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DIASPORAS AND SECURITISATION
Displacement and Return: Public Policy and Practice in Cyprus

By Neophytos Loizides and Djordje Stefanovic

This research on return intentions among Greek Cypriots was based on the Cyprus2015 surveys, in partnership with the UNDP and the European Union Commission representation in the island. The Cyprus2015 project offered some of the most influential and extensive surveys done in the island in the past decade. In 2009 we were invited to contribute with a set of questions concerning internally displaced Greek Cypriots. The Cyprus2015 survey also covered general attitudes on peace but asked different questions to members of each community concerning their expectations from the settlement. The overall sample for each community included 1000 respondents randomly selected across the population. An important feature of the Greek Cypriot sample was the large number of respondents (about a third) who declared themselves internally displaced. The figure is consistent with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre report which ranks Cyprus as the country with the largest percentage of internally displaced persons worldwide (IDMC 2006).

Because of identity and security concerns, Greek Cypriots were more willing to return under their own administration (i.e. to newly reallocated villages and cities across the federal border) rather than under future Turkish Cypriot administration. The Cyprus2015 sample data revealed that while only 16.6 percent of the displaced Greek Cypriots were willing to return under the Turkish Cypriot administration, a much higher percentage of 69 percent was willing to return under a Greek Cypriot Administration. On the one hand, the findings confirm the decisions by UN mediators to maximize the areas to be returned under Greek Cypriot administration and to limit return under Turkish Cypriot administration. On the other, the same data suggest that the overwhelming majority of Greek Cypriots hailing from the future Turkish Cypriot constituent state are left with few incentives to support a future settlement.

The demographic results are extremely interesting with regard to age as Greek Cypriot elderly are more likely to return. According to Loizides and Stefanovic (forthcoming), the average age of the decided returnees is 52. These findings are consistent with other studies elsewhere, for example, Bosnia (Opacic 2005). In Cyprus, Sitas et al. (2007) found that the elderly (and refugees) have been in certain respects more open to rapprochement and reconciliation compared to younger persons (and non–refugees). In interpreting these findings, it could be assumed that the elderly tend to have stronger attachments to their former homes and land. In addition, they are more mobile due to their pensions, although one might imagine that younger people might be also able to commute to work daily, given the proximity of northern Cyprus to the capital city of Nicosia. What is also interesting in this analysis is that high-income displaced persons are more likely to return to their former houses.

The major public policy implication of this finding is that integration into a new environment does not conflict with return. In fact, the capacity to (re)integrate might offer displaced
communities more resources, experience and confidence in dealing effectively with hardships during the return process. The age variable suggests that returnees could be “less threatening” than probably imagined by the Turkish Cypriots. Something often unknown to the parties in the peace talks is that tax income in federations is normally paid in the place of residence. This is another important finding as a future settlement might rely on a linkage between improving return conditions for the Greek Cypriot displaced and the financial sustainability of the future Turkish Cypriot constituent state.

References

A Critical Approach to Stigmatization of Stateless Diaspora Activism

By Bahar Baser

My research focuses on how homeland conflicts affect the mobilization patterns of diaspora groups in their host countries, precisely concerning conflict-generated and stateless diasporas such as those of the Tamils and Kurds. Delving into issues such as stateless diasporas and their divergent repertoires of action, I found that - despite the abundance of inquiry on this issue - academic literature still has shortcomings when it comes to portraying different types of diasporas and their respective mobilization strategies.

Moreover, the post 9/11 atmosphere has very much affected how the mobilization of stateless diasporas is perceived by policy makers, media organizations and even by academics. There is a dense focus on what diasporas are doing in order to “influence homeland conflicts” – remittances, supporting insurgent groups, protest and lobby activities – which often obscures the historical context and underlying reasons of why diasporas are mobilizing in a specific way in the first place: Why do they use unconventional methods which occasionally include violent means? Are they directed against their home states to promote their basic human rights? Is diaspora mobilization a form of resistance outside the borders of the home state? What happens to the power relations between dominant and subaltern groups in transnational space? How is statelessness experienced in the diaspora? These questions are usually disregarded by policy makers as they do not question the meaning of very basic concepts such as peace and conflict. Academic publications at times also contribute to this one-dimensional understanding of diaspora mobilization.

