return and development for returnees who come assisted by an AVRR programme is a new trend. Yet, the discourse about the national socio-economic development by the returnees taking part in the AVRR programmes seems to carry blatant contradictions for the returnees as well as organisations working with them.

The policies linking return and development have become more and more common in recent years. In many countries, the most recent policy documents focus on return, while they move beyond diaspora-return binaries and drawing on diaspora discourse, even within the AVRR programmes. The policies linking return and development have been promoted by some states such as France and the Netherlands (Sinatti and Horst, 2015). The discourse of migration and development is used to secure sending countries' willingness to cooperate on readmission agreements (Cassarino, 2008; Sinatti, 2015). Moreover, the discourse addressing AVRR and diaspora engagement programmes is a deliberate attempt to make the AVRR programmes more marketable to the states who are IOM programme donors.

The Joint Declaration on a Mobility Partnership between the European Union and Armenia was signed in 2011. It aims to 'prevent, reduce, and counteract the negative effects of the brain drain and brain waste, including through return policies targeting in particular skilled Armenian migrants' (Council of the European Union, 2011). The other aim was to involve the diaspora in sustainable return or circular migration activities. This document discussed the return activities in Armenia that would be in line with the aim of the states to manage migration and attempt to make the return sustainable for all participants.

Skilled migrants are seen as being capable of starting professional as well as social changes in the society. The project of short-term returns of professionals of Armenian origin takes place within a wider diaspora engagement framework of IOM's strategy to 'enable, engage, and empower' diasporas (IOM, 2019). This project follows on the famous TOKTEN programme, which has been running since the 1970s in more than 50 countries and aims to engage the diaspora in specific technical or developmental projects (Mavroudi and Nagel, 2016). In the past, UNDP ran the TOKTEN programme to engage diaspora Armenians (ILO, 2012).

The Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals project, which ended in 2016, was aimed at 'a transfer of know-how, funds, knowledge, and skills' (personal communication, 13th July

2016). The follow-up project called Connecting Diaspora for Development, run by IOM, was not extended to Armenia. The project of The Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals invited skilled Armenian nationals from different sectors such as health care, education, and civil society for a period of six months, which could be extended to one year. IOM staff stated that, for example, there were two journalists from BBC who came to Armenia to work in the local media and a seismologist from Bulgaria who worked at the Ministry of Emergency (personal communication, 13th July 2016).

However, the project run by IOM was not the only project in Armenia that targets this specific group. Recently, UNICEF came up with the online platform Armenia4Development aimed at skills matching of Armenians abroad and organisations in Armenia. The professionals were meant to provide help with skills such as project management and IT to assist local Armenian organisations. Similarly, GIZ staff described a similar project that they ran:

> We had another activity related to experts from the diaspora who were coming to Armenia as short-term experts to organise training. We wanted to use this capital that we have abroad in the areas that are important for development (personal communication, 15th July 2016).

The problem is with the evaluation of these initiatives which has been acknowledged by IOM staff:

> It is difficult to measure how and what has been achieved. The question is whether the diaspora engagement is the most efficient way to develop a sector or if it would have been easier just to hire an expert. The level of professionalism in the diaspora differs. If someone is an artist and comes to write a book in his country of origin, then […] it is difficult to evaluate the impact (personal communication, 13th July 2016).

While some people came for short-term assignments, few decided to stay in Armenia in the end. IOM staff mentioned that 'physical return is often difficult. Maybe it is more useful for

people to stay where they are at the moment. For example, if they are in Germany or France, they have a better infrastructure to carry out research at universities than in Armenia' (personal communication, 13th July 2016). This provokes a question why not to hire a foreign expert to deal with the issues. One of the key informants claimed that during the trainings the presence of a person from Armenian diaspora was beneficial:

> Most of the experts spoke Armenian, the same language. And they also knew the history, […] there was no need to present the problem. There was this background information [that was necessary] to conduct this training. Therefore, the trainings were relevant to Armenian reality. First, [it was] because they were speaking the same language. Not only in terms of the language itself but also the content (personal communication, 15th July 2016).

However, there are already skilled returnees in Armenia who might have studied or worked abroad, and this resource has not been tapped into by IOM, unlike by other Armenian organisations such as Repat Armenia.

The AVRR programmes try to pick up the rhetoric of the diaspora engagement programmes in their communication towards key stakeholders with the hope to secure the funding and make the AVRR programmes more marketable. While the possible impact of the diaspora engagement programmes is hard to measure, it might be even more questionable to link returnees assisted by the AVRR programmes with socio-economic development in their regions. These measures may undoubtedly assist individuals in need but are short-term as has been stated by some key informants. However, it does not prevent organisations working with the returnees to make this link.

The IOM Armenia website lists migration and development as one of four main areas of migration management that it focuses on (IOM, 2019). Even the AVRR programmes are framed in this way and development discourse is used as a rationale for the programmes. As the IOM website further discusses the AVRR programmes in more detail, it envisages

sustainable return which goes hand in hand with socio-economic development. However, lack of socio-economic development and difficulties in finding a job represent one of the main reasons why returnees decide to leave Armenia in the first place (Bakhshinyan and Porsughyan, 2014).

IOM Armenia's website claims that 'IOM and partners in countries of origin provide migrants with socio-economic support to promote their self-sufficiency and contributions to their local communities' (IOM, 2019). However, the potential of return for homeland development can be dubious (Van Houte and Davids, 2008). It seems a heavy burden placed on the returnees to promote socio-economic growth in their local communities. As Bakewell (2008: 1355) argues, 'a concept that sees development as a cure for migration whilst also indicating migration, followed by return, as a cure for development carries blatant internal contradictions'. Importantly, these programmes use similar discourse linking return and development. While the economic reasoning for these programmes has been widely used, resonating with the state objectives, the discourse linking the assisted voluntary return and development is a new trend. This trend increasingly uses the return and development rhetoric as a strategy of border management promoting the AVRR programmes as a less costly and more humane alternative.

5.5.2 Social changes perceived by the returnees

Armenian return migration has a potential for social changes but clearly, all societal changes cannot be attributed directly to return migration. There are different areas in which returnees already perceive social changes taking place or see that there could be a potential for change due to return migration. The Armenian society has a low rate of immigration and the returnees can influence the local population because of their exposure to other societies and importance that is attached to migration experience in the Armenian society. It means that the people who

are not migrants themselves might copy the behaviour of the returnees (Chauvet and Mercier, 2012). This section discusses the attitudes of returnees with a potential to change aspects of the Armenian society, among them innovative businesses, skills developed by working abroad, and their transfer and attitudes towards gender norms and corruption.

Some changes are taking place when it comes to starting a business or beginning to work in Armenia. The businesses started by the returnees sometimes stand out thanks to their innovative nature. For example, the Green Bean Café in Yerevan was the first non-smoking café in the city. Its owner studied in the United Kingdom and upon her return, decided to open a new enterprise on Amiryan street in Yerevan centre. It has been a success with many visitors and shortly thereafter, another non-smoking café opened in the same street. This trend is especially remarkable because smoking in the cafés in Armenia is commonplace. However, second-hand smoking is something that is perceived as undesirable by the returnees. For example, as one returnee put it, 'you're going to have a safe country but everyone's going to have a lung cancer' (man, 33, returned from Canada). Another returnee stated, 'another issue is the second-hand smoke. I can't take it now. Before [being a migrant] I could bear with it' (woman, 43, returned from USA).

The businesses run by returnees also include food chains such as Tashir Pizza (a favourite Russian fast food chain) whose first branch in Yerevan was opened by a returnee from Russia. The businesses run by Syrian Armenians include restaurants with traditional Syrian-Armenian food which was not very common in Armenia. Moreover, Syrian Armenians have also opened other businesses such as jewellery stores, a soap factory, and a confectionery store (Mkrtchyan, 2019). Some returnees are aware of these opportunities in Armenia.

> There are new businesses in Armenia. For example, the Syrian Armenians brought business culture of their own which challenged the local businesses. And that is a good thing (man, 31 returned from Germany).

Some returnees also argued about the advantage of the small size of Armenia being conducive to starting or running a business:

> In Canada, you are a small fish in a big pool. Here you are a big fish in a small pool (man, 33, returned from Canada).

However, others found it difficult to export to other locations because the country is landlocked and its borders to two neighbouring countries (Turkey and Azerbaijan) are closed. Moreover, the road to Georgia is sometimes closed in the winter (personal communication, 6th July 2016). Therefore, some returnees believed that it would be beneficial to focus on online services which could overcome this barrier. Therefore, some of the returnees in Yerevan Impact Hub either offered services to foreign clients – among them were graphic design, project management skills, and running a company which focused on medical tourism. Some returnees argued that the ideal environment for the transfer of ideas in Armenia is in the technological sector.

> There were some people in the Silicon Valley who were Armenian and they said, why don't we start something in Armenia? Of course, the business style is different, I would say there is a more sophisticated approach to identity and the idea how society should function (man, 33, returned from Canada).

One aspect that returnees saw as a direct consequence of their stay abroad was an increase in skills while studying and working abroad. Many returnees thought they developed soft skills, were more tolerant, and had better intercultural competencies thanks to their migration experience. The potential for social change is higher for the skilled returnees. For example, research found that in the Netherlands, highly skilled migrants are in a better position to contribute to the development in their countries of origin by the way of economic and social remittances (Sturge, Bilgili, and Siegel, 2016). Some returnees merely felt as 'more

cosmopolitan than everyone else [in Armenia]' (man, 33, returned from Canada), while for others, being abroad also brought some important changes in connection to their working activities and ways of working. One person who returned from Germany states,

> I didn't change too much by going abroad. I was always on time, even before going to Germany. But it helped me develop my way of working (man, 31, returned from Germany).

Similarly, there are other skills that pertain to working life such as flexibility and improving communication skills which can be also used outside of the work environment. Both have been discussed by the returnees.

> I have some skills from the US. For example, the education system taught me flexibility. There are many different things, research skills. I am willing to learn new things (woman, 27, returned from the USA).

> I think that I improved my communication. […] You ask about everyone's job and you try to do networking. I think that after this experience, I approach people more easily (woman, 43, returned from the USA).

Another aspect with a potential for social change are the relations between the genders in Armenia. For many female returnees, the gender norms in Armenia are perceived as strict. For example, one returnee claimed,

> There are some things that I find difficult here, some cultural things. Sometimes you are stared at and the way how men treat women, the women's role in the society (…) Being Armenian doesn't mean that you necessarily belong here. Every day I feel as a foreigner (woman, 32, returned from USA).

The female returnees felt a pressure to conform to the gender norms.

> There are still some stereotypes and discrimination. Five years ago, people were against women to smoke. They say she was a bad woman if she smoked. Now they

> will not say it any more but they might think that. I remember a woman smoked at the bus station and the driver wouldn't let her board the bus. That was five years ago but it's changing. The change is bigger in the capital (woman, 28, returned from Ukraine).

Things are also changing when it comes to clothing. Male and female returnees alike remarked on the changes. For example, the changes are taking place when it comes to sports education.

> Before girls didn't wear a sports outfit. They came to play sports in high heels. But now the sports shoes and clothes are different (woman, 27, returned from Iran).

This change comes also with the project that aims to involve children in playing sports such as football. However, at the beginning, playing football was not seen as something appropriate for the girls.

> When we opened the first girls' league in the regions, parents told children they should not participate. They were afraid of changes. They thought it would be bad for girls, they told me they would become homosexual. But our aim is sports. (woman, 27, returned from Iran)

The changes in the attitude is obvious as now parents, siblings, and friends of the players come to the games to support them. However, the dress code also affects professionals. One returnee also mentioned that he did not adhere to the stricter dress code in Armenia where it is customary for men to wear a suit to official meetings.

> For example, I wore jeans and jumpers to official meetings in an NGO. This is what I wear, whatever is convenient. I'm a professional (man, 41, returned from Qatar).

So little by little, there is change when it comes to gender roles, clothing, and what is seen as appropriate for respective genders. The returnees also contribute to these changes.

