Diaspora Migration: Definitional Ambiguities and a Theoretical Paradigm

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ABSTRACT

Diaspora migration is one of many types of migration likely to increase considerably during the early twenty-first century. This article addresses the many ambiguities that surround diaspora migration with a view to developing a meaningful theoretical scheme in which to better understand the processes involved.

The term diaspora has acquired a broad semantic domain. It now encompasses a motley array of groups such as political refugees, alien residents, guest workers, immigrants, expellees, ethnic and racial minorities, and overseas communities. It is used increasingly by displaced persons who feel, maintain, invent or revive a connection with a prior home. Concepts of diaspora include a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return – which can be ambivalent, eschatological or utopian – ongoing support of the homeland and, a collective identity defined by the above relationship.

This article considers four central issues: How does diaspora theory link into other theoretical issues? How is diaspora migration different from other types of migration? Who are the relevant actors and what are their roles? What are the social and political functions of diaspora?

On the basis of this analysis a theoretical paradigm of diasporas is presented to enable scholars to move beyond descriptive research by identifying different types of diasporas and the dynamics that differentiate among them. Use of the proposed typology – especially in comparative research of different diasporas – makes it possible to focus on structural differences and similarities that could be critical to the social processes involved.

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INTRODUCTION

A story quoted by Safran (1991) highlights the ambiguity and dynamism which are central to our effort to conceptualize a theory of diaspora.

> In an old Jewish joke from an Eastern Europe shtetl, the husband asks his wife: "What will happen to the million zloty I invested in the business if the Messiah comes and we return to Jerusalem and I have to leave everything behind?" The wife answers: "With God's help, the Messiah will not come so soon".

The term diaspora is based on the Greek terms *speiro*, to sow, and the preposition *dia*, over. The Septuagint, the earliest extant Greek translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew which was produced near the middle of the third century BC (*tirgum ha'shiv'im*), translated Deuteronomy, 28: 25 as follows: "Thou shalt be a diaspora in all kingdoms of the earth" (Oxford English Dictionary). The Greeks understood the term to mean migration and colonization.

In Hebrew, the term is generally *galut*, which initially referred to the settling of scattered colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile and has assumed a more general connotation of people settled away from their ancestral homelands. The word *pezura* is also used in a similar sense.

As a social construct, the term has shifted its meaning and coverage over time and it is the implications of these dynamics that this article addresses.

SOME DEFINITIONAL AMBIGUITIES

The term diaspora refers today not only to such classic groups as Jews, Greeks and Armenians, but to much wider categories which reflect processes of politically motivated uprooting and moving of populations, voluntary migration, global communications and transport. The term has acquired a broad semantic domain and now encompasses a motley array of groups such as political refugees, alien residents, guest workers, immigrants, expellees, ethnic and racial minorities, overseas communities. One of the largest recent groups to enter this category consists of 25 million Russians living in non-Russian states of the Former Soviet Union (FSU): the collapse of the unitary Soviet state has transformed them into minorities in the states of the CIS. Palestinians have developed a sense of diaspora since 1948. There is also reference to a Black diaspora which pertains to persons whose forefathers were forcibly removed from a variety of African countries and resettled in other societies. And, of course, the most recent group of refugees from Kosovo has joined this category (Kolsto, 1996; Pilkington, 1996; Shevtsova, 1992; Tololian, 1991). Indeed, the term diaspora has acquired metaphoric implications and is used more and more by displaced persons who feel, maintain, invent or revive a connection with a prior home (Safran, 1991: 83).

In referring to modern diasporas, Sheffer (1986: 3) proposed a simple definition: "Modern diasporas are ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands". Chaliand and Rageau (1991: xiv-xvii) utilize four criteria for defining a diaspora: forced dispersion, retention of a collective historical and cultural memory of the dispersion, the will to transmit a heritage, and the ability of the group to survive over time (see also Esman, 1986: 333; Kearney, 1995: 553).

Sheffer (1986) Safran (1991) and Clifford (1994) have all considered the phenomenon in considerable depth and proposed several more encompassing definitions. Although they are not identical, the critical components of these definitions are a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return (which can be ambivalent, eschatological or utopian), ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity defined by the above relationship.