Evaluating diaspora activism through the lenses of security and terrorism criminalizes altogether the diasporic activity of ethnic/religious groups whose only chance to make their voice heard is to mobilize in transnational space as they are deprived of this opportunity in their own homelands. My in-depth research and extensive fieldwork engaging with both Kurdish and Tamil diaspora groups showed that they feel doubly excluded both in their homelands and hostlands due to the stigmatization of their national struggle as a (transnational) crime. One needs to remember that these kinds of simplistic approaches put already disadvantaged groups in a more vulnerable situation in their hostlands and duplicate those hegemonic discourses against which they mobilized in the first place.

I suggest that these two areas should be addressed in order to better understand the mobilization patterns of conflict-generated/stateless diasporas:

- Firstly, there should be a more cautious approach in terms of definitions and adjectives that are attributed to diaspora groups. Academics and policy makers sometimes use a specific terminology too munificently which brands diaspora groups as trouble-makers, war mongers or even terrorists. Many academic articles reproduce a certain jargon without questioning the very meaning of the concepts they use such as “extremist”, “radical” or “marginal” in discussions about diaspora activism. This kind of approach casts out diaspora groups in the long run from potential collaboration with civil society organizations as well as other political actors as it creates certain doubts about the diaspora’s “ultimate intentions.”
Secondly, policy makers or authors who analyze diasporas through a securitization lens tend to lump different groups together without paying particular attention to the root causes of diaspora mobilization. For instance, groups such as Al Qaeda are analyzed in the same sample with LTTE or PKK which have sharply different claims and reasons for their mobilization. As Cheran (2003: 8) points out, legitimate self-determination claims cannot be examined together with groups who engage in transnational terrorism. We need to avoid the circulation of knowledge that reproduces the same hierarchies and inequalities of the non-democratic homeland into the transnational space all over again.

We need to have a more reflective approach that challenges conventional wisdom about diaspora politics and constantly questions the terminology, concepts and theories we use to understand the role of diasporas in today’s world. Diaspora activism should not be analyzed out of its historical context; rather the root causes which determine the way that diasporas behave should be approached more cautiously and free from bias.

References


Do diasporas cause an increase in political violence in their country of origin? Studies have argued that countries which possess a large diaspora are more likely to experience acts of terrorism or separatist violence, and that diasporas are the cause of this increased violence (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000). My work on the role of the Croatian diaspora during the war in Yugoslavia (1991-1995) has shown that this causal link should be reversed: conflicts are not the consequence, but the cause for diasporas to mobilize. As for their role, it is much more complex than the existing theories would have it. Two main elements explain this:

First, diasporas are not a homogeneous social group. They are both a united and divided group of social actors, what Bourdieu has defined as “field”. Diasporas can be conceived as “communities” in that they are composed of people who identify and may mobilize around a common sense of belonging and origin, but they are diverse in terms of reasons of departure, generations of migration, socio-economic backgrounds and religious sensibilities. Experiences of exile, links with the homeland, and political views may therefore be radically different within the same diaspora, depending on the different backgrounds of its members. My research (Ragazzi 2009) showed that contrarily to many stereotypes, it is wrong to assume that the Croatian diaspora is nationalist: In the U.S., the Croatian diaspora is for example mostly composed of children of late 19th century agriculturalists who became factory workers, and share mostly center-left political views. It is only a small - yet powerful - minority based partly in the U.S., but mostly in Canada, Australia, Germany and Argentina, composed of the philo-Ustasha or anti-communist middle class who fled Yugoslavia after World War II and during the Communist Yugoslavia that harbours nationalist political views.

Second, diasporas are not political subjects per se: they are always socially and politically brought to existence by appointed or self-appointed spokespersons who claim to represent various demographics. The spokespersons are in competition for the representation of the diaspora. Some can be tightly linked to a political party in power, such as the Croatian American Association (CAA), who represented the nationalist post-World War II migrants and supported the policies of Croatia’s president, Franjo Tudjman, at all times. Others may support a movement, but can withdraw their support when their key values are no longer respected, such as the Croatian Fraternal Union (CFU)’s who represented the first wave of Croatian migrants in the US and Canada, and publicly criticised Tudjman after the discovery of the Croatian army’s atrocities a few years after the beginning of the war. Governments, finally, are increasingly trying to represent the diaspora directly, as for example Tudjman’s government failed attempt to enroll the Croatian diaspora in the Croatian World Congress.

