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# Diaspora and Multiculturalism

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**ABSTRACT**

Diaspora commonly refers to different kinds of migrant groups who have left their homeland but who continue to share a religious, ethno-national, or national identity. Since the mid-1980s, and through the 1990s, diaspora has expanded in meaning, to include more groups of people and placing more importance to the non-center and hybridity as central to diasporic identities. Asylum-seekers, refugees, exiles, forced migrants, immigrants, expatriates, guest workers, trading communities, and ethnic communities of various kinds, have come to be described as in diaspora or as tokens of a single diaspora. Some scholars have tried to retain a sense of consistency to a word, described as stretched to the point of potential irrelevance. The inequities of a liberal multiculturalism arise not from its weak commitment to difference but from its even stronger vision of national cohesion. Multicultural ideologies thus serve to reinforce liberal regimes through which nostalgia for an authentic past becomes an important driving force behind the construction of citizenship and political subjectivity.

*Keywords:* Diaspora, Multiculturalism, Transnationalism, Hybridity, Globalization

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The present discussion deals with a broad and descriptive analysis on 'Diaspora and Multiculturalism'. 'DIASPORA' is the term often used today to describe practically any population which is considered 'deterritorialised' or 'transnational' – that is, which has originated in a land other than which it currently resides, and whose social, economic and

political networks cross the borders of nation-states or, indeed, span the globe. To be sure, such populations are growing in prevalence, number, and self-awareness. Several are emerging as (or have historically long been) significant players in the construction of national narratives, regional alliances or global political economies. Over the past twenty years, the term diaspora has proliferated as a way of making sense of how groups of people, defined through ethnicity, culture, religion, and homeland, have circulated and settled in a postcolonial and increasingly globalized world. The term 'MULTICULTURALISM' describes heterogenous societies in which many cultures and ethnicities are represented. Multiculturalism has redefined the nation as comprising a culturally pluralist population. However, the increased linkages between countries, produced by accelerated globalization, have also engendered intricate transnational networks between diasporas residing in several states. The telephone, internet, satellite television and other media help construct a web of connections among these transnations enabling them to maintain and enhance their cultural identities. Diasporas have creatively engaged with transnational media and are participating in a globalization-from-below. An increasingly cosmopolitan outlook has been fostered by the inter-continental links. But multiculturalism policies tend erroneously to continue viewing members of immigrant communities as having engaged in a one way trajectory that breaks ties with their past. The current conceptualization of multiculturalism as fixed within the context of the nation-state does not allow for a well-considered response to the transnational contexts in which immigrants live out their lives. Some migrant-producing states have begun to address these circumstances, but those of immigrant-receiving governments have generally been reluctant to acknowledge them.

We know that anthropology remains a changing discipline and as such, it continues to remain endlessly fascinating. Anthropology has had fragmenting tendencies since its development as a formal discipline and has been always indignantly and confusingly divided. Roots and collective sense of belongingness, encompassed with the larger world politico-economic transformations, constitute a fertile field for anthropological investigation. Much of human activities and cultural creativities are connected to or resolved around the land and territory they live in and extract resources from. Anthropology today is much concerned about the ideological representations of rootedness as these are on the move following diverged routes. Understanding the transmutation of roots has led to the development of the current discourse of globalization in anthropology. The premises of classical anthropology have developed transnationalist and post-colonial perspectives to look at globalization within an evolutionary frame of reference that we were local but now we are global, discrete were geographically bounded and localize before, but now in the global age, it started flowing around the world. Our reliance on ethnography as a means of understanding cultural production and creativity has engaged us in understanding the empirically grounded linkages between global processes and the production of cultural form among the local groups not by deconstructing but reconstructing the ways they experience the local, regional and global cultural processes. Such experiences are formed by dynamic processes that link global process with the local structuring of social lives.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s anthropologists began to study not only the broader socio cultural context in which members of ethnic groups interacted, but also the ties that many of these groups maintained with their home communities. During this period a focus on diasporas and transnationalism developed within the anthropological study of ethnicity and migration that was largely based on the processes of globalization. In the anthropological

literature, diasporas and transnationalism are intimately related. The term 'multiculturalism' emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in countries like Canada and Australia, and to a lesser extent Britain and the USA (all Anglo-phone countries with histories of immigration) (Goldberg 1994). Multiculturalism becomes a vantage point for unique critical insights into the nature of contemporary national cultures, as well as current developments and transformations of culture associated with transnational developments in media technology, commodity consumption, and other political and economic changes. Multiculturalist thinking of all kinds has been importantly associated with both intra- and extra-academic social activism aimed at reversing the prevailing cultural devaluation of ethnic and other minorities. This activism has in turn taken its place as an important mode of contemporary struggle against the continuing social and political oppression of such groups. There are a number of ways that anthropologists could contribute, both constructively and critically, to multiculturalist thinking and practice, and a number of ways also that they might expand their own theoretical and practical horizons by doing so.

