

# Theorizing Diaspora: Perspectives on “Classical” and “Contemporary” Diaspora

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## ABSTRACT

Cohen (1997) employed the term “classical” diaspora in reference to the Jews. Indeed, a vast corpus of work recognizes the Jewish people as examples of quintessential diasporic groups. However, a broader conceptualization of the term diaspora allows for the inclusion of immigrant communities that would be otherwise sidelined in the conventional literature on diaspora.

This study is therefore a departure from the traditional diasporic literature, which tends to use the Jewish Diaspora as the archetype. It favours, rather, the classification of three principal broad historical waves in which the Jewish Diaspora can be interpreted as part of a classical period. The historicizing of diasporization for the purpose of this paper is achieved by an empirical discussion of the three major historical waves that influenced the diasporic process throughout the world: the Classical Period, the Modern Period, and the Contemporary or Late-modern Period.

The paper discusses these three critical phases in the following manner: first, reference is made to the Classical Period, which is associated primarily with ancient diaspora and ancient Greece. The second historical phase analyses diaspora in relation to the Modern Period, which can be interpreted as a central historical fact of slavery and colonization. This section can be further subdivided into three large phases: (1) the expansion of European capital (1500-1814), (2) the Industrial Revolution (1815-1914), and (3) the Interwar Period (1914-1945). The final major period of diasporization can be considered a Contemporary or Late-modern phenomenon. It refers to the period immediately after World War II to the present day, specifying the case of the Hispanics in the United States as one key example. The paper

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outlines some aspects of the impact of the Latin American diaspora on the United States, from a socio-economic and politico-cultural point of view.

While the Modern and Late-modern periods are undoubtedly the most critical for an understanding of diaspora in a modern, globalized context, for the purpose of this paper, more emphasis is placed on the latter period, which illustrates the progressive effect of globalization on the phenomenon of diasporization. The second period, the Modern Phase is not examined in this paper, as the focus is on a comparative analysis of the early Classical Period and the Contemporary or Late-modern Period.

The incorporation of diaspora as a unit of analysis in the field of international relations has been largely neglected by both recent and critical scholarship on the subject matter. While a growing number of studies focus on the increasing phenomenon of diasporic communities, from the vantage of social sciences, the issue of diaspora appears to be inadequately addressed or ignored altogether. Certain key factors present themselves as limitations to the understanding of the concept, as well as its relevance to the field of international relations and the social sciences as a whole.

This paper is meant to clarify some aspects of the definition of diaspora by critiquing the theories in the conventional literature, exposing the lacunae in terms of interpretation of diaspora and in the final analysis, establishing a historiography that may be useful in comparing certain features of “classical” diaspora and “contemporary” diaspora. The latter part of the paper is intended to provide illustrations of a contemporary diasporic community, using the example of Hispanics in the United States.

## INTRODUCTION: DEFINING AND THEORIZING DIASPORA

The emphasis or adherence to the statecentric model in the realm of international relations has contributed to the sidelining of entities known as diaspora as a valuable unit of analysis. In this sense, the nation state cannot account for certain features in the emerging global political economy, which can perhaps be better explained by using diaspora.

Furthermore, pervading Eurocentric analyses have proven inimical to portraying diaspora in their significant role as transnational actors and major contributors to the international political economy. As such, Third World diaspora are not accurately represented and Western Europe is to a large extent not associated with being a diaspora.

The third limitation of interpreting diaspora addressed in this paper relates to the reference to Jews as the quintessential or archetypal diasporic group, in deference to other diasporic communities that can be considered diaspora but only

from a particular perspective. That perspective is further elucidated later in the paper but points nonetheless to a broader conceptualization of the term diaspora.

Numerous analyses (Clifford, 1994: 304; Chaliand and Rageau, 1995; Cohen, 1997: 22-27; Van Hear, 1998: 5; Gillespie et al., 1999) of diaspora make reference to Safran’s (1991) extensive work on the common features of a diaspora. They have become the basic tenets used to assess whether an ethnic group is in fact diasporic in nature. These basic characteristics include:

1. Dispersal from an original “centre” to two or more foreign regions;
2. Retention of a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland including its location, history, and achievements;
3. The belief that they are not – and perhaps never can be – fully accepted in their host societies and so remain partly separate;
4. The idealization of the putative ancestral home and the thought of returning when conditions are more favourable;
5. The belief that all members should be committed to the maintenance or restoration of the original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and
6. A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history, and the belief in a common fate.