Finally, many returnees complained about corruption and nepotism in Armenia.

> In many countries, corruption is experienced on different levels. Normally it is the task of the government to eliminate petty corruption but it is not happening in Armenia (man, 41, returned from Russia).

These interviews took place in 2016. The dissatisfaction was obvious as many Armenians felt increasingly disenfranchised. Some skilled returnees felt they were not able to utilise their skills. Others felt it was not their skills but who they knew that would enable them to get a job on par with their qualification. Eventually, people went to the streets and the Armenian 'velvet revolution' began in April and May 2018. So far, it is difficult to assess any changes that were brought about by this transition of power.

Returnees need strong networks and social capital in Armenia in order to influence others. As has been argued,

> The transfer of ideas happens. You talk to someone and their views are changing. You want to pass it on to your community. But the sharing happens outside of here [Yerevan Impact Hub]. Here we're on the same level but the change happens in other people's views. For example, the issue of gay rights. Another thing, I have a nose ring. My dad is a conservative Armenian man. But in the end, he got used to me wearing a nose ring. So it is important not to change your opinion, be strong and be a part of the puzzle. But I will never fit in the puzzle (…). But once you get out, societies change because of these transitions (woman, 27, returned from USA).

To summarise, some changes take place through contact with the diaspora and return migration. The returnees and their social networks can relate to the exposure to different ideas and norms that take place thanks to the process of cultural diffusion. However, not all changes in society can be directly attributed to them as they represent only one of many channels affecting the social changes in the country.

5.5.3 The role of non-governmental organisations in spontaneous returns

While the return is generally encouraged by the Armenian state on the discursive level, there are various organisations that are even more enthusiastic about promoting it. Generally, non-governmental organisations working with the spontaneous returnees also work with the Armenians in the diaspora. The Ministry of Diaspora is also active in this field. The organisations work with the premise that skilled returnees might be able to help develop businesses or industries in which they work. The article 8 of the *2017-2021 Strategy for migration policy of the Republic of Armenia* (State Migration Service, 2017) highlights that,

> Migration regulation policies should provide for effective utilisation of the potential of the Disapora and migrants to the benefit of the country's development. Involvement of returning migrants into the process of economic development is also important in the context of ensuring Armenia's continuous economic development.

There are various age groups which are targeted by these non-governmental organisations. There are the youth, young adults without work experience, and older adults who already have work experience. There are two main organisations who work with this group of returnees and whose activities are presented – Birthright Armenia and Repat Armenia. However, there are other organisations such as Luys Foundation who provide scholarships to Armenian students to study at prestigious foreign universities with the rationale that they will come back and use the acquired skills in Armenia. One of the conditions of the scholarship programme is to take part in activities in Armenia in the summer and to return to work in Armenia for at least three years after the completion of the programme (Luys Foundation, 2019). However, this programme is offered by a private foundation and it is not an official programme of the Republic of Armenia.

Birthright Armenia is another organisation that works with young people who have studied abroad but mainly with the Armenian diaspora. Its Pathway programme offers grants to

participants to take part in internships throughout Armenia. The programme participants come from different countries,

> The majority of participants, just under 50%, are from the United States, others are from European countries, South America, Russia. It kind of represents the broader Armenian network outside Armenia (personal communication, 12th July 2016).

Some of the participants eventually decide to stay in Armenia,

> Right now, there are about 75 former participants who live here but besides the ones who are here right now, we've had others in the past who've come to live here long term, for two years, three years but had gone back to other countries (personal communication, 12th July 2016).

When asked about the impact on development, the director of Birthright Armenia mentioned that the total number of skilled returnees in Armenia is not big. However, he also highlighted their impact,

> You have people who are engaged in substantial way in Armenia in terms of business and work, expertise. A few thousand maybe. Their impact on development lies in the knowledge sharing, a sentiment of viability that people share. If people see it, it must be viable.

Repat Armenia is another organisation, founded in August 2012, which works with skilled return migrants and Armenian diaspora. Its aim is to 'inform, initiate and actively champion the return of high-impact (professional, entrepreneurial) individuals and families to Armenia to secure the future development of the Armenian nation' (Repat Armenia, 2019). Other organisations are generally supportive of the role of Repat Armenia,

> Repat is doing a very good job, they are in a way trying to mobilize the migrants but they are also working with the classical diaspora, to bring their investments to Armenia… They are doing a very good job. I know that some diasporans are already interested in investing in Armenia (personal communication, 12th July 2016).

According to the organisation representative, between 1 000 and 1 500 people return to Armenia on a voluntary basis every year. The organisation receives around 500 applications per year – among them are Syrian Armenians (40%), returnees from the USA (15%), returnees from Russia (12%), and other countries (personal communication, 21st July 2016). Most of them are between 25 and 32 years old. The organisation has experience with the following reasons for the return:

> physical safety; people want to be engaged with Armenia because Armenia cannot exist as a network. Being Armenian means that the assimilation is quick and they want their children to speak Armenian. There are professional reasons. People studied abroad and they can turn their skills into a comparative advantage. Life is easier [here], for example, the commute is shorter. The work-life balance is good. There are activities for children if you have money. Changes you make here, you can feel them (personal communication, 21st July 2016).

Hence, the role of organisations in bringing in skilled returnees and repatriates is substantial. Furthermore, at the discursive level they attempt to link their engagement to the increased development of the country. This is especially pronounced when it comes to the diaspora Armenians and their possible return:

> If there are some success stories, the diasporans will see the change. Actually, they are also businessmen, they want to do something for their country but also for their business to grow. So if we can somehow connect their both interests - connecting with their homeland and growing their business, then why not. It's a potential but it really needs to be well elaborated (personal communication, 12st July 2016).

There are some non-governmental organizations which attempt to engage the skilled migrants and returnees in various ways from providing scholarships to offering internships and networking opportunities in Armenia. However, as has been argued, the role of these organisations is only supplementary to the networks returnees already might have.

6 DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings pertaining to Armenian return migration and their relations to other research which has been carried out in Armenia or in other contexts. This chapter also suggests a set of policy recommendations for the Armenian government and the organisations working with returnees in Armenia for both assisted returns and spontaneous returns. The research has implications for return migration policies which should take into account the lived experience of the returnees and provide some added value. It is clear that the return experience differs for different groups of returnees and hence, the return policies have to be designed accordingly.

When it comes to the AVRR programmes, it seems that they only reach a limited number of returnees. The research found that many of the returnees are unaware of the AVRR programmes. One Armenian survey showed that 98.8% of the target audience were unaware of the existence of reintegration schemes (European Training Foundation, 2013). Similarly, the presented research found that the Armenian migrants living abroad were generally not aware of reintegration programmes in Armenia; among the organisations the migrants knew about were Repat Armenia and Birthright Armenia. The role of the Armenian state is to provide information about the assistance that is available for the returnees. Yet sometimes this role is taken up by the non-governmental organisations.

A lot of funding by EU governments is spent on the AVRR programmes in different organisations to promote returnee reintegration. There is a entire industry around the AVRR programmes in Armenia. However, the programmes sometimes target only the returnees from a specific EU country (the most obvious example being the French OFII). Moreover, these organisations offer programmes that are quite similar in their content and their work often overlaps. Therefore, the AVRR programmes should be based on the real needs of the

returnees and not on the needs of the EU states (which want to promote humane returns). The impact of these programmes should be monitored and evaluated because so far, there is no conclusive evidence of their effectiveness. Moreover, the cases of returnees receiving support from various organisations at the same time are not unheard of. Therefore, there should be more coordination among the programmes and more emphasis on monitoring the impacts of these programmes.

TABLE 10: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE AVRR PROGRAMMES IN ARMENIA

Recommendations for the AVRR programmes in Armenia
- Reaching out to a wider group of returnees
- Coordination between different programmes and organisations
- Monitoring and evaluating the impacts of these programmes
- Programmes should be based on the real needs of the returnees
- There should be more local ownership
- Programmes should not work only with the returnees from a specific EU member state but should be EU-wide

Source: author

There are certain barriers which make it difficult for the returnees to reintegrate in Armenia. The return preparedness (connected with both tangible and intangible resources) is often lacking for the AVRR returnees. Furthermore, their return motivations play an important role for subsequent reintegration and if people are compelled to return, they might not be able to sustainably reintegrate. Local organisations seem to be aware of this tension. For example, Lietaert (2019) found that the reintegration support is perceived differently by the returnees

and the professionals implementing these programmes. Similar issues were reported in this dissertation which has two different sections for reporting the experience of returnees (chapter 5.2) and key informants (chapter 5.3), which slightly differ. The programmes should be adjusted to the local realities and should not be seen as something which is imposed from the outside.

There are several organisations that work with returnees who did not avail of the AVRR programmes including skilled returnees. This group can also face many difficulties such as inadequate skills recognition or problems with readjusting to a different working environment. The skilled returnees can also struggle with finding a job that correspond to their levels of skills and expectations. One key informant even stated that it might not be beneficial for returnees to return at all:

> Physical return is often difficult. Maybe it is more useful for people to stay where they are at the moment. For example, if they are in Germany or France, they have a better infrastructure to carry out research at universities than in Armenia (13th July 2016, personal communication).

Some key informants argued that there are problems awaiting returnees and physical return is often difficult. The social situation in Armenia can also appear unsatisfactory to the returnees but it can be even worse for local residents. As one key informant warns,

> We have to be careful with the returnees because in some situations, the neighbours who never left, are often worse off and they do not get any attention. This creates social tensions, increase of dissatisfaction and frustration (26th July 2016, personal communication).

The numbers of returns to Armenia are estimates at best and there are no precise and systematic data on the scope of return migration to Armenia (Fleischer, 2012). Therefore, it can be recommended to collect the data on return migration which is also in line with the first

objective of the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration*[5] (UNGA, 2018). There should be fewer barriers for all groups of returnees. The dual nationality for Armenian nationals is already possible but there are other steps that can be taken to enable returnees make full use of their potential and skills.

The strategies such as competitive salaries, adequate facilities for skilled workers together with the official governmental programme to promote skilled migration have been successfully used in different countries such as China or Israel. Without attracting return migration, there might still be a long way for Armenia to achieve its policy goals. However, it should also be clear that the return programmes have a wider relevance for society and that there are certain fields which can be promoted and returnees from these fields can be encouraged to come to Armenia. Armenia is generally supportive about the return of its citizens (as has been stated in its 2017-2021 *Strategy for migration policy of the Republic of Armenia*). However, not many resources are offered to the prospective returnees.

TABLE 11: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RETURN POLICIES IN ARMENIA

Recommendations for the return policies in Armenia
- Better documentation of returns
- Removing barriers for the returnees
- Policies on attracting skilled migrants (e.g. skills/qualification recognition) and making the positions competitive
- Drawing on the relevance for the society
- Use the connection with return and development only when substantiated

Source: author

[5] 'Collect and utilise accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies.'

The returnees who are interested in the return to Armenia and want to bring in new ideas are the key actors here, so it is crucial to understand returnees' perspectives and experiences. However, social changes in connection with return migration in Armenia might only affect a small segment of the population. The returnees themselves might have changed while living abroad and can transfer some of these changes to their immediate surroundings. However, the potential for a wider social change through return migration to Armenia remains to be explored.

As Sinatti and Horst (2015) argue, the discourse of migration and development is now being extended to all returnees and reintegration programmes. However, it should only be used in the cases when its impact on development can be substantiated. For example, the AVRR programmes often use the migration and development rhetoric (and some of these programmes even have 'migration and development' in their title). Yet, the genuine connection between migration and development in this context is questionable at best. The ways how returnees contribute to development differ and it should not be expected that all returnees contribute to development. Moreover, there should not be pressure on the individual returnees to 'do something good for their country' if there are various barriers to their involvement. Moreover, the returnees should not be forced into returnee entrepreneurship if they have no pre-requisites to become successful.