Here, we will broadly discuss the issue 'Diaspora and Multiculturalism. For a detailed analysis first of all we will present a conceptual background about diaspora and multiculturalism. Then there will be a detailed presentation about 'Diaspora and Multiculturalism', and then we will discuss some concepts related to the present topic, such as: identity, hybridity, transnationalism, globalization, transmigration, cosmopolitanism and others, which are much closed to the concept of multiculturalism. After this, we will discuss about 'diaspora and multiculturalism' situation in South Asia and some other parts of the world and so on

## 2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

### 2. 1. Diaspora

Diaspora is a term used to describe the mass, often involuntary, dispersal of a population from a center (or homeland) to multiple areas, and the creation of communities and identities based on the histories and consequences of dispersal. The term is not new; it is a Greek word once solely used to describe Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersions – what some scholars often describe as the "classic" diasporas. However, diaspora has gained currency recently as both a conceptual and analytical tool to explain various practices of global movement and community formation. The use of diaspora emerged in various academic disciplines in the second half of the 20th century both in conjunction with and as an alternative to other terms expressing global shifts in movement and identity formation, sharing meaning with a broader semantic field that includes such terms as transnationalism and globalization.

The emergence of the study of diaspora is fairly recent. In most scholarly discussions of ethnicity, nationalism and immigration very little attention has been devoted to diaspora. Research on diaspora is currently conducted from numerous perspectives including anthropology, sociology, human geography, international migration, post colonialism, political economy and communications. The term diaspora is derived from the Greek diaspeirein, meaning "dispersal or scattering of seeds". A typical example of diaspora is given by the New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus of English language: "the dispersed Jews after the Babylonian Captivity; their dispersion" (New Webster's Dictionary, 1993:264).

However, the terms diaspora and diasporic communities, today, are increasingly being used as a metaphoric definition for expatriates, expellees, refugees, alien residents, immigrants, displaced communities and ethnic minorities. The term diaspora has also been used to describe the experience of movement / displacement and to analyze the social, cultural and political formations that result from this movement / displacement.
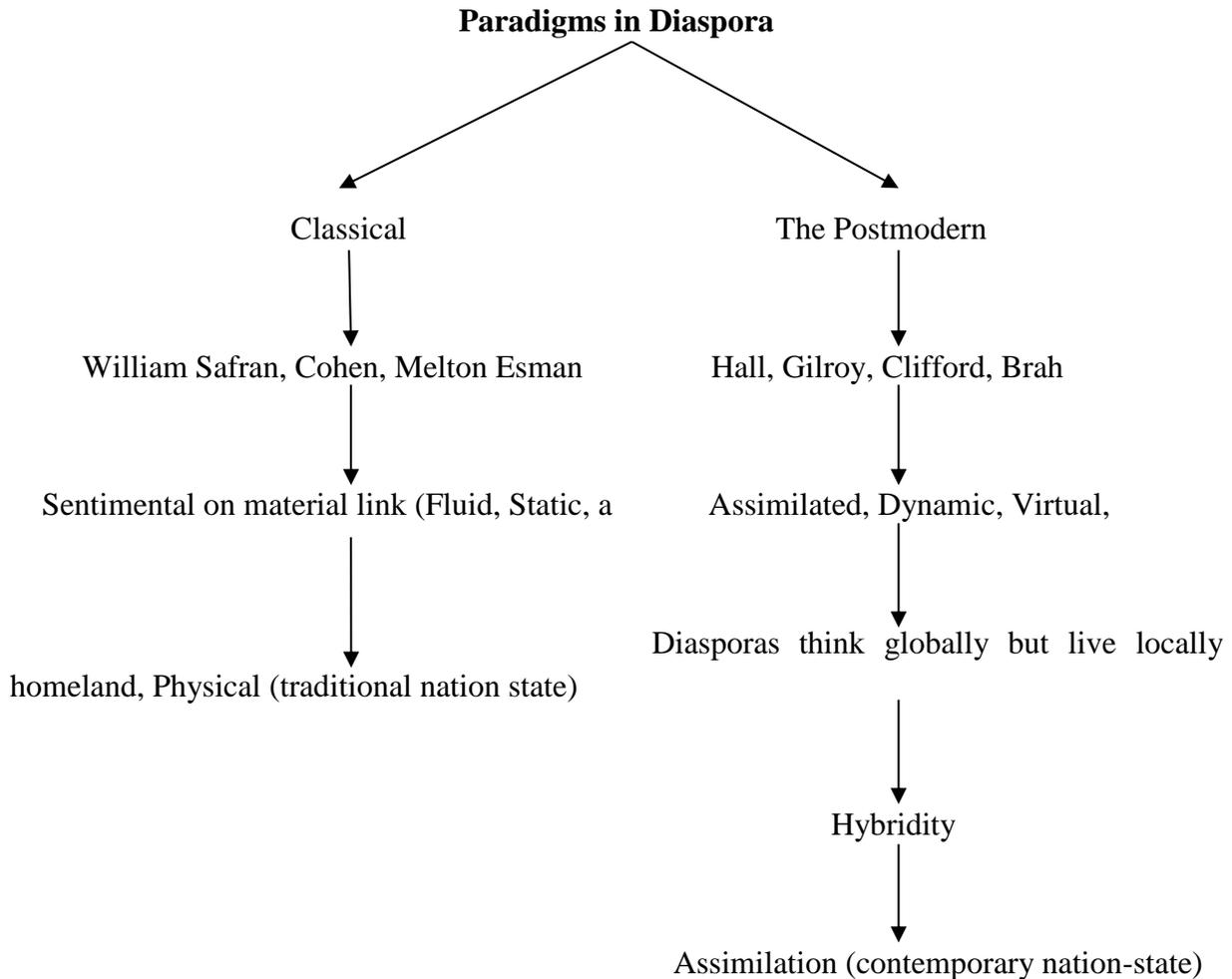
**Paradigms in Diaspora**