Very few modern-day diaspora ascribe to all of the aforementioned characteristics. Safran did not intend that all of the above criteria should apply in order for a group to be considered a diaspora. It is immediately apparent that certain features present problems for certain groups and that the sustainability of these features over time is questionable.

The limitations of interpreting diaspora can thus be overcome by approaching the phenomenon from a post-colonial perspective. The preceding is not meant to suggest that the Jewish Diaspora as a framework of reference is altogether useless or irrelevant, but rather that its salience in understanding diaspora can be explained by historicizing the phenomenon in the following manner:

1. The Jewish Diaspora is incorporated as part of a Classical Period, the first of three principal broad historical waves;
2. The second classification refers to the Modern Period; and finally
3. The Contemporary or Late-modern Period.

The major empirical discussion in this paper centres on both the Classical and Contemporary or Late-modern Period. Even though Caribbean and Latin

American diaspora are undoubtedly situated within the Modern Period, the paper limits the analysis to the diasporization of Hispanics in the contemporary United States.

## CLASSICAL DIASPORA

The term “diaspora” has its origins in Greek history and civilization. Cohen (1997: 2) defines the word diaspora in relation to the Greeks in the following manner: “for the Greeks, the expression was used to describe the colonization of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean in the Archaic period (800-600 BC)”. The word diaspora is a derivation of the Greek verb *diasperein*, which means to sow or scatter about and the Greek preposition *dia*, meaning through or over. According to Mandelbaum (2000: 2), diasporas are “ancient features of human history”, a concept which has virtually become synonymous with Jewish experience; that of the dispersion of the Jews after the Babylonian exile.

In fact, Chaliand and Rageau (1995: 4) are precise when they state that “dispersion seems to be the hallmark of the Jewish people”. In the absence of a suitable theoretical framework for analysing contemporary diaspora, a sizeable body of literature exclusively makes reference to the Jewish case, thereby establishing it as the archetypal diaspora. This paper departs from using the Jewish experience as the blueprint for interpreting diaspora as a concept. It chooses, rather, to situate the Jews as part of a Classical Period, associated primarily with ancient diaspora and ancient Greece in particular. One of the major flaws of diaspora theory is the reliance on the Jewish case as the illustration par excellence of whom or what is a diaspora, regardless of time and space. Perhaps the task of defining diaspora would be far less problematic if the Jewish Diaspora ceased to be used as the norm for determining which groups are relegated to a minority, transnational community, diaspora, or other grouping. Yet even in modern-day analyses of diasporic communities, these works continue to find currency in utilizing the Jewish Diaspora as a reference for the archetypal diaspora (Cohen, 1997; Chaliand and Rageau, 1995; Green, 1998).

While this conceptualization may be useful in order to position the various contending debates as to what specifically constitutes a diaspora, it may be less suitable in the application of criteria that define Jews in relation to other ethnic communities. Yet this idea is not being articulated in the current literature on diaspora. It is not altogether surprising, however, that the Jewish diasporic experience has emerged as a case apart from other transnational communities. Indeed, one of the principal reasons behind this can be traced to biblical times, for historically the Jews considered themselves to be a chosen people. While

exile, trauma, and collective identity are features of the Jewish Diaspora, they are not necessarily features of all other diasporic groups, particularly in reference to contemporary diaspora.

Quite apart from the Jews, other diasporic communities form part of this Classical Period. Similarly, the Armenian diaspora forms part of a typology of “Victim diasporas” which Cohen (1997) classifies in addition to the Jews and the Africans. Armenians were largely dispersed because of the numerous conflicts between the Byzantine Empire and Armenia itself. The exodus of Armenians therefore began as early as the end of the eleventh century (1080) and resulted in the settlement of Armenians in Bulgaria, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, the Ukraine, Hungary, Moldavia, and even western Anatolia (Chaliand and Rageau 1995: 77). Again, Armenians were dispersed even further:

In the Middle Ages, from the tenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century, there is evidence of a continuous presence of Armenian communities of traders and craftsmen (especially masons and architects) in western Europe: Venice, Marseilles, Paris, Bruges – from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries – and London (Chaliand and Rageau 1995: 78).

