

# Book Reviews

## I

**Ninna Nyberg Sorensen (2007), *Living Across Worlds: Diaspora, Development and Transnational Engagement, Switzerland: International Organization for Migration, Pp. III + 207, ISBN 978-92-9068-404-6.***

The book is a compendium of research papers written by scholars from different disciplines such as Sociology, Development studies, International studies, Anthropology and so on. The eight research papers are based on ethnography, case studies and narratives of the immigrants, who are drawn from different geographical terrains of the world, but mainly focusing on immigrants from Latin American countries to Europe and U.S.A. The editor of the book states that the broad geographical outlook allows for a broader analysis of Diaspora formation, production of transnational social space, and the determinants of trans-national engagements. He further adds that the possible positive and negative influences of such engagements on developing the countries or local communities within them are documented in the following eight chapters.

The first chapter discusses the contemporary definitions and conceptualizations of Diaspora. It has been argued that Diaspora does not emerge solely as a consequence of dispersion, common national ancestry, or simply through any kind of connection. There is a process by which groups are motivated or influenced to become Diasporas. The author argues that the following criteria are essential such as- the level of community consciousness about the needs for a link with the homeland; whether the home-land government is encouraging diasporic identifications or links; the perception of emigrants by the society in the homeland and finally the relationship between homeland and host governments. Such processes are demonstrated by using case studies of the different Central American migrant groups. Finally, it can be inferred that in addition to 'common origin' and 'history', the 'context' is crucial for a migrant group to emerge as a diaspora.

The second chapter approaches the production of trans-national social space through Henri Lefebvre's (1991) distinction between space as practiced, conceived and perceived. The author uses Mexican migration of 1910s to 1940s to the United States as a case study to theorize the production of transnational social space. The third chapter sets out to analyze the contradictory processes of the making and unmaking of transnational communities and diasporic identities. The author challenges the conventional concepts of diaspora and transnational community by using Burundian diaspora in Belgium as a case study. The author shows that the objective position of a diaspora in the host country is not only born out of ethnicity and time of arrival, but also depends on individual political manoeuvring in the transnational political field that shapes diasporic networks and determines the contents of trans-national practices. The fourth chapter maps and examines the determinants of transnational engagements among Nicaraguan migrants in Costa Rica. It is demonstrated that Diaspora form a platform for politics as well as are a location of change. The chapter further shows the evidence of a new transnational political field of action that has to be taken into account in the current political landscape.

The fifth chapter discusses about the transnational engagement of 'return Diaspora' in the homeland with the help of a case study of Somali Diaspora and shows the process of recognition, power relations, opportunities, nation building and gender in the homeland. The sixth chapter challenges the notion of 'return' as a migratory practice and develops the concept of 'revolving returnees' to capture the dynamics between an ideology of return and final homecomings on the one side, and mobile migratory practice on the other. The chapter also explains why 'revolving returnees' maintain continued forms of mobility between Somaliland and the West, and concludes that people need networks, knowledge, money and documents to be able to circulate between Somaliland and the West. The chapter also conveys that the Somalis are prime example of what Roger Rouse called a 'transnational migrant circuit' that is maintained through the circulation of people, money, goods and information (Rouse, 1991:15).

The seventh chapter analyzes transnational family life among Latin American migrants in Europe. The chapter criticizes that the previous studies tend to look at trans-national migration as larger processes of cross-border family relations, but have largely failed to address more closely micro-social processes such as family formation and family transformation-

beyond the simple description of continuous connections across borders. The article argues that one has to go beyond ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2003) which should be substituted with ‘methodological regionalism’ (p.169). The final eighth chapter explains the migration experiences of Peruvians. It argues that the decisions to emigrate as well as the choice of destination countries are determined by migrant’s previous migratory experience and economic and social status in Peruvian society. It has been argued that migrants construct different notions of home in response to the context of reception in their new settings as well as their previous migration experience. The chapter cautions that the policy makers should take into account the dynamics of migratory experiences while framing the policy. In the conclusion, it has an overview of all the research papers and gives food for thoughts for policy makers and practitioners to engage with Diaspora effectively.

The primary critique of the book is that every research paper is intercepted with abstracts of the research papers which are not necessary, because there are abstracts of each chapter in the introduction section itself. Further, while discussing trans-national engagements with the homeland, the authors should have made a comparison or reference to Indian or Chinese diaspora who are engaged with the homeland. The other major criticism could be that though the authors of each chapter are from different discipline, they have not used much of their respective discipline’s concepts. All of them focus on the concepts namely development and transnationalism, of course, the concepts like social capital and cultural capital have been used in the fifth chapter for analysis. None of the research papers discuss macro level impact on a nation state. Instead, all of them focus on micro level impact on community, region or family. Further, none of the research papers provide any kind of statistical data or details about the remittance to homeland. Certainly, it is a qualitative analysis, but, it could have been better if there had been quantitative analysis while discussing remittance flow at least in the first chapter. Over all, it can be stated that this book is a value addition in the growing body of Diaspora literature and scholarship.