Classical                                    The Postmodern

William Safran, Cohen, Melton Esman          Hall, Gilroy, Clifford, Brah

Sentimental on material link (Fluid, Static, a          Assimilated, Dynamic, Virtual,

Diasporas think globally but live locally

homeland, Physical (traditional nation state)

Hybridity

Assimilation (contemporary nation-state)

**Figure 1.** Paradigms in Diaspora.

How to define diaspora has been the subject of ongoing debate. While some scholars have argued in favor of identifying a closed set of attributes and have been only minimally concerned with the actual conditions of diasporic existence (Cohen 1997), others have preferred to use the term in the broader sense of human dispersal. For example, Safran (1991) maintains that diaspora is "that segment of people living outside the home land." Docker (2001: vii), defines diaspora as " a sense of belonging to more than one history, to more than one time and place, to more than one past and future". Brah's work on diaspora locates "diaspora space" in the "intersectionality of diaspora, border and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychological process" (1996). The term

diaspora is often conceptualized as being limited to powerless dispersed ethnic communities. However, the contemporary experience of several diasporas suggest otherwise. The rapid expansion of telecommunication technologies on a mass scale and the arrival of the internet and the World Wide Web in the 1990s have created powerful opportunities for developing new forms of transnational relationships and communications. Increasingly, the term transnational community is also used as a synonym of diaspora and the two terms / concepts frequently collapse into one. Hence, the term diaspora became the catchword for the condition, experiences and the communities that were caught up in this web of transnational relations.

**Four Phases of Diaspora Studies:**

- First, the classical use of the term, usually capitalized as Diaspora and used only in the singular, was mainly confined to the study of the Jewish experience. The Greek diaspora made an off-stage appearance. Excluding some earlier casual references, from the 1960s and 1970s the classical meaning was systematically extended, becoming more common as a description of the dispersion of Africans, Armenians and the Irish. With the Jews, these peoples conceived their scattering as arising from a cataclysmic event that had traumatized the group as a whole, thereby creating the central historical experience of victimhood at the hands of a cruel oppressor. Retrospectively and without complete consensus, the Palestinians were later added to this group.

- In the second phase, in the 1980s and onwards, as Safran notably argued, diaspora was deployed as 'a metaphoric designation' to describe different categories of people – 'expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities tout court'. Moreover, a point again made by Safran, the term now designated a vast array of different peoples who either applied the term to themselves or had the label conferred upon them. Given their number (certainly now over one hundred), their historical experiences, collective narratives and differing relationships to homelands and hostlands, they were bound to be a more varied cluster of diasporas than the groups designated in phase one.

