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Kurdish Diaspora in Central Asia and Caucasus

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Abstract

In last century one of the challenges for peace in Middle East is the Kurds and their situation in those countries that have Kurdish communities. The human and physical expenses for to dissolve this problem in the region couldn't dissolve that, and recently with new feature of the world after the cold war and globalization, expand the diasporic Kurdish people around the world spread this problem to other part of the world after the collapse the soviet union because the new situation of this region and the existence of Kurdish diaspora in the central Asia and Caucasus. Kurdish issue becoming a issue for foreign policies for many countries of the region with their relations with other countries of the region that have Kurdish minorities like Turkey. This thesis is a an atemoet to find and clear the Kurdish condition in this play.

In end years of 19th century and during the 20th century Kurds in Ottoman Empire and turkey have tried to achieve a national government or right to determine their destiny by the uprising the national movement in Ottoman Empire and later the Turkey, regional and world powers have tried to use the Kurds as an effective factor on their regional policies against those countries that have the Kurdish communities in their territory Russian empire during its wars with Ottoman Empire in 1830 – 1870 used the yazidi Kurds of Ottoman Empire to ally them against Ottomans during the USSR this policy has employed in other shapes after the collapse the Soviet Union separated countries from USSR like Armenia tried to use this factor again in their regional and national policies against their rivals. On other hand the Kurdish parties and organization have used this rivalry relation to achieve their goals and in this game Kurdish diaspora and Kurdish communities in these countries facilitate this process to each side of the game.

In this study I try to clear the usage of the Kurds for foreign policy of Armenia and the circumstances of playing with Kurdish card for countries in the region and the role of ethnic Kurds communities (Kurdish Diasporas) in these countries.

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Chapter one: introduction

1- Introduction

The Kurds are an ethnic- Iranian ethno linguistic group mostly inhabiting a region known as Kurdistan which includes adjacent parts of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. Substantial Kurdish communities also exist in cities of western Turkey, and can also be found in Armenia, Georgia, Israel, Azerbaijan, Russia, Lebanon, and in recent decades, some European countries and the United States. Most speak Kurdish an indo-European language of the Iranian branch. The Kurds are classified as an Iranian people. 1

There are no exact census about the numbers of Kurds and its population, probably because of political issue. But different sources estimate the population of Kurds at about, 20000000 persons in the world. In political literature Kurds has been known as the biggest ethnic group in the world that has no national government. Because of geopolitical, economical and social issues many of Kurds have emigrated or have been forced to emigrate from their homeland during last centuries. Some of these immigrants groups of Kurds now live in Caucasian countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) and central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan). By the collapse the Soviet Union these Kurdish Diasporas influence of new international relations sphere and Kurdish nationalist movements started to redefine their ethnic identity and ethnic conciseness and some Kurdish parties like PKK and recently KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) started the relation with this Diasporas groups to achieve their political and economical purposes, this and attention of some new independent countries like Armenia to Kurds as a play card in their rivalry relation with their neighbors, get a political role to this Kurdish Diasporas in Caucasus and central Asia in this thesis I will try to clear what's the role of Kurdish Diasporas in regional policy and how the governments of these countries use the Kurds as a play card in their relation and policies toward other countries.

2- Key questions

- 1-What's the role of the Kurdish Diasporas in Caucasus and central Asia?
- 2- How the countries of region use the ethnic Kurds as a play card in regional policies and how the PKK use this Kurdish diaspora in its activities?

3- Hypothesis of the study

One of the purposes of this thesis is finding to answer these questions that how Armenia and Russia to prevent the influence of Turkey in the Caucasus and central Asia region use the Kurds and Kurdish Diaspora. And in other side PKK (Kurdistan labor party) tries to use this, to expand its activities in the region against Turkey and getting more logistic and finance sources by using the Kurdish Diasporas community in the region. And so what are the other countries benefits in this policy and have tried to use The Kurds and Kurdish Diasporas for achieving them.

4- Objectives of the study

The purpose of this dissertation is analysis the role of Kurds and Kurdish Diasporas in foreign policy of regional players in central Asia and Caucasus.

5- Methodology

The study will use the descriptive and historical type of methodology as research methods. In order to evaluate the above-mentioned hypothesis, the historical developments and facts will be studied and analyzed. By utilizing related researches and academic works, the study will discuss about the definitions of Diaspora theorizing, the Diaspora the role of Diasporas on national and international policies, Kurds as an ethnic, Kurdish national movements, Kurdish Diaspora in central Asia and Caucasus the role of PKK as a player in the region and policies of region countries about the usage of Kurds in their foreign policies. The secondary data for the present study includes books, journals, and Internet. Consequently, as a response to shortage of articles and books in this respect, the internet must be considered as main sources for data gathering

6- Main concepts

Diaspora, Kurdish Diaspora, PKK, Turkic policy Yazidis Kurds

Definitions

Diaspora: group of people who dispersed from their home land and live in another country

Kurdish Diaspora; those Kurds who lived in outside of Kurdistan

PKK; the labor party of Kurdistan in Kurdish: *partia kargarana Kurdistan*

Turkic policy; foreign policy of Turkey toward the countries that majorities of them are Turks in Caucasus and central Asia. to integrate themselves in its leading. Based on Turkish culture and language.

Yazidi Kurds; the Kurds with Yazidi religion as an ancient religion of the Mesopotamia.

7- Literature review

There some article and researches under name of Kurdish Diaspora on the web sites, but about the Kurdish Diaspora in central Asia and Caucasus there a rare article or academic researchers in English, other language like Persian or Kurdish most of the researches about Kurdish communities in Caucasus and central Asia have been done by former USSR scholars, the most famous one is prophet Jalil e jalil who teach kurdology in Austria universities now but his work published in Russian and German in 2005 a book published in name of Encyclopedia of Diaspora Immigrant and refugee cultures Around the world published one of its section is about the Kurdish diasporas in the world and Kurds in Caucasus and central Asia too by Amir Hasanpour and Shahrzad MoJab but this book is not accessible in Iran. There aren't any Persian references about the Kurdish Diasporas in Caucasus and central Asia, most of the data in web sites because of security and political nature of the issue have unknown sources and they are not academic work and we cannot trust them. But about the Diasporas and its related theories about that there are sufficient book and articles although access to them is not easy in Iran. In this thesis I have used some like *Theorizing Diaspora* by Jana Evans braziel and Anita Msannur, *Global diaspora* by Chohen Robin. About the history of Kurds there are many articles on web sites and books in English, Persian and Kurdish. About the ethnic identity and ethnicity and the process of shaping it in Diasporas communities I have used of works from

Crystal Elizabeth Rizzo, Wsevolod W. Isajiw, Francesco Caselli and Wilbur John Coleman, *Nicos Trimikliniotis*. They arguing about the theories of ethnic identity, ethnic conflict, ethnicity, and ethnic consciousness, Thomas Hylland Erikson have a work about nationalism in

cyberspace, Frances Stewart and his work on religion and its relation with ethnicity. About the chapter 5 most references based on the news and available information on web sites that they are from political sources and not so trustable but because of the lack of news and references I have to use these as the basement for my research,

8- Organization of research

This thesis contains five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which deals with the description of problem, key question, hypothesis, methodology, research purpose and key terms of the thesis.

Chapter two is titled as "Diaspora Definition and Diaspora Theories" in this chapter, Diaspora definitions, and historical background the meaning of term Diaspora, category of Diaspora, importance of study about Diaspora and common features of Diaspora have been discussed.

Chapter three argues about the definitions of ethnicity, ethnicity and ethnic group, ethnic identity and ethnic groups, ethnic consciousness, ethnic consciousness in diasporic communities, the impact of diasporic groups on national and international policies, characters and dynamism of long distance nationalism.

Chapter four describing the Kurds as an ethnic group, history of the uprising the Kurdish ethnic identity as a separated ethnic in Ottoman Empire

Chapter five peruses Kurdish Diaspora in Caucasus and central Asia, the relation between Kurds and Armenia in the past and present, Kurdish Diaspora in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, and PKK activities in these countries and policies of these countries toward the Kurdish Diasporas of these countries.

Reference

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www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/wahlbeck.pdf

3 Nationalism in Diaspora: a study of the Kurdish movement

www.wekurd.com/AndycuritsNationalismintheDiaspora.pdf

4 From victim Diaspora to transborder citizenship

202.198.141.77/upload/soft/0-article/+00000001/077.pdf

Chapter two; Diaspora definition and Diaspora theories

1- Diaspora definitions

After the World War II and great role of Jewish Diaspora in establishing the Israel, and impact of Diasporas communities in international and national policy around the world, the study about Diaspora and theorizing it became important and many scholars started the study about Diaspora and its role in globe. In 1970s it seemed that the age of ethnicity and nationalism came to its end this conception appropriate 70s and 80s to itself but in early of 1990s, however, the study of cultural group seemed to veer toward a study of diasporas, and “diasporic language appeared to be replacing, or at least supplementing, minority discourse” in USA as the greatest diasporic communities it began with the foundation of Diaspora Magazine.¹ Nowadays diasporic studies have emerged as an important new field of study, so here we mention to definition and important point of theories of Diaspora.

As the use term of Diaspora in has been proliferated in last decades, its meaning has been stretched in various directions, as that has proliferated; its meaning has been stretched to accommodate the various intellectual, cultural and political agenda as in the service of which it has been enlisted. This has resulted in what one might call “diaspora”diaspora” –a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space. Term for term of Diaspora some meaning have existent in dictionaries and encyclopedias as below

1. The dispersion of Jews outside of Israel from six century BC. When, they exiled to Babylonia, until the present time.
2. Often Diaspora the body of Jews or Jewish communities outside Palestine or modern Israel.
3. A dispersion of a people from their original homeland or the community formed by such a people.
4. Diaspora a dispersion of an originally homogeneous entity, such as a language or culture
5. (Christian Religious Writing /Bible) (in the New Testament) the body of Christians living outside Palestine.
6. (Social Science / Anthropology & Ethnology) (Sociology) (often not capital) a dispersion as of people originally belonging to one nation or having a common culture.²
7. The Greek, dispersion, from diaspeirein to scatter, from dia+speirein to sow

8. The setting of scattered colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile b: the area outside Palestine settled by Jews c: the Jews living outside Palestine or modern Israel

9. A, the movement, migration, or scattering of people away from an established or ancestral homeland b: people settled far from their ancestral home land³

Chon Robin in his book *Global Diaspora* gives us this definition for Diaspora,

The word “Diaspora” is derived from the Greek verb *spereo* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over).when to apply the humans, the ancient Greeks thought of Diaspora as migration and colonization. By contrast, for Jews, Africans, Palestinians and Armenians the expression acquired a more sinister and brutal meaning. Diaspora signified a collective trauma, a banishment, where one dreamed of home but lived in exile. Other peoples abroad who have also maintained strong collective identities have, in recent years, defined themselves as Diasporas, though they were neither active agents of colonization nor passive victims of persecution. The idea of a Diaspora thus varies greatly. However, all diasporic communities settled outside their natal (or imagined natal) territories, acknowledge that “the old country” – a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore – always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions. That claim may be strong or weak, or boldly or meekly articulated in a given circumstance or historical period, but a member’s adherence to a diasporic community is demonstrated by an acceptance of an inescapable link with their past migration history and a sense of co-ethnicity with others of a similar background”.⁴

Diaspora can perhaps be seen as a naming of the other which has historically referred to displaced communities movements of migration, immigration, or exile.⁵

first used in the Septuagint¹ explicitly intended for the Hellenic Jewish communities in Alexandria (circa 3rd century BCE) to describe the Jews living in exile from the homeland of Palestine, Diaspora suggests a dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and a relocation in one or more nation-state, territories, or countries.

Historically another reference for term of Diaspora is the Black African Diaspora, that beginning in the sixteen century with the slave trade, forcibly exporting West Africans out of North America, South America, the Caribbean and elsewhere that slave labor was exploited – through the Middle Passage². These early historical references reveal that Diaspora is not always voluntary.⁶

¹ The Greek translation, of the Hebrew Scriptures.

² some historian believe that more than 12 million black selves were sold during 400 years from 1502

So we can see most of the definition of term Diaspora implicated on a religious meaning related to Jews in past. All scholars of Diaspora recognize that the Jewish tradition is at the heart of any definition of the concept. But recently especially in last 3 decades the meaning of Diaspora has shifted and the Diaspora term expanded to groups of displaced persons and communities moving across the globe and reference to Jewish has become slight, in this issue we can find the name of many ethnic groups like Palestinian, Pakistani, Kurds, Azeri Persian and est..... around the world, that today's considered as diaspora. Indeed in recent extension of the term, the reference to the paradigmatic cases has become more attenuated. Many specialists believed that, some emigrant groups characterized as long distance nationalists have been contrasted as diaspora because of their continued involvement in homeland politics, sometimes involving the support of terrorist or ultra-nationalist movements. Kurds, Albanians, Hindu Indians, Irish, Palestinians, and Tamils have been construed as diaspora in this way. And in a further extension, the term has come to embrace labor migrants who maintain emotional and social ties with a homeland, like Indian, Italian, Mexican, Pakistani,.....⁷. In this conception and from point of view of the homeland, emigrant group have been conceptualized as Diasporas, even when they have been largely assimilated. In yet a further extension, diasporas have been seen to result from the migration of borders over people, and not simply from that of people over borders. Hungarians, Russians and other ethno national communities separated by a political frontier from their putative national homelands have been conceptualized as Diasporas in this manner.⁸

One problem that appeared by this definitions is that, by expansion of the uses of diaspora term we faced to “let-a-thousand-diasporas bloom” and this category becomes stretched to the point of uselessness. If everyone is diasporic, then no one is distinctively so. The term loses its discriminating power – its ability to pick out phenomena, to make distinctions. The universalization of diaspora, paradoxically, means the disappearance of diaspora. the literature of the 1990s argued effectively that there is no reason to privilege the Jewish experience, no least because that experience is internally complex, ambivalent and by no means straightforwardly and by no means straightforwardly ”diasporic” in the strict sense of the term. But there is no reason to speak of the diasporization of every more or less dispersed population. Even the editor of the journal *Diaspora*, talk, noted in the journal s sixth year that diaspora “is in danger of becoming a promiscuously capacious category”, and argued for at least some stringency of definition.

Besides the nomination of new candidates for diaspora status, the “diaspora” diaspora also involves dispersion in disciplinary and social space. Within the academy, the term is now used throughout the humanities and social sciences. A sampling of forty recent dissertations on diaspora showed that they were distributed among forty- five different fields and subfields, ranging from various subfields of history, literature, anthropology and sociology through Black studies, women’s studies, religion, philosophy, communications, folklore and education, to art history, cinema, dance, music and theatre. 9

Any ways Diasporas are the fact our world and study the Diasporas have its necessities, in political and social area.

2Theorizing diaspora:

In last 2 decades theorizing diaspora offers critical spaces for thinking about the discordant movement of modernity, the massive migrations that have defined this century – from the late colonial period through the decolonization area in to the twenty first century. Theorizations of diaspora need not, and should not, be divorced from historical and cultural specificity. Diasporic traversals question the rigidities of identity itself – religious, ethnic, gendered, national: yet this diasporic movement marks not a postmodern turn from history, but a nomadic turn in which the very parameters of specific historical moments are embodied and - as diaspora itself suggests – are scattered and regrouped in to a new points of becoming.

Speaking to different communities than post colonies, recent theorizations of diaspora also seek to represent the lived experiences of people whose lives have unfolded in myriad diasporic communities across the globe Diasporic subjects are marked by hybridity and heterogeneity – cultural, linguistic, ethnic, national – and these subjects are defined by a traversal of boundaries demarcating nation and diaspora. For Hall,³ the diaspora experience “is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives in and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity.” for other scholars this hybridity opens diasporic subjectivity to a liminal, dialogic space wherein identity is negotiated (Clifford, Gilroy, Hall, Mercer, Ifekwunigwe, Radhakrishnan).Kobena Mercer theorizes a diasporic “critical dialogism” that challenges “the monologic exclusivity on which dominant versions of national identity and collective belonging are based”; this critical dialogism,

³ a scholar of diaspora theory

according to Mercer, allows for a “powerfully syncretic dynamic, which critically appropriates elements from the master – codes of the dominant culture and creolizes them, disarticulating given signs and rearticulating their symbolic meaning otherwise.” thus, diasporic subjects experience double (and even plural) identification that are constitutive of hybrid forms of identity, hybrid national (and transnational) identities are positioned with other identity categories and severed from an essentialized, nativist identity that is affiliate with constructions of the nation or homeland.⁷

3- Why the diaspora study is important?

By the end of 20th century the members of United Nation are about 200 states. However, the number of “nation-peoples” (groups evincing a “peoplehood” through the retention or expression of separate languages, customs, folkways and religions) is estimated at 2000, ten times the anticipated number of recognized nation-states.⁸

Such a great numbers of nations and ethnic groups that encompassed by the states have many influences on the international relations through secessionist movements, nationalist movements, civil wars for independent of ethnic groups especially after the collapse the former USSR, migrants communities and eats...

Nowadays this conception that people be identified with their adapted country in term of political loyalty, culture and language can no be granted. During the colonial age and after that through the end of 19th century and beginning of 20th century when the map of nation states shaped many ethnic minorities encompassed in state and divided between them that had no common national identity, cultural and essences with majority people of that states, and in new area study about this sprayed ethnic has is importance for the scholars of sociology and international relation studies. In response to the question, *why Diaspora studies are important?* Jana Evans Braziel AND Anita Mannur have additional reasons; first, diaspora forces us to rethink the rubrics of nation and nationalism, while refiguring the relations of citizens and nation – state. Second, diaspora offers myriad, dislocated sites of contestation to the homogenizing forces of globalization. In the last century, under the pressure of monumental transnationalist and global shifts (economically, politically, geographically), the nation as a political ideal and as a state form has undergone significant transformation, if not massive ideological erosion. The shaping of national identities occurs within many discursive frames – juridical, political, civic, economic,

and literary.⁹ and there is no doubts that Diasporas has a grate impact on these issues in globalization area. And so the diaspora study has a grate roll to understand the political, economical, and cultural problems and questions of contemporary area.

4- Category of Diaspora:

In the past the meaning of diaspora implicated on Jewish ethnic around the world but by the proliferation use of the term diaspora its meaning shifts and now the meaning of this word are is so expanded rather than the past. To describe the Diasporas some scholars of this filed have categorized them, in some categories I think that the best category has presented by Chohen Rbin in his book Global Diaspora, He categorized Diasporas in four categories.

1- Classical nation of diaspora: transcending the Jewish tradition .All scholars of diaspora recognize that the Jewish tradition is at the heart of any definition of the concept. For the Jewish people during the exile from Judea Bible is a source for study the sad of Jewish for their land and their wishes to return it.

2- Victim diaspora: Africans and Armenians: .Both of Africans and Armenian conform well to the special attributes of a victim diaspora and the more general features of all diaspora. Although there was a greater element of voluntary migration from Africa than is often adduced, and the process was rather lengthy, both experienced a decisive “break event” in their histories – slavery in the first case and the 1915–16 massacres in the second.

3-Labour and imperial Diasporas: British and Indians

The main conception for disc rib of this type of diaspora is leaving the homeland to search jobs and work. for this type of diaspora we can show many example: Dutch and French tropical plantation from the 1830s to about 1920.the Italians who made the transatlantic crossing, mainly to the USA and Argentina, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century from another possible candidate group, Turks (that many of them were Kurds from Kurdistan of turkey) and North Africans who entered Europe in the period after the Second World War.

4- Trade Diasporas: Chinese and Lebanese

Trade communities of merchants living among aliens in associated networks are to be found on every continent and back through time to the very beginning of urban life. Geographical position of some nation like Phoenician in ancient time (now Lebanese), China caused that nations have ingenuity in commerce and trade. Habitanacy of these people in other countries and shaping their

communities in aim market and country caused the creation of trade Diasporas during the history Chinese merchants in east and east south of Asia and Lebanese in west Asia are the most famous examples for this type of diaspora.

5- Diaspora and their homelands; Sikhs and Zionists

this kind of diaspora contain those people who want or create their home land like Zionist movement or Sikhs and their intention to create the Khalistan, Zionists gather the Jewish from around the world in Palestine and these Jewish people gat a new citizenship in new country most of them have a common point they are new comer and not native people of Israel. The Sikhs wanted to create their land for their people during the 20th century in khalistan but they failed.¹⁰

6- Cultural Diasporas: in this case Diasporas be definite by continuous cultural connections to a single source and teleology of return.¹¹

This type of diaspora is a post modernist conception of globalization the conviction underpinning this manifesto disguised as a “Preface” is that *Diaspora* must pursue, in texts literary and visual, canonical and vernacular, indeed in all cultural productions and throughout history, the traces of struggles over and contradictions within ideas and practices of collective identity, of homeland and nation. *Diaspora* is concerned with the way in which nations, real yet imagined communities, are fabulated, brought into being, made and unmade, in culture and politics, both on the land people call their own and in exile. For postmodernists the collective identity of homeland and nation is a vibrant and constantly changing set of cultural interactions that fundamentally question the very ideas of “home” and “host”. It is demonstrable, for example, that unidirectional – “migration. ¹²

STEVEN VERTOVEC⁴; in his article, three meaning of “diaspora”, exemplified among south Asian religions has presented his categories in his definition about Diasporas as below

1- Diaspora as social form ‘The Diaspora’ was of course, at one time, a concept referring almost exclusively to the experiences of Jews, invoking their traumatic exile from an historical homeland and dispersal throughout many lands. With this experience as reference, connotations of a ‘diaspora’ situation were usually rather negative as they were associated with forced displacement, victimization, alienation, loss. Along with this archetype went a dream of return. These traits eventually led by association to the term s application toward populations such as Armenians and Africans. Martin Baumann indicates three quite different referential points with

⁴ The professor of oxford university

respect to the historical Jewish experience ‘in the diaspora’: these are (a) the *process* of becoming scattered, (b) the *community* living in foreign parts, and (c) the *place* or geographic *space* in which the dispersed groups live.¹³

2- Diaspora as Type of consciousness: another relatively recent, approach to “diaspora” puts greater emphasis on describing a variety of experience, a state of mind and a sense of identity. “Diaspora consciousness” is a particular kind of awareness said to be generated among contemporary transnational communities. Its particularity is variously described as being marked by a *dual or paradoxical nature*. It is constituted negatively by experiences of discrimination and exclusion, and positively by identification with an historical heritage (such as “Indian civilization”)or contemporary world cultural or political forces (such as Islam). In a related way, James Clifford suggested that “Diaspora consciousness lives loss and hope as a defining tension”.¹⁴ Diaspora consciousnesses are further considered to be the source of resistance through *engagement with*, and consequent *visibility in, public space*. Here, Cohen comments that ‘Awareness of their precarious situation may also propel members of Diasporas to advance legal and civic causes and to be active in human rights and social justice issues’ (‘Rethinking’, 13). This is especially witnessed today in the ever more effective and organized expressions of group concerns (often described as ethnic mobilization, identity or community politics, or the politics of recognition or difference).

A further kind of diaspora consciousness we can point to is specific to religious groups. This occurs through a particular kind of *self-questioning* stimulated by conditions of ‘diaspora’ coupled with religious pluralism. Under such conditions, believers are often compelled to realize that the routine habitual practice, rote learning and ‘blind faith’ underpinning previous contexts (where their faith may have been homogeneous or hegemonic) are no longer operational.¹⁵

3- Diaspora as Mode of Cultural Production; STEVEN VERTOVEC in his article mention that this final of meaning which various writers have attributed to the notion of diaspora is usually conveyed in discussion of globalization. in this sense—usually although not exclusively the approach of anthropologist—globalization is examined in its guise as the world-wide flow of cultural objects, images and meaning resulting in variegated process of realization, back- and-forth transferences, mutual influences, new contestations, negotiations and constant transformations. In this way *diaspora* is described as involving the *production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena*.¹⁶ in this conception of Diaspora emphasis on