

## Dissertation Abstract

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### **Displaced Populations: Re-shaping International Planning**

My dissertation questions the management of international aid for refugees and repatriation policy, normally considered the optimal solution for refugees. Repatriation for refugees remains problematic, due to issues of economic, social and political integration. Yet the rhetoric and policy of the international refugee regime remains focused on return. This disjuncture has implications for planning within the international aid regime, which is responsible for assisted repatriation and organizing humanitarian assistance. Often refugee crises produce emergency situations and international planning has still to develop an adequate systematic framework, theoretically and practically, to cope with refugee needs.

I work through the relevant theoretical concerns using fieldwork I conducted among Meskhetian Turk refugees, a twice displaced people living in Azerbaijan. Specifically I look at issues of spatial and economic exclusion, the importance of home and homeland within the context of repatriation logic, and participation in the internationally organized movement for return of this group. The theoretical literature on forced migration (Zolberg, Malkki), the anthropology of displacement (Appadurai), minority discourse, (Verdery, Brubaker, Chatterjee) and the changing authority of the state (Sassen, Jacobson) all productively contribute to understanding the plight of Meskhetian Turk refugees of not only the post-Soviet Union, but as responses to globalization.

I see the international regime which manages refugees as attempting, but not succeeding, to impose a conventional temporal and spatial configuration of the nation-state on refugees through the enactment of international aid. (I use the case of internally displaced in Baku, but I think many of the so-called voluntary repatriation movements also fall into this category.) The international refugee regime insists that displaced people have a single allegiance (spatio-temporal) and that these displaced must stick to it. (The evidence for this is various and I discuss this at length in the dissertation.) The relationship between the refugee regime and displaced has become a more nervous interaction than in the past -- less hierarchical and more contested. This is partly because refugees can express and engage in multiple identities and allegiances more easily than in the past. The refugee regime has to respond to certain consequences of globalization and therefore become part of that "partial condition." I posit that the enactment of international aid has a different temporal character since 1980's that is more uncertain. The refugee regime itself is more unstable due to its engagements with globalization. Moreover, this instability is transferred to refugees because their living conditions are more precarious than in the past, options for resettlement unlikely, and international aid interventions deliberately designed with these boundaries in mind. This parallels what Sassen (2000) refers to as "spatio-temporal (dis) order in the making" of globalization.