Cohen (1997) has proposed a typology of diasporas each of which has been caused by a different set of precipitating circumstances which result in a variety of social contexts, mythologies and definitions of solidarity. These are: victim diasporas, labour and imperial diasporas, trade diasporas, cultural diasporas, global – deterritorialized diasporas. Cohen notes that these types may overlap and change their character over time.

In all of these definitions it is important to highlight the affective-expressive components. Diaspora discourse reflects a sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes dispersed people who retain a sense of their uniqueness and an interest in their homeland. Diaspora is a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, history, meaningful narratives, group identity, longings, dreams, allegorical and virtual elements, all of which play a role in establishing a diaspora reality. At a given moment in time, the sense of connection to a homeland must be strong enough to resist forgetting, assimilating or distancing. In the words of Benjamin (1968), "effaced stories are recovered, different futures are imagined...."

THEORETICAL ISSUES

What are the theoretical issues that need to be addressed in considering modern diasporas? Four conceptual issues are addressed:

How does diaspora theory link into other theoretical issues?
How is diaspora migration different from other types of migration?
Who are the relevant actors and what are their roles?
What are the social and political functions of diaspora?

How does diaspora theory link into other theoretical issues?

It is fruitful to consider diaspora theory as an independent category. At the same time, it is important to be aware of its inherent links to other theoretical themes. One of the most important of these is *ethnic theory*. Building on the assumption that people seek a shared identity, especially in an era of large-scale urbanization and weakening of localized, particularistic relations, ethnic theory addresses itself to understanding the processes involved in deriving such identities from commonalties of history, language (in some cases religion) and past achievements.

Before the 1960s, immigrant groups were generally expected to shed their ethnic identity and assimilate to local norms. Groups that were thought unable to do this were not admitted, for example, Chinese to Canada, non-Whites to Australia.

Beginning in the 1970s, when it became evident that assimilationist models did not work effectively, policy changes in some societies permitted or even encouraged immigrants to maintain various aspects of their ethnic tradition. The resurgence of diasporas can be viewed as part of the persistence, or *de novo* emergence of ethnicity at a time when, according to older versions of modernization theory, it was to have been attenuated and tending to disappear (Kearney, 1995; Kymlicka, 1996). Adding the element of "homeland" to the criteria of ethnic identity provides an additional focus for solidarity.

Diaspora theory is also linked to the theoretical discourse on *transnationalism* and *globalization.* Tololian (1991) states that "Diasporas are the exemplary communities of the transnational moment". Diaspora discourse reflects a sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes a homeland. It is characterized by a sense of living in one place while simultaneously remembering and/or desiring and yearning for another place. This is because of the multiplicity of relations not only between diaspora communities and their homeland in a binary context but because of the ongoing, lateral relations among diaspora communities located in different sites within nation states and in different states. In recent years this approach has led to the notion of multiple centred diasporas (Clifford, 1994; Helmreich, 1992; Kearney, 1995; Schiller et al., 1995; Tololian, 1991).

A dramatic proliferation in communication media during the last 20 years has created an increasingly interconnected world. These processes have been gaining in momentum and sophistication and are likely to continue in future years. The modes of communication include written and oral media, electronic media, including the internet and the World Wide Web, as well as relatively cheap means of transportation to all corners of the globe. Globalization is expressed in worldwide financial, economic, technological and ecological interdependence in which goods, capital, knowledge, crime, culture, drugs and

fashions flow across territorial boundaries. Global culture of the 1990s is sustained by advanced communication technologies which provide for the accelerated dispersal of information and images across boundaries and cultures. Open borders, mobile job markets, international division of labour, and increased accessibility of modern means of transportation make possible ongoing communication and contact of immigrants with their countries of origin and with significant others there. At the same time, counter forces of nationalism, ethnicity, religious fundamentalism, racism, sexism and other forms of exclusion are growing simultaneously (Portes, 1989).