- The third phase, from the mid-1990s, was marked by social constructionist critiques of 'second phase' theorists who, despite their recognition of the proliferation of groups newly designated as diasporas and the evolution of new ways of studying them, were still seen as holding back the full force of the concept. Influenced by postmodernist readings, social constructionists sought to decompose two of the major building blocks previously delimiting and demarcating the diasporic idea, namely 'homeland' and 'ethnic/religious community'. In the postmodern world, it was further argued, identities have become deterritorialized and constructed and deconstructed in a flexible and situational way; accordingly, concepts of diaspora had to be radically reordered in response to this complexity.

- By the turn of the century, the current phase of consolidation set in. The social constructionist critiques were partially accommodated, but were seen as in danger of emptying the notion of diaspora of much of its analytical and descriptive power. While the increased complexity and deterritorialization of identities are valid phenomena and

constitutive of a small minority of diasporas (generally those that had been doubly or multiply displaced over time), ideas of home and often the stronger inflection of homeland remain powerful discourses and ones which, if anything, have been more strongly asserted in key examples. The phase of consolidation is marked by a modified reaffirmation of the diasporic idea, including its core elements, common features and ideal types.

## 2. 2. Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism relates to communities containing multiple cultures. The term is used in two broad ways, either descriptively or normatively. As a descriptive term, it usually refers to the simple fact of cultural diversity: it is generally applied to the demographic make-up of a specific place, sometime at the organizational level, e.g. schools, businesses, neighborhoods, cities, or nations.

As a normative term, it refers to ideologies or policies that promote this diversity or its institutionalization; in this sense, multiculturalism is a society "at ease with the rich tapestry of human life and the desire amongst people to express their own identity in the manner they see fit." Such ideologies or policies vary widely, including country to country, ranging from the advocacy of equal respect to the various cultures in a society, to a policy of promoting the maintenance of cultural diversity, to policies in which people of various ethnic and religious groups are addressed by the authorities as defined by the group they belong to.

However, two main different and seemingly inconsistent strategies have developed through different Government policies and strategies:

**The first,** focuses on interaction and communication between different cultures. Interactions of cultures provide opportunities for the cultural differences to communicate and interact to create multiculturalism. This approach is also often known as interculturalism.

**The second,** centers on diversity and cultural uniqueness. Cultural isolation can protect the uniqueness of the local culture of a nation or area and also contribute to global cultural diversity. A common aspect of many policies following the second approach is that they avoid presenting any specific ethnic, religious, or cultural community values as central.

Multiculturalism is often contrasted with the concepts of assimilationism and has been described as a "salad bowl" or "cultural mosaic" rather than a "melting pot".

## 3. RELATED CONCEPTS REGARDING THE TOPIC 'DIASPORA AND MULTICULTURALISM'

### 3. 1. Diaspora in an Age of Globalization

Because of diasporas, whether narrowly or broadly defined, probably date back well into prehistory, there is no obvious link to the current phase of globalization. However, many aspects of globalization certainly encourage diasporic emigration and help maintain the unity of widespread diaspora communities. The rapid developments in global communications and travel also contribute to the emergence and reproduction of diaspora communities. Not all diaspora communities are transnational, but many are, and the easy ability to maintain personal, cultural and economic connections over long distances may be important to the maintenance of diasporic identity.

Globalization encourages reactionary or adaptive ethnic, religious, and nationalist cohesion; it also encourages the reactionary racism and bias against migrants that negatively maintains the boundaries of immigrant communities from without. Finally, the increasing awareness and intergovernmental recognition of human rights has provided a moral platform for diasporic peoples to claim recognition, compassion, and political validation.

**Anthropological Periods**

|  | **Time** | **Focus of Interest** | **Dominant Paradigms** | **Major Theorists** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Formative | Late 19th century | Savage, barbarian, civilization | Cultural evolution | Tylor, Frazar, Morgan |
| Classic | 1900-1945 | Primitives: bands, tribes, chiefdoms | Historical particularism, structural functionalism | Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown |
| Modern | 1945-1980 | Peasants, urban shantytowns, underdeveloped societies | Modernization theory,; later, dependency and world systems throries | Wolf, Worsley, Harris |
| **Transitional** | **1980-1990** | **Anthropology itself** | **Interpretive anthropology, critical anthropology, postmodernism, poststructuralism** | **Geertz, Clifford and Marcus, Jameson, Foucault** |

[Source: Roughly based on Kearney 1996: 23-41, coated in 'The Anthropology of Globalization' by Ted C. Lewellen]

## 3. 2. Global Cultural Flows

Arjun Appadurai in his article 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy' discussed the relationship among five dimensions of global cultural flows. Here he used the suffix – scape that allows us to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of landscapes that characterize international capital as deeply as they do international clothing styles. The terms with common suffix-scape also indicate that these are not objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision but, rather that they are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors:

nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as substantial groupings and movements, and even face to face groups, such as villagers, neighborhoods, and families.

