

REGARDING THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND EMIGRATION PROCESSES OF ARMENIANS

Hovhannes Aleksanyan

PhD in History

Institute of History NAS RA

alhovhannes@gmail.com

Abstract

During the Soviet years, the number of the Armenian population increased significantly, population movements were not significant. In the 1990s, population migration from Armenia began, the main destination of which is the Russian Federation and post-Soviet countries, the European Union, the USA, etc. The region's socioeconomic, military, and political instability as well as the perspective's ambiguity were the determining factors. For a variety of reasons, the trend and rate of Armenians returning to their homeland have been apparent in recent years.

Keywords: Demographic, emigration, Armenian, census, population, diaspora

During the First World War, as well as the preceding and following decades, the Ottoman and then Turkish governments planned, consistently and stage by stage carried out the Armenian Genocide, making the last remnants of Western Armenians stateless, making hundreds of thousands homeless, emigrants and orphans, Islamizing Armenian children and women.

The active participation of Eastern Armenians in the First World War as members of the Russian army and the Armenian volunteer movement resulted in huge human losses.

It is noteworthy that according to the first All-Russian census held in 1897, the Armenian population of the Russian Empire was 1,173,096 people or 0.93% of the population of the entire Empire.

Dislocation of Armenians in the Russian Empire according to the 1897 census

Column N1

	total	urban population	rural population
Transcaucasia	1,079,059	221,192	857,867
North Caucasus	33,452	17,677	15,775
European Russia	49,329	29,211	20,118
Middle Asia	4,864	4,316	548
Siberia	629	239	390
Baltic states	182	166	16

As of 1897, Transcaucasus included the provinces of Tiflis, Kutaisi, Elizavetpol, Yerevan, Baku and Kars region, where 4,934,614 people lived, of which 1,079,059 were Armenians. Armenians were present in all provinces and districts of the region. Thus, 441,000 Armenians lived in the Yerevan province, 292,188 in Elizavetpol, 196,189 in Tiflis, 52,233 in Baku, 24,043 in Kutaisi, and 73,406 in Kars region. Thus, less than 100,000 Armenians lived outside the Transcaucasus.

Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, a civil war erupted between the Bolsheviks and the White movement in various regions of the former empire, affecting particularly the Armenian population of the North Caucasus and the Don.

After the formation of the USSR, the increase in the number, dislocation and dynamics of Armenians living within the borders of the Union can be divided into two main stages:

1. Before the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War, in the 1920-1930s, the census demonstrated the dynamics of the growth of the number of Armenians.
2. The post-war period until the collapse of the USSR, when the all-Union censuses held in 1959-1989s came to show the exceptional indicators of the demographic progress of the Armenians.

After the formation of the USSR, in 1926 the first all-Union census was held, which recorded the number of Armenian population in the USSR as 1,567,568 people, of which 1,332,593 were in the TSFSR.

In 1939, according to the all-Union census, 2,152,860 Armenians lived in the USSR, of which 1,061,997 lived in the Armenian SSR, 388,025 in the Azerbaijan SSR, 415,013 in the Georgian SSR, and 218,156 in the RSFSR. Thus, before the Great Patriotic War, about half of the Armenians of the USSR already lived in the Armenian SSR.

In the post-war years, the number of the Armenian population of the USSR continued to grow steadily, and the Armenians made a great contribution to the state, economic and educational life of the Soviet republics.

Of course, mass repressions against various population layers in the Armenian SSR, the Georgian SSR, the Azerbaijan SSR, and the RSFSR (especially in the North Caucasus) as well as starvation, epidemics, and human casualties—which reached approximately 200,000 on the front lines of the war—were negative factors contributing to the decline in the Armenian population in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

At the same time, in terms of the demographic growth of the Armenians of the USSR, the repatriation process, which took place at various stages during the Soviet years, was of great importance, as a result of which around 200 thousand compatriots from the diaspora moved to live in Soviet Armenia. The post-war years were years of creative and hard work, which made it possible to restore the material and human losses of the war and record new exceptional successes.

