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Introduction

What is the state’s logic in engineering the settlement of certain groups of repatriated co-ethnics but not others? In particular, why did the Greek state become involved with the settlement of the Greeks from the former Soviet Union in Thrace in the 1990s but not those from Albania? Moreover, why did the Greek state shift its policy toward the Greeks from the former Soviet Union in 2000 to one of graduated help for settlement across Greece? These are important questions both from a human rights perspective but also for comparative politics. I consider various answers to these questions ranging from ethnic affinity and decentralization policies to foreign policy concerns.

This chapter is part of a broader book project on managing diasporas in which I focus on the policies that states develop to cultivate links with, attract back, or integrate diaspora members in their country of origin, allegiance, or citizenship.  

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2 In my state-centric framework, the term diaspora refers to citizens of a state who have emigrated with an intention to live abroad, their descendants, as well as people that are scattered abroad but fit the definition of nationhood of that state and have not fully assimilated into another society, and their descendants. In this definition, members of a diaspora do not have to act as co-ethnics while they are residing abroad. In fact, national states often consider communities that have never lived in the purported homeland or do not keep ties with that homeland as their diaspora. At times a state’s official definition of its...
A subset of these policies includes ‘repatriation’ or ‘ethnic return migration’ policies (see figure 1). Here, I study the Greek state policies toward different repatriate groups in the 1990s and challenge the very definition of the right to ‘freedom of movement’. When scholars discuss violations of ‘freedom of movement’ they usually refer to cases of legal restrictions on the enjoyment of this human right or to criminal activities, such as trafficking. Beyond legal restrictions and criminal activities, however, an argument can be made that ‘freedom of movement’ may also be violated through selective incentives and special privileges that attempt to engineer the settlement of certain groups within a country. I argue that the Greek state’s goal was to influence the settlement pattern of these people in order to serve national interests. Labour market opportunities, however, seem to have a greater impact on settlement patterns than selective incentives put in place by the Greek administration. Contrary to the conventional wisdom from labour economics, the Greek government did not consider the skills of these people and as a result, the goals of decentralization and national homogenization of certain peripheral areas did not materialize.

Figure 1. The Field of Study

*Migration Policy*

Understanding the politics of ethnic return migration is consequential for the social sciences but also from a policy perspective. From a theoretical point of view, it is diaspora is less inclusive than the definition above. In my book project I try to discern when this is part of a conscious policy or just neglect. For a genealogy of the term diaspora, see R. Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28 (2005): 1-19.