THE CONCEPT OF DIASPORA; 
A NEW PARADIGM AND RELEVANCE FOR IRAQI INTELLECTUAL ELITE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the use of the concept of Diaspora in the field of sociopolitical writings in the past and evaluates its suitability for the systematic analysis of population dispersion in light of the advancements of more rigorous theory building as well as systematic empirical measurement in recent decades. The paper maintains that past usages of the concept of diaspora have been broad, more descriptive and lacking the rigor found in today's academic social research and the more quantitatively-oriented theoretical designs. It suggests the need for a rather "revolutionary" paradigm (to use T.S. (hues publication title) to energize the concept's systematic use in social research and to move it away Tom the rather general trend of lowering its parameters to use( Moynihan terminology) so that it would conveniently fit any social problem resulting from the variety of population dispersion. The paper then proposes a rather elementary new paradigm for the use of the concept in the field and explores its relevance for the Iraqi intellectual elite in the American Society.

Keywords: Concept of Diaspora, Global Diaspora, Iraqi intellectuals, immigration
Introduction

One of the numerous theoretical and methodological contributions the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan made to social research, and more particularly to the area of sociopolitical analysis, was his contention that societies' governmental agencies and social writers, when tackling social problems such as disintegration of the family institution, deviant behavior in its different settings and the rise of poverty level, they tend to define them down so as to explain away and make "normal" what a more rigorous and advance empirical researchers would define as deviant. This tendency to destigmatize the behavioral patterns of subjects by lowering their levels of manifested consequences would help a society in general and its collective aggregates and groups to soothe themselves and to assist their members to act normally (Moynihan, 1985).

The process of lowering the parameters of the different social and political phenomena, as advanced by Moynihan has become of late a trendy affair with many social writers in different areas of analysis, especially where the focus of the writing lacks methodological rigor and systematic quantitative measurements (Fiske, 1986; Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). On the other hand, modern social research has advanced the argument that empirical measurements are necessary to delineate the behavioral of the subjects of the study along with accompanying conceptual frameworks of that particular investigation (Greer, 1989; Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). Without the process of quantification of the variables derived from the proposed conceptual framework, research findings become arbitrary and the validity of their claim border on the questionable side.

One must also make the observation that a great number of these studies with lower parameters tend to be qualitative in nature, rather broad in scope of coverage and have their historical foundations in the past centuries if not in the almost forgotten epoch of human existence. The present-day institutions of these historical phenomena with lower parameters have evolved dramatically such that when compared with similar institutions of the same phenomena of the past they show a drastic departure from them. That being the case, it follows that when delineating the boundaries of the problem under investigation, researchers would have difficulties defining the conceptual frameworks for them. These difficulties when are added to the lack of rigor in the conceptual definitions and in the empirical measurements would result in difficulties in generalizing the findings of these studies across racial and ethnic boundaries and impede their utility in furthering the cause of building deductive frameworks that are necessary for generating more empirically oriented analysis. The net results are stagnated theory building, isolated conceptual frameworks and arrested development of viable and empirically-oriented sociopolitical discipline.
The Concept of Diaspora

This paper maintains that one such sociopolitical concept that has been lowered in its parameters by social writers and is lacking both conceptual framework and systematic empirical measurements is the concept of Diaspora. Originally, Diaspora (in caps) was derived from the Greek lexicons. At the time of its inception, it meant the HOLISTIC dispersion of the masses of Hebrew population away from their ancient residential communities in Northern Kingdom as a result of the Assyrian invasion during the first part of the seventh century BC and later the mass captivity of the Jewish population in the first part of the seventh century BC and later the mass captivity of the Jewish population in the late sixth century BC by the Babylonians. Some writers add to the preceding waves of dispersion the third Jewish dispersion by the Roman Empire in 70 CE.