Thus, according to the latest all-Union population census of 1989, a steady increase in the number of the Armenian population was recorded in 13 republics, and a

decrease in two union republics: The Georgian SSR and the Azerbaijan SSR. In the case of the latter, the national liberation movement for the reunification of Armenia with Nagorno-Karabakh, which began in 1988, resulted in the mass deportation of Armenians from this republic. As a result, over 360,000 Armenians left the territory of this republic in 2-3 years, mostly moving to Armenia, Russia, Turkmenistan, and partially to other union republics.

**The number, distribution and percentage of Armenians in the USSR
according to the All-Union Population Census of 1989¹**

Column N1

-	The number	In the USSR by %	Population in %	Dynamics in % in 1979 compared to
USSR	4,623,232	100	1,6	111,4 (+)
1. Armenian SSR	3,083,616	66,7	93,30	113,2 (+)
2. Azerbaijani SSR	390,505	8,4	5,56	82,1 (-)
3. Georgian SSR	437,211	9,5	8,09	97,6 (-)
4. RSFSR	532,390	11,5	0,36	146,0 (+)
5. Ukrainian SSR	54,200	1,2	0,10	140,2(+)
6. Uzbek SSR	50,537	1,1	0,25	119,3 (+)
7. Turkmen SSR	31,829	0,7	0,90	119,6(+)
8. Kazakh SSR	19,119	0,4	0,11	136,4 (+)
9. Tajik SSR	5,651	0,1	0,11	116,3 (+)
10. Byelorussian SSR	4,933	0,1	0,04	179,3(+)
11. Kirghiz SSR	3,975	0,1	0,09	121,0 (+)
12. Latvian SSR	3,069	0,07	0,11	160,4(+)
13. Moldavian SSR	2,873	0,06	0,06	147,1 (+)
14. Estonian SSR	1,669	0,04	0,10	197,5 (+)
15. Lithuanian SSR	1,655	0,04	0,04	173,3 (+)

After the restoration of Armenia's independence in 1991, due to the disruption of socio-economic relations, economic transformations, new military-political realities, mass and still unceasing migration from Armenia commenced, mainly to the Russian Federation, European countries and the United States.

Thus, over the 70 years of the USSR, the Armenian population recorded a stable, dynamic and significant growth both in the Armenian SSR and throughout the Union, which is a great achievement. In the years of 1926-1989, the Armenian population in the

¹Aleksanyan 2016: 174-175.

Armenian SSR increased 4.1 times, the entire population—3.7 times.²

More than 2/3 of the Armenians of the USSR, or 3.083 million people, were living in the Armenian SSR, which was the largest concentration of Armenians in a small piece of our Motherland in recent centuries.

Due to low birth rate and continuous emigration, the number of the population of the RA in the thirty years of post-independence is around 3 million. At the same time, a significant change in gender and age composition has been manifested, causing serious demographic problems.

Taking into account the consistent growth rates of the Armenian population in the last three Soviet censuses, in 1970, 1979, and 1989, that is, natural growth of 400-500 thousand each decade, the Armenian population should have reached 4.5-5 million people by now, in case of normal development.

Thus, along with the successes recorded in the economy, science, education, culture, healthcare and other areas of life, one cannot underestimate the enormous achievement reached by Armenia and the Armenian people in the form of demographic progress during the Soviet years.

Considering the growth and continuity of labor migration from Armenia since the 1990s, it is important to study the issue separately from the standpoint of the quantitative growth of displacements, the qualitative changes associated with them, the identification of general patterns and features of migration processes and their impact. Since the 1990s, the increasing rate of chaotic population emigration from the Republic of Armenia and illegal labor migration have caused numerous challenges, including loss of qualified labor resources, deterioration of the demographic situation, disruption of national security, disproportionate territorial development and population migration from border settlements.