Immigrants in the 1990s are less contained inside the physical and cultural boundaries of their host country than ever before. There is travel to and from homelands and ongoing communication with family and friends who remain there. Social networks promote and support immigration. These phenomena carry important implications for the maintenance of relations between immigrants and their homelands and for the persistence of traditional cultural patterns, ongoing separatism and processes of merging into the mainstream of the host society. It has been noted that people who live in close physical proximity, may *share* less on a cultural level than they do with dispersed people elsewhere, in an increasingly interconnected world (Shuval and Leshem, 1998; Shuval, 1998).

Of central importance to disapora theory is the discourse on the *nation state* and its authority. Diasporas present a unique challenge to the hegemony of modern nation states because of the feelings they engender toward groups and places located outside the borders of a given nation state. Diaspora communities make it clear that identity with a political or geographical entity does not need to be binary – in the sense of all or nothing – but can involve loyalty to more than one such entity (Clifford, 1994; Kearney, 1995). Thus notions of assimilation and loyalty to one nation are challenged by diasporas which, in addition to relating to their host nation state, relate simultaneously to people located in other nation states. Deterritorialization of social identity challenges the meaning of the "nation state" and its claims for exclusive loyalty with the alternative of multiple identities and even multiple citizenships (Cohen, 1997).

How is diaspora migration different from other types of migration?

Post-modern migration is distinguished by its extreme diversification in terms of the many types of contemporary immigrants. These include a wide variety of cross-cutting categories and people may shift over time from one type to another. Diaspora migration differs from other types of migration in that in many cases it is based on claims to a "natural right" to return to an historic homeland. In this type of migration an ascriptive, ethnic or religious criterion is used to claim the right of return and entitlement to specific benefits, in some cases automatic citizenship. Two of the homelands that best exemplify this are Israel with regard to Jews and Germany with regard to Aussiedler, i.e. ethnic

Germans (Carmon, 1996; Munz and Ohliger, 1998; Portes, 1989; Shuval, 1998; Shuval and Leshem, 1998).

It is incorrectly assumed that diasporas are always a result of exile. Indeed they are often initiated by processes of uprooting, pogroms, political, religious or racial oppression; however, some people may opt for migration as a result of political domination and repression, economic inequality, powerlessness or minority status. In many, perhaps most, cases migrants seek to become part of the host society and culture and many relegate their previous cultural baggage to the past. In this respect, diaspora migration does not differ inherently from other types of migration. What distinguishes diaspora people is their ongoing or re-awakened attachment and loyalty to their earlier culture and specifically to the homeland which they feel they have left (Kearney, 1995). In most cases, this does not necessarily interfere with their integration into the host society on the condition that that society is accepting of such competing loyalties. Immigrant communities have a certain temporal span and often last up to a third generation after which their self identification as immigrants in most cases fades, even though they may retain an ethnic identity. A sense of diaspora can occur or re-occur after several generations when the group members are themselves no longer immigrants even though their predecessors were. A sense of diaspora is a feeling that is characterized by shifting periods of latency and activism which occur in response to processes in the three relevant referents: the group itself, the host society and the homeland.

Who are the relevant actors and what are their roles?

There are three sets of actors that are relevant to diaspora theory. These are the diaspora group itself, the host society and the homeland which may be real or virtual (Sheffer, 1986). There is a complex triadic relationship among these actors each of which is differentiated into a range of sub-groups which may differ considerably with regard to levels of commitment, self interest, power and interest in each other. In addition to issues of cultural inter-dependence and ongoing social interaction, there has been a strong trend toward politicization of the relationships in recent years. Thus diasporas have been mobilized to influence political outcomes in real home countries and to provide economic aid as well as military assistance to homelands (Esman, 1986).

On the most general level, these actors have been discussed in terms of their triangular relationship. But issues of bifocality have also been raised and pose some intriguing questions regarding the dynamics of the relationships (Gilroy, 1987; Mankekar, 1994; Rouse, 1991) On a schematic level, it is fruitful to focus on *pairs of actors* in terms of their relationship to the third. Thus:

Diaspora and homeland. Attitudes of a diaspora group to its host may be a function of the host's policy with regard to the homeland. This may express

itself in voting patterns and other forms of political support or non-support by the diaspora group of the host. Analogously, a diaspora group's attitude toward specific groups in the host society may be determined by these groups' support of homeland policies of the host. There have been cases in which members of the diaspora community have left their host country to seek protection or political asylum in their homeland.