Throughout this ancient period, diasporas existed in the form of the Moors in Spain, as well as the Gypsies at the beginning of the fourteenth century in various parts of Europe—Crete, Corfu, Serbia, Wallachia, Transylvania, Zagreb or Croatia and Bohemia (Chaliand and Rageau, 1995: 97). During this pre-modern period, Cohen (1995: 1) cites “other ancient civilizations uninfluenced by the Judaeo-Hellenist world – notably the Mesopotamian, Inca, Indus, and Zhou empires” which likewise “generated their own migratory myths and their own population flows...”. Greeks were also an ancient diaspora, dispersed primarily for trading reasons. According to Chaliand and Rageau (1995: XVIII), “under Rome and during the Hellenistic period the Greeks experienced both an intellectual and a trading dispersion”.

In contrast to the Classical Period, the Contemporary Period covers a much wider range of diasporic communities and their reasons for dispersal are far more numerous than the Classical Period, particularly in relation to globalization. The next section explores the Contemporary or Late-modern period as part of a critical historical wave in the definition of the diasporization process.

## CONTEMPORARY OR LATE-MODERN DIASPORAS

This period covers the end of World War II (1945) to present date. In theorizing diaspora, conventional studies on the topic do not grasp the full contemporary reality of the phenomenon. It can be argued that the principal diaspora theorists

fall into two major categories. The work of Safran (1991), Clifford (1994), Chaliand and Rageau (1995), Said and Simmons (1996), Cohen (1995, 1997), Green (1998), King and Melvin (1999), Gillespie et al. (1999) rely heavily on the Jewish experience as a starting point for examining the phenomenon. Recent studies cited below are more suitable for a discussion of the so-called “new” or contemporary diaspora.

The second category essentially comprises a small corpus that explores diaspora issues in a novel manner. This body of literature explores the commingling of contemporary diaspora with issues of transnationalism and globalization. Included in this grouping are Castles and Miller (1998), Laguerre (1998), Papastergiadis (1998), Van Hear (1998), Mahler (2000), Mandelbaum (2000), Mittelman (2000), Cornwell and Stoddard (2001), and others.

Not since the period immediately after World War II has there been such massive population shifts. Nonetheless, it is far more complex, diverse, and global than previous movements (Cohen, 1995: 3). It is, therefore, a grave misconception to believe that international migration is an:

... invention of the late twentieth century... Migrations have been part of human history from the earliest times. However, international migration has grown in volume and significance since 1945, and most particularly since the mid-1980s (Castles and Miller, 1998: 4).

Diaspora is largely a phenomenon created either when ethnic groups “migrate of their own free will, leaving to study, work or join their family abroad” (Kasasa, 2001: 29), and as such, need not arise only as a result of a crisis or traumatic event. Within recent times, and emerging as a result of the end of the Cold War, the collapse of communism has given rise to a number of precarious political situations and pressures that have triggered a massive exodus of peoples from many different regions.

This final part of the historiography marks a period essentially characterized by the forces of “mass migration, decolonization, emancipatory social movements” (Papastergiadis, 1998: 121). Thus, the post-Cold War period triggered movements of displaced peoples and refugees on a scale not seen since the chaos immediately following the end of World War II (Cohen, 1995: 3).

In the aftermath of the war in Europe, great chaos reigned both in terms of political disorganization and economic collapse, problems which were “greatly exacerbated by large-scale population movements” (Barraclough, 1985). In fact, the major transfers of population in Europe at the end of World War II were of three kinds: people who had been forced into Nazi Germany to work during the

war and afterwards resettled in their own country from states overrun by the Third Reich during the war and from territory taken from Germany in 1948, and Russians and Poles settled in territories annexed or occupied at the end of the war, from which the original inhabitants either fled or were expelled (Barraclough, 1985).

During the post-World War II period until 1959, numerous former Asian and Middle Eastern colonies acquired independence. From 1960 to 1989 many of the developing countries – 41 in Africa, 11 in the Caribbean, and 14 Asian countries – gained independence. These movements provided the impetus for people from former colonial territories to move to the metropolis of the colonizer (Cohen and Kennedy, 2000: 85).

Contemporary diaspora are complex and the reason for their formation, manifold. This period is characterized by dislocation and fragmentation. Whereas classical diaspora are to a large extent directly associated with exile, as is the case of the Jews, the Palestinians, the Africans, and the Armenians, dispersal to overseas territories need not imply a decisive break with the homeland nor is the uprooting of the diasporic group considered permanent in relation to contemporary diaspora.