Sustainable return is also connected with migration and development and emerges as an important concept for the returnees. However, making migrants return (and stay) should not disregard their further life trajectories and aspirations. The return should not be regarded as an ultimate goal of migration, which would close the migration cycle, but it should be considered as an option which would enable them to make the best use of their capacities. Should the conditions be not conducive to return, there should be no pressure on returning. By the same token, the returnees should not be forced to leave Armenia and re-migrate due to the lack of

future opportunities. Most of the interviewed returnees were content about their decision to return. Yet some saw various shortcomings and others considered re-migrating.

There are various organisations working in the field of return migration in Armenia and they can be divided into organisations offering the AVRR programmes and those working with spontaneous returnees. Some of these organisations offer assistance to both of these groups. There could be more cooperation on cross-cutting issues, especially for the organisations that work with different returnees. Finally, it is important to note that the return experience can differ for various returnees and return policies need to be tailored accordingly. These variations depend on their age and other experience, including the experience before migrating and in the host country. On one hand, if returnees increased their skills during migration, they are in a better position to contribute to the society in their country of origin. On the other hand, these returnees might struggle with finding a job that is commensurate with their levels of experience. Therefore, there should be targeted policies to both groups of the returnees. However, these policies should not prioritise return migrants over other groups of vulnerable populations.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation deals with the topic of return migration to Armenia and its possible impacts on the development of the country. While the scholarly interest in return migration is relatively new, some connections between return migration and development are already being made, usually applying to skilled migration. Armenian migration has had a long history, since the 1915 Armenian Genocide but even earlier when Armenians often left the country in search of trade opportunities or better lives. Still, the country is better known for its emigration rather than immigration to the country (which is limited) or return migration. Nevertheless, return migration represents an important phenomenon that might be even more prevalent after the so-called Armenian 'velvet revolution' of 2018.

The literature on return migration has mostly dealt with return motivations and returnee integration. Moreover, the field of return migration and development has emerged in the literature, which mostly discusses the role of human capital and skills which are also connected with the future pathway returnees take such as returnee entrepreneurship or the role of social remittances that may lead to changes in home societies. This dissertation works with different methods in order to answer the research questions connected with (i) the return motivations for Armenian migrants and returnees; (ii) the factors that influence reintegration in a positive and negative way; (iii) the ways returnees are assisted in their reintegration to society by different organisations; and (iv) the possible social change that is caused by return migration to Armenia. At this point, it needs to be stressed that there are both spontaneous and assisted returnees who return to Armenia and this dissertation discusses both groups.

The dissertation uses returnee interviews, key informant interviews, and a survey with Armenians living abroad as the main methods for the explorative study. It found that among the motivations to return were, *inter alia*, the reasons connected to their families, work-

related, or patriotic reasons. The motivations to return were similar for both spontaneous and possible prospective returnees (Armenian migrants currently living abroad). Many returnees also saw the return to Armenia as more conducive to having a quieter lifestyle and less worries due to their social networks in Armenia. However, the assisted voluntary returnees often saw a lack of other options than returning to Armenia, so we cannot say that their return was motivated by various factors but was compelled by the external circumstances. It does not matter which countries the returnees came from but important are their levels of skills (human capital) and social capital that influence their return experience.

The possible influence of return migration on development and its complexities are also discussed. Return migration to Armenia is important because it directly affects other states, including the EU states and their policies on return migration. While the AVRR programmes are widely hailed and seen as the stepping stone for returnee reintegration, the truth is that they fail to replace the support that the returnees get from their social networks. Therefore, social capital plays an important role in returnee reintegration and it is difficult to replace it with other types of support. Human capital, or the levels of skills and education, are important for the returnees who are looking for a job in Armenia. These returnees are often welcomed in the public discourse and it is presumed that they will contribute to the development of Armenia. While there is no conclusive evidence for this, it is also necessary to provide support for the AVRR returnees who might have lower skill levels and are in need of long-term training or support. The return preparedness emerges as a key concept for all Armenian returnees. It is crucial for them to plan for their return, have contacts in Armenia, and be able to use their networks. Therefore, the programmes working with the returnees should take all of these factors into account to ensure a sustainable return.

This dissertation attempted to shed further light on the topic of return migration and development and presented a single case study of Armenia. Return migration can be seen as

both a failure or a resource to draw on to generate development. It can be presented as a panacea to solve the developmental issues, but the story is more complex. The aim of this dissertation is to uncover this complexity and possibly bring attention to this important topic. There is more research to be done on the Armenian case or on comparative case studies. Similar research should be taken into account when discussing the policies on return migration (or development) which should not only be based on Western countries' requirements. What matters here is, the issue of human dignity, which can only come with sustainable return or by allowing people to live their lives the way they prefer.

There are certain social changes which can take place in connection with return migration. The ways how return migrants can contribute to social changes are connected to social remittances, which can be transferred from the returnees. This way, the returnees are able to innovate not only by creating innovative businesses but also through changing their attitudes towards social norms. For example, the returnees are more aware about the dangers of second-hand smoking. One returnee even started a non-smoking café in Yerevan. Returnees also increased their skills while studying or working abroad. The increased productivity in their jobs could be transferred to their co-workers. Finally, the returnees had different attitudes towards gender norms and corruption by being less tolerant towards discrimination and various forms of corrupt behaviour.

While the main findings of this research are similar to those of other studies on return migration, it is important to show that they are also valid in the Armenian realities. Furthermore, it is quite unique that this study deals with both groups of the AVRR returnees and spontaneous returnees and compares and contrasts their experiences. This study also uses key informant interviews to get a balanced view of the situation. This dissertation critically interrogates the connection between return and development which is, often in the public

policy discourse, taken for granted. Therefore, it raises important questions which should be addressed.

Finally, it puts forward a set of recommendations for Armenian organisations working with returnees and for the general return policies in Armenia. However, these recommendations are only valid in the Armenian context. This research is important for the countries with large return migration because it is important to understand the implications of this phenomenon. Return migrants not only bring in new skills but they might also change their surroundings, their neighbourhoods and their cities. They might open innovative businesses which are uncommon in the country, offer new services or they can come up with more subtle ideas in the form of social remittances. The norms which they can transfer are often connected to democracy, gender equality or anti-corrupt behaviour.

Future research can be directed to the area of social remittances and how these are transferred to local populations. An interesting case to look into would be the attitude towards corruption and political behaviours of returnees (such as the likelihood of voting of the returnees and their social networks). Moreover, there is a need for more precise data on return migration to Armenia. Many countries do not collect data on returnees but this deprives the state of knowing about a resource that can be tapped into. The state policies in Armenia and their influence on actual return migration outcomes is another topic worthy of further investigation. In the future, there might be more opportunities to migrate, but some proportion of migrants will eventually decide to return to their countries of origin. Therefore, it is important to learn about this group of (return) migrants, about their motivations, reintegration process, and what can be done to enhance their return experience. It is also likely that the returnees will contribute to some social changes in their countries of origin. All these issues have been discussed in this dissertation but the matter at hand is so rich that it deserves further discussion.

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Annex 1: List of key informant interviews

	Title	Organisation	Date of interview	Location
1	Programme manager	Armenian Caritas Benevolent NGO	06/07/2016	Yerevan
2	Chief of staff	Ministry of Diaspora	06/07/2016	Yerevan
3	Head of Department of repatriation and investigations	Ministry of Diaspora	06/07/2016	Yerevan
4	Director of the Migration Competence Centre	Yerevan State University	07/07/2016	Yerevan
5	Labour migration expert	ICMPD (International Centre for Migration Policy Development)	07/07/2016	Yerevan
6	Country representative	CISP (Comitato internazionale per lo sviluppo dei popoli)	12/07/2016	Yerevan
7	Director	Birthright Armenia	12/07/2016	Yerevan
8	Former research director	CRRC (Caucasus Research Resource Centre)	13/07/2016	Yerevan
9	Project coordinator	People in Need	13/07/2016	Yerevan
10	Head of office	IOM (International Organisation for Migration)	13/07/2016	Yerevan
11	Project manager	GIZ (German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation)	15/07/2016	Yerevan
12	Office manager Gavar	Caritas	18/7/2016	Gavar
13	External Relations Associate	UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)	20/7/2016	Yerevan
14	Founder	Impact Hub Armenia	21/7/2016	Yerevan
15	Executive director	Repat Armenia	21/7/2016	Yerevan
16	Project coordinator	UNICEF (United Nations Children´s Fund)	21/7/2016	Yerevan

17	Representative	OFII (Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration)	21/7/2016	Yerevan
18	Project manager	TIA (Targeted Initiative for Armenia)	22/7/2016	Yerevan
19	Project coordinator	TIA (Targeted Initiative for Armenia)	22/7/2016	Yerevan
20	Research, Data and Development Policy Expert	UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)	22/7/2016	Yerevan
21	Team leader	ICMPD (International Centre for Migration Policy Development)	25/7/2016	Yerevan
22	Integrated expert - Circular Labour Migration	State Employment Agency, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	25/7/2016	Yerevan
23	National programme officer	OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe)	26/7/2016	Yerevan
24	Director	ICARE (International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education)	26/7/2016	Yerevan
25	First Secretary	Embassy of the Czech Republic in Yerevan	26/7/2016	Yerevan
26	Project coordinator	AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union)	28/7/2016	Yerevan
27	Executive director	AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union)	28/7/2016	Yerevan
28	Project manager	Kasa Swiss Foundation	28/7/2016	Yerevan
29	Executive director	TIAC (Transparency International Anticorruption Centre)	29/7/2016	Yerevan
30	Executive director	Mission East Armenia, Tufenkian Foundation	29/7/2016	Yerevan
31	Project coordinator	Armenian Caritas Benevolent NGO	17/8/2016	Yerevan
32	Political officer	EU Delegation to Armenia	19/8/2016	Yerevan

Annex 2: List of returnee interviews

	Gender	Age	Skilled	Employment	Returned from	Date of interview	Location
1	F	27	Yes	Yes	Hungary	06/07/2016	Yerevan
2*	F	45	No	No	Germany	07/07/2016	Yerevan
3*	F	55	No	No	Belgium	08/07/2016	Ararat region
4*	M	52	No	No	Belgium	08/07/2016	Ararat region
5*	M	33	No	No	Austria	08/07/2016	Ararat region
6*	F	52	Yes	No	Germany	11/07/2016	Yerevan
7	M	41	Yes	Yes	USA	13/07/2016	Yerevan
8	M	32	Yes	Yes	Germany	13/07/2016	Yerevan
9*	M	61	No	Self-employed	Belgium	18/07/2016	Gavar
10	M	31	Yes	Yes	USA	19/07/2016	Dilijan
11*	F	34	No	No	France	20/07/2016	Yerevan
12	M	45	Yes	Self-employed	USA	21/07/2016	Yerevan
13	M	36	Yes	Yes	Russia	21/07/2016	Yerevan
14*	F	32	No	No	Belgium	25/07/2016	Yerevan
15	F	28	Yes	Yes	Georgia	28/07/2016	Yerevan
16	F	37	Yes	Yes	Canada	28/07/2016	Yerevan
17	M	33	Yes	Yes	Canada	29/07/2016	Yerevan
18	F	25	Yes	Yes	Hungary	20/08/2016	Yerevan
19	M	35	No	Self-employed	Russia	23/08/2016	Yerevan
20	M	29	Yes	Yes	Slovakia	07/09/2016	Yerevan
21	M	33	Yes	Self-employed	Canada	10/01/2018	Yerevan
22	F	43	Yes	Yes	USA	22/01/2018	Yerevan

23	F	27	Yes	Yes	France	23/01/2018	Yerevan
24	M	31	Yes	Yes	Germany	23/01/2018	Yerevan
25	F	32	Yes	Yes	USA	23/01/2018	Yerevan
26	F	28	Yes	Yes	Ukraine	23/01/2018	Yerevan
27	M	29	Yes	Yes	Syria	24/01/2018	Yerevan
28	F	27	Yes	Yes	Iran	24/01/2018	Yerevan
29	F	28	Yes	Yes	Lebanon	25/01/2018	Yerevan
30	M	41	Yes	Self-employed	Qatar	25/01/2018	Yerevan
31	F	27	Yes	Yes	USA	25/01/2018	Yerevan
32	M	30	Yes	Yes	Egypt	25/01/2018	Yerevan

* The returnee was assisted by Caritas NGO.