**Five dimensions of global cultural flows according to Arjun Appadurai**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ethnoscapes** | The landscape of persons who who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree. |
| **Technoescapes** | The global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology and the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries. |
| **Financescapes** | As the disposition global capital is now a more mysterious, rapid, and difficult landscape to follow than ever before, as currency markets, national stock exchanges, and commodity speculations move megamonies through national turnstiles at blinding speed, with vast, absolute implications for small differences in percentage points and time units |
| **Mediascapes** | Refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world, and to the images of the world created by these media |
| **Ideoscapes** | Also concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counter ideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it. |

### 3. 3. Mobilizing Diasporas in a Global Age

Here we will discuss four aspects that have particular bearing on the mobilization of diasporas:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. A Globalized Economy | that permits greater connectivity, the expansion of enterprises and the growth of new professional managerial cadres, thereby changing but creating new opportunities for diasporas |
| 2. New Forms of International Migration | that encourage limited contractual relationships, family visits, intermittent stays abroad and sojourning, as opposed to permanent settlement and exclusive adoption of the citizenship of a destination country. |
| 3. The Development of Cosmopolitan Sensibilities | in many 'global cities' in response to the multiplication and intensification of transactions and interactions between the different peoples of the world. |
| 4. The Revival of Religion as a Focus for Social Cohesion | through dispersal, renewed pilgrimage and translocation resulting in the development of multi-faced world religions connected in various and con complex ways to diasporic phenomenon. |

### 3. 4. Identity

Identity is important for everyone. Most of us question at some point who we are and why we are here. For diaspora communities identity is often bound up with ethnicity, culture and religion.

These are important factors for many people, but tend to take on more significance for those who are away from their country of origin or who belong to a minority ethnic group. Social scientists agree that the movement of people from one locale to another in the form of internal or international migration accentuates the importance of identity formation and construction in migratory spaces.

The cultural production and manifestation of migrant identities as an integral part of transnational migratory domains is of scholastic value to the understanding of the layered and intricate social behavioral patterns that migrants continue to forge throughout the world. Social identity is socially constructed and given resonance or meaning within specific cultural genres and domains.

### 3. 5. Hybridity

It is by now established that authors writing on diaspora very often engage with the mixed notion of hybridity. In its most recent descriptive and realist usage, hybridity appears as a convenient category at 'the edge' or contact point of diaspora, describing cultural mixture where the diasporized meets the host in the scene of migration. Nikos Papastergiadis makes this link when he mentions the 'twin processes of globalization and migration'. He outlines a development that moves from the assimilation and integration of migrants into the host society of the nation-state towards something more complex in the metropolitan societies of today. Hybridity has been a key part of new modelling, and so it is logically entwined within the coordinates of migrant identity and difference, same or not same, host and guest. The career of the term hybridity as a new cultural politics in the context of diaspora should be examined carefully.

The hybrid is a usefully slippery category, purposefully contested and deployed to claim change. With such loose boundaries, it is curious that the term can be so productive: from its origins in biology, its interlude as syncretism to its reclamation in work on diaspora by authors as different as Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, Iain Chambers, Homi Bhabha and James Clifford. With relation to diaspora, the most conventional accounts assert hybridity as the process of cultural mixing where the diasporic arrivals adopt aspects of the host culture and rework, reform and reconfigure this in production of a new hybrid culture or 'hybrid identities'.

### 3. 6. Transnationalism

As a paired term to diaspora, transnationalism focuses on various flows and counter flows and the multi-striated connections they give rise to. Transnationalism encompasses not only the movement of people, but also of notions of citizenship, technology, forms of multinational governance, and the mechanisms of global markets. While diasporas are often understood to be a subset of transnational communities, the latter are taken to be an expansion of the overall conceptual scale of the former. As an analytical category transnational communities are understood to transcend diasporas because such communities may not be derived primarily or indeed exclusively from the forms of co-ethnic and cultural identification that are constitutive of diasporas, but rather from elective modes of identification involving class, sexuality, and even professional interest.

The term transnationalism is a loaded term and migration scholars have yet to embrace definitive measurement of this concept (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998; Mahler, 2002). The transnational perspective in migration was articulated by Basch et al. (1994), and Glick Schiller et al. (1992).