As a result of these two brief observations, the following recommendations can be formulated:

- Contrary to Collier & Hoffler (2004), diasporas do not cause nor sustain conflict; specific organisations claiming to represent “the diaspora” do. The attention should therefore be on specific political organisations rather than entire communities.
• Diasporas are not unitary actors; they are a field of competition between organisations which might have entirely different stances on political violence. The attention should therefore be on the diversity of stances and the logics of competition and escalation that might take place between state and non-state organisations.

References


Challenges for Diaspora Centric Charities

By Suniya Qureshi

The challenges that charities are facing in the development sector - especially those working on a non-profit making basis - are manifold. Diaspora centric charities currently face greater scrutiny on how and for whom they fundraise; especially in politically troubled and unstable environments such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Although the Charity Commission in the UK provides guidelines on good governance and established transparent channels for giving and fundraising, obstacles to the fundraising and campaigning of Diaspora communities in the UK for the communities in their countries of origin/birth still persist.

Diaspora communities should be encouraged to lobby for clearer routeways in order to be able to continue the good work they do within the third sector and push for effective governance structures to better understand perceived and actual threats to national security. The value of diverse cultural communities in any country has been hugely underestimated and slated by political rhetoric. Acknowledging their contributions to sector activity and managing changing borders should be a point taken up by the NGO sector, as this can only increase the added value of our shared work.

Qismat Foundation is working to create a global online investment vehicle for individuals, communities and corporates; it thereby contributes to breaking down the barriers to giving which often hinder that effective projects receive the right support in a timely manner

Hence broader research questions should be:

**Policy impact:** Facilitation and better understanding of Diaspora global giving - whether it be via remittance or other.

Legislation and policy currently clash on the security parameter of mobilizing and remitting monies for charity and development purposes and this creates harmful bottlenecks. The NGO sector needs to create a disclaimer within policy enabling ways and means which allow financial assets to flow into projects.

**Key findings:** Social enterprise is often the enabler of change in disruptive environments as can be found in the developing world. Innovation and growth can only be supported through access to market and investments at grass-root level. Diaspora communities have the acumen to lead on this but do not have the financial means or ability to manage funds. Peer to peer collaboration within Diasporas and between communities will enable effective lessons to be learnt.
**Recommendations:** Socio political lobby is non-existent within Diaspora communities, and they often then resort to extreme measures or dysfunctional attitudes arise. Eradicating poverty is not the answer; empowerment is - through acknowledgment, technology and skills transfer, as well as via access to required funding. Security concerns hinder all of the above.
Diasporas and Security

By Fatima Lahnait

Uncontrolled migration and the failure of (some?) ethnic minorities to integrate in their host countries generate serious security risks including trafficking of all types and terrorism. Studies have demonstrated that terrorists specifically recruit their supporters and their active agents not only in the parent countries but also in the ethnic communities of host countries, among them diasporas of the MENA region and Asian countries, but also diasporas from Sub-Saharan countries like Somalia and Nigeria, drawing both on underprivileged parts and also on young, technically educated, people. Problems concerning integration and security have reached a critical level and have become a new challenge for European societies, even more since the Arab springs. These international events have a strong impact on the national/local level (e.g. young people from Europe going to fight as jihadists in Syria).

My research’s aim is to focus on what contribution can be made by the diaspora, and specifically by the binationals, to improve social, economic, political and cultural cooperation between their host and home countries and the understanding between diaspora communities and local communities in their countries of residence, and to determine the place of European Muslim citizens.

The results of the studies showed that little effort has been made to harness the positive experiences of those immigrants and dual-nationals who have integrated well into Western societies and live their two (or more) cultures successfully.

Therefore, to better understand the diaspora-security nexus, I suggest that a special attention should be given to the following points.

A distinction has to be drawn between those who experienced immigration and those who were born in the European country in order to not consider their presence as illegitimate. The emphasis on integration implies that even third generation citizens ‘with immigrant backgrounds’ are still not considered truly Europeans. Then, it is not surprising to notice that the Muslim diasporas face the same issues and wonder about the same questions: how can a nation determine if a person is integrated? Does a religious identity come into conflict with local or national interests? Why did many governments try to restrict and regulate some religious practices?