Annex 3: Survey questions

The research is a part of my PhD research project which focuses on return migration to Armenia.

I would appreciate if you could answer the questions truthfully. Feel free not to answer all the questions or withdraw from the research at any point. All the information provided is anonymous and confidential.

Thank you for taking part.

Demographic information

1. Are you male or female?

Male

Female

2. What is your age?

17 or younger

18-20

21-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60 or older

3. In which country do you currently reside?

Russia

Georgia

France

United States

Czechia

Other (please specify)

4. How long have you lived abroad?

Less than 6 months

Between 6 to 12 months

One year to three years

Three to five years

More than five years

5. Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?

Single

Not married, living with a partner

Married

Divorced

Separated

Widowed

6. How many people currently live in your household?

7. How many children do you have?

8. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Less than high school degree

High school degree or equivalent

Some college but no degree

Bachelor's degree

Graduate degree

9. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

Employed

Self-employed

Student

Not employed, looking for work

Not employed, NOT looking for work

Retired

10. If employed, which field do you currently work in? (e.g. IT, services, education)

11. While living abroad, do you think that your professional knowledge and skills

have increased significantly?

have increased to some extent?

have stayed the same?

12. Which languages do you speak?

Armenian

Russian

Georgian

English

French

Other (please specify)

Possible return to Armenia

13. Do you still keep in touch with people in Armenia?

Yes

No

14. If yes, how?

Visits

Phone calls

Email

Social media (e.g. Facebook)

Other (please specify)

15. How many people in Armenia do you communicate with at least once a month?

16. How many people in your country of residence do you communicate with at least once a month?

17. How often do you think about returning to Armenia?

Once a week or more often

Once a month or more often

Less than once a month

Never

18. What reasons would make you return to Armenia?

Family

Employment

Safety

Other (please specify)

19. What do you see as the biggest obstacle to returning to Armenia?

20. How would you rank Armenia compared to other countries?

	Few opportunities		Neutral		Many opportunities
Employment opportunities	○	○	○	○	○
Opportunities to start a new business	○	○	○	○	○
Opportunity to earn enough money	○	○	○	○	○
Opportunity to get a good education	○	○	○	○	○
Opportunity to have a good work-life balance	○	○	○	○	○

21. If you were to return to Armenia today, how welcomed would you feel?

Very welcomed

Neutral

Not very welcomed

22. What kind of help would you like to use upon your return to Armenia?

Help with job-searching

Help with housing

Training

Financial assistance

Other (please specify)

23. Do you know any organisations that help returnees integrate in Armenia?

24. Is there anything else that you consider important in connection with your possible return to Armenia?

VLIV MEZINÁRODNÍ MIGRACE NA ROZVOJ: PŘÍPADOVÁ STUDIE NÁVRATOVÉ MIGRACE DO ARMÉNIE

AUTOREFERÁT DISERTAČNÍ PRÁCE

Studijní program: P1314 Geografie

Obor studia: Mezinárodní rozvojová studia

Školitel: Prof. RNDr. Vladimír IRA, CSc.

Katedra rozvojových a environmentálních studií

Přírodovědecká fakulta, Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci

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THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ON DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF RETURN MIGRATION TO ARMENIA

Ph.D. DISSERTATION SUMMARY

Study Programme: P1314 Geography

Specialization: International Development Studies

Supervisor: Prof. RNDr. Vladimír IRA, CSc.

Department of Development and Environmental Studies

Faculty of Science, Palacký University in Olomouc

Olomouc 2019

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The dissertation was compiled within Ph.D. study programme at the Department of Development and Environmental Studies, Faculty of Science, Palacký University in Olomouc.

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Obhajoba disertační práce se koná dne 30. 8. 2019 před komisí pro obhajoby disertačních prací doktorského studia v programu P1314 Geografie, studijním oboru Mezinárodní rozvojová studia, v prostorách Přírodovědecké fakulty Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci, 17. listopadu 12, 771 47 Olomouc.

The defence of the Ph.D. dissertation will take place on 30th August 2019 in front of the commission for the defence of Ph.D. dissertation in study programme P1314 Geography, specialization International Development Studies, in the premises of the Faculty of Science, Palacký University in Olomouc, 17. listopadu 12, 771 47 Olomouc.

S disertační prací je možno se seznámit na studijním oddělení Přírodovědecké fakulty Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci, 17. listopadu 12, 77 46 Olomouc.

The Ph.D. dissertation is available at the Study Department, Faculty of Science, Palacký University in Olomouc, 17. listopadu 12, 771 46 Olomouc.

Contents

ABSTRACT

This doctoral dissertation examines the role of return migration to Armenia and its potential impact on development of the country. This study aims to inquire about: (i) the return motivations for Armenian migrants and returnees; (ii) the factors that influence reintegration in a positive and negative way; (iii) the ways returnees are assisted in their reintegration to society; and (iv) the possible social change that is caused by return migration to Armenia. Existing literature on migration to Armenia has focused almost exclusively on outmigration and the effect of remittances on Armenian development. This inductive study advances our understanding of international migration and its effect on the society in the country of origin by discussing the phenomenon of return migration in a specific single country case study. It aims to map the return experience using semi-structured qualitative interviews and an in-depth survey. The findings from the research show that the impact of return migration on the development of Armenia is more complex than previously assumed. The findings offer broader insights into the phenomenon of return migration to Armenia and address the wider societal challenges that can be particularly important in the light of changes the country is undergoing.

Key words: return migration, development, reintegration, AVRR programmes, social remittances, Armenia

INTRODUCTION

While international migration has received plenty of attention in the Global North in the last few years, there has been relatively less focus on return migration. Global migration flows numbers peaked in 2018 but it is important to bear in mind that the global population is on the rise so the proportion of international migrants in the global population has remained roughly the same – around 3% (IOM, 2018). The increasing inter-connectedness has been caused by globalisation which has brought about changes in communication and transportation. For some scholars, this has meant the emphasis on the transnational aspect of international migration (Vertovec, 1999; Portes, 2001). The phenomenon of international migration is not new as people have been moving around since the dawn of humanity and the same is true for return migration. While return migration has been gaining some academic attention in the past years, it is still less researched than other phases of the migration process.[1]

There are academic works dealing with return migration in different regions ranging from Cape Verde (Carling, 2004) to China (Sun, 2013). The authors often highlight the benefits which can take place in connection with return migration. For example, Wolff (2015) found that the amount of personal savings sent to the country of origin is about twice as much by the migrants who intend to return. At least some migrants eventually decide to go back to their countries of origin and it is important for the states to be able to accommodate them by, in the ideal case, enabling them to use their skills. In the eventual years following the end of the Syrian conflict, some Syrian migrants and refugees may decide to go back to their country of origin. Therefore, it is important to start inquiring about the processes following the return migration and the benefits the returnees can bring to their countries of origin. There are also Syrian migrants of Armenian origin in Armenia, which was one of the topics that were debated during 2015 and in the subsequent years.

While it is only a part of the total impact of migration on the countries of origin, the political aspects remain salient and the possible pressure on democratic institutions is one of them. According to Collier (2013) and others, emigration can affect institutions in the countries of origin in two contradictory ways. First, institutions can be influenced through the creation of the diasporas who can put pressure on democratisation from the outside. Second, while a large

[1] These phases include pre-migration, migration itself, return migration (back to the country of origin) or re-migration (to another country).

number of the educated population can migrate from the country, the proportion of the educated population which remains in the society is lowered, and thus, the pressure on democracy remains low. So far, there has been no conclusive proof that one of these phenomena is more important than the other.

Research from Cape Verde, which has one of the highest outmigration rates in Africa, found that migrant households have a higher participation in political life (Batista and Vicente, 2011). A similar transfer of political engagement was seen in Mexico (Pérez-Armendariz and Crow, 2010). In Mali, Chauvet and Mercier (2014) found that return migrants are more likely to vote than other citizens. Furthermore, the non-migrants were more likely to copy their behaviour, i.e. those who lived close to migrants were more likely to vote. Among the neighbours, those with lowest levels of education were those who were the most likely to copy return migrants.

Return migration to Armenia has been an under-researched topic until recently with some notable exceptions including Lietaert et al. (2017) and Pawlowska (2017). There has been some policy-oriented research about the returnees, mainly targeting the group of temporary labour migrants to Russia (European Training Foundation, 2013; Bakhshinyan and Porsughyan, 2014). During the research period in Armenia, the so-called Velvet Revolution took place in April 2018. While it would be an overstatement to suggest that the revolution took place because of the returnees, they were one of its ardent supporters. In the interviews the returnees often complained about the nepotism and corruption which were also the reasons which led to the overthrow of the former president (who was about to become the new Prime Minister).

While Armenia has large outmigration from the country, it nevertheless has a steady rate of return. The allure of migrating can be attractive for the people living in the semi-periphery of the world, yet there are people who come back. Contrary to the expectations, the Armenian returnees are not only those who had no other option but to return. There is also a group of spontaneous returnees who have diverse motivations from family-oriented to identity-related. The dissertation works with both groups, the forced (or euphemistically put, the 'assisted voluntary') returnees and the voluntary ones.

Before we proceed, it is important to define some key terms that are used throughout the dissertation. This dissertation defines the returnees as people with the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia (RA), who have lived abroad for at least one year before coming back to

Armenia. This is in line with other studies on return migration such as King (2000: 9), on return migration to Greece, who defines returnees as 'Greeks who have lived abroad for at least one year and been resident back in Greece for at least a year'. However, reintegration is a complex process, including psycho-social and socio-economic reintegration. It is connected to the concept of sustainable return, which involves the absence of re-migration (Black and Gent, 2005). In this dissertation, the term *country of origin* generally refers to Armenia, while the term *country of settlement* refers to the country where the Armenian migrants are or were staying.

So far, there has been no single grand theory of international migration (Castles, 2010). It might not even be plausible to come up with one due to the differences in migration contexts and the multiplicity of migration experience. However, some authors propose an integrated theory of international migration.

According to them it should contain:

> Four basic elements: a treatment of the structural forces that promote emigration from developing countries; a characterization of the structural forces that attract immigrants into developed countries; a consideration of the motivations, goals and aspirations of the people who respond to these structural forces by becoming international migrants; and treatment of the social and economic structures that arise to connect areas of out- and in-migration. Any theoretical explanation that embraces just one of these elements will necessarily be incomplete and misleading… (Massey et al., 1998: 281).

This dissertation works with all elements of this definition, albeit in a limited context. All push and pull factors in Armenian (return) migration are considered in this work. Moreover, the motivations, goals, and aspirations of the returnees are highlighted throughout this dissertation. Finally, the connections between the countries of settlement and the country of origin in the form of social remittances are considered.

The aim of this dissertation is to inquire about the relationship between return migration and development in Armenia from the perspective of the returnees and other relevant stakeholders. The specific research questions are posed in the next chapter on research aims. The subsequent chapter discusses the background of Armenian return migration. It is important to highlight that Armenians have always migrated but following the 1915

Genocide, a large Armenian diaspora was created around the world. Next, the theoretical framework of this work is presented. This dissertation draws mainly on three bodies of literature: i) the work on return motivations, ii) return and reintegration, and iii) return migration and development. The studies on the latter deal with its three important aspects, mainly human capital, returnee entrepreneurship, and social remittances. The chapter on methods discusses the three main methods which have been used for the purposes of this dissertation – key informant interviews, returnee interviews, and an online survey.