Diaspora and host. Attitudes of a diaspora group toward its homeland is often ambivalent – a combination of yearning and distancing. When they have a choice, many people do not chose to return to their homeland because it is often too disruptive or traumatic to leave the diaspora. In many cases, a homeland does not actually exist or it is not welcoming to them politically, ideologically or socially. Maintaining an eschatological stance with regard to the homeland, i.e. defining it as a future, virtual, utopian goal that will be attained at an undefined time (when the Messiah arrives...), may reflect the practical view expressed in our opening story which may be summarized as *ubi lucrum, ibi patria,* my home is where I can make a living. A sense of the need for immediate return in most cases reflects discomfort, for whatever reason, in the host society, or a strong belief in the legitimacy and desirability of return. Lack of overt political support for the homeland may reflect concerns with regard to accusations of dual loyalty, fears of oppression or discrimination. On the other hand, overt support may reflect a sense of security in a society in which there is tolerance and acceptance of such views.

Homeland and host. Attitudes of the homeland to the diaspora group may be to provide cultural and emotional support and security but also to make use of diaspora groups to gain political, material, or other support from host countries. When diaspora persons return to their homeland, the reception accorded them may be welcoming but also ambivalent or hostile. The latter might reflect homeland residents' feeling that diaspora returnees may threaten their status or their property and that the returnees are not real "natives" (Munz and Ohliger, 1998). The host's attitude toward the diaspora group reflects overall norms of tolerance or intolerance that are defined as appropriate. If the diaspora group is politically significant in terms of size or influence, the host may relate to the diaspora group in terms of its own political goals.

What are the social and political functions of diaspora?

We may distinguish between the social functions of diaspora consciousness *to the group itself* and its social functions *to others.* When a group finds itself in a context of exclusion, limited opportunities for advancement, political domination or social and political discrimination, a diaspora culture helps maintain a sense of community and belonging to a more rewarding and welcoming social entity. This is accomplished by selectively preserving and recovering traditions so that they create or maintain identification with far reaching historic, cultural

and political processes giving a sense of attachment elsewhere, in a different time accompanied by hopes or visions of renewal (Gilroy, 1987; Rouse, 1991).

Myths of return serve to strengthen ethnic solidarity but in many cases have little practical implications. The "return" of many diasporas is an eschatological concept used to make life easier by means of a belief in an eventual, virtual utopia. The return is hoped for "at the end of days", in Hebrew, *"be'achrit ha'yamim"*.

Clifford (1994) notes that the language of diaspora is increasingly used by people who feel displaced and who maintain, revive or invent a connection with a prior home. Groups that did not have diasporic consciousness in the past are reclaiming diasporic origins and affiliations. The sense of being a "people with historic roots" outside the time/space of a host nation provides a sense of power and legitimacy to claims of oppression or disadvantage.

Within host societies, different groups have exploited the homeland myth for a variety of purposes. For example, Christian groups have viewed the diaspora status of Jews as punishment for the latter's sins, thus gaining legitimation for certain Christian groups' beliefs and ideologies regarding their own superiority.

PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS OF A THEORETICAL PARADIGM

In seeking to systematize the theoretical issues raised, we have worked with a number of assumptions that emerge from the discussion above. Our object is to make possible the development of a broad typology of diasporas which will be based on abstract concepts that are conducive to mapping various types of diaspora, making clear the differences and similarities among them. Hopefully, this will enhance our understanding of the underlying conceptual basis of diaspora, formulating hypotheses and encouraging the likelihood of fruitful comparative research.

Our approach is based on a number of assumptions:

1. A theoretical approach to diaspora needs to take account of the changing reality in which they exist. The term "dynamic" in the title of this article refers to the fluid nature of social processes characterizing diasporas. This means that a group may acquire a sense of diaspora, lose it, regain it, change it and so on, over an undefined period of time. Thus the approach we propose includes the notion of ongoing change as an integral part of the scheme.

2. Diaspora theory is structured around three principal actors – homeland, diaspora group, host – who interact in a multi-faceted, changing set of relation-

ships which may be viewed on a bifocal or trifocal level. These three actors form the principal components of diaspora theory.