Diasporization and globalization can thus be considered as coeval processes, with globalization having the most impact on the contemporary phase. The most obvious example of the diasporic process becoming globalized is through “the profound technological revolution that has occurred in telecommunications, and particularly information technology” which has “created the conditions for increased cross-border communication and exchange, and, therefore, laid the basis for an expansion of economic transactions among states on a global scale” (Hall and Benn, 2000: 24). The following is a useful framework of analysis for examining the relevance of globalization in relation to diaspora by:

1. examining important technological developments in telecommunications and transport;
2. employing a post-colonial/post-modernist perspective in relation to the declining relevance of the Westphalian form of sovereignty; and
3. analysing globalization in relation to the nation state, as it has become widely accepted that “various developments in the post-World War II global economy have led many scholars of International Relations to contend that borders are eroding” (Goff, 2000: 533).

The manner in which globalization has been most beneficial to diasporas lies in the fact that technological advances in communications and transport foster the

maintenance of even closer ties between home and host countries. Numerous recent analyses give an account of the role of transport, technology, and communications in facilitating the diasporic process. Stalker's (1994: 32) extensive study of migration remarks that "the proliferation of global communications has also reduced the 'emotional distance' for potential migrants by enabling them to keep in touch with this home country while away". It is in this sense that globalization has shrunk distances, as the telephone, fax, Internet, and availability of more flights between homeland and host countries, as well as the prospect of less costly travel are important tools of the diasporic trade. These advances in technology make "family- and kin-based economic transactions" easier and safer (Cohen, 1997: 160).

The fact that "globalization has been occurring through computer networks, telephony, electronic mass media, and the like", permits persons in the diaspora "to have nearly immediate contact with each other, irrespective of their location on earth and regardless of the state borders that might lie between them" (Baylis and Smith, 1997). Appadurai (1996) pays attention to the role of the media in the globalizing process: "globalization has shrunk the distances between elites, shifted key relations between producers and consumers, broken many links between labour and family life, obscured the lines between temporary locales and imaginary national attachments".

Apart from the media, improvements in transportation and telecommunications have facilitated the diasporic process by permitting migrants to maintain closer and cheaper contact with their homeland in a manner that was not possible in the past. As a result, the remittances that diasporic communities send to the homeland impact favourably on their home economies. Considerable attention is now being paid to the effects of these remittances "particularly as they have grown in volume and as globalization and integration have effected their own profound changes on migration" (Bate, 2001). The focus of numerous articles and research has been on the effects of remittances as a feature of diasporic economics. A few examples are Maingot (1991), Ferguson (1992), Graham and Hartlyn (1996), Gillespie et al. (1999), Bate (2001), and Orozco (2002, 2003).

The historical mapping of migration and subsequent diasporization from the early classical period to the twenty-first century hinges on issues of "political conflict, global communications and transport systems" which have "stimulated immense and complex flows of displaced persons, labour migrants and skilled professionals" (Cohen, 1995).

In the context of globalization, there are examples of "opportunity-seeking" diasporas, whose displacement arises due to situations that are neither traumatic



nor associated with disaster. Pursuit of work and the seizing of opportunities to study and travel abroad, facilitated by the globalizing process, are sufficient reasons to stimulate the diasporic process in the contemporary context. It is imperative, therefore, that the distinction be made that these modern-day diasporas are formed not only through intense political conflict, but as a result of opportunity. One of the best illustrations of this is the case of the newly formed states that have emerged from the former Soviet Union. While the impetus for the creation of diasporic communities was essentially a result of the pursuit of more viable economic activities or opportunities to further studies, these new independent states have burgeoned simply because of independence and democracy.

Many of the more recent global social movements of diasporic communities are indeed the by-product of political upheaval and the collapse of political systems like the Russian Federation. Eurasia is a primary example.

Many Eurasian states have come to use the label "diaspora" in speaking of several distinct groups: immigrants who came to western Europe or North America in the last century, political exiles who fled abroad during the communist period, and communities that were separated from the homeland in 1991 by changes in interstate boundaries (King and Melvin, 1999: 118).

Diasporic movements in the twenty-first century evoke the precarious state of world affairs. According to Van Hear (1998: 8), the majority of these shifts "drawn from the last quarter of this century also demonstrates the recent volatility of the world migration order".

The diasporic movements that have been gaining increasing attention are those affecting the Caribbean and Latin America. All across Europe, in England, Spain, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands, substantial diasporic communities from the Caribbean and Latin America are leaving the stamp of their diasporic identity. This makes Latin America an interesting case study in the examination of diaspora, for it is simultaneously a recipient territory and an exporter of diasporas. The final section of this paper looks precisely at the impact of Latin American diasporas on the host country of the United States in terms of cultural, political, and socio-economic influences.