The second part of this dissertation deals with the findings and possible recommendations for key stakeholders which are presented in the discussion. The chapter on Findings is divided into five sections. First, there is the part on return motivations (5.1) which is crucial for understanding the factors behind the decision to return. Second, return experience is discussed through the lived experience of the returnees (5.2) and observations of the key informants working with them (5.3). The key stakeholders working with the returnees in Armenia and their role are mapped in following section (5.4). Finally, the social changes taking place in Armenia because of the phenomenon of return migration (5.5) are discussed in the final part of the chapter Findings. This dissertation will conclude with a chapter on policy recommendations (discussion) and concluding remarks.

1 RESEARCH AIMS

Migration studies, while slowly emerging as a discipline in its own right, are also connected to other scientific disciplines. Therefore, this dissertation is not fully grounded in only one discipline but lies on the borderlines of human geography, political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines. Nevertheless, I have attempted to justify this interdisciplinarity by presenting a holistic approach that might be of benefit to other scholars as well as organisations working with returnees in Armenia and the returnees themselves. This doctoral dissertation aims to shed light on the return migration-development nexus using a single country case study (Faist, 2008; Skeldon, 2011). It attempts to avoid methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller, 2003) by considering the transnational aspects of migration by taking into account pre-migration, migration, and post-migration phases that take place in different countries, thereby avoiding the isolated migration-process discussion. This study is by no means exhaustive, but it aims to complement other research that had already been done on the issue of return migration to Armenia. Furthermore, it aims to present an important topic with policy implications not only for Armenia but also for the European Union, the EU Neighbourhood countries, and other countries with a large Armenian diaspora.

The aim of this inductive study is to map the phenomenon of return migration to Armenia and possible overlaps with human capital and development. While this is a large task, it aims to fill in the gap in the research on return migration and development by addressing the case of Armenian return migration and possible benefits of return migration in this specific context. Moreover, it addresses several issues which are crucial for understanding the role of return migration and the possible role of norm transfer and social remittances in Armenia. One of the issues it focuses on is mapping different groups of returnees to Armenia and potential returnees. It considers their motivations for return, obstacles during and after their return, and the factors that can contribute to the broadly defined development of Armenia. The notions of human and social capital are used as a conceptual framework for this dissertation. Another important aim is to contribute to the practical policy issues of return migration in Armenia or possible caveats by mapping the organisations working with the returnees and their contributions to the return migration in Armenia.

This dissertation focuses on the overall barriers and opportunities for returnee reintegration in Armenia. In total, four research questions were selected for this study. They try to shed light on the issues connected to return and its perception among the returnees. Furthermore, the questions aim to stir a discussion about the role of external actors such as the state and

international and non-governmental organisations and the ways how they can help foster development in Armenia. Table 1 shows the research questions, the chapter in which they are mainly addressed, and the source of information. The way how this information is extracted is discussed in the chapter on Methods.

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research question	***Chapter***	***Source of information***
RQ1	Chapter 5.1	Migrants, returnees
RQ2	Chapter 5.2 and 5.3	Returnees, key informants
RQ3	Chapter 5.4	Returnees, key informants
RQ4	Chapter 5.5	Returnees, key informants

RQ1: What are the motivations to return for different groups of migrants and returnees?
RQ2: How do the returnees perceive their reintegration in Armenia and what are the factors that influence sustainable return?
RQ3: In what ways are the returnees assisted by different stakeholders to reintegrate into the Armenian society?
RQ4: In what ways can the returnees contribute to social change in Armenia?

Source: author

2 THE HISTORY AND CURRENT SITUATION OF ARMENIAN MIGRATION

Leaving Armenia has had a long tradition since the time of the Ottoman Empire, during the Soviet era, and more recently, during the 1990s and 2000s (Makaryan, 2012). According to the World Bank (2016), the percentage of Armenian population abroad is 26.3%. This makes it a country with one of the highest proportions of population abroad not only in the region but also worldwide. The number increases if we factor in the Armenian diaspora, i.e. people who might not have been born in Armenia but still consider themselves Armenian. The Armenian word for the diaspora, *spyurk*, is used to refer to Armenian communities outside of the country. The size of the Armenian diaspora can reach up to 8 million (Baser and Swain, 2009). Large Armenian diaspora communities are located in the United States, Canada, France, Russia, and other countries.

One of the important moments in the history of the Armenian nation was the Armenian Genocide in 1915 when thousands of Armenians left Western Armenia escaping violence in the collapsing Ottoman Empire (Safrastyan, 2011). This led to the creation of the old/classical diaspora that settled in the Middle East as well as in the United States and some European states. The new diaspora was established in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union and many members of this diaspora now live in Russia and in other countries. In Czechia, there are currently around 8 000 Armenians (Wikipedia, 2018). However, many Armenians define themselves according to their heritage despite living outside of the country (even for several generations). Moreover, due to the historical experience of Armenians, it has been underlined that ‘for centuries there has been no single, clearly defined centre and periphery acknowledged by all Armenians’ (Pattie, 1999: 85). This chapter aims to present the background of migration from Armenia during different historical periods and information about more recent return migration to Armenia. Furthermore, it aims to discuss the different processes, barriers, and opportunities that are connected with Armenian migration and its diaspora.

3 RETURN MIGRATION

Return migration represents an important, albeit often overlooked, part of the migration cycle. In the ideal world, migration starts with pre-migration phases, migration itself follows, and return migration takes place, sometimes followed by re-migration (to the same or different destination). However, mobility often takes unexpected twists and turns and sometimes it is not straightforward. What could be seen as a short trip often becomes a lifetime journey and vice versa, some people venturing 'for good' decide to return later on. The pattern can also hold for return migration when the returnees first come back for brief visits and eventually decide to return. Or as Kasbarian (2009: 365) put it, 'sojourning can be a prelude to settlement, an experimental migration over a period of time'. This gradual return often corresponds to the notion of 'open-ended return' when the returnees first decide to stay for a shorter period of time (Porobić, 2017).

Return migration is relatively less researched compared to other phases of the migration process. However, it is important in terms of the implications for the country of origin and individual returnees. Return migration can take up different forms from permanent return to temporary return or other forms of circular movements. With the sedentary bias being the norm (Malkki, 1992), return migration was usually seen as the end of the migration cycle but return migration does not represent a new phenomenon. It has been estimated that between 1880 and 1930, one quarter to one third of all immigrants to America repatriated (Wyman, 1993). Moreover, return appears in various contexts from hearing about the right to return in the case of Palestinians dispossessed from the 1948 Palestine (Butler, 2012) or ancestors of the Sephardic Jews seeking to return to Spain from which they were driven out under the Spanish Inquisition more than 500 years ago (The Times of Israel, 2018). Importantly, the right to return is enshrined in Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN General Assembly, 1948) which states that 'everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country'.

According to the IOM, a return is:

> the act or process of going back to the point of departure. This could be within the territorial boundaries of a country as in the case of returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) and demobilized combatants; or between a host country (either transit or destination) and a country of origin, as in the case of migrant workers, refugees, asylum-seekers, and qualified nationals (IOM, 2011).

It is clear that there are various groups of returnees. This dissertation only discusses the international return migration and does not deal with internal returnees.

Gmelch defines return migration as:

> the movement of emigrants back to their homelands to resettle. Migrants returning for a vacation or an extended visit without the intention of remaining at home are generally not defined as return migrants, though in some settings it is difficult to distinguish analytically the migrants returning home for a short visit or seasonally from those who have returned permanently (Gmelch, 1980: 136).

Hence, the period of return needs to be longer than a 'short visit'. King (2000: 8) argues that 'return migration may be defined as the process whereby people return to their country or place of origin after a significant period in another country or region'. However, a significant period is loosely defined. For this study, a period of one year abroad is selected as the main criterion for defining Armenian return migration but there is no minimum stay in Armenia that would qualify returnees for this study (excluding the obvious cases of going to Armenia on holiday, etc.).

The topic of return migration to the Republic of Armenia was chosen because of several reasons:

1. It is relatively under-researched (with some notable exceptions – see, for example, Lietaert et al., 2017; Johansson, 2008; Pawlowska, 2017).
2. A large proportion of the Armenian population resides abroad and as such, there is a relatively high number of returnees.
3. A large proportion of the Armenian population receives remittances from abroad (these can further contribute to the development of the country).
4. Armenia lies in the vicinity of the European Union and thus, is affected by its policies, which makes it a convenient case study for seeing the impact of these policies on return migration.

The aim of this dissertation is threefold. First, it attempts to inquire about the motivations to return to Armenia among the migrants and the returnees. Second, there is a need to understand returnee reintegration in Armenia. This part enquires about the factors that influence the lived

return experience and impact reintegration in a positive and negative way as well as the role of organisations facilitating return in Armenia. Third, the dissertation focuses on the social change that can take place through return migration in Armenia. Finally, the discussion section incorporates the findings into the current research on return migration and attempts to tie the findings with the discussion on migration and development.

4 METHODS

In order to understand the experiences of return migration, this dissertation adopts an interpretative framework. Findlay and Li (1999: 56) argue that drawing from more than one paradigm and methodology is necessary to uncover multiple meanings of migration. Furthermore, the perspective on return migration is elicited from different actors – the returnees themselves, the potential returnees, and the key informants working in the migration field in Armenia. This structure attempts to uncover different aspects of return migration to Armenia. A mixed methods approach is taken so that it is possible to identify various key elements of return migration to Armenia. Various actors (returnees, key informants, and migrants) are interrogated to enable the understanding of the multiple meanings of return migration to Armenia.

The dissertation opts for a country-specific approach that allows for an in-depth exploration of the context of the study. This approach is in line with Long and Oxfeld's (2004) conceptualisation of return migration as a situated concept, which positions return migration as impacted by particular contexts and experiences. Because of the differences in individual perceptions, the research attempts to include returnees from various countries, different genders, and age. While the research findings are not meant to be representative of all Armenian returnees, they do provide an important insight into various ways how return migration in Armenia is perceived, what are the main challenges faced by the returnees, and what are the meanings they attach to them.

Creswell (2007: 202-207) presents four different criteria of quality in qualitative research – a longer fieldwork stay, triangulation, consultation with other researchers, and reflexivity. All criteria have been considered when designing the research and during the next phases. The dissertation combines different research methods to ensure triangulation of the data. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 4) claim, 'the combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, and depth to any investigation.' Brewer and Hunter (1989: 17) add that mixing methods is about trying to attain validity in research:

> Triangulated measurement tries to pinpoint the values of a phenomenon more accurately by sighting in on it from different methodological viewpoints... when two reliable instruments yield conflicting results, then the validity of each is cast into doubt. When the findings of different methods agree, we are more confident.

Many migration-oriented scholars call for more interdisciplinary and multi-method research. The distinction is now less between quantitative and qualitative data and research practices usually lie on the continuum between the two (Newman and Benz, 1998). For example, Findlay and Li (1999) draw attention to the need to use mixed methods and call for blurring the lines between quantitative and qualitative methods. While this dissertation uses mixed methods, it deals mainly with the qualitative research framework. The methods used include qualitative semi-structured interviews with the key informants and returnees in Armenia as well as an online survey with the Armenians who currently reside abroad. The aim is to inquire about the migrants' motivations for their return and possible ways how they perceive their return experience and how they can contribute to the development in the country of origin. The research methods for this dissertation have been chosen in line with similar studies conducted on the issue of return migration (e.g. Lietaert et al., 2014; Paasche, 2016; Gillespie et al., 1999).

This study takes the social constructivist and interpretivist perspectives as its starting point (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Neuman, 2000). It assumes that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they work and live and they develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2002). This leads researchers to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing them into certain categories. The goal of this study is to rely on participants' own views of their lived experience. Moreover, it is important to note that these subjective meanings are embedded in the social and historical settings. Crotty (1998) identified several key assumptions: 1) meanings are constructed by individuals as they engage with the world they are interpreting; 2) individuals make sense of the world based on their historical and social experience; and 3) the generation of meaning is always social. Therefore, the meanings we attribute to concepts and our knowledge are formed through interaction with others. Given that, the role of the researcher in the interpretation of data needs to be acknowledged. While it was attempted to attain objectivity by consulting with other researchers, the interpretation of the data follows the author's own personal and cultural experience.