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## II

**Andre Solimano (2010). International Migration in the Age of Crisis and Globalization: Historical and Recent Experiences, New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0-521-19425-9.**

In the globalized era, the international migration has become a prominent area of discussion in academic field. The global forces intend to pace up the flow of money, resources, workers and society from one geographical boundaries to another. The international migration of people has been a main feature of the global economy of today and past. For last few decades, the international migration of workers, professionals and ethnic minorities have been increasing due to socio-economic and political pressures. Under such conditions, the migrants' rights and safety remain ambiguous in the destination countries. Therefore, the international migration, both as a process and condition has become challenging and precarious for both country-of-origin and country-of-destination.

The book titled "International Migration in the Age of Crisis and Globalization" is written by Andre`s Solimano, who is the Founder and President of the International Center for Globalization and Development in Santiago, Chile. He discussed the international migration with the historical cases and recent evidences, which comprising of various country-examples from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. He has also conceptualized the push and pull factors of current migration waves and their impacts on the development of source and receiving countries. Furthermore, the migration experiences under the certain time-frame, political structure, cost involved in migration, socio-economic pressures have been analysed. These issues are relevant at the times of economic crises as well as economic growth and prosperity.

The book consists of seven interconnected chapters dealing with theoretical underpinnings and empirical experiences of people and societies. The author has given a detailed introduction of the global migration history and discussed the major characteristics of international migration. The first chapter examined the trends, themes and stratification of international migration, highlighting the major drives and incentives for mobility. It

also discussed the role of visas, walls and deportation to allow easy and smooth immigration of people vis-a-vis to discourage the immigration from sending countries. The chapter also discussed the shift in political power and ideological differences, which plays critical roles in the flow of immigration.

The book examines the eight critical themes of international migration which resulted in the conceptualization of international migration. Such eight critical dimensions underline the international migration in the following areas: contentious or consensus issue, economic prosperity or economic crisis, consequence or mitigation of income disparities, goods and capital or people are important, talented elites or workers are more mobile, economic success in north or economic failure in south, irregular migration or fragmentation of global labour markets, multicultural framework for regulating international migration.

The second chapter examines the reasons for people's movement such as international differences in income, wages, payments, economic cycles, policies, social networks, financial crisis, political instability, civil war, dissolution of empires and so on. The impact of economic development on the standard of living, social services, community safety, health, environment and overall social securities for both individual as well as society as well as the role of development organizations, philanthropy and investment in the communities back home are discussed. It also analysed 'why not' people migrate which includes financial, family, social costs and factors that influence the decision to migrate, other than income.

The third chapter discuss the dilemma of legal ambiguities, denial of rights and restrictions on immigration that result in illegal migration. Immigration creates a sense of insecurity for employment opportunities, natural resources and capital among the natives. Furthermore, the dilemma of migration compatibility and income convergence in view of size of migration, the challenges of brain drain and brain gain in tandem with migration outflow and inflow in the sending and receiving countries respectively were discussed. The impact of economic growth in sending countries in view of talent circulation, remittances, new development effects have been also discussed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter deals with the policy regimes and economic imperatives

that influence the mobility of capital and people. The author discussed the economic liberalization in the first wave of globalization for labour and capital markets during 1870-1914. He talked about the major traits, nature and role of global capital market in the labour-flow from developing countries. He also discussed the de-globalization phase during 1913-1945 wherein economic instability (western and developing countries) and political turmoil (in developed nations bloc) led to restricted immigration flows. Furthermore, the book emphasized the rising debate over nationalism vs. internationalism during 1945-1973, corresponding with the Bretton Woods era. The chapter also talked about the second phase of globalization with mass labour migration towards Western Asian region from South Asia. The chapter analysed how international capital markets have interacted, shifted and reshaped under certain political events and policy regimes. The chapter explained that how the nature of international trade, capital markets and free labour mobility took place from first wave of globalization to second phase of globalization.

The fifth chapter deals with Latin America, which was discussed as a case of economic development, political crisis, poverty and remittance gain. In this chapter, the author discussed the development gaps between Latin America and Europe, which reinforces the formation of New world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Under this broad theme, the author examined the country-cases of Argentina and overtaking immigration in Latin America in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The author also discussed the macro-economic and financial crisis, inconsistent growth and recurrent political crises which led to the emigration from Latin America and the Caribbean towards the one country i.e.; United States. However, since 1990s, the flow of people from Latin America shifted towards Spain and some other European countries. The chapter further discoursed over the socio-economic demographic characteristics of Latin American migration which promulgated the emigration of women and educated persons. It also studied how internal diversity in developmental levels which helped to explain intra-regional migration and the effects of remittances gain for the domestic economies in Latin America.

The sixth chapter focused on the highly talented, highly educated, professionals and entrepreneurially oriented people. The chapter conceptualized the concept of elite, knowledge and talents in the current economic scenario. It raised the debate on the significance of international

political relations, capital markets and value of talents in the sending and receiving countries. The chapter also discussed where the talent moves, where the health and cultural talent moves, why there is mobility of talent in international public organizations, multinational corporations and international banks. The chapter has brought the debate on and what they offer- employment opportunities, earning, rewards, promotion and better career options to talented workers. It critically addressed the debate over the segmentation of labour market based on their skills, knowledge and experiences. This has furthermore raised the discussion over the best vs. worst, talented vs. looser, winner vs. failure under the conditions of economic gains, reward system and profit terms. The chapter has put forth the important topics of return flow of talented persons, talent circulation and outsourcing jobs, unnoticed, unseen and unrecognized (in terms of rewards, earning and employment) contribution of youths in culture and arts in the world.

The seventh chapter dealt with the conclusion inclusive of summary of the salient arguments and critical issues of the book. This chapter advocated a fair and orderly international migration process. The author suggested for global social contracts, legal framework, conventions and recommendations particularly for management of international migration and disseminate the responsibilities to the various agencies of sending and receiving countries. The chapter forecasted the migration scope in the world and proposed to fill up the institutional vacuum through various contracts, policies and programmes. The chapter recommended the state, civil societies and non-govt organisations to bring new policy measures and programmes for more inclusive and accommodative migration approach. It also proposed the international organizations for more proactive, dynamic and effective approach to address the issues and challenges of international migration today.

The book has relevance with the current debate over international migration worldwide. The book provides a detailed historical background of the international migration trends of people with support of the changing political and economic regimes. The book is well organized and executed with detailed reference lists for comprehensive readings related to migration studies.

It also analysed some critical issues such as illegal migration, economic

crisis, brain drain, political turbulence. The book, however, does not discuss the issues of exile, forced migration, women's irregular migration and human trafficking per se. The book does not discuss the critical role of state and international bodies in terms of unskilled workers' migration, human trafficking, absence of human rights and challenges of migrants. . The book did not address the migration history of Africans to the European countries. Nevertheless, the book contributes to the knowledge capital of migration studies and provokes readers to think on capitalism, internationalism and globalization.

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### III

**Rajinder Dudrah (2012). *Bollywood Travels: Culture, diaspora and border crossings in popular Hindi cinema*, London/New York: Routledge, P- 144, ISBN: 0415447402 .**

This book is based on a research journey about a cinematic medium, i.e. Bollywood and its products; its audience and the context of reception. It is a product of years of research and writing by the author and some of its chapters have been published and presented in different scholarly domain in the past few years. The reason for saying this is Rajinder Dudrah is a familiar name for those interested in "cultural studies" and to be more specific "reception studies". From the reception studies perspective, the present monograph can be placed within "the third generation audience studies" (Alasuutari 1999) as it pays equal attention to the texts, audiences and the context of consumption. To say it differently, this is a very timely contribution to the growing body of literature on the analysis of popular culture and its reception.

As the title suggests, *Bollywood Travels* indicates a globalized media phenomenon that crosses multiple geographical territories through distribution of the films to their intended markets and simultaneously through film form and language. The idea of Bollywood as a "culture

industry” (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1993) producing and reproducing popular culture has been claimed and preserved throughout.

Through this scholarly endeavour, the author seeks answers for three key objectives. First “What happens to issues of culture and diaspora in Bollywood cinema, especially as it develops as a cinema and popular culture in the era of globalization?” Second “How far, and to what extent, do some of its films and related products (i.e. starts and related film industry) travel across borders of various kinds (cultural, social, economic and actual nation-state boundaries)?” Last but not the least, “How do audiences take up some of these mediations and incorporate them into their lives beyond mere cinematic spectatorship?”

The book attempts to answer some of these questions by drawing on participant observation, textual analysis, and performance and cultural studies. The author attempts to make sense of the phenomena of Bollywood shows, especially from the viewpoint of the diaspora. The author has developed on the existing body of works done by distinguished scholars on Bollywood, like Madhava Prasad (2003), Ashish Rajadhyakshya (2003, 2009), Vijay Mishra (2008) among others.. These scholars mostly concentrated on the nomenclature of Bollywood, and how it has become the preferred term, replacing earlier descriptors such as Bombay Cinema, Indian Popular Cinema, and Hindi Cinema; its relationship with the hegemonic centre of Hollywood film production and distribution around the world. Moving ahead of these works, Dudrah focuses on the changing representation of diaspora itself as Bollywood films, popular culture, and its cultural industries travel and interact with global cultures and ideas outside India. As Bollywood cinema partly relies on the Indian and wider South Asian diaspora for its monetary growth, it regularly seeks to depict this diaspora in its own special ways.

Through his journey in ‘Bollywood Travels’, the author examines some of Bollywood cinema’s recent travels where part of its pleasure and tensions are about crossing borders of various imaginative and actual kinds. He does so through the textual analysis of some of the recent popular and successful Hindi films, their possible readings and uses by audiences in the diaspora as wider popular culture, and its ‘cultural industry manoeuvres’ in the cotemporary moment of globalization. He states that “in crossing such socio-cultural borders in the production and uses of the films and popular

culture by filmmakers and audiences, this allows the creation of border places and spaces” (p. 99).

Citing the scope for Bollywood travels in future, the author says that we should pay attention to the various industrial, textual and socio-economic dynamics of the movements across Bollywood and its neighboring cinemas. This may include the travel of popular films from the south to the north of India and beyond, where one can focus on the translation of films into different languages, and also the recent phenomenon where some of India’s industry personnel (like Mani Ratnam) who often work on regional and Bollywood films simultaneously.

The Book is divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter the author introduces his work and places it within the larger body of literature on Bollywood and diaspora. The second chapter takes up the issue of border and border crossing in the recent popular films like *Main Hoon Na* and *Veer Zaara* with a special focus on the troubled relationship between India and Pakistan. The third chapter analyzes and discusses the filmic text of *Jhoom Barabar Jhoom* as an interesting take on issues of the diaspora and homeland. The fourth chapter deals with the issues of queer gender and sexuality in the mainstream gay Bollywood film *Dostana*. These four chapters deal with the film form, content, plots and narratives and focus on how pleasure in the texts can be critically read and assessed. Moving ahead the fifth chapter in this book develops the theoretical framework of the ‘haptic urban ethnoscape’ which deals with the multi-sensory ways of interaction between the film text and the audience, in metropolitan locales. Differing from all others, the sixth chapter explores how the star-studded Bollywood shows and the culture industries perform an idea of Bollywood. The last and the concluding chapter (chapter 7) explores the future pathways for the continuation of this spirit of Bollywood through social networking sites like twitter.

One noticeable aspect of this book is, though its chapters vary in their scope, the common thread that binds them together is the concept/idea of Bollywood. The book is neatly written and the concepts/ideas are well developed for a better understanding of the reader. Through his writing, the author takes the reader on a smooth journey of ‘Bollywood in the foreign lands’.

More recent studies like *Bollywood and Globalization* (2011) edited by Mehta and Pandharipande, *Tracing an Indian Diaspora* (2008) edited by Raghuram et.al. mostly focus on the content of the filmic text and how they deal with the idea of diaspora whereas the present study by Dudrah looks beyond the text to understand the interaction between the text and the audience and the presence of Bollywood's culture industry in the life of the diasporic audience outside theatre.

This book is an excellent piece of work and a scholarly contribution to the emerging field of Sociology of Media and Communication. Anyone who is interested in the areas of sociology, diaspora, media and film studies will find it interesting and useful.

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#### IV

**Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff (2009) *Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement*, UK: Cambridge University Press, ISBN-13 978-0511-71938-7**

Migratory birds like the Siberian cranes cover large distances to escape harsh winters and shortage of food during the winter months. Even though they stay for a few months in their host country of migration like India, they are a source of joy as well as a source of income through tourism for locals. In much the same way, humans migrate from their countries of birth for livelihood, better life or to escape conflict or persecution in their homelands. Unlike the birds, however, most of them don't return to their homelands, having settled in their new lives in their adopted homelands. So what is the difference between migrants and Diasporas?

Diasporas are defined as migrants in host countries, who still maintain emotional and material linkages with their homelands. This book by Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff is a scholarly work about digital Diasporas, Diaspora groups that use the Internet. The term 'Digital Diaspora' is a recent coinage and describes the phenomenon of Diasporas using the Internet to connect and maintain bonds with their countries of origin. The Internet

pretty much performs the same function as a physical group i.e., that is, it provides a connection to the country of origin, eases security concerns, improves a member's quality of life, creates communities that represent hybrid identities and encourages solidarity among members.

So how does the digital aspect add value? Migration is not easy. The identity of the migrant is not a zero sum game. It is typically a dynamic hybridization between home, host and lived experiences. There is a felt need of a migrant to actively express an identity. This may be derived from various forms of marginalization, confusion or not wanting to lose a sense of homeland identity.

Information technology is interactive and is an easily access tool for Diaspora storytelling, sharing and narration, thus enabling members to make sense of their experiences and feelings in their new culture and identity. The anonymity of the Internet eases the Diaspora participation especially when sharing painful memories or discussing potentially conflictive topics.

Brinkerhoff examines how immigrants who still feel a connection to their country of origin use the Internet, and this, she does through the case study of nine digital organizations. She argues that digital Diasporas can ease security concerns in both the homeland and the host society, thus improving Diaspora members' quality of life in the host society, and contributing to socioeconomic development in the homeland.

She begins her arguments by theoretically defining the term 'Diaspora' and emphasis on the Diasporan identity and its importance. She elucidates the major components that influence Diaspora identity. These are origin, language, historical memory, religion, and the habitual status of a minority in larger societies.

Diasporas may proactively promote and recreate homeland identities, these identities being more acute in the absence of a physical homeland, for instance, for people from Tibet. She cites the case of Dorjee Nud, a Tibetan born in India, after his parents fled Tibet. Nudup founded TibetBoard in the year 2000, two years after his arrival in New York. TibetBoard, explains Brinkerhoff, is an interactive and comparatively informal destination for those who may want to learn about or negotiate the Tibetan identity among Diaspora.

Brinkerhoff talks about how digital networks increase in social capital, bonding of which provides the collective identity, and how instrumental networks that can ward off personal disorder and psychic crisis. They direct their mobilized identity toward improved quality of life for compatriots in the homeland, for Diaspora communities in the host-land, or for both. For example, the IIT Roorkee Alumni Association of North America (host land) is working with IIT Roorkee (homeland) to help students explore and fine-tune their entrepreneurial instincts by pitching business ideas for start-ups to a panel of senior venture capitalists and entrepreneurs for mentorship and incubation using the digital medium.

Besides a homeland identity, IT helps Diasporas link to the homeland. Brinkerhoff cites the case of Bal Joshi who after pursuing his undergraduate in business studies in Portland, Oregon, returned to Nepal. In Nepal, he started Thamel.com to attract tourists after trying his hand at other entrepreneur ventures. Bal Joshi used Thamel in a throwback to the name of a Kathmandu street that hosts the business core. Thamel.com became an important vehicle for Diasporas to communicate inexpensively with their family members in Nepal. Joshi stumbled on to a new idea related to the Dashain Festival, the most important cultural and spiritual celebration in Nepal, the major component of which was the sacrifice of a ceremonial goat to bring prosperity in the year ahead. After a few iterations, Thamel.com zeroed in on delivering gift certificates from Diasporas that could be redeemed by the family in Nepal at a particular goat market. These become a big hit with the Nepal Diaspora who would transfer the money online for gift certificate to be physically delivered in Nepal.

The chapter, “Digital Diasporas and Conflict Prevention” analyzes how digital Diasporas by the creation of cyber communities counter the marginalization conducive to violence using examples of Somalinet and AfghanistanOnline. These cybercommunities potentially prevent conflict through opportunities to express feelings and bond with others online, as the difficulty of communication in the physical world is simplified in the cyberworld where a certain degree of anonymity is permitted to an individual. Through these cybercommunities, members potentially deflect their frustration and animosity through verbal modes, as opposed to potentially violent forms like physical agitation and confrontation.

The author discusses how Diasporas also support agendas consistent

with liberal values, such as democracy and human rights which are advantageous to selected homeland constituents and the international community alike. Furthermore, the author feels Diasporas may not threaten state sovereignty to the extent feared, and may even support it giving the example of the U.S. Copts Association and its physical world political agenda to improve the quality of life of Copts residing in Egypt. She narrates the story of Nermien Riad, a US State Department employee on a duty in Egypt, after visiting a Coptic orphanage in Cairo went on to start the Coptic Orphans that implements four programs in Egypt that not only help the Coptic community, but also extend their reach to non-Coptic girls and their problems.

The author brings out how today the most advanced digital diasporas are seeking to improve policy and institutional frameworks in support of both targeted homeland communities/populations and Diaspora contribution efforts. For example, the Zacatecan Federation of Hometown Associations in the United States orchestrated matching programs with the Mexican Government and spun off a political arm to lobby on both sides of the border, for an improved migrant investment environment while the India, Diaspora members have contributed significantly to the IT sector, through direct investment brokering investment relationships and proposing and promoting necessary changes to the legal framework in order to improve the investment climate.

Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff is leaning heavily on how these digital Diasporas help negotiate hybrid identity and contribute to homeland societies. How digital Diasporas are contributing to the host-land in terms of host societies understanding of migrant culture, migrant skills and addition to host-land economy is not elucidated. She has also not touched upon digital Diasporas support for secession by ethnic groups in homeland.

The research for this 2009 published book has been done in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and hence concepts like “social media Diaspora groups” don’t figure in the narrative. How social media channels “Youtube” “Twitter and “Facebook” have reworked connecting and sharing rules on the internet or usage of Skype for communication is not touched upon. Five years is a long time in the new media converged world of today and hence maybe a second edition of the book is due.

Irrespective of a little repetitiveness the book is a must read for students working in the field of Diaspora studies. Students of new media will also get a great baseline insight on digital Diasporas. This combined with the current tidings of digital Diasporas experiments with social media will be worth investigating.

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## V

**Savitri Sawhney (2008) I shall Never Ask for Pardon: A Memoir of Pandurang Khankhoje, New Delhi: Penguin, 341 p, ISBN-13: 978-0143063766.**

The National Movement in India comprised individuals of various hues. The attempt by the imperialist historiography to portray them as self seekers in the institutional openings created by British indeed needs to be critiqued. The biography under review depicts a man who exemplified commitment to the nation and its downtrodden. However this was no sectarian, narrow or chauvinist commitment. Khankhoje made a link between the downtrodden in India and the downtrodden across national boundaries. It was thus a transition from an armed revolutionary to an agricultural scientist of repute in far away Mexico was made.

Khankhoje was what E.H. Carr has called a ‘romantic exile’. He left the country to explore avenues for training in arms and possibilities of a revolutionary overthrow of the British rule in India. This was at a very young age of 19 and after travelling through Japan, China and several other countries he reached the United States. Working as a labourer and restaurant waiter he studied at the Oregon University to earn a degree in agriculture. It is here that the foundations of the revolutionary Ghadr movement were laid. He depicted himself as a man of action and thus headed the ‘praharak’ (action) wing of the Ghadr movement. The casual way in which Khushwant Singh dismisses his association with Ghadr

is not borne out by facts. Harish K. Puri in an article in *Social Scientist* in 1980 described Khankhoje as the head of the armed militant wing in the revolutionary organization of Ghadr. Similarly, his name comes up in the various accounts of the time. That he had to be low profile was a price he had to pay for organizing armed training and mobilization. Savitri Sawhney in her account tells us that he often disguised himself as a muslim and assumed names such as Pir Khan. She has done a signal service to the scholars of the national movement by bringing out an account based on Khankhoje's personal papers. We get to know of Khankhoje's trials and travails as he makes contact with democratic movements in China (where he meets Sun-Yat-Sen), Japan, Persia and Russia. The attempts at armed mobilization were not without danger as Savitri Sawhney tells us of the time when he was shot and wounded and was taken care of by a nomadic Persian tribe.

Khankhoje turned towards the left revolutionary politics in the 1920s. Along with Virendernath Chattopadhyay, he met Lenin in Moscow in 1921 and submitted a thesis on the Indian question.

A revolutionary cannot be permanently plotting and carrying out armed revolution. Khankhoje in US had acquired degrees in agriculture at a US university. As Sawhney points out the inspiration to work on agriculture had initially come from his meeting with Sun-Yat-Sen. In his meeting with Lenin she tells us that Lenin had asked in detail about caloric and nutritional requirement of the Indian worker. It is these inspirations which fuelled Khankhoje's research in agriculture when he took asylum in Mexico. His contribution in developing a new variety of corn is well documented in various histories of agriculture.

Savitri Sawhney's account is indeed a tribute of a daughter to her father. There is nothing to be apologetic about that. Indeed her sparkling narrative tells us of the happy memories of her childhood and her father. In spite of the stresses and strains of the revolutionary commitment he managed to give that to his family is indeed an achievement.

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The review was first published in Author's blog *itihastak* in 2008. <http://itihastak.blogspot.in/>

## VI

**Stephane Dufoix (2008), *Diasporas*, Berkeley: University of California Press, Paperback, 160 pages ISBN: 9780520253605**

As we all very much aware that the word 'diaspora' referred only to religious group and Jewish migration experience at early stage. Later, it has assumed different connotations due to its application in diverse fields. In 1990s, the word was applied to world people who had migrated to different parts of the world due to various reasons and the word was further being applied to professional groups. At present, Diaspora means that it is nothing but the idea of displacement and the maintenance of a connection with a real or imagined homeland. The critics argued that owing to wider application, the usage of the term has become ambiguous. At this juncture, the scholars like Robin Cohen and Steven Vertovec tried to concretize the theoretical meaning of the term. In this light, the contribution of Stephane Dufoix is note worthy.

The book was originally written in French and it was translated to English by William Rodarmor. It is an indispensable guide for those who want to understand Diaspora as intellectual phenomenon and a social process. The book starts with a brief introduction by citing the popular usage of term in different fields and the divided views on Diaspora as a concept. Dufoix suggests a broader analytical framework for depicting the homeland relations of dispersed populations which is a unique theoretical contribution by Dufoix. Further, he has coined a new term 'referent origin' instead of calling it homeland as envisaged by others. The first chapter entitled as what is a Diaspora? exemplifies the etymological origin of the term in the beginning and then, he provides two classic examples of different diasporic experiences such as the 'Jewish Diaspora' and the 'Black Diaspora' as it is linked and opposed to each other. Followed by, he describes the recent historiography of the term. Having discussed that, he surveys and distinguishes three kinds of existing definitions on the term such as open, categorical and oxymoronic. For instance, oxymoronic definitions are based on the postmodern thought which is radically different from open and categorical definitions. Postmodern definitions focus upon paradoxical identity, the noncenter, and hybridity. The works of Stuart Hall, James Clifford and Paul Gilroy can be put under this category. A phenomenon called Diaspora to happen, first of all, dispersion should

take place. He analyses the dispersion of the people around the globe in the second chapter called as 'the spaces of dispersion,' which throws light on the nature, patterns, and phases of migration of people.

Dufoix discusses about four kinds of migratory groups namely the Greeks, Indians, Chinese, Armenians and their global spread. Having spread over space and time by diasporas, the establishment of connection with the referent origin is another important feature of dispersed population. He addresses this aspect in the third chapter entitled as 'maintaining connections' in which he develops a broader framework for homeland relations and collective experience abroad. He uses the Max Weber's methodology 'Ideal type' to identify as well as to structure the different dimensions of homeland relationships. He proposes four ideal types such as 'centro-peripheral,' 'enclaved,' 'atopic,' and 'antagonistic' which are fluid in nature. Drawing on wealth of examples, he shows how populations can move from one mode to another. He shows that the Jewish Diaspora had transformed from atopic mode to centro-peripheral mode after the creation of the state of Israel. By doing so, he brings out the dynamic aspect of Diaspora relations rather than static thinking on the term. Besides, he shows with illustrations and tables the shifting nature of collective experience of the dispersed populations. In Chapter four 'Managing Distance' where he exemplifies the management and leverage of one's diasporic population and also explains the construction and imagination of Diaspora draws one's attention. For instance, he discusses about long distance nationalism by diasporas and the arrival of internet has reduced the distance which has paved the way for creation of 'imaginary community.' He concludes by saying that Diaspora has become a global word and is a common noun at present. It is no longer refers to misery, persecution and punishment of immigrant groups, he delineates that the term is perfectly suited to the modern process of Diasporic phenomenon.

Dufoix must be appreciated for analyzing the travel of the term from past to present with innumerable examples drawn from around the globe. He tries to make the term very inclusive given its position in the modern context. Over all, the book is a comprehensive and thorough account on the phenomenon called Diaspora. Though it is a small volume but it has all the ingredients. It is very much coherent, well structured and lucid written one. The illustrations and tables are self explanatory. The contents of the book aptly stands up to the title of the book 'diasporas.' Certainly, Dufoix differs

from other scholars for his dynamic approach in terms of conceptualizing and interpreting the term. The book will be a rewarding one for the scholars, students and those who are perplexed over understanding the term.

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## VII

**Gabriel Sheffer (2003) *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad*, UK: Cambridge University Press, pages, 290, ISBN: 9780521009874.**

What forms the basis of Diaspora politics? What are the main formational tools that leads to Diaspora formation within the ambit of a trans-national network? How do we associate Diaspora politics within this increasingly globalised world? These some the questions Gabriel Sheffer tries to tackle in the book “Diaspora Politics Home and Abroad. With this book, Sheffer tries to analyse the extent to which Diaspora networks play within the context of both homeland and the host country. This is a question that has particularly come within the fore front of the global stage. The book itself is structured in a form which looks to first discuss, then debate the question of the driving forces towards the formation of Diaspora politics within the homeland and looks to provide an analytical framework which could be used for further research.

The central focus of Sheffer’s Diaspora analysis is set on the factor of “ethno-nationalism”, a term he underlines while putting forward the Primary Questions and Hypotheses of the book. It is with this focus that Sheffer then builds on his various conclusions within the book itself. By ethno-national Sheffer tries to understand the politics of diasporas founded solely on the basis of a feeling on nationhood led by similar “ethnic and national traits, tendencies and familiarities” (p. 11). This acts as the foundation which the author uses to analyse the extant theories regarding the formation of diasporas so as to distinguish them from other sets of immigrants. With this important note, the first few chapters deal with the clarification of certain terms as well as the setting out of certain caveats while analyzing

the role diaspora politics in the global scenario. Having set out the types of diaspora to focus on in the opening chapters, Sheffer then attempts to show how the concept of a diaspora lobby group influencing politics in both the homeland and the host is not a new concept. Tracing the histories of ancient diasporas such as the Jewish, the Greek and the Armenian diasporas and subsequently the Chinese and the Indian diasporas, Sheffer shows how these groups had already formed a precursor to the sort of diaspora politics found today.

There are two basic points of reference where Sheffer tries to draw our attention towards while discussing the political and cultural group formation within diaspora groups. One important point of distinction is the difference between a “state-linked” diaspora- those diaspora groups who have a concrete and politically recognized notion of a homeland- and a “stateless” diaspora- those groups who lack the former. This point of difference is an important one according to Sheffer and the author keeps bringing the reader back to this point regularly throughout the remainder of the book. The other point of reference is the historicity of diasporas. Hence, as the author leads from the fact that diaspora formation is quite an old concept, he also shows that various new diaspora groups keep springing up everywhere in the world. This plays an important part in their participation within the politics of both homeland and host countries and the strategies that the various diasporas use when dealing with these two nations and vice versa. It is this difference between the historical and established diaspora and the incipient diasporas as well as the stateless and the state-linked diasporas that the book tries to analyse throughout the remainder of the book.

Given these two points of contention, it is then that the author proposes the questions of strategies used by the diasporas to exist and bargain both with the host country as well as the homeland. This process, as Sheffer notes, is not merely a one-way relationship, as homeland and host countries are always on the lookout to woo the diaspora groups to their advantage. Within this complex web of transnational politics, what Sheffer then tries to analyse is the way in which diaspora political groups are formed and even unmade (put forward in the chapter “The Making, Development and Unmaking of Diasporas”). One of the most interesting aspects of the book comes when Sheffer tries to place state-linked and stateless diasporas within the ambit of six broad strategies of integration – assimilationist, integrationist, communalist/

corporatist, autonomist, irredentist and separatist- within the host country. Each diaspora group owing to its identity as a state-linked/ stateless diaspora as well as its history of establishment, will pick and choose one strategy from the former so as to increase their spheres of influence regarding their socio-economic and political mandates.

It is from this angle also that Sheffer views the issues of trans-national networks, their relationship with traditional nation- states in an increasingly transnational world and finally and importantly, the question of a diaspora pledging its loyalty towards either the host country or a homeland. Again through the lens of ethno-nationalism and the previous criss-crossing identities, Sheffer points out that a diaspora groups loyalty depends on a whole host of prevalent political conditions in both the homeland and the host country.

It is in the final chapter that Sheffer tries to look beyond the conventional categorization of diaspora groups (making a direct reference to particularly the features of a diaspora group given by Safran and the types of diaspora as given by Cohen). In order to understand the true nature of diaspora functioning within a global context requires a departure from these narrow view towards a more holistic view, which consists of a primordialist view as well as a mytho-symbolic view as well as the instrumental approach already mentioned in the book. It is only when one sees the making and development of diaspora groups within the country, according to Sheffer, can one truly contextualize the role of diaspora politics within a globalized world. Thus, as the title refers, it is important to understand how the diaspora makes itself home abroad that will define its role with respect to the world.

Sheffer does a good job of identifying and then analyzing the various issues and strategies used to overcome those issues by various sets of diaspora groups. His justification for using the ethno-nationalistic perspective for doing so is also put forward adequately. The book also provides adequate insight into the historicity of the formation and development of diaspora groups for those not aware of it. All in all, the book does provide a clear perspective on how to go about analyzing the role of diaspora groups within a globalized economic and political system.

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