The impact of emigration on the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the population and labor resources of the Republic of Armenia cannot be definitely assessed. If we consider emigration as a factor that relieves the tension in the domestic labor market, then in the current conditions of socio-economic development, the loss of highly qualified specialists and labor potential can lead to a serious problem of unsatisfied demand for human capital. The “equivalent” of human capital loss in countries experiencing mass emigration becomes remittances from migrants to their home countries.³

Remittances of the population as a factor of socio-economic development are the second most important source of external financing after direct investments. They have a huge impact on the domestic labor market, consumption and imports, the state budget and other areas of socio-economic relations.

It is noteworthy that in 1992-1994, among emigrants, 75% - 80% of the outflow went to CIS countries - mainly Russia - and the rest were evenly distributed between

² Sakhvadze 2017: <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2017/0723/tema04.php>

³ Tadevosyan *et al.* 2014

Europe and the USA.⁴ According to official statistics, at present, the population of the Republic of Armenia decreased by 21.3% or 777.1 thousand people in 1991-2011. This was only conditioned by the negative balance of external migration–1.120.3 thousand people, since over the indicated period, the population increased by 343.2 thousand people due to natural increase. Thus, it can be noted that since the 1990s, tens of thousand people, sometimes more than 100 thousand, have emigrated from Armenia every year.⁵

The relative accessibility of the “Russian” direction of emigration is predetermined, first of all, by the economic factor (the absence of a visa and fees for obtaining it, geographical location, the availability of road transport), the fundamental similarity of the socio-psychological environment, and, finally, the absence of a language barrier.

Distribution of emigrants by country of departure

Country of departure	in 2008	In 2009	In 2013
Russia	79,7	73,1	68,6
Other CIS countries	3,6	6,8	3,1
European countries	10,2	8,2	13,4
USA and Canada	5,0	7,9	12,9
Other countries	1,5	4,0	2,0
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

The specific weight of labor migration to Russia can be explained by the wide opportunities for legal and illegal employment in this country, the ease of doing business and obtaining the right to work, and employment opportunities in the service field.

It is interesting that Armenians who emigrated to the Russian Federation have the highest percentage of the intention of re-emigration–return to their homeland / 24.6%/. The intention to re-emigrate from Europe is more than twice lower–11.5%, and the intention to return from the USA and Canada is incredibly small–only 3%.

Since the total number of emigrants who left for Russia is 68.6%, and among labor migrants that number is higher - 79%, the return potential of the emigrants under study is on average 19.6%.

Among the purposes for emigrants’ departure, job search emphatically stands out.

One of the immediate reasons for emigration is, as a rule, the contradiction among the individual’s level of development, demands and possibilities on the one hand, and the conditions for satisfying them on the other. Potential emigrants have gradually come to believe that this contradiction may be resolved outside of the RA.

The main causes for emigration from Armenia are related to employment issues, including a shortage of jobs, both in general and by occupation, and, most crucially, the lack of jobs ensuring decent living.

⁴ Migration and skills in Armenia 2012: 10.

⁵ Atayan 2015: 67-69.

An important reason is also the lack of public trust in Armenia's development prospects and future. This is the only way to explain the continuous growth in the number of emigrants from Armenia.

Overcoming the causes of emigration, large-scale involvement of the economic capabilities and human resources of the Armenian Diaspora (repatriation) can change the situation.

Meanwhile, since 2022, positive dynamics of immigration have been recorded in Armenia, and the number of applications for citizenship is growing.

Only in 2022, about 20 thousand people received Armenian citizenship, and most of them are citizens of Russia and ethnic Armenians. However, even in 2021, their number was a little more than 8 thousand people.

The positive migration balance of border crossings in 2022 was 38 thousand. This means that more people arrived in Armenia that year than left.⁶

Also, in 2022, a large flow of labor migrants was recorded in Armenia, most of them were Russians. Moreover, the difference in border crossings (entries and exits) according to the passports of citizens of the Russian Federation amounted to 65 thousand people. This is almost 2.5 times more than the 2021 figure. Almost 10 thousand citizens of the EAEU were granted a residence permit with the right to work in Armenia. This proves that they settled and live in Armenia. In addition, about 2.5 thousand foreigners (not from EAEU countries) also received a residence permit.

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⁶ Sputnik-Armenia, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3Ruql90>

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The article was accepted for publication on 01.12.2023