Their concept of immigrant transnationalism focused on the idea that migrants transcend the nation-states by manifesting and creating social fields incorporating social, cultural, economic ties not only with the host societies, but also with the migrant-sending communities. For example, migrants, now and before, straddle between the cultures of their host society as well as the cultures of their home societies. Migrants are not bounded by specific cultural and social genres that are constrained by space and locality. Instead, migrants may form broad and encompassing social systems that seek to maintain them in two or multiple sites for social action.

These cross-border ties and relationships are fostered by economic and cultural diffusion, globalization, dispersion of economic and cultural systems of production, and efficient modes of transportation and communication. According to Basch, the term may be used in referring to the multiple processes whereby immigrants are able to create and negotiate transmigrant roles, positions, and statuses that seek to connect them with their home countries as well as to the host societies. These complex networks and supranational institutions are formed expressly to anchor the immigrants to the values, cultures, and beliefs of their home countries even as they map out new trajectories of identities with their migrant host societies.

## 3. 7. Transmigration

Transmigration entails manifold socio-economic, political and cultural linkages across boundaries, raises questions about identity (and identification), and rights and entitlements, and problematises 'bounded conceptualizations of race, class, ethnicity, and nationalism [we should add culture] which pervade both social science and popular thinking'. Over the past decade there has been much debate about whether, and if so how, contemporary transmigration is a new phenomenon, about its causes, its various forms, and long-term trajectories. Anyone with knowledge of international migration over the past century is bound to have a sense of déjà vu when reading about transmigration (Grillo 1998b).

**Transmigrant and Multiculturalism: Alternative Scenarios**

| Scenario | Motif | Social and Cultural Characteristics | Transnational linkages |
|---|---|---|---|
| **STAYING ON** (a) Assimilation | Here and the same | Putting down roots in the society of reception, orienting oneself primarily towards it. Acculturation. British etc "with funny names." | Become more tenuous or symbolic, except where the existence/survival of a homeland is at stake. |
| (b) Integration | Here but different | "Weak" multiculturalism; cultural diversity recognised and accepted in private sphere. High degree of assimilation to local population in employment, housing, education and health/welfare systems (or markets), and acculturation in many areas of life. | Prognostication difficult. Likely to be strong initially, and the demand for multiculturalism may reflect this, but for $2^{nd}$ and $3^{rd}$ generations increasingly symbolic. Dual loyalties may be questioned. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (c) Enclavement | Here but separate | "Strong" multiculturalism. Demands for the institutional recognition and acceptance of cultural difference recognised and institutionally in <u>public</u> sphere; special provision in education, health care and welfare etc. Organisation of representation on ethnic/cultural lines. | Likely to derive from, reflect, and reinforce extensive transnational linkages of a social, political or religious character. May strengthen. |
| **BETWIXT AND BETWEEN** (a) Permanent transmigration | Neither here nor there | Circular migration (in long term by generation): 'a transnational semiproletariat, caught chronically astride borders' (Rouse 1992.) | Oriented ultimately to country of origin, but always on the move, utilising transnational ties and engaging in transnational activities so far as resources allow |
| (b) Stable dual orientation | Here <u>and</u> there | *Either* "denizens" (Hammar 1990) with rights to permanent residence (and other rights) in country of immigration, but legally foreigners; *or* dual citizens. | Transnational ties extremely important and maintained (e.g. for reasons of security.) Multiple identities accepted as normal. |

## 3. 8. Cosmopolitanism

As a growing set of recent literature demonstrates, cosmopolitanism has become a topic of considerable attention, particularly in light of globalization, new modes of transnational interconnectedness and increasing ethnic diversity. Much interest in cosmopolitanism concerns its ethical or philosophical dimensions, especially regarding questions of how to live as a 'citizen of the world'. Other dimensions concern normative political issues that are deemed cosmopolitan, such as global governance structures or forms of international intervention.

With reference to general notions of diaspora (considered here as an imagined community living away from a professed place of origin), how-ever, it is the sociological dimensions of cosmopolitanism which are perhaps of most relevance. Since the 1990s, however, and concomitant with the growth of studies concerning diasporas and transnational communities, social scientists have increasingly drawn attention to characteristics of 'working-class cosmopolitans' such as labour migrants and other non-elites spread throughout global diasporas. This is what some scholars also point to by way of modes of 'actually existing cosmopolitanism', 'everyday cosmopolitanism' and 'tactical cosmopolitanism'. Elite or not, of what does such contemporary cosmopolitanism consist?

Drawing on a range of literature, it is suggested that we might understand cosmopolitanism as comprising a combination of attitudes, practices and abilities gathered from experiences of travel or displacement, transnational contact and diasporic identification.


