

## **International Relations and Diaspora**

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### **Abstract**

Diasporas are dispersed ethnic or national groups across different countries. Diasporas have a unique role in international relations because they find themselves in between two countries, sharing in two cultures, having an emotional investment in two nations, and preserving social connections in two societies. They have influenced international politics since ancient times and they continue to do so today. Diasporas are non-state actors that interact with state actors, primarily their host state – the state they currently live in – and their homeland – their country of origin.

### **Introduction**

Diasporas, in the present context, are not simply groups of people who share the same national origin, live outside their country of birth, and wish to remain tied to their place and culture of origin. Such transnational links are common but generally focus on maintaining family, religious, and cultural links and are not particularly political. Sometimes, however, a leader or political movement will cultivate a particular sense of diaspora consciousness or commitment so as to advance a specific political agenda. The Croatian diaspora, for example, was “imagined” or “invented” in the 1990s in response to a specific set of opportunities and threats associated with the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Globalization, with its inexpensive communications and ease of travel, has made this type of transnational mobilization more attractive and has multiplied the access points for local political contests. Diaspora politics takes advantage of the ability to mobilize in and across multiple national settings and to leverage the comparative advantages of different locations. One set of political tasks (e.g., fundraising, public relations, lobbying) may take place in one country while another set of tasks (electoral or military campaigns, mass mobilization) may take place in another.

### **Diaspora in International Relations**

International politics speaks of political boundaries which is an important idea of neorealism. Even the classification of countries on various bases is normal in the contemporary world. International relations theories have used the modernist theory and theoretical pluralism in international politics. Foreign policy and its strategies are related to the concept of control. It makes the relation between other countries peace, coalition, diplomatic relations, implementation of nuclear status, political support etc. The democratic foreign policy talks about the value of democracy and the non-democratic foreign policy inter-relates the most collective strategy ability in the inexperienced democratic foreign policy making. The emphasis on democratization as a tenet of foreign policy had, however, generally been on liberation and not on control. The study of diaspora nowadays constitutes a growing intellectual industry, increasing recognition of the importance of diaspora in international affairs. The theorization of diaspora in international relation theories like realism, liberal institutionalism, constructivism and post-colonialism pay attention to the potential of diaspora in its theoretical tenets.

To talk about realism, there is no singular definition of the same. However there are common attributes in all definitions. Propounded by Hobbes, Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz there are some

core assumptions of realism, i.e., state is a unitary actor in an anarchical world. The obsession with state centrism and anarchy leaves no space for the diasporic community as an actor. In fact as states subsume unitary identity, the domestic abroad gets neglected as a component of the state which can exert influence even after remaining outside the boundary of the state.

Constructivism is another theory which can be utilized to understand the activities of the international diaspora. To familiarize with this theory, constructivism holds that if structures shape the behavior of social and political actors, then normative and material structures are also as important as material structure. The understanding of non-material structure's influence on actors' identity is important as interests are related to identity. However, according to constructivism structure and agent are mutually constituted. Normative and ideational structures can influence identity and interest but they are also dependent on the knowledgeable practice of the actors. Thus it appears that constructivism offers space to theoretical conceptualization of international diaspora as the same is concerned with identity and interest. Constructivism helps to understand the identity based activities of the international diaspora.

### **Usefulness of Diaspora in International Relations**

**Promote trade:** They help to promote trade across national boundaries by acting as middlemen by providing market information and consumer preferences in both host and origin countries.

**FDI:** They help their home country through their implicit method of attracting foreign direct investments (FDI).

**Instruments of exchange:** They serve as instruments for knowledge exchanges, transfer of skills and technology between their host and origin countries.

**Economic development:** Diasporas have been contributing to the development of their home countries through the sending of remittances, as well as managing businesses in the latter. The Diaspora helps in poverty alleviation at household level though remittances that are being sent to their relatives.

**Promote soft power:** Diasporas promote the image and culture of their homeland. Thus they act as a tool to display soft power of a nation. Soft power is the ability to affect others in order to acquire the planned outcomes through attraction, instead of coercion or the use of force.

**Promote cooperation:** Diasporas promote friendship and cooperation between the host and origin country through their personal contacts and networks.

### **Conclusion**

The process of diaspora is speedily emerging as one of the forces towards development in the globalizing world. Diasporas abroad amass human and financial capital for the economic and social development of their host communities. In this era of globalization where distance is diminishing, contacts are ever increasing the role international diaspora has increased many folds in the international system. International migration has shown tremendous increase in the last few decades and therefore, their role in political, economic, cultural and other aspects of international relations is growing. Diaspora is a productive as well as counter-productive. Diaspora has engaged itself with the home country while being the citizen of the country of settlement. Diaspora has been maintaining financial and political networks in the homeland and host land. In the last few decades, diaspora has become a vital element for the making of foreign policy. This paradigm shift has led to engaging with the diaspora. Foreign policy is the political interaction among the states which is complex and dynamic where that a state involves pursuing relations with other state and non-state actors outside the scope of its own jurisdiction. Foreign policy is a dynamic and comprehensive

design based on knowledge and experience for fostering relations of government with other countries.

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