Some European Muslims consider that such issues reinforce their identity claim. The feeling of exclusion is reinforced and radicalization is increasing. The consequences are the
spreading of fears among societies and policy makers, an amalgam Muslim-terrorist and the
disappointment of the youth.
Governments are already working on a framework for more favorable integration conditions. However, realities in matters of integration and security diverge from one country to another. The diaspora’s experiences (both good and bad) must be used to improve the understanding of the process of integration. There should be a concerted effort to mobilize the binational communities in order to use their abilities to reduce and eliminate the economic and social causes of discontents within their host and parent countries and to improve the security. The loyalty and the citizenship awareness are key factors to reinforce or create a feeling of belonging. The role of governments, NGO’s and the media in this process has to be specified.
The success or failure of security programs and their ability to isolate radicals depend mainly on policy makers’ capacity to shape a flexible and targeted approach when they deal with diasporas, especially its youth members. Coherent social policies that address the frustrations of young people and strive to provide equal opportunities have to be developed. Actions have to be reinforced at the grass-root level to improve education, fight ignorance and prejudices of all kind, and to promote the values of liberty and democracy. Reducing the fears and giving signs of opening are not easy tasks, but we have to keep in sight the radicalization process going on among the Western Muslim communities.

References


Challenges for INGOs working with Conflict Diasporas

By Champa Patel

Diaspora organisations have a long-standing history and have repeatedly played an important role in conflict and post-conflict processes. Often internally differentiated through prisms of class, ethnicity, religion and gender, diaspora communities can also differ in focus from one another according to the waves in which they occurred. Long standing diaspora groups, for example, may have a very different relationship to their country of origin as opposed to those who have had to leave because of conflict.

Diaspora organisations, whether as family members, activists, humanitarian or relief workers and donors, can be said to engage with their country of origin across several dimensions - political, economic, philanthropic and cultural. Most academic attention on these interactions has focused on the role of remittances. The actual work of peace keeping or peace building, however, is usually discussed in terms of the role of the state affected by the conflict and the international system (UN, INGOs, donors). Relatively little analysis critically triangulates the role played by the state and the international system vis-a-vis the role of the diaspora in conflict and post-conflict processes. In particular, there is a lack of research that critically explores the role of INGOs in this context, particularly in terms of how INGOs may inhibit or ‘take over’ the space for diaspora organisations to play an effective role in peace keeping or peace building, or conversely, legitimise certain diaspora organisations, which may hold views that are counter to their, whether diaspora organization or INGO, stated aims and objectives.

Within the international system, diaspora organisations tend to be on the margins of the sector. While many INGOs advocate active participation and partnership models of working with recipient communities, there is little elaboration of the principles of working with diaspora communities in conflict or post-conflict contexts (across peace keeping, peace building, humanitarian and development areas). Some of the key challenges include the differences in capacity between often small and voluntary led diaspora organisations and large well-funded and well-resourced INGOs. This difference in capacity is exemplified by negative equality and power dynamics whereby INGOs – because of their own competing missions, agenda and focuses – may unintentionally delineate narrow spaces for meaningful engagement with diaspora groups at all stages of the process (project design to delivery). This can result in diaspora organisations being regarded as solely ‘implementing partners’ with little power or influence. Yet they are often approached, precisely, to provide intelligence and access to what could be the most vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Research could support INGOs to be more critically attuned to how their work is perceived by diaspora-led organisations and the ways in which they may negatively affect the diaspora’s role in peace keeping or peace building. There needs to be a better understanding of diaspora motivations and why diaspora organisations may not want to engage with INGOs, preferring to rely more on their informal networks and family relationships that can ensure that their aid reaches those for whom it is intended. This analysis needs to be located within the heavily securitised policy environment, which will critically influence the manner in which diaspora engagement is perceived by national/regional political entities in the host countries. The value of working with diaspora organisations, beyond wanting to harness remittances more effectively to
development and aid, should also be further explored. In particular a more rigorous critique is needed which points to the limitations of working with diaspora groups. This, more critical, approach is needed to be clear why diaspora engagement is important, to what ends, and how INGOs could support a multiplicity of partners so that certain groups are not privileged above others. This critical analysis could help INGOs to better understand how to work with diaspora organisations as genuine partners not solely as extensions to their own agendas which are to be recreated in their own image. Research could help unpick the new spaces needed for diaspora organisations to be able to more effectively help shaping the policy and tasks of INGOs.