## 4. DIASPORA AND MULTICULTURALISM

As a general case, the founding narrative of diasporas, which constructs their past experience and is conveyed in many manners (by books, forms of cultsor folktales), accounts for the condition of dispersal, assesses its challenges and justifies aspirations to retain distinctiveness from locals and allegiance to legacies originating 'elsewhere'. 'Elsewhere' means a transnational orientation rather than an international horizon, as it does not imply any buffering by official institutions. It indicates a commitment that cuts across boundaries and concretizes 'here and now' a principle of 'dual homeness'.

Dual homeness implies the anchoring of a collective in its local environment, intensified by an external reference of belongingness. Such a development is particularly relevant to the case of newcomers in the more affluent western societies that are the major pole of attraction for immigrants from the rest of the world, and where welfare rights are generously offered to newcomers. Such rights ease the exigencies for these migrants to conform to the prevailing cultural models by reducing the costs of non-compliance. Diasporans are thus inclined to settle in neighbourhoods inhabited by fellow-diasporans, where the new is mitigated by the familiar. Contemporary ease of transport and communication with the original homeland and with fellow-diasporans settled in other countries permit then to anchor the community in a diasporic allegiance. On the other hand, getting jobs and guaranteeing children's future still pressurize diasporans to acculturate to their environments and invest their best efforts at successful insertion into their new environment. When they effectively become inserted into society, they also learn a new language and grow accustomed to new symbols. Ultimately, they acquire a new national identity that becomes their primary one and diminishes the original one to secondary status.

The scattered structures of diasporas and the disparate influences exerted on their various communities may indeed generate divergent perceptions of the common identity, and blur lines of authority. Diasporans become 'different' from what they were originally, and become factors of the socio cultural heterogenization of their diaspora. Nevertheless, some retentionism in diasporic com-munities is still fuelled by transnational exchanges and makes them a major factor of multiculturalization of their present-day setting – despite the mitigation of the socio cultural gaps. This dual contrast that transnational diasporas illustrate in two different dimensions concretizes the principle of a twofold socio cultural heterogenization of our global socio-cultural reality and shows, in other words, a bidirectional force of multiculturalization.

This reality brings with it hardships as well as consolations. Diasporans often feel so at ease in their new setting that they willingly and openly assert their distinction – in spite of all prejudices that may be directed at them – and present this setting as a genuine – possibly their first – homeland. In this case, they make it quite awkward to denominate this setting as 'hostland' – as do several commentators who reserve the token of 'homeland' for the diasporans' original homeland.

Considering original homelands as 'homelands' may also sometimes be misguiding, since some countries see emigrants more as 'deserters' and refuse to be acknowledged as the migrants' homeland any-more. This is by no means the general rule, though: in most cases, the original homelands show commitment to their expatriate nationals. Some continue to see them as full-fledged citizens, while others grant them special privileges when they decide to return for reinsertion. In several instances, original homelands and diasporic organizations sustain common world frameworks where representatives of all regions discuss common interests.

Governments of original homelands may seek to retain a protective role over their émigrés in their current homelands. In return, diasporic constituencies are also prompted to lobby not only on behalf of their local interests but also of their original home-land vis-a-vis the state, making diasporic transnational interests topics of domestic politics – thereby widening the space and nature of inter-state relations. Such developments further strengthen the recognition of transnational diasporas and thereby the forces that foster society's multicultural character – eventually through the reconfiguration of the social order and overall identity in ways able to encompass, culturally and socially, those diasporic communities. It is a challenge, however, that can be fraught with hardship for both societies and diasporas. Both sides ask – what are the limits of multiculturalism? What should be left to the domain of communities' singularities, and what are the general symbols and values that should be endorsed by all? The issue becomes more arduous nowadays because collective boundaries tend to be more flexible, permeable and relatively open.

These processes have led some scholars to speak of 'hybridization' as a feature of contemporary social dynamics. 'Cultural hybridization' means the borrowing by a given culture of patterns of behavior and values upheld by another. The result consists not only of changes occasioned by intercultural contacts but also in the emergence of new in-between categories. This notion is attacked by analysts who reject 'objectivist' approaches towards collective entities. In the present context, hybridization finds its utility by indicating a major source of new cultural developments. It also sensitizes the analyst to the general impact – in terms of innovations and mixings of sources of symbols – characteristic of societies' development towards multiculturalism. The outcome is a tendency towards fluidity of social boundaries that invites actors to question and redefine their identities in the endless debates that typify contemporary intellectual endeavours.