## THE LATINIZATION OF THE CONTEMPORARY UNITED STATES

Latin Americans have been exerting pressures of an economic, social, political, and cultural nature on the United States and on their homeland territories over a sustained period. The current demographic reality projects that approximately

one in four Americans will be of Hispanic descent by the year 2050 (Larmer, 1999: 16).

Despite their great diversity and the limitations of ascribing a homogeneous label to such a heterogeneous grouping, the term “Hispanic” encompasses a diasporic community that continues to have profound effects on the United States. These effects can be measured in a variety of ways and permeate many aspects of American life on a daily basis.

This final section of the paper briefly sketches some of the myriad ways in which Latin American diasporas have influenced the social fabric of the United States. Recent studies point to the fact that Latinos are increasingly becoming involved in politics. As with many contemporary diaspora:

They have long exerted their influence: they have lobbied in their adopted countries for policies favourable to the homeland. But now something new is taking place: diasporas are increasingly exerting influence on the politics of the countries they have physically, but not emotionally, abandoned (*The Economist*, 2003a: 41).

Another effect of Latin American diasporization on the United States can be analysed through the role of traditional American mainstream media in fuelling images of a monolithic Hispanic identity. However, the media’s portrayal of certain aspects of Hispanic identity and culture are increasingly at variance with reality. Dissatisfaction with the manner in which the Hispanic diaspora have been depicted in the media has led Hispanics to define that role themselves and use other vehicles to convey a more acceptable and accurate picture of the multiplicity of groups that Hispanics truly represent. The Hispanic diaspora contribute to reshaping the contours of America and therefore “widespread interest in the Hispanic market is similarly evident in the general media and marketing industry at large, which has seen an explosion of new magazines, publications and media initiatives geared to Latinas” (Dávila, 2001: 51).

Univision’s relative success vis-à-vis Telemundo can be explained through its promotion of “Latinidad as an ‘ethnoscape’, a diasporic community transcending the United States and Latin American nation-states” (Appadurai, 1996).

In Dávila’s (2001: 42) seminal work on the marketability of the Latino diaspora, the author is critical of the traditional manner in which Hispanic identities are conceptualized, exoticized, and thereby relegated to a marketable “other”. In fact, Dávila asserts that Hispanic networks have played a transnational role, reinforcing the diasporic nature of the US Latin American expatriate community. Dávila (2001: 218) argues that ethnic marketing and more specifically “Hispanic

marketing responds to and reflects the fears and anxieties of mainstream US society about its ‘others’, thus reiterating the demands for an idealized, good, all-American citizenship in their constructed commercial images and discourses”.

A remarkable development is that the Hispanic market is increasingly becoming attractive to the dominant Anglo community as well, so that non-Hispanics are also attracted to traditionally “Latin” products, “challenging the assumption that Hispanic culture is to be used exclusively to market to Hispanics” (Dávila, 2001: 55). Apart from their importance in economic terms, the increased focus of the Hispanic diaspora as a major consumer grouping correlates to their increasing prominence as a whole. Realizing their worth as consumers “does attest to their growing power and visibility...” (Dávila, 2001: 192).

Nowhere is this heightened power and visibility more pronounced than in the example of California’s Silicon Valley. It is an astounding example of what the future society of the United States may look like both demographically and in economic terms (Breslau, 2000: 42). Breslau (2000) is accurate in stating that “this huge influx of hyperachieving techno-migrants, combined with a swelling Hispanic population, has – in just over a generation – transformed Silicon Valley into a ‘majority minority’ microcosm of America’s racial future”. Silicon Valley is a laboratory not only for what society will look like in the years ahead, but an example of technological skill and the rise of subaltern communities, albeit of primarily Chinese and Indian immigrants.

Within recent times techno-achievers in the diaspora have emerged as an invaluable resource to their countries of origin. As such, “successful entrepreneurs of Indian, Israeli, Chinese, Taiwanese, Mexican, and Pakistani origin who live in the United States, Europe, or the Gulf states have also become important investors in their home countries” (Naím, 2002). These diasporic entrepreneurs are critical assets who in addition to injecting money into their homeland, bring “an infusion of entrepreneurial spirit and skills that their home countries often sorely lack” (Naím, 2002). They establish several operations in their native lands such as “subsidiaries, joint ventures, subcontracting arrangements, or other business operations” (Naím, 2002).