The concept then went into a total "hibernation" so to speak and was hardly used in social and political writings for a rather long time. Then suddenly in 1876, The Oxford English Dictionary cited the term in connection with the evangelizing movements among the Protestant churches in Europe. The "reincarnation" of the concept soon would find its way to the writings of a number of discipline and in varied geographical and cultural settings. A survey of literature reveals the use of a variety of adjectives such as trade diaspora, spatial diaspora, ethnic diaspora and even Hurricane Katrina Diaspora. No wonder the eminent scholar, Moynihan reminded scholars with strict methodological concern to avoid attempts at lowering the parameters of their conceptual frameworks and adhere to more rigorous empirical definitions.

It is interesting to point out that the different disciplines of modern social sciences such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science and even the different specialties of economics were establishing their quantitative roots at around the times the concept of diaspora was emerging from its inactive stage of use in the literature. However, when examining the early writings in these new disciplines, there is hardly much of use of the concept of diaspora in their coverage of their respective phenomena.

Moynihan's calls to sociopolitical writers to adhere to the more cautious use of the social concepts that explain social problems and to stress theoretical rigor in their analysis have finally found their ways in the mid-nineties and around the turn of last century in the writings of such scholars as Clifford(1994); Cohen, R.(1997) and Cohen and Kennedy(2000). These authors' contributions to the refinement of the concept of diaspora were made within the established social science specialties of sociology and cultural anthropology and probably reflected the more rigorous standards set by the scholarly leaders in their respective disciplines.
Immigration Acts And Policies

While the dynamics of the process of diaspora as advanced by early historians and other social writers may have been appropriate tools to deal with forced and/or voluntary dispersion of population especially in the past centuries, the enactment of series of immigration laws by both European countries and the United States earlier in the twentieth century necessitated the need for a new set of dynamics in handling population movements coming from Eastern Europe, Asia and the Middle East into Western Europe and across the Atlantic to the American shores. The legislative acts especially in the United States set new boundaries for any population movement into its boarders therefore establishing new and powerful restrictions governing the earlier forms of the dynamics of diaspora in the decades following their enactment.

Perhaps the most restrictive of the new legislative acts was the Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act). It limited the annual number of immigrants who could be admitted to the country to only 2% of the number of people from that country who were already living in the United States in 1890. The law was primarily aimed at furthering the restrictions imposed against Southern and Eastern European immigrants. In addition, it severely restricted immigration of African and prohibited admission of immigrants from Arabia, East Asians and Indians. Furthermore, the act set the foundations for a quota system for admitting each immigrant therefore making mass migration from Eastern Europe where the majority of the Jewish diaspora lived virtually impossible.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, also known as The McCarran-Walter Act abolished racial restrictions found in the United States immigration and naturalization statutes going back to The Naturalization Act of 1790, but let the quota system set in the 1924 act stands, insisted on the qualifications of the individual immigrant and excluded the remnants of the Eastern European diaspora from any entry to the United States. President Harry S. Truman vetoed the bill declaring that "...we need to stretch out our helping hand to save those who have managed to flee into Western Europe to succor those who are brave enough to escape from barbarism, to welcome and restore them against the day when their countries will as we hope be free again...," but the House and Senate succeeded in overriding his veto by a comfortable margins thus affirming its restrictive clauses.

Immigration policies in the United States took a radical departure from the legislative acts cited in the preceding paragraphs when the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, also known as The Hart-Cetler Act was passed by the Congress and signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson at the foot of the Statue of Liberty on October 3, 1965 declaring that the old system (meaning the 1924 and 1952 acts) violated the principles of American democracy. The new immigration act terminated the use of the quota system and established a new set of criteria for admitting immigrants based on level of knowledge, educational achievement and the need for highly trained and scientifically-oriented skill applicants. The new act opened the doors to immigrants from all over the world and especially from India and the Middle East.
The Refugee Issue

The multiplicity of patterns of refugees throughout human history present a rather high level of complexity for researchers in the field of population dispersion due to the almost infinite circumstances surrounding movements of the refugees themselves, diversity of the geographical locations, political and economic factors, natural disasters and even level of satisfaction with living conditions of the native country. While some of these circumstances are also prominent in cases of migration trends, the latter phenomenon is likely to be governed by the countries' legal restrictions and governmental regulations. By implications, studies of refugees demand different theoretical frameworks, more individualized strategies for empirical analysis and careful plans for generalization of the findings to other refugee cases.