To further the potential of INGOs in working with diaspora led organisations, the following key questions must be addressed:

- Through specific case studies, what are the practices, structures and processes through which INGOs may negatively impact on diaspora organisation’s engagement in peace building and peace keeping? In what ways does the current focus on securitisation and borders further exacerbate these tensions – both for the INGO as well as for the diaspora organisation?
- What are the opportunities and limitations for INGOs to more effectively support diasporas to realise their peace keeping and peace building potential? Are there case studies, with overarching themes, structures, approaches and/or processes, which illustrate some of the dynamics that can positively maximise diaspora organisation involvement in policy conceptualisation as well as operational activities?
- What are the barriers that prevent INGOs from working as ‘facilitators’ enabling diaspora access to political and funding spaces? Are these cultural, structural or political? How can these barriers be overcome to ensure more meaningful and effective engagement with diaspora organisations?
- How can INGOs, still working within their mission and agendas, also create ‘new spaces’ that allow for diaspora identified issues to be developed and taken forward in a genuinely partnership process?

References


Three Lessons from Research on Diasporas and Contested Sovereignty

By Maria Koinova

Since 2006 I have been researching how diasporas mobilize in liberal democracies when conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction take place in their countries of origin. Since 2012 I have been directing a large ERC Project entitled “Diasporas and Contested Sovereignty” conducted at Warwick University. I study the conditions under which diasporas become moderate or radical actors in world politics and examine the causal mechanisms by way of which they do so. My research so far has been at the forefront of integrating works about migration and integration regimes, foreign policy analysis, transnationalism, as well as conflict and post-conflict processes. Since 2006 I have interviewed representatives of the Albanian, Armenian, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Lebanese, Macedonian, Palestinian, and Ukrainian diasporas in the US and/or the UK, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

I select three of my findings with direct repercussions for policy makers.

First, diasporas are highly prone to act in contentious ways when their countries of origin experience periods of warfare or large-scale violence. This was the case with the Armenian diaspora during the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh (1991-1994), the Albanian diaspora during the internal warfare in Kosovo (1998-1999), the Chechen diaspora during the Russian invasion (1994), the Palestinian diaspora during the Gaza war (2009), and other cases. Radical behaviour – such as fund-raising for radical groups on the ground, sending fighters and others – is largely due to the close emotional ties between refugee diasporas and their ethnic brethren, amplified by images of warfare and victimization spread on the Internet and by international media.

My recommendation: During moments of violent warfare in original homelands, policy makers in Western capitals are usually prone to seek solutions to de-escalate the conflict in other parts of the world, but rarely factor in the potential radical effects exerted by diasporas living in their own territories. Hence, diasporas need not be omitted as irrelevant actors, or consulted only as providers of information about conflict areas. On the contrary, diasporas need to be actively engaged in discussions to stop the violence and to develop peace-building initiatives.

Second, when countries of origin experience problems with their sovereignty, diasporas in liberal states – bound by these countries’ liberal values and legislation – can often resort to the use of democratic discourses and procedures, but in essence seek to advance nationalist goals. A good example is the involvement of the Macedonian diaspora in inaugurating a civic referendum in Macedonia in 2004. The referendum sought to stop the decentralization initiatives envisaged by the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement, which aimed
to give more self-government rights to the Albanian minority in Macedonia. With active US and EU involvement, the referendum eventually failed.

*My recommendation*: Participation of diasporas in democratic procedures – such as elections, referenda and others – needs to be understood as part of the democratic process, but simultaneously scrutinized and quickly acted upon if there is a need to prevent the spread of nationalist and intolerance messages, especially in deeply divided societies.