Dávila (2001: 7) makes a valuable assessment of not only the effect of the rapidly “growing US Latino community, but also other segments of US society, as well as global markets worldwide”. An inescapable feature of America’s sizeable Hispanic population is the fact that they generate billions of dollars in the advertising, marketing, and the entertainment industries. Now “a tiny elite of Mexican companies is venturing north with its eye on America’s huge Hispanic population” (Contreras, 2003: 34). According to Televisa’s head, Azcárraga, “the 38 million Hispanics living north of the Rio Grande now command a pur-

chasing power at least equal to the \$915 billion gross domestic product of Mexico, a nation of 101 million” (Contreras, 2003: 34).

This entrepreneurial activity is a product of the conflation of globalization with transnationalism. Mexican television magnate, Televisa, is targeting Mexicans at home and abroad, as two-thirds of the US Hispanic population alone is of Mexican descent. Mexican investment in the US Hispanic diaspora “has jumped from \$146 million to more than \$7 billion” (Contreras, 2003: 34), corroborating that Hispanic consumers have become one of the most important target groups.

Two years ago, Televisa astutely increased its shares in Univision, “now the dominant Spanish-language network in the United States, from 6 to 15 per cent of its shares” (Contreras, 2003: 35). There is growing evidence that Latin American companies are targeting Hispanic consumers in the United States.

Mexico’s CEMEX Corporation propelled itself to the ranks of the third largest global cement manufacturer when it purchased an American company, South-down Inc. of Houston, in the fall of 2000 (Contreras, 2003: 35). Similarly, “Mexico City-based fruit-drink company Jumex has tripled sales to American consumers since 1993” (Contreras, 2003: 35).

Latin American diasporas are, therefore, not only disenfranchised, disadvantaged groups. Within recent times they have experienced considerable social mobility. An overwhelming number of them are professionals and in the Colombian case in Miami, they are not concentrated in sprawling ghettos where unemployment is rampant and education levels low. On the contrary, “legions of professionals are moving into affluent suburbs” (Contreras, 2001). As a result, membership in the Colombian-American Chamber of Commerce dramatically doubled over an 18-month period prompting political scientist, Eduardo Gamarra, to surmise that “Colombians are basically subsidizing Miami” (Contreras, 2001). The impact of high-density Hispanic communities in South Florida is being registered at all levels – politically, socio-economically, culturally, linguistically, and even in terms of culinary influences.

Wherever there are large concentrations of Hispanics, “these new arrivals have an enormous economic effect” (*The Economist*, 2003b). Latinos in the mid-west continue to provide labour to the tourism and hotel industry, restaurants, construction industry, factories, and the agricultural-based industries. Based on a study conducted in 2000 by the Hispanic American Center for Economic Research (HACER), a Latino advocacy group, it was “estimated that undocumented workers (most of them Mexican) added \$1.5 billion to Minnesota’s gross state product and contributed more than \$1 billion in state tax revenue”

(*The Economist*, 2003b). Their willingness to accept low-paying, strenuous jobs have prevented the total collapse of south-east Minnesota's meat-packing industry in much the same way that Dominicans have sustained the garment industry in the state of New York.

## CONCLUSION

The manner in which diaspora has been theorized reflects gaps in knowledge in the field. The decision to historicize the phenomenon under three broad periods provides for the recasting of diaspora to encompass much wider criteria. Classical diasporas become associated with antiquity, ancient Greece, and Jewish exilic experience.

Contemporary diasporas, on the other hand, it can be argued, are more dynamic and unpredictable, as the processes of dislocation and regeneration are often played out in the context of globalization. The focus of diasporas and their vital role in the emerging global political economy can no longer cease to be recognized. Diasporas, as a contemporary phenomenon, have more salience beyond the global security issue, although more often than not, social scientists continue to examine the concept in terms of potential for ethnic conflict and their global implications (Castles and Miller, 1998: 2; Choucri, 2002).

This paper highlights the fact that "over the last five centuries mass migrations have played a major role in colonialism, industrialisation, the emergence of nation states and the development of the capitalist world market" (Castles and Miller, 1998: 283). In the case of the modern-day diaspora, however, the phenomenon is further fanned by political conflict, economic instability, opportunity, and globalization.

The Latin American diaspora has become an invaluable cultural resource for the United States and throughout the world where they have settled. Nowhere has this registered more than in the cultural industries and in the production and commodification of Latin sound such as salsa and the merengue, proving that Latinos have a cultural, as well as a political and socio-economic space in the host societies in which they settle.