There were some ethical issues to be taken into consideration with this type of research (Hammersley and Atkison, 1995). First of all, all interviews were conducted under conditions of anonymity and confidentiality. With the experts, some additional care is taken so that their responses used in the dissertation or research articles would not jeopardise their situation in

Armenia. Therefore, their names are not mentioned in the text. The returnees in Armenia are only identified by their gender and age range and no real names are used. When conducting some of the interviews at the offices of Caritas or Impact Hub, it was made clear to the returnees that there is no connection between my research and the services they could receive from the organisation. Therefore, their participation was purely voluntary. The online survey mentioned the following disclaimer: 'Feel free not to answer all the questions or withdraw from the research at any point. All the information provided is anonymous and confidential', and it is treated as such.

The main part of the research in Armenia was conducted from July to September 2016 and in January 2018. The preliminary part of research included desk research and document analysis with the aim to get acquainted with the Armenian context and state-of-the-art research on return migration. Another part of the research included a period of fieldwork in Armenia (mainly in Yerevan) in the summer of 2016. During this time the assistance at Caritas Armenia was offered. Another period of fieldwork took place in early 2018 by carrying out the final interviews with skilled return migrants at Yerevan Impact Hub. The research in Armenia also included periods of participant observation, following social workers of Caritas non-governmental organisation in their daily work with return migrants and participating in the events organised by the Yerevan Impact Hub. The research period also allowed for observation of some return migrants in their dealing with Caritas and frequenting some places run by the return migrants. The online surveys with the migrants of Armenian origin were conducted at the beginning of 2017. The first version of the survey was in English and subsequently, the survey in Armenian was launched.

5 FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the dissertation. First, it discusses the return motivations for Armenian migrants living abroad and for the Armenian returnees. There are various factors that influence the decision to return and it often is a mix of various motivations. Next, the return experience is discussed through the viewpoint of the returnees and key informants who work with the returnees. There is interplay between the structural forces and the individual agency of the return migrants that leads to different return experience. However, certain key characteristics such as return preparedness, the role of social, and human capital appear to be important for a sustainable return experience. Next, the role of the key actors in migration management in Armenia is presented including the state, IOM, and non-governmental organisations in Armenia. Finally, the possible social changes that take place because of the return migration to Armenia are introduced based on the interviews with returnees and key informants. They relate to different programmes which attract diaspora Armenians and returnees with the rationale of sharing their skills or to the perceived changes that the returnees themselves see in the society. All sections attempt to shed light on the issue of return migration to Armenia and its possible impact on the human development.

5.1 Return motivations

The motivation to return seems to be an important factor for returnee reintegration. While there is a complex array of overlapping reasons why returnees go back, several of them emerged as important ones among the Armenian migrants and returnees. It emerges that the motivation to return is often a mix of various reasons for Armenian migrants and returnees alike. The main reasons for return included family, employment or safety. Many returnees also cited patriotic reasons and planned future projects. While the motivations to return generally did not differ too much for the returnees and migrants, migrants did not see Armenia as conducive to work-life balance, but many actual returnees thought about it differently as is shown in the following sections.

5.2 Return experience of the Armenian returnees

This chapter discusses different returnee experiences to illustrate the lived reality of return migration to Armenia and it highlights the differences between the groups of returnees and the status of their return (on the scale from voluntary to forced). It starts with discussing the role

of return preparedness for the returnees and it will be argued that return preparedness is necessary for the subsequent returnee reintegration. Next, it assesses the importance of social networks and social capital in return migration. For many migrants and returnees, networks represent the most important resource when returning back to their country of origin. However, their networks might not be working very well after a longer period of absence. Finally, this chapter enquires about the role of skills (human capital) for the returnees. It shows that education and skills of the returnees matter for their successful engagement upon return. However, it might be problematic for some skilled returnees to find a job that matches their levels of skills.

5.3 Return through the lens of key informants

This section focuses on the reality of return which is a difficult experience for many returnees who struggle with reintegration. There are various organisations that attempt to ease the reintegration process for the returnees and who work with the returnees on a daily basis. Therefore, both negative and positive factors influencing returnee reintegration on the individual as well as structural levels are investigated from the perspective of the key informants. It has been found that the returnees' personal characteristics such as skills, networks and social relations, and their willingness and preparedness to return are necessary for the returnees to be able to reintegrate successfully. However, the broader environment in Armenia, including the economic factors and other social and structural factors (such as corruption) affect reintegration in a negative way.

The barriers to returnee involvement in the economic activities in the country of origin tend to be largely structural. Poverty, low salaries, and high levels of unemployment create conditions that push people to leave in the first place and make it difficult for people to return. Despite some improvements in the past two decades, the labour market conditions in Armenia are problematic (European Training Foundation, 2013). Clearly, there are some obstacles for the returnee engagement in Armenia, but the question is to what extent they differ for different groups of return migrants. For the returnees who do not have the opportunity to become self-employed and lack the relevant networks, finding employment can be difficult. This can be an issue for both low skilled and high skilled returnees.

5.4 Role of various migration management actors in Armenia

This chapter aims to present various migration management organisations working with the returnees in Armenia and their role in facilitating migration management. There is a multiplicity of actors in migration governance in the world and the same is true for Armenia. International migration management, while focusing on the relationships between the states, has also been criticised for its top-down approach (Bader, 2012). This work does not want to neglect other forms of governance such as migrant associations and local grassroot organisations and they are partly discussed in the final section about the role of non-governmental actors. First, this chapter looks at the AVRR programmes and the role of the states in their facilitation. Second, it enquires about the role of IOM which is the major actor in migration management in Armenia. Third, it explores the role of non-governmental organisations working with the return migrants in Armenia.

There are various organisations assisting the returnees and they differ by the audience they aim to cater for and by the type of assistance they aim to provide. The programmes offer assistance to various groups of returnees on the scale from forced to voluntary returns, including both the participants in the AVRR programmes and the spontaneous returnees. Some programmes only offer basic assistance while others allow returnees to enhance their skills. However, returnees might struggle with finding programmes that would fit their exact needs. Many of these programmes are very similar in content, levels of assistance, and the targeted recipients.

It has been argued that the technocratic approach of migration governance can lead to depoliticising highly contentious issues such as migration (Geiger and Pécoud, 2010). The key stakeholders in the field of (return) migration in Armenia can be divided into three main groups: state organisations, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations. While the role of some organisations such as the OFII (French Office for Immigration and Integration) or GIZ (a German organisation under its Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) is ambiguous because they are state organisations of another state who work as international organisations, other organisations are deeply rooted in the Armenian realities.

The organisations working with returnees can be classified into two categories – those working with the assisted voluntary returnees and those working with the spontaneous returnees. However, some organisations work with both target groups. This chapter further discusses the assisted voluntary return and integration (AVRR) programmes, the role of IOM

as the most salient actor in AVRR and the role of other organisations. Finally, the role of these organisations and the recommendations for their work are also addressed in the discussion chapter.

5.5 Social changes in Armenia in connection with return migration

It can be argued that various changes in the social fabric of Armenia are taking place, partly due to return migration. There are various ways how return migrants contribute to social changes and many of them are connected to social remittances. It has been argued in the literature that social change can take place through migration and specifically, return migration because the returnees can bring social remittances (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011). Social remittances can relate to social norms, technological know-how, or ideas. Returnees can take up gainful employment in their country of origin and share the knowledge they have gained while living abroad. Similarly, they can start a new business in a field which is unusual in Armenia or bring innovation to an existing business. However, for this they need strong social networks which support them.

Armenian return migration has a potential for social changes but clearly, all societal changes cannot be attributed directly to return migration. There are different areas in which returnees already perceive social changes taking place or see that there could be a potential for change due to return migration. The Armenian society has a low rate of immigration and the returnees can influence the local population because of their exposure to other societies and importance that is attached to migration experience in the Armenian society. It means that the people who are not migrants themselves might copy the behaviour of the returnees (Chauvet and Mercier, 2012). This section discusses the attitudes of returnees with a potential to change aspects of the Armenian society, among them innovative businesses, skills developed by working abroad, and their transfer and attitudes towards gender norms and corruption.

6 DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings pertaining to Armenian return migration and their relations to other research which has been carried out in Armenia or in other contexts. This chapter also suggests a set of policy recommendations for the Armenian government and the organisations working with returnees in Armenia for both assisted returns and spontaneous returns. The research has implications for return migration policies which should take into account the lived experience of the returnees and provide some added value. It is clear that the return experience differs for different groups of returnees and hence, the return policies have to be designed accordingly.

When it comes to the AVRR programmes, it seems that they only reach a limited number of returnees. The research found that many of the returnees are unaware of the AVRR programmes. One Armenian survey showed that 98.8% of the target audience were unaware of the existence of reintegration schemes (European Training Foundation, 2013). Similarly, the presented research found that the Armenian migrants living abroad were generally not aware of reintegration programmes in Armenia; among the organisations the migrants knew about were Repat Armenia and Birthright Armenia. The role of the Armenian state is to provide information about the assistance that is available for the returnees. Yet sometimes this role is taken up by the non-governmental organisations.

A lot of funding by EU governments is spent on the AVRR programmes in different organisations to promote returnee reintegration. There is a entire industry around the AVRR programmes in Armenia. However, the programmes sometimes target only the returnees from a specific EU country (the most obvious example being the French OFII). Moreover, these organisations offer programmes that are quite similar in their content and their work often overlaps. Therefore, the AVRR programmes should be based on the real needs of the returnees and not on the needs of the EU states (which want to promote humane returns). The impact of these programmes should be monitored and evaluated because so far, there is no conclusive evidence of their effectiveness. Moreover, the cases of returnees receiving support from various organisations at the same time are not unheard of. Therefore, there should be more coordination among the programmes and more emphasis on monitoring the impacts of these programmes.

TABLE 2: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE AVRR PROGRAMMES IN ARMENIA

Recommendations for the AVRR programmes in Armenia
- Reaching out to a wider group of returnees
- Coordination between different programmes and organisations
- Monitoring and evaluating the impacts of these programmes
- Programmes should be based on the real needs of the returnees
- There should be more local ownership
- Programmes should not work only with the returnees from a specific EU member state but should be EU-wide

Source: author

There are certain barriers which make it difficult for the returnees to reintegrate in Armenia. The return preparedness (connected with both tangible and intangible resources) is often lacking for the AVRR returnees. Furthermore, their return motivations play an important role for subsequent reintegration and if people are compelled to return, they might not be able to sustainably reintegrate. Local organisations seem to be aware of this tension. For example, Lietaert (2019) found that the reintegration support is perceived differently by the returnees and the professionals implementing these programmes. Similar issues were reported in this dissertation which has two different sections for reporting the experience of returnees (chapter 5.2) and key informants (chapter 5.3), which slightly differ. The programmes should be adjusted to the local realities and should not be seen as something which is imposed from the outside.

There are several organisations that work with returnees who did not avail of the AVRR programmes including skilled returnees. This group can also face many difficulties such as inadequate skills recognition or problems with readjusting to a different working environment. The skilled returnees can also struggle with finding a job that correspond to their levels of skills and expectations. One key informant even stated that it might not be beneficial for returnees to return at all:

> Physical return is often difficult. Maybe it is more useful for people to stay where they are at the moment. For example, if they are in Germany or France, they have a better infrastructure to carry out research at universities than in Armenia (13th July 2016, personal communication).

Some key informants argued that there are problems awaiting returnees and physical return is often difficult. The social situation in Armenia can also appear unsatisfactory to the returnees but it can be even worse for local residents. As one key informant warns,

> We have to be careful with the returnees because in some situations, the neighbours who never left, are often worse off and they do not get any attention. This creates social tensions, increase of dissatisfaction and frustration (26th July 2016, personal communication).