Third, ultranationalist parties which have emerged and consolidated in Europe since the beginning of the 2000s have increased insecurity feelings among migrants and especially among Muslim populations. On some occasions hate speech has even triggered painful memories and associations with persecution and war among former refugees. Among Bosnians in the Netherlands, for example, the hate speech of the ultra-nationalist Geert Wilders has been associated with the hate speech of politicians who started the wars of disintegration of former Yugoslavia.

*My recommendation*: While many consider ultranationalist parties as mere competing parties in a democratic polity, such vision needs to be corrected. Ultranationalist parties have done a lot of damage to inter-ethnic relations. Their messages are mainstreamed in the respective societies, and some of their ideas adopted by mainstream parties. When policy makers in Western capitals engage diasporas, they need to inquire about such damaging effects with each diaspora, on a case by case basis. They also need to engage diaspora representatives to find solutions to such damaging effects, and help the diaspora gain more visibility displaying its positive achievements in advancement of the respective host society.
Three Rules of Engagement
By Feargal Cochrane

It is becoming commonplace for States, transnational organisations and NGOs working at the practitioner level, to recognise that diaspora communities are key stakeholders in the policy process. My work on the role of Irish-America in the Northern Ireland conflict points to three key generic lessons for both policy communities and diasporas themselves if they want serious engagement processes to develop (Cochrane 2007; Cochrane 2010).

The first relates to the meaning of engagement itself. During the 1970s, Irish-American voices were dominated by active lobby groups such as the Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAID) which supported the Provisional IRA, together with less militant but equally unreflexive voices from the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), Irish National Caucus and leading Irish-American politicians. The narrative for the most part during this period was demand driven, with Irish nationalist aspirations articulated as being essential requirements for peaceful change. These voices repeatedly demanded that the American government intervene to censure British policy in Northern Ireland. However, they were repeatedly ignored. Requiring the US government to publicly (or even privately) criticise its closest European ally, when it was seeking alliances with it over much broader geopolitical issues, was never likely to work – and it did not. Eventually a new voice within the Irish-American diaspora appeared in the early 1990s. Those involved were highly networked politicians, business leaders, US trade unionists and journalists, which eventually formed a group called Americans for a New Irish Agenda (ANIA). They asked the Clinton White House to engage with the ‘process’ of conflict resolution rather than in any predetermined outcome or set of policies that would have been difficult for it to adopt. This lowered the political risk for Clinton and the wider policy community in the US and made engagement both easier to initiate and allowed it to evolve incrementally through soft power mechanisms of mutual respect, leading to trust and empathy.

The second relates to the broader political context within which engagement is conceived and developed. The end of the Cold War in the late 1980s created new political space for engagement to take place. This allowed President Clinton to move the issue of Northern Ireland from the traditionally Anglophile State Department to the more ‘neutral’ National Security Agency where it was led by specific individuals attuned to the nuances of all of the direct conflict actors, including the British government itself. This helped to build credibility between the Clinton administration and the Irish republican community and Sinn Fein in particular, that US policy towards Northern Ireland would not slavishly mirror British policy towards the region.

The third key lesson presented by the Irish-American example relates to the time-line and quality of the engagement process. In the context of Northern Ireland it can be traced
meaningfully from the Carter Presidency and specifically his statement on Northern Ireland in 1977, to the failed attempt by Richard Haass to resolve ongoing problems over flags and dealing with the past in December 2013. In other words engagement has been taking place for a generation. Allied to this, the initial policy engagement evolved in qualitative terms from a rather tepid but important statement from President Carter, to President Clinton’s (and Senator George Mitchell’s) economic engagement where they ran a number of investment conferences to begin the dialogue and encourage FDI. Only then did US policy engagement move into the political realm with direct third party support for the political negotiations and eventual Good Friday Agreement in April 1998. The soft-power relationships between the policy community and the political negotiators allowed engagement to become more intense and the Irish-American diaspora played a crucial facilitative role in that process.

In conclusion, the lesson here is that engagement between the Irish-American diaspora and the US government was facilitated by the diaspora themselves becoming more nuanced in how they operated, and the policy actors finding greater political space and the vision to understand what such engagement could achieve and how it could be done. This required an incremental approach that allowed engagement to develop over time, in line with mutual interests and with some continuity over a period of years, where lines of communication were broadened and deepened and where soft power relationships were allowed time and space to mature.

References