Refugees have received the lion share of the international attention and aid programs. As early as 1921, the League of Nations began its global assistance and more particularly the European refugees through its High Commission organization which proved to be crucial for masses of refugees escaping the Russian Revolution of 1917. Shortly after that, the Commission played a significant role in assisting the Armenian refugees as well as the Anatolian Greeks.

In 1951, The United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) was established to assist with flow of refugees following the end of World War II throughout the European Continent and other war-affected surroundings in need of immediate assistance. Earlier, following the Arab-Israeli War, the international body created the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) to assist the Palestinian refugees in Palestine and the surrounding countries. Both the First Gulf War of 1991 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003 added new waves of refugees to the world displaced population and necessitated more involvement of the UNHCR in assisting them. The war in Afghanistan, Somalia Sudan and lately in Syria and Iraq inflated the total people who are currently in situation of displacement to the figure of some 45 million. As many as 55% of counted and/or assisted in one fashion or another came from only five countries: Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Syria and Sudan.

The Need for a New Paradigm

The forgoing review of patterns of population dispersion in their varied historical and geographical settings clearly shows that if sociopolitical researchers attempt to use the concept of diaspora, as it was intended and applied in early years, as their analytic framework, they would soon discover that their choice of the tool of analysis would not be helpful in their efforts to advance an elaborate system of theoretical concepts linked together to form network of relationships supporting their derivation from a larger theoretical construct and providing the necessary tools for their empirical measurements and testing processes. Put differently, the concept of diaspora as it has been used by social writes investigating population movements in almost countless number of historical and geographical cases all over the globe, has reached a point whereby its continued use in its present form would not be conducive to rigorous theory building neither would it be of help in furthering the cause of empirical measurement and
meaningful generalization to similar areas of population dispersion. These limitations once added to what Moynihan(1985) had observed regarding the tendency by writers in areas of social problems to lower the parameters of their concepts so that they may be used by them as tools of analysis would in the opinion of this writer necessitate the need for the advancement of a new paradigm. The new paradigm would serve as a path guiding researches in their investigation of problems of population movements and serving as system of logic for deriving the necessary theoretical definitions of the variables of their studies, proposing tools for their empirical measurements and suggesting a set of mechanism necessary for generalizing their findings to similar conditions. Put differently, the time has come to develop a new paradigmatic structure that would assist researchers to elevate their research strategies in their use of the concept of diaspora to a higher level such that they would be able to establish a theoretical foundations for their hypotheses, link its framework to a broader deductive construct, derive the necessary empirical measurements and strive to generalize their findings to other similar cases so that the cause of theory building in the area of population dispersion would be accelerated.

Specifically, what is a paradigm? How does a new paradigm emerge? What are the necessary research conditions that are conducive to its development and maturity? A pioneering scientist of the logic of scientific inquiry, Thomas S. Khun, defined the concept of paradigm as:

"...some accepted examples of actual scientific practices — examples which include law, theory, application and instrumentation together — provide models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research...(Khun,1970:10).

Once a paradigm is developed and accepted by practicing researchers, a shared system of values and standard of research would emerge and a broad commitment to its principles become more likely to prevail among members of that scientific community.

"...That commitment and the apparent consensus it produces are ...the genesis and continuation of a particular research tradition"(Khun,1970: 11)

In other words, researchers who adhere to a particular paradigm become partisans advocating and defending the principles and practices of the emerging system of logic but not necessarily calling for a stagnated form of scientific methodology. Furthermore,

"...Acquisition of a paradigm and of a more esoteric type of research it permits is a sign of maturity in the development of any scientific field"(Khun, 1970:24).