The numbers of returns to Armenia are estimates at best and there are no precise and systematic data on the scope of return migration to Armenia (Fleischer, 2012). Therefore, it can be recommended to collect the data on return migration which is also in line with the first objective of the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration*[2] (UNGA, 2018). There should be fewer barriers for all groups of returnees. The dual nationality for Armenian nationals is already possible but there are other steps that can be taken to enable returnees make full use of their potential and skills.

The strategies such as competitive salaries, adequate facilities for skilled workers together with the official governmental programme to promote skilled migration have been successfully used in different countries such as China or Israel. Without attracting return migration, there might still be a long way for Armenia to achieve its policy goals. However, it should also be clear that the return programmes have a wider relevance for society and that there are certain fields which can be promoted and returnees from these fields can be encouraged to come to Armenia. Armenia is generally supportive about the return of its citizens (as has been stated in its 2017-2021 *Strategy for migration policy of the Republic of Armenia*). However, not many resources are offered to the prospective returnees.

TABLE 3: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RETURN POLICIES IN ARMENIA

Recommendations for the return policies in Armenia
- Better documentation of returns
- Removing barriers for the returnees

[2] 'Collect and utilise accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies.'

- Policies on attracting skilled migrants (e.g. skills/qualification recognition) and making the positions competitive
- Drawing on the relevance for the society
- Use the connection with return and development only when substantiated

Source: author

The returnees who are interested in the return to Armenia and want to bring in new ideas are the key actors here, so it is crucial to understand returnees' perspectives and experiences. However, social changes in connection with return migration in Armenia might only affect a small segment of the population. The returnees themselves might have changed while living abroad and can transfer some of these changes to their immediate surroundings. However, the potential for a wider social change through return migration to Armenia remains to be explored.

As Sinatti and Horst (2015) argue, the discourse of migration and development is now being extended to all returnees and reintegration programmes. However, it should only be used in the cases when its impact on development can be substantiated. For example, the AVRR programmes often use the migration and development rhetoric (and some of these programmes even have 'migration and development' in their title). Yet, the genuine connection between migration and development in this context is questionable at best. The ways how returnees contribute to development differ and it should not be expected that all returnees contribute to development. Moreover, there should not be pressure on the individual returnees to 'do something good for their country' if there are various barriers to their involvement. Moreover, the returnees should not be forced into returnee entrepreneurship if they have no pre-requisites to become successful.

Sustainable return is also connected with migration and development and emerges as an important concept for the returnees. However, making migrants return (and stay) should not disregard their further life trajectories and aspirations. The return should not be regarded as an ultimate goal of migration, which would close the migration cycle, but it should be considered as an option which would enable them to make the best use of their capacities. Should the conditions be not conducive to return, there should be no pressure on returning. By the same token, the returnees should not be forced to leave Armenia and re-migrate due to the lack of

future opportunities. Most of the interviewed returnees were content about their decision to return. Yet some saw various shortcomings and others considered re-migrating.

There are various organisations working in the field of return migration in Armenia and they can be divided into organisations offering the AVRR programmes and those working with spontaneous returnees. Some of these organisations offer assistance to both of these groups. There could be more cooperation on cross-cutting issues, especially for the organisations that work with different returnees. Finally, it is important to note that the return experience can differ for various returnees and return policies need to be tailored accordingly. These variations depend on their age and other experience, including the experience before migrating and in the host country. On one hand, if returnees increased their skills during migration, they are in a better position to contribute to the society in their country of origin. On the other hand, these returnees might struggle with finding a job that is commensurate with their levels of experience. Therefore, there should be targeted policies to both groups of the returnees. However, these policies should not prioritise return migrants over other groups of vulnerable populations.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation deals with the topic of return migration to Armenia and its possible impacts on the development of the country. While the scholarly interest in return migration is relatively new, some connections between return migration and development are already being made, usually applying to skilled migration. Armenian migration has had a long history, since the 1915 Armenian Genocide but even earlier when Armenians often left the country in search of trade opportunities or better lives. Still, the country is better known for its emigration rather than immigration to the country (which is limited) or return migration. Nevertheless, return migration represents an important phenomenon that might be even more prevalent after the so-called Armenian 'velvet revolution' of 2018.

The literature on return migration has mostly dealt with return motivations and returnee integration. Moreover, the field of return migration and development has emerged in the literature, which mostly discusses the role of human capital and skills which are also connected with the future pathway returnees take such as returnee entrepreneurship or the role of social remittances that may lead to changes in home societies. This dissertation works with different methods in order to answer the research questions connected with (i) the return motivations for Armenian migrants and returnees; (ii) the factors that influence reintegration in a positive and negative way; (iii) the ways returnees are assisted in their reintegration to society by different organisations; and (iv) the possible social change that is caused by return migration to Armenia. At this point, it needs to be stressed that there are both spontaneous and assisted returnees who return to Armenia and this dissertation discusses both groups.

The dissertation uses returnee interviews, key informant interviews, and a survey with Armenians living abroad as the main methods for the explorative study. It found that among the motivations to return were, *inter alia*, the reasons connected to their families, work-related, or patriotic reasons. The motivations to return were similar for both spontaneous and possible prospective returnees (Armenian migrants currently living abroad). Many returnees also saw the return to Armenia as more conducive to having a quieter lifestyle and less worries due to their social networks in Armenia. However, the assisted voluntary returnees often saw a lack of other options than returning to Armenia, so we cannot say that their return was motivated by various factors but was compelled by the external circumstances. It does not matter which countries the returnees came from but important are their levels of skills (human capital) and social capital that influence their return experience.

The possible influence of return migration on development and its complexities are also discussed. Return migration to Armenia is important because it directly affects other states, including the EU states and their policies on return migration. While the AVRR programmes are widely hailed and seen as the stepping stone for returnee reintegration, the truth is that they fail to replace the support that the returnees get from their social networks. Therefore, social capital plays an important role in returnee reintegration and it is difficult to replace it with other types of support. Human capital, or the levels of skills and education, are important for the returnees who are looking for a job in Armenia. These returnees are often welcomed in the public discourse and it is presumed that they will contribute to the development of Armenia. While there is no conclusive evidence for this, it is also necessary to provide support for the AVRR returnees who might have lower skill levels and are in need of long-term training or support. The return preparedness emerges as a key concept for all Armenian returnees. It is crucial for them to plan for their return, have contacts in Armenia, and be able to use their networks. Therefore, the programmes working with the returnees should take all of these factors into account to ensure a sustainable return.

This dissertation attempted to shed further light on the topic of return migration and development and presented a single case study of Armenia. Return migration can be seen as both a failure or a resource to draw on to generate development. It can be presented as a panacea to solve the developmental issues, but the story is more complex. The aim of this dissertation is to uncover this complexity and possibly bring attention to this important topic. There is more research to be done on the Armenian case or on comparative case studies. Similar research should be taken into account when discussing the policies on return migration (or development) which should not only be based on Western countries' requirements. What matters here is, the issue of human dignity, which can only come with sustainable return or by allowing people to live their lives the way they prefer.

There are certain social changes which can take place in connection with return migration. The ways how return migrants can contribute to social changes are connected to social remittances, which can be transferred from the returnees. This way, the returnees are able to innovate not only by creating innovative businesses but also through changing their attitudes towards social norms. For example, the returnees are more aware about the dangers of second-hand smoking. One returnee even started a non-smoking café in Yerevan. Returnees also increased their skills while studying or working abroad. The increased productivity in their jobs could be transferred to their co-workers. Finally, the returnees had different

attitudes towards gender norms and corruption by being less tolerant towards discrimination and various forms of corrupt behaviour.

While the main findings of this research are similar to those of other studies on return migration, it is important to show that they are also valid in the Armenian realities. Furthermore, it is quite unique that this study deals with both groups of the AVRR returnees and spontaneous returnees and compares and contrasts their experiences. This study also uses key informant interviews to get a balanced view of the situation. This dissertation critically interrogates the connection between return and development which is, often in the public policy discourse, taken for granted. Therefore, it raises important questions which should be addressed.

Finally, it puts forward a set of recommendations for Armenian organisations working with returnees and for the general return policies in Armenia. However, these recommendations are only valid in the Armenian context. This research is important for the countries with large return migration because it is important to understand the implications of this phenomenon. Return migrants not only bring in new skills but they might also influence their surroundings, their neighbourhoods and their cities. They might open innovative businesses which are uncommon in the country, offer new services or they can come up with more subtle ideas in the form of social remittances. The norms which they can transfer are often connected to democracy, gender equality or anti-corrupt behaviour.

Future research can be directed to the area of social remittances and how these are transferred to local populations. An interesting case to look into would be the attitude towards corruption and political behaviours of returnees (such as the likelihood of voting of the returnees and their social networks). Moreover, there is a need for more precise data on return migration to Armenia. Many countries do not collect data on returnees but this deprives the state of knowing about a resource that can be tapped into. The state policies in Armenia and their influence on actual return migration outcomes is another topic worthy of further investigation. In the future, there might be more opportunities to migrate, but some proportion of migrants will eventually decide to return to their countries of origin. Therefore, it is important to learn about this group of (return) migrants, about their motivations, reintegration process, and what can be done to enhance their return experience. It is also likely that the returnees will contribute to some social changes in their countries of origin. All these issues have been discussed in this dissertation but the matter at hand is so rich that it deserves further discussion.

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ABSTRAKT

Disertační práce zkoumá úlohu návratové migrace do Arménie a její možný dopad na rozvoj země. Cílem této studie je popsat: (i) motivace k návratu arménských migrantů a navrátilců; (ii) faktory, které pozitivně a negativně ovlivňují reintegraci; (iii) způsoby, jakým je navráceným osobám poskytnuta pomoc při jejich opětovném začlenění do společnosti a (iv) případné sociální změny, které jsou způsobeny návratovou migrací do Arménie. Stávající literatura o migraci a Arménii je téměř výhradně zaměrená na emigraci a možný vliv remitencí na arménský rozvoj. Tato induktivní studie posouvá naše chápání mezinárodní migrace a jejího vlivu na společnost v zemi původu prostřednictvím diskuse o fenoménu návratové migrace ve specifické případové studii dané země. Zároveň usiluje o zmapování zkušeností s návratem za využití polostrukturovaných kvalitativních rozhovorů a podrobného dotazníku. Zjištění z výzkumu ukazují, že dopady návratové migrace na rozvoj Arménie mohou být komplexnější, než se dříve předpokládalo. Výsledky výzkumu nabízejí širší pohled na fenomén návratové migrace do Arménie a řeší jeho širší společenské dopady, které mohou být obzvláště důležité s ohledem na změny, jimiž země prochází.

Klíčová slova: návratová migrace, rozvoj, reintegrace, programy asistovaných návratů (AVRR), sociální remitence, Arménie

SOUHRN

Disertační práce se zabývá problematikou návratové migrace do Arménie a jejími možnými dopady na rozvoj země. Přestože je vědecký zájem o návratovou migraci relativně nový, souvislosti mezi návratovou migrací a rozvojem již v literatuře existují, a to především ve vztahu ke kvalifikované migraci. Literatura o návratové migraci se většinou zabývá motivacemi k návratu a integrací navrátilců. Kromě toho se v literatuře objevuje oblast návratové migrace a rozvoje, která se zabývá převážně rolí lidského kapitálu a dovednostmi, které mohou vést ke změnám v zemi původu. Tato disertační práce pracuje s různými metodami a odpovídá na výzkumné otázky spojené s (i) motivací k návratu arménských migrantů a navrátilců; (ii) faktory, které pozitivně a negativně ovlivňují reintegraci; (iii) způsoby, jakým je navráceným osobám poskytována pomoc různými organizacemi při jejich opětovném začlenění do společnosti; a (iv) možnými sociálními změnami, které jsou způsobené návratovou migrací do Arménie. Je třeba zdůraznit, že do Arménie se vracejí navrátilci spontánně i s asistentcí návratových programů (AVRR) a tato disertační práce pojednává o obou skupinách.

