

Greek Diaspora and Economic Recovery

S. Vemuri¹, D. Karayanni², G. Kyprianou³ and V. Ieronymakis⁴

karayani@upatras.gr

Abstract

There is a division of opinion amongst contributors in the literature about the role that the diasporans play in the economy of the home countries (Lowell and Gerova 2004; Kuznetsov 2006; Leblang 2010). Some regard the movement of people as a drain, in the form of ‘brain drain’ and ‘talent drain’, as the brightest and the most productive of the people migrate out of economies because prevalent economic conditions are unable to absorb their talents effectively. Others focus on the funds transfers of the migrants due to familial connections. The re-pull factors (Vemuri 2014) for diasporans is so strong that their heightened affinity to their family members in the ‘mother countries’ creates conditions to contribute to the welfare of both the individuals and the economy. Connecting to and building economic, as well as, social bases in the homelands, also enables the diasporas the widening of the choice sets in both home and host countries. Despite the differences of opinion on whether the diasporans are a drain on the home economies or a gain, there is consensus emerging in the literature, and played out in the real world, of an overwhelming recognition of diasporans contribution to the home economies. Countries that are interested in harnessing diaspora for development purposes in homeland normally deploy certain diaspora strategies. The later comprise a series of formal policies aimed at fortifying and developing relationships with expatriate communities and diasporic populations who share a special affinity (Boyle and Kitchin, 2011). Recent events in the recovery of the Greek economy have once again raised the topic of the role diasporic communities can potentially play in economic development. The objective of this paper is to examine the role of Greek diasporans in the economic development of Greece. The paper is organised as follows. The first part of the paper examines the current role, if any, the diasporans play in the Greek economy. The paper then highlights that the Greek State currently does not seem to have an organized strategy in order to harness support from the Hellenic diaspora. There is an underlying assumption that there is a prevailing level of eagerness on the part of many Hellenic diasporans to contribute to the economic growth efforts of their

¹ CDU Business School Darwin Waterfront

² Assoc. Prof. of Marketing, Dept of Bus. Administration, Univ. of Patras

³ Dept of Bus. Administration, Univ. of Patras

⁴ Dept of Bus. Administration, Univ. of Patras

home country. The paper examines the extent of support of the Hellenic diaspora to help their origin country in some way, or other. The paper attempts to bridge the gap of research by attempting to measure: a) the potential Hellenic diaspora population that would have the affinity to contribute to the Greek state economy, b) the existing relationships among Hellenic diasporans c) the attitudes of Hellenic diasporans towards the development of economic relationships with other Hellenic origin professionals, or businessmen located in Greece, or worldwide. The paper provides preliminary results of a pilot qualitative research, which is still in progress. The paper concludes with calls for further research based on these preliminary findings.