The Latin American diaspora has usurped the role of European immigrants arriving in America at the turn of the century. Their arrival, along with the addition of various immigrants around the world, have spawned global cities such as Miami, New York, Los Angeles, and many others which can be considered "ground zero for a demographic upheaval that is unfolding across America" (Larmer, 1999: 14). The social transformations taking place in America due to

migration are ultimately reworking the geographical definition of the Caribbean and Latin American space beyond a mere question of demographics.

Diaspora is of great importance to both host and home countries. There are many benefits to be derived from the level of connectedness between the homeland and the diaspora. As such, the implications for policy making in the sending country, particularly in the case of small, developing states is a burning issue. Government planners and policy makers need to be far more proactive vis-à-vis their diasporic communities in a variety of ways. One example is in the channeling of the economic resources of the overseas diaspora to encourage investment and entrepreneurial activity in the homeland. In the case of diasporic tourism, as the migrant communities maintain contact with the homeland, a significant proportion of tourists to the sending societies are often from the overseas diaspora. Yet many governments still do not have a specific tourism development plan targeting their overseas diasporic communities.

With respect to the host country, special provisions need to be made for permanent settlers from abroad. This includes facilitating banking and financial services to enhance investment opportunities and business ventures, in addition to reducing the cost of remitting money to the homeland. In addition to promoting new economic initiatives, the formulation of immigration policy and regulation of nationality and citizenship laws also need to be addressed. In relation to Latin American diasporic communities, the question of bilingual education has been at the heart of debate for some time, as demographic numbers indicate a sharper increase in the number of Hispanics, pointing to America's growing linguistic diversity. These are only a few of the implications of diaspora for policy making in sending and receiving societies.

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## THÉORISER LA DIASPORA: PERSPECTIVES SUR LA DIASPORA « CLASSIQUE » ET LA DIASPORA « CONTEMPORAINE »

Cohen (1997) a utilisé l'expression diaspora « classique » pour parler des Juifs et, de fait, un vaste corpus reconnaît que le peuple juif est un parfait exemple de peuple comportant des groupes diasporiques. Mais une élaboration conceptuelle plus large du mot « diaspora » permet d'y inclure des groupes d'immigrants qui ne seraient pas pris en compte dans les ouvrages classiques sur la diaspora.

Cette étude s'écarte donc des ouvrages habituels sur la question, qui présentent la diaspora juive comme l'archétype. Elle opte plutôt pour la classification de trois grandes vagues historiques, la diaspora juive pouvant être interprétée comme faisant partie de la période classique. L'historicisation du processus diasporique, pour les besoins de cette étude, est atteinte grâce à une discussion empirique des trois grandes vagues historiques qui ont influencé le processus diasporique dans le monde : la période classique, la période moderne et la période contemporaine ou période moderne contemporaine.

L'article présente comme suit les trois étapes critiques: il fait tout d'abord référence à la période classique, principalement associée à la diaspora antique et à la Grèce antique. La deuxième étape historique analyse la diaspora dans le contexte de la période moderne, que l'on peut interpréter comme un fait historique central sur l'esclavage et le colonialisme. Cette partie peut à son tour être subdivisée en trois grandes étapes: (1) l'expansion du capital européen (1500-1814) ; (2) la Révolution industrielle (1815-1914) ; (3) l'entre-deux-guerres (1914-1945), la grande période finale de diasporisation pouvant être considérée comme un phénomène contemporain. Elle commence juste après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et va jusqu'à nos jours, l'exemple le plus marquant étant celui des Hispaniques aux États-Unis. L'article présente certains aspects de l'incidence socioéconomique et politico-culturelle de la diaspora latino-américaine sur les États-Unis.

Si la période moderne et la période moderne contemporaine sont sans aucun doute les plus critiques pour comprendre la diaspora dans un contexte mondialisé, aux fins de cette étude, l'accent est davantage mis sur cette dernière période qui illustre l'effet progressif de la mondialisation sur le phénomène de la diasporisation. La deuxième période, la phase moderne, n'est pas étudiée dans cet article qui procède à une analyse comparée de la période classique ancienne et de la période contemporaine.