It is also maintained that the suggested paradigm for the study of different types of diaspora, much like any other form of systems of logic must serve as a springboard from which scientific propositions and research hypotheses are derived. It must endure continuous evaluation and
verification (Scott, 1992). Its composing elements are series of assumptions and measurement operations which should provide researches in the field the theoretical frameworks necessary for the advancement of a particular study of population movement as well as similar acts of dispersion.

The process of building a new paradigm in any discipline must be undertaken with a measure of caution. Paradigm acquire with the passage of time a degree of sacredness due to their effectiveness in past discoveries and the successful applications of the findings of research designs built on them in solving the problems the researchers sought to tackle. These outcomes may lend a particular paradigm certain degree of legitimacy in the eyes of their practitioners and may in fact lead to a measure of rigidity of the use of if. Sociologically, the paradigm may acquire an institution-like status among its practitioners. This is because,

"in learning a paradigm, the scientist acquires theory, method, and standard together, usually in an inextricable mixture. Therefore, when paradigms change, there are usually significant shifts in criteria determining the legitimacy both of the problem and proposed solutions" (Khun, 1962:108)

How does a new paradigm develop? A new paradigm is likely to develop when production of knowledge in a particular scientific discipline is uncertain (Lodhal and Gordon, 1972). Put differently, when a discipline reaches a level of stagnation in advancing new research findings, the likelihood of an emerging paradigm becomes strong. Furthermore, an existing paradigm is more likely to maintain its continuity in a discipline if there is sufficient agreement among its practitioners regarding its contribution to the advancement of knowledge. However, when the conceptual tools and methodological techniques of a paradigm loose their cohesion and become segmented, the continuity of a paradigm is threatened (Thompson and Tuden, 1959). Finally, the question of how significant the produced knowledge in the advancement of future research can critically affect the continuity of a paradigm and may encourage the leaders of the discipline to advance a new one.

Suggested Paradigm For The Concept of Diaspora

As was pointed out in an earlier section of this paper, the varied uses of the concept of diaspora and the almost absence of a rigorous theoretical underlying its applications to the field of population dispersion make the need for a system of logic that can encompass the properties of the concept in a theoretical construct, which would guide the researchers in their measurement of the variables of the study, collect their data, interpret their findings and generalize them to similar situations, rather urgent and probably justified. Therefore, this paper will include an outline of a preliminary set of components that could enter into the formation of a paradigmatic structure using existing methodological techniques available in research designs literature. The components suggested in the proposed paradigm are not necessarily exhaustive neither are they unique to the field of population dispersion. The components are the following:
1. The term diaspora as used in a particular investigation must be defined theoretically in such a way that reflects its attributes (components) as stated in the statement of the problem
   a. the components of the concept must be linked logically and supported by the literature cited in the statement of the problem
   b. empirical definitions of the components of the theory must be operationally established for the purpose of observation
   c. the derivation process of relationships among the variables of the study preferably follows axiomatic format provided that the existing literature include enough verified statements of relationships that can be used by the research to build his/her axiomatic structure
2. A specific type of population that would be suitable for the nature of the problem chosen by the researcher must be secured. The choices of population available may include
   a. an immigrant group
   b. a refugee group
   c. a mixed type of population dispersion
3. Location and legal status of the population
   a. legally established status
   b. undocumented status
   c. transitional status
4. Demographic characteristics of the chosen population
   a. gender differentiation
   b. educational attainment
   c. occupational differentiation d. income levels
5. Research Design
   a. hypotheses derivation and setting of the equations
   b. identifying the type of sampling
   c. statement of the nature of the model chosen for the study
   d. type and level of the statistical testing and suggested processes of control of the different variables
6. Generalization of the findings
   a. scope and extend of the generalization process to similar dispersion movements
   b. external validity of the generalization of the findings
   c. measurement of the variance between the finding of the study and a normal distribution.
The Case of The Iraqi Intellectual Elite in American Society