Arménská migrace má dlouhou historii, od arménské genocidy z roku 1915, ale i z dřívějších let, kdy Arméni často opouštěli zemi při hledání obchodních příležitostí nebo lepšího života. Země je však známa spíše emigrací než přistěhovalectvím nebo návratovou migrací. Návratová migrace ale představuje důležitý fenomén, který může ještě zesílit po tzv. arménské „sametové revoluci“ z roku 2018. Disertační práce využívá polostrukturované rozhovory s arménskými navrátilci a experty a online dotazník s Armény žijícími v zahraničí. Bylo zjištěno, že mezi motivacemi k návratu byly mimo jiné důvody spojené s jejich rodinami, prací, ale také s vlastenectvím. Motivace k návratu byly podobné u dobrovolných navrátilců i možných potenciálních navrátilců (arménští migranti, kteří v současné době žijí v zahraničí). Mnozí navrátilci také vnímají návrat do Arménie jako příznivý pro klidnější životní styl s méně starostmi. Navrátilci účastnící se AVRR programů však neviděli jinou možnost než návrat do Arménie, takže je k návratu donutily vnější okolnosti. Nezáleží na tom, ze kterých zemí navrátilci přišli, ale důležité jsou jejich dovednosti a vzdělání (lidský kapitál) a sociální kapitál. Oba aspekty ovlivňují jejich ponávratové zkušenosti.

Diskutovány jsou také možné vlivy návratové migrace na rozvoj a komplexnost této problematiky. Návratová migrace do Arménie je důležitá, protože přímo ovlivňuje ostatní státy, včetně států EU, a jejich politiky týkající se návratové migrace. Zatímco programy

AVRR jsou široce vítány a jsou považovány za odrazový můstek pro reintegraci navrátilců, pravdou je, že nenahrazují podporu, kterou navrátilci dostávají od svých sociálních sítí. Sociální kapitál proto hraje důležitou roli v reintegraci navrátilců a je těžké jej nahradit jinými typy podpory. Lidský kapitál neboli úroveň dovedností a vzdělání jsou důležité pro navrátilce, kteří hledají práci v Arménii. Tito navrátilci jsou ve veřejném diskurzu často vítáni a předpokládá se, že přispějí k rozvoji Arménie. Je ovšem také nezbytné poskytnout dlouhodobou podporu méně kvalifikovaným navrátilcům prostřednictvím AVRR programů. Připravenost na návrat se stává klíčovým konceptem pro všechny navrátilce. Je velmi důležité, aby plánovali návrat, měli kontakty v Arménii a mohli využívat své sociální kontakty. Programy, které pracují s navrátilci, by proto měly vzít v úvahu všechny tyto faktory, aby zajistily udržitelný návrat.

Tato disertační práce se pokusila objasnit téma návratové migrace a rozvoje a představila případovou studii Arménie. Návratová migrace může být považována za selhání nebo za zdroj, který může pozitivně ovlivňovat rozvoj. Může být prezentována jako všelék k řešení rozvojových problémů, ale příběh je složitější. Cílem této disertační práce je odhalit tuto komplexnost a případně upozornit na toto důležité téma. Daný výzkum by měl být vzat v úvahu při projednávání politik týkajících se návratové migrace a rozvoje, které by neměly být založeny pouze na požadavcích západních zemí. Důležitá je zde otázka lidské důstojnosti, která může přijít pouze s udržitelným návratem nebo tím, že se umožní lidem žít jejich život způsobem, kterému dávají přednost.

Existují určité společenské změny, ke kterým může dojít v souvislosti s návratovou migrací. Navrátilci mohou přispívat k sociálním změnám prostřednictvím sociálních remitencí, které mohou sdílet s okolím. Tímto způsobem jsou navrátilci schopni inovovat nejen vytvářením nových podniků, ale také změnou svých postojů k sociálním normám. Navrátilci jsou například více informováni o škodlivosti kouření na veřejných místech. Jedna z navrátilkyň dokonce v Jerevanu založila první nekuřáckou kavárnu. Navrátilci také zvýšili své dovednosti při studiu nebo práci v zahraničí a jejich zvýšená produktivita může být sdílena s jejich spolupracovníky. Navrátilci také měli odlišný postoj k genderovým normám a korupci tím, že byli méně tolerantní vůči diskriminaci a různým formám korupčního jednání.

Zatímco hlavní zjištění tohoto výzkumu jsou obdobná jako u ostatních studií o návratové migraci, je důležité ukázat, že platí i v arménské realitě. Navíc je zcela unikátní, že se tato studie zabývá oběma skupinami navrátilců – asistovanými i dobrovolnými navrátilci a porovnává a staví do protikladu jejich zkušenosti. Tato studie také používá rozhovory

s klíčovými informátory, aby bylo možné získat vyvážený pohled na situaci. Tato disertační práce kriticky zkoumá souvislost mezi návratem a rozvojem, která je často ve veřejném politickém diskursu považována za samozřejmost. Vyvolává tak důležité otázky, které je třeba řešit.

Disertační práce nakonec předkládá soubor doporučení pro arménské organizace, které pracují s navrátilci, a pro obecné návratové politiky v zemi. Tento výzkum je důležitý pro země s velkou mírou návratové migrace, protože je důležité pochopit důsledky tohoto jevu. Návrat migrantů přináší nejen nové dovednosti, ale může také změnit jejich okolí. Navrátilci mohou otevřít inovativní podniky, které jsou v zemi neobvyklé, nabízet nové služby nebo mohou přijít s dalšími nápady. Normy, které mohou přenášet, jsou často spojeny s demokracií, genderovou rovností nebo protikorupčním jednáním. Tyto změny pak mohou vést ke změnám v celé společnosti.

Budoucí výzkum může být zaměřen na oblast sociálních remitencí a na to, jak se přenáší na místní obyvatelstvo. Zajímavým případem, na který by se dalo zaměřit, je postoj vůči korupci a politické chování navrátilců (např. pravděpodobnost hlasování u voleb u navrátilců a jejich sociálních kontaktů). Navíc je zapotřebí sbírat přesnější údaje o návratové migraci do Arménie, protože mnohé země neshromažďují údaje o navrácených osobách. Dalším tématem hodným dalšího zkoumání jsou státní politiky v Arménii a jejich vliv na samotnou návratovou migraci. V budoucnu by mohlo být více příležitostí k migraci, ale určitá část migrantů se nakonec rozhodne vrátit do svých zemí původu. Proto je důležité dozvědět se o této skupině migrantů a navrátilců, o jejich motivaci, procesu reintegrace a co lze udělat pro zlepšení jejich ponávratových zkušeností. Je také pravděpodobné, že navrátilci přispějí k některým společenským změnám v zemích původu. Všechny tyto otázky byly v této disertační práci diskutovány, ale toto téma je natolik bohaté, že si zaslouží další pozornost.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Workplace

- Department of Development and Environmental Studies, Faculty of Science, Palacký University Olomouc

Education and academic qualifications

- 09/2014 – present: Palacký University Olomouc, Ph.D. programme International Development Studies
  Dissertation titled "The impact of international migration on development: The case of return migration to Armenia", state exam passed in June 2017
- 09/2012 – 06/2013: Central European University (CEU), Hungary, MA International Relations and European Studies, with Merit
- 09/2008 – 06/2012: University of St Andrews, Great Britain, MA International Relations and Social Anthropology, First Class
- 09/2010-01/2011: University of Copenhagen, Denmark, Erasmus exchange programme

Teaching activities

- Department of Development Studies: Migration in today's world; Introduction to foresight; Possible futures mapping; English for development studies
- Guest lecturer at the Department of Politics and European Studies and the Department of Social Work, Palacký University Olomouc
- Teaching at the Royal University of Bhutan and Université Hassan II de Casablanca

Research projects

- TAČR-ZÉTA 2018-2019, Mapping the perception of dangerous sites, see http://gis.vsb.cz/tacr-zeta/
- IGA 2018, Use of selected foresight methods in development and environmental studies

Scientific research activities

Foreign research stays

- January 2018: Yerevan, Armenia (research on return migration to Armenia)
- May-July 2017: Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France (research internship)
- October 2016: Samtse, Bhutan (guest lecturer at the Royal University of Bhutan)
- July-September 2016: Yerevan, Armenia (research on return migration to Armenia)
- April 2013: Beirut, Lebanon (research on Syrian migration)

International courses attended

- October 2017: University of Amsterdam (Migration, Borders, and Citizenship PhD autumn school)
- September 2017: International Metropolis Conference, The Hague (Exploring the Potential of Academic Research for Policy Making and Policy Advocacy)
- October 2016: Maastricht University (New Perspectives on Transnational Living - Symposium and PhD course)
- June 2016: University of Palermo (a PhD course on Migrants, Human Rights and Democracy)
- June 2016: Charles University Prague (IMISCOE Conference on Migration and Development)
- October 2015: University of Oslo (a PhD course on Politics of Human Mobility)

Member of professional societies

- IMISCOE (International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe)
- Mobility and Politics, Carleton University, Canada
- Foresight Europe Network

Publications

Research articles

- Filipec, Ondřej and Lucie Macková. "Fortifying against the threat: Can walls stop irregular migration?", *Slovak Journal of Political Sciences* 19, 1 (2019).

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Book chapters

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Book reviews

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Conference proceedings

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Online documents

- Macková, Lucie and Zora Hesová, "Migrace a rozvoj: Může být rozvojová politika součástí řešení migrační krize?" Briefing paper AMO, listopad 2017, https://www.amo.cz/cs/azylova-a-migracni-politika-eu-do-roka-a-do-dne/migrace-a-rozvoj-muze-byt-rozvojova-politika-soucasti-reseni-migracni-krize/

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- Macková, Lucie. Tale of Two Organizations: The Role of UNHCR and UNRWA in Lebanon (MA thesis, Central European University, 2014), www.etd.ceu.hu/2013/mackova_lucie.pdf.

Work in progress

- (*in review*) Macková, Lucie and Jaromír Harmáček. "Expectations and Reality of Return Migration to Armenia"

- (*in review*) Macková, Lucie, Jaromír Harmáček and Zdeněk Opršal. "The determinants of international migration from developing countries to the Czech Republic."

Lectures at conferences

- Macková, Lucie "Armenian return migration and its potential for social change" (presented at the Migration: Educational, Political and Cultural Aspects Conference, Tel Aviv, Israel, March 19, 2019)

- Macková, Lucie "Armenian return migration and its potential for social change" (presented at the Metropolis Conference, Sydney, Australia, October 30, 2018)

- Macková, Lucie "Return Migration of the Highly Skilled Armenians: Barriers and Possibilities for Development" (presented at the PhD research seminar at Université de Hassan II, Casablanca, Morocco, July 27, 2018)

- Macková, Lucie "Motivations and barriers for Armenian return migration" (presented at the New Wave conference, Prague, Czech Republic, May 31-June 1, 2018)

- Macková, Lucie "Armenian return migration from EU states" (presented at the Migration: the Challenge of European States scientific conference, Trnava, Slovakia, April 26-27, 2018)

- Macková, Lucie "Return migrant entrepreneurship in Armenia: Possibilities and Realities" (presented at MDE conference on Migration and diaspora entrepreneurship, Bremen, Germany, November 30-December 1, 2017)

- Macková, Lucie "Back to Hayastan: The expectations and reality of return migration to Armenia" (presented at EADI Nordic Conference, Bergen, Norway, August 21-23, 2017)

- Macková, Lucie "Transnational Aspects of Armenian Return Migration" (presented at the New Perspectives on Transnational Living - Symposium and PhD course, Maastricht, the Netherlands, October 19-21, 2016)

- Macková, Lucie "The Challenges for Returnee Entrepreneurship in Armenia" (presented at the Autumn Research Convention, Samtse, Bhutan, October 12-13, 2016)

- Macková, Lucie "International Migration: Facts and Fiction" (presented at the Current Challenges seminar, Olomouc, Czech Republic, June 1-3, 2016)

- Macková, Lucie and Lubor Kysučan, "History and Politics of Human Mobility" (presented at the Sustainable Living Conference, Olomouc, Czech Republic, November 28-30, 2015)