Les recherches récentes et critiques sur la question n'ont dans l'ensemble pas introduit la diaspora comme unité d'analyse dans le domaine des relations inter-

nationales. Si un nombre croissant d'études s'intéressent au phénomène de plus en plus fréquent des communautés diasporiques, du point de vue des sciences sociales, la question de la diaspora semble peu étudiée ou totalement ignorée. Certains facteurs clés constituent en eux-mêmes des limites à la compréhension du concept et de sa pertinence dans le domaine des relations internationales ou des sciences sociales dans leur ensemble.

Cet article vise à éclaircir certains aspects de la définition de la diaspora. Il procède pour ce faire à une critique des théories avancées dans les publications classiques sur la question, dénonce des lacunes dans l'interprétation du phénomène diasporique et, dans son analyse finale, établit une historiographie qui pourrait être utile pour comparer certaines caractéristiques de la diaspora « classique » et de la diaspora « contemporaine ». La dernière partie de l'article fournit des illustrations de la communauté diasporique contemporaine à partir de l'exemple de la communauté hispanique aux États-Unis.

## TEORÍA DE LA DIÁSPORA: PERSPECTIVAS SOBRE LA DIÁSPORA “CLÁSICA” Y “CONTEMPORÁNEA”

Cohen (1997) empleó el término de diáspora “clásica” para referirse a los judíos. Por cierto, gran parte de los trabajos de investigación reconoce al pueblo judío como “el” ejemplo de lo que son las diásporas. Sin embargo, una conceptualización más amplia del término diáspora permite incluir comunidades de inmigrantes que de lo contrario hubieran quedado al margen de la literatura convencional sobre la diáspora.

Por consiguiente, este estudio diverge de la literatura de la diáspora tradicional, que tiende a utilizar a la diáspora judía como arquetipo. Más bien está a favor de tres oleadas históricas amplias en las que la diáspora judía puede interpretarse como parte de un periodo clásico. Al historiar la diáspora para los fines de este documento se recurre a una deliberación empírica de tres importantes oleadas históricas que influyeron en el proceso de la diáspora en todo el mundo: el periodo clásico, el periodo moderno, y el periodo contemporáneo o posmoderno.

Este documento analiza estas tres etapas críticas de la siguiente manera: primero, alude al periodo clásico, que se asocia principalmente con la antigua diáspora y la antigua Grecia. La segunda etapa histórica, examina la diáspora con relación al periodo moderno, que puede interpretarse como un hecho histórico central de esclavitud y colonización. Esta sección puede dividirse en tres subcategorías: 1) la ampliación del capital europeo (1500-1814), 2) la Revolución Industrial (1815-1914), y 3) el periodo entre las dos guerras mundiales (1914-1945). El principal periodo final de “diasporización” podría ser el contemporáneo o posmoderno. Ello comprende el periodo consecutivo a la Segunda Guerra Mundial hasta la fecha, especificando el caso de los latinos en los Estados Unidos como otro ejemplo clave. Este documento esboza algunos de los aspectos de las repercusiones de la diáspora latinoamericana en los Estados Unidos, todo ello desde una perspectiva socioeconómica y político-cultural.

Si bien los periodos moderno y posmoderno son, sin lugar a dudas, los más críticos para una comprensión de la diáspora en un contexto moderno y globalizado, a los efectos de este artículo, se hará hincapié en el último periodo, que ilustra el efecto progresivo de la globalización del fenómeno de la diasporización. El segundo periodo, la etapa moderna, no se examina en este documento, puesto que el análisis comparativo se hace entre el periodo clásico y el periodo contemporáneo o posmoderno. La incorporación de la diáspora como unidad de análisis en el ámbito de las relaciones internacionales no se ha tenido en cuenta en los estudios académicos recientes y críticos sobre la cuestión. A pesar de un creciente número de estudios que se centran en

el fenómeno de las comunidades de diáspora en plena expansión, desde la perspectiva de la sociología, las cuestiones de la diáspora no se abordan adecuadamente o, simple y llanamente se ignoran, algunos factores clave resultan ser limitaciones para la comprensión del concepto, como por ejemplo, la pertinencia del ámbito de relaciones internacionales y la sociología en su globalidad.

Este documento tiene por objeto aclarar algunos aspectos de la definición de diáspora al criticar las teorías de la literatura convencional, exponer las lagunas en términos de interpretación de la diáspora y finalmente analizar mediante la historiografía que podría servir para comparar algunas características de la diáspora “clásica” con la “contemporánea”. La parte final de este artículo tiene por objeto ilustrar a la comunidad de diásporas contemporáneas, utilizando como ejemplo a los latinos en los Estados Unidos.