In turn, this fluidity of boundaries together with the dual-homeness condition of diasporans cannot be without significance for individuals' attitudes towards society and state. Indeed, they signify that social belonging somehow becomes blurred for many people, and that for diasporans, more specifically, commitment to the national society and the state is coupled with transnational allegiances. Hence, none of these lines of loyalty are now one-sided and total.

This aspect cannot exist without leaving a mark on individuals' involvement in their actual homeland. Moreover, the fact that many diasporans encounter this problematic cannot be without influence on both the feelings and behaviors of many non-diasporans. In this respect, one may speak of transnationalism – in terms of attitudes towards society and state that are in alignment with transnational allegiances – as a phenomenon that tends to permeate society as a whole. For non-diasporans, this phenomenon signifies that individual citizens may display a shared attitude vis-a-vis society and the state, challenging the rig our of the

total commitment exigent upon them and long considered as 'normal'. In this light, transnationalism is nothing less than a general societal condition.

The development of transnationalism and multiculturalism is also largely favored by endemic traits of present-day societies, above all by their democratic regimes.

## 5. EMPIRICAL DIVERSITY

In any event, transnationalism and multiculturalism are now part of our daily life. They are visible to the public eye in every metropolitan linguistic landscape–London, New York, Paris, or Berlin – where from one block of houses to another we encounter different temples, cultural centers, ethnic restaurants, charities, or businesses, all marked by different linguistic signs – in addition to their carrying official languages. By their markers, 'Little Italy', 'Chinatown', or 'Jerusalem' shows both their 'belonging here' and their transnational allegiances.

They demonstrate how far these diasporic communities are challenging the aspiration to socio cultural unity that was for long the horizon of western cultures. Only half a century ago, these western powers were diffusing their languages and social models through-out the world. In the meantime, decolonization and the upsurge of globalization have implanted count-less languages and cultures originating from the 'Rest' into the territory of the 'West', carried by diasporans from all over the world. The communities they set up impose their public presence through their social dynamics and political ability. Democracy constrains societies to compromise with this anchoring of cultures within their borders and the settling of groups who stand in sharp contrast to the images conveyed by the descendants of old, indigenous families of their own ethnocultural and historical roots.

Globalization as such and inclusion in target societies tend to erode cultural idiosyncrasies of diasporic communities, but the singularities they retain warrant connectedness and cultural reproduction within their transnational entities that themselves become multicultural through the influences of their various communities conveying values and symbols acquired in their actual – diverse – societies. These contradictory tendencies contribute to making multiculturalization – of both societies and transnational diasporas – a chaotic and cacophonic process.

## 6. SOUTH ASIANS IN THE DIASPORA

South Asia is a separate and recognizable cultural region but this does not imply a homogeneous cultural form. On the contrary, South Asia is among the most diverse regions in the world in terms of ethnicity, language and also religion. South Asians identify with different nations of origin, speak different languages, and belong to different religions. South Asia is divided into six modern nation states: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan, and while India is the most pluralistic and diverse of the nations in the region, all of them are further divided by ethnic, linguistic and religious identities. It is estimated that there are about 20 million members of the South Asian diaspora, though it's difficult finding accurate statistics for every country.

The South Asian diaspora is a significant global phenomenon. Large scale emigration from South Asia in the last hundred and fifty years has established a series of diaspora communities worldwide. Emigration from South Asia and establishment of South Asian settlements abroad can generally be divided into two periods: The first period lasted from 1830s to the independence of the South Asian nations. This period is characterized by movements of people from South Asia to other British colonies. The second period, from 1947, is characterized by the movement of people from South Asia to Europe, North America, Australia and the Middle East. Diaspora has created numerous South Asian communities around the world.

The South Asian diaspora is not a uniform phenomenon, but reflects the dramatic modern history of South Asia and the diversity of the geographical region of origin. The range, the depth and the diversity of beliefs and practices both across and within religious traditions of the South Asian diaspora community around the world are remarkable and much of the diversity of religious life of South Asia is replicated in the diaspora.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion it can be said that, Diaspora commonly refers to different kinds of migrant groups who have left their homeland but who continue to share a religious, ethno-national, or national identity. The inequities of a liberal multiculturalism arise not from its weak commitment to difference but from its even stronger vision of national cohesion. Multicultural ideologies thus serve to reinforce liberal regimes through which nostalgia for an authentic past becomes an important driving force behind the construction of citizenship and political subjectivity. The scattered structures of diasporas may indeed generate perceptions of the common identity. Diasporans become 'different' from what they were originally, and become factors of the socio cultural heterogenization of their diaspora. Nevertheless, diasporic communities are fuelled by transnational exchanges and makes them a major factor of multiculturalization of their present day setting.

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