3. In line with Featherstone's analysis of hyper-differentiation in post-modern societies (1992), it is clear that diasporas, hosts and homelands take many forms and are characterized by ongoing differentiation into distinct types and sub-types. Different sub-groups within the three basic sets of actors are characterized by differing orientations, values and attitudes. Therefore no single definition of diaspora can be useful.

4. A theoretical approach to diaspora is multi-dimensional with many variables playing a role. The three principal components are each characterized by several parameters which are not equally weighted in their importance. Their weights also have a dynamic of their own, depending on changing circumstances.

5. The parameters are not necessarily binary and are likely to be located along a continuum which in some cases may be quantitatively defined but which is more likely to be defined in qualitative categories which may be ordered or differentiated in qualitative terms.

In sum, the proposed theoretical paradigm (Figure 1, next page) is structured around the three sets of actors which serve as principal components of the paradigm. Each is characterized by a number of parameters and categories which are relevant to diaspora issues. As already noted, the categories may be ordered quantitatively or qualitatively as seems appropriate in terms of the substance of the parameter involved.

The purpose of the paradigm is to permit a mapping of *types* of diasporas that will provide a useful basis for research. Its principal advantage is to make explicit similarities and differences among various types of diasporas in such a way as to focus on the nature of the social processes attributable to these differences and similarities. This is accomplished by spelling out the values of the parameters of each of the three components with respect to a given diaspora. On the conceptual level, this process is logically analogous to the use of a "mapping sentence" as proposed by Guttman (Guttman and Greenbaum, 1998): a mapping sentence identifies and explicates simultaneously the theoretical constructs of the research together with the kind of observations needed to test it (p. 16). The extensive set of concepts proposed recently by Riggs (1999), while extremely useful, does not explicate the relations among them in a systematic manner.

Since some categories of the mapping may be absent, the paradigm avoids the rigidity of an ideal definition and makes possible the identification of what is termed "semi diasporas" (Clifford, 1994: 306) or incipient diasporas.

FIGURE 1

THEORETICAL PARADIGM OF DIASPORAS

I. Characteristics of Diaspora Group

a. Chronology of group.
b. Causes of dispersion.
c. Differentiation: criteria for definition of sub-groups.
d. Retention of ethnic culture.
e. Spatial dimension-physical location of members and relations among them.
f. Quality of relations among members; lateral connections and/or connections to one origin.
g. Attitudes and feeling toward homeland – if real; if virtual:

   1) Level of support.
   2) Level of affect.
   3) Level of activity.
   4) Content of activity.
   5) Extent of ongoing contact with family, friends in homeland.

II. Characteristics of Homeland

a. Level of reality.
b. Legitimacy.
c. Attitude of residents of homeland and its government toward return of diaspora communities.
d. Behaviour toward returnees.
e. Behaviour of returnees:

   1) Level of integration into homeland,
      - sense of "at homeness"
      - acceptance of homeland culture
      - retention of separatism, previous citizenship
      - perception of host's attitude.
   2) Inversion of diaspora: redefinition of "exile" as "homeland".
   3) Re-migration after return – to new destination.

III. Characteristics of Host

a. Structural features.
b. Cultural-ideological stance toward ethnic groups.
c. Behaviour of government and subgroups toward ethnic groups.
d. Relevance of homeland to host government and to subgroups in society.

DISCUSSION OF THE PARADIGM

The following are some examples of categories that apply to the parameters of each of the three dimensions. It is important to note that these are examples only and do not presume to be exhaustive. The opposite is the case: categories and even parameters are flexible and adaptable to specific research needs.

Characteristics of diaspora group

a. Temporal dimension: chronology of group, i.e. when did members or forefathers leave the homeland in mythological past, in far distant past… within memory of living persons… recently.
b. Causes of dispersion: traumatic expulsion, persecution, famine, poverty, over population, seeking employment, job requirement…
c. Differentiation: criteria for definition of sub-groups – earlier and recent arrivals in host society; extent of support for homeland, its current government, its dissidents, its legitimacy…
d. Retention of ethnic culture: none… some… active…
e. Spatial dimension – physical location of members and relations among them: decentred, i.e. geographically widespread in many settings, or concentrated in one or few host countries.
f. Quality of relations among members: formal… close familial connections and ongoing interaction among members in distant settings. Lateral connections and/or connections to one origin.
g. Attitudes and feeling toward homeland.

   1) Level of support
      if real: not worthy of support, worthy of support, actual desire for return at undefined time… urgent desire for immediate return accompanied by practical preparations.
      if virtual: none, apathetic, ambivalent… mythological, or eschatological, i.e. in undefined future (when Messiah comes)…
   2) Level of affect regarding homeland:
      if real: passionate… cool… rational
      if virtual: passionate… cool… rational
   3) Level of activity (if real) – none, indifferent… minimal… active support.
   4) Content of activity (if real) – financial, moral, political…
   5) Extent of ongoing contact with family, friends in homeland
      (if real) ....

II. Characteristics of Homeland

a. Level of reality:
   Eschatological… real but inaccessible… real and accessible.

b. Legitimacy:
    accepted by all… widely accepted (by whom?) …not generally accepted
    (by whom?).
c. Attitude of residents of homeland and its government toward return of
    diaspora communities:
    Rejected by all current residents… rejected by some and accepted by some
    current residents.....accepted by all current residents, encouraged by residents
    to return.
d. Behaviour toward returnees:
    accepted on formal and informal levels, accepted formally but not informally
    (by some… most… all…) …not accepted formally or informally …hostility,
    disdain.
e. Behaviour of returnees:

    1) Level of integration into homeland –
       -   sense of "at homeness": acceptance of homeland culture –
           completely... partly… rejection
       -   acceptance of homeland culture –
           completely… partly… rejection
       -   retention of separatism –
           none… some… much citizenship
       -   perception of host's attitude –
           acceptance… indifference… hostility by host and its subgroups
    2) Inversion of diaspora: redefinition of "exile" as "homeland" –
       -   encounter difficulties in attitudes of homeland host; (resent benefits,
           perception of preferential treatment)
       -   disappointment in "at homeness" (feel strange – don't know lan-
           guage, culture of homeland)
       -   perceive host culture as inferior to culture of "exile" society –
           therefore seek to retain "higher" culture for selves and for children.
    3) Re-migration after return to new destination –
       -   response to dissatisfaction with homeland, "… other fields are
           greener".

III. Characteristics of Host

a. Structural features:
    extent of opportunities for social mobility for all or some members of
    society and of minority groups.
    Geographical dispersion of ethnic groups… concentrations of settlement…
    ghettoization.
b. Cultural-ideological stance toward ethnic groups – norms of assimilation:
    monolithic, …pluralistic …acceptance of expressions of ethnic identity…
c. Behaviour of government and subgroups toward ethnic groups – indifferent…
    disdain… hostile… discriminatory… violent…

d. Awareness, relevance of homeland to host government and to subgroups in society – irrelevant… highly relevant, for example, to foreign policy, to internal political interest…extent of political activity.

CONCLUSION

Our goal has been to systematize the conceptualization of diaspora research and thinking by unravelling the theoretical dimensions of the issues and making them explicit in a manner that is conducive to further expansion and specification.

Of what use is this theoretical paradigm? At first glance, its generality would seem to trivialize it, i.e. it includes every possible type – even virtual ones – with no order or suggestion of priority. It is our feeling that this broad generality is precisely its strength. Priorities and selection of types are determined by researchers in terms of their interests. Our purpose is to enable scholars to move beyond descriptive research by identifying different types of diasporas through a simultaneous use of the three components to map out the characteristics of any given diaspora. Use of the proposed typology – especially in comparative research of different diasporas – makes possible a focus on structural differences and similarities that could be critical to the social processes involved.

We do not presume that this typology is exhaustive and comprehensive. While the three structural components appear fundamental to the conceptualization, the parameters characterizing each and the categories by means of which the parameters are classified, remain open-ended and flexible. Indeed it is the flexibility of the scheme that makes it useful in that it highlights the inherent dynamism of diaspora theory by making clear the ongoing, changing processes involved which cause certain types to shift their structural characteristics in a manner that is open to scrutiny through the overall schema. Furthermore it underscores the intrinsic differentiation of diasporas into a large number of types while at the same time making it possible to focus on the similarities and differences among them.

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LA MIGRATION DE DIASPORA ET LES DIFFICULTES
DE LA DEFINIR: UN PARADIGME THEORIQUE

Parmi les nombreuses formes de migration, se trouve la migration de diaspora, pour laquelle on peut prévoir un important développement pendant la première partie du XXIᵉ siècle, mais qui est entourée de nombreuses ambiguïtés. L'étude qu'on va lire a pour but de dissiper ces incertitudes et de concevoir un schéma théorique solidement motivé et permettant de mieux comprendre les faits.

La signification du mot "diaspora" s'est élargie de telle façon que le mot s'applique à présent à des groupes très divers: réfugiés politiques, ressortissants étrangers, travailleurs étrangers, immigrants, expulsés, minorités ethniques ou raciales, groupes de populations étrangères. De plus en plus souvent, le mot est utilisé par les personnes déplacées qui gardent, maintiennent volontairement, inventent ou réinventent un lien avec leurs origines. Sous ses diverses formes, la diaspora suppose toujours un passé marqué par la séparation, des mythes/souvenirs de la patrie perdue, un sentiment d'aliénation dans le pays d'arrivée, un désir de retour – qui peut être ambivalent, eschatologique ou utopique –, un soutien durable pour le pays d'origine, et une identité collective définie par cette relation.

L'article qu'on va lire répond à quatre questions centrales : quels sont les liens de la théorie de la diaspora avec d'autres questions théoriques? En quoi la migration de diaspora est-elle différente des autres types de migration? Qui en sont les acteurs, et quels sont leurs rôles? Quelles sont les fonctions sociales et politiques de la diaspora?

On y trouvera ensuite, sur la base de cette analyse, un paradigme théorique des diasporas qui devrait permettre aux spécialistes d'aller au-delà de la recherche descriptive et de définir les différents types de diaspora ainsi que leurs dynamiques respectives. La typologie proposée devrait permettre, notamment dans la recherche comparative sur les différentes diasporas, de dégager des différences et des similitudes structurelles d'une importance critique pour les questions et l'action sociales dans ce domaine.

MIGRACIÓN DE LA DIÁSPORA: AMBIGÜEDADES
EN LA DEFINICIÓN Y PARADIGMA TEÓRICO

La migración de la diáspora es uno de los distintos tipos de migración que puede aumentar considerablemente a principios del Siglo XXI. Este artículo encara las diversas ambigüedades que existen en torno a la migración de la diáspora con miras a desarrollar un mecanismo teórico significativo para una mejor comprensión de los procesos pertinentes.

El término diáspora ha adquirido un amplio significado semántico. Ahora comprende toda una serie de grupos tales como refugiados políticos, residentes extranjeros, trabajadores invitados, inmigrantes, expulsados, minorías étnicas y raciales y comunidades de ultramar. Con mayor frecuencia, las personas desplazadas que sienten, mantienen e inventan o reviven una conexión con su hogar anterior utilizan este término. Los conceptos de diáspora incluyen una historia de dispersión, mitos y recuerdos del lugar de origen, alienación en el país de acogida, deseo de retornar eventualmente – que puede ser ambivalente, escatológico o utópico – el apoyo constante en el lugar de origen, y una identidad colectiva definida por la relación antedicha.

Este artículo examina cuatro cuestiones fundamentales: ¿Cómo se vincula la teoría de la diáspora con otras cuestiones teóricas? ¿En que difiere la migración de la diáspora de otros tipos de migración? ¿Quiénes son los actores y cuáles sus papeles? ¿Cuáles son las funciones sociales y políticas de la diáspora?

Basándose en este análisis, se presenta un paradigma teórico sobre las diásporas para permitir a los estudiosos ir más allá de la investigación descriptiva e identificar distintos tipos de diásporas y la dinámica que las diferencia. Al recurrir a una tipología propuesta, especialmente la investigación comparativa de las distintas diásporas, fue posible concentrarse en las diferencias y similitudes estructurales que pueden ser cruciales para los procesos sociales concernidos.