A careful review of movements of Iraqi population to other countries and especially to the American shores reveals that a systematic Iraqi dispersion was not in existence following the end of the first World War. As a matter of fact there was a quite significant non-Iraqis, such as Armenian, Turkic-speaking and Persian-speaking populations migrating to the Mesopotamian urban centers in the north, around soon-to-be the capital city of the newly established nation and other centers of industry and religious worship. Still, one must recognize the individualized and rather irregular out-migration of the Christian minority to the European countries and the United States prior to the war and following its cessation.

The enactment of a number of immigration laws in some Western countries and in the United States served as deterrent to some Iraqis who would have joined waves of population migration following the end of the First World War. The passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 (the Johnson-Reed Act) by the Congress with its provision of limiting the annual number of immigrants admitted to the country to only 2% of the number of people from the countries to which immigrants are coming from made it extremely difficult for Iraqis to venture into the act of moving to America. The restrictive provisions continued to be of a significant obstacle in the path of Iraqis aspiring to move to the new world following the end of the second World War especially when the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1951 took effect despite President Truman efforts to nullify its provisions against non-Western European immigrants. Still, despite the presence of these restrictive measures, quite a few of the Iraqi Christian minority continued to opt for the challenge of moving to the United States and to take residence in the urban centers of the Eastern coast and in the Midwest.

Iraqi migration took a dramatic upward turn with the enactment of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. Even though the provisions of the act did not go into effect until 1968, the new law opened the flood gates for the vast majority of the Iraqi intellectual elite to migrate to the United States. However, we must be cognizant of the fact that the migration of the Iraqi intelligentsia was highly individualized and family-oriented cases of migration rather than the mass dispersion of a population that falls under the rubric of diaspora. Iraqi immigrants took advantage of the provision of the act that stressed the admission of immigrants who possessed high level of education, technical and professional training and legitimate claim claims to scientific achievements. These demographic attributes were by far the most prevalent among Iraqi visa-seeking immigrants throughout the early decades following the years when the provisions of the act were put into effect.

Once the political turmoil of the late 1970's and throughout the 1980's took hold in Iraq, the rise in the Iraqi intellectual elite streaming out the troubled Mesopotamian land to the different European countries and more specifically to the American shores was accelerated so much so that a number of Iraqi communities of intellectual elite sprang up on the Eastern coast, the western coast, the Midwest and the DC metro area. Enter the early years of the Nineties, when
the outbreak of the First Gulf War was engulfing the country of Iraq and you begin to see somewhat different flow of Iraqis seeking refuge in the United States and in a host of European countries. They were mostly refugees who were displaced during the war and shortly after it ended. Even though these waves of refugees included some highly educated and professionally trained Iraqis, they were overwhelmingly dominated by lesser educational attainments. This trend continued throughout the latter part of the last century and the time of the Second Gulf War.

The American invasion of Iraq in the Spring of 2003 and the dragging years of violence that devastated the country triggered new waves of Iraqis seeking refuge in a relatively large number of countries but mostly in the United States where the immigration authorities estimates their number to be over 120,000 and who moved into a large number of US urban centers even though the vast majority of them settled in the already established Iraqi communities of the Western Coastal cities, the Midwest and the DC metro area. Political instability and violence among members of the different religious sects which dragged on long after the invasion kept the stream of out migration growing with the US authorities increasing the total amount of financial assistance to the waves of refugees to over $ 1.7 billion. Here again, the demographic characteristics of the newly arriving refugees indicate a mixture of levels of education and academic achievement with the minority qualify for the elite class.

Since the summer of 2014, population dispersion of Iraqis took a turn to the in-migratory pattern where some million and a half were forced to leave their communities and their possessions to escape the new radical political authority that was controlling a rather significant portion of the northern section of the country. These waves of displaced families were forced to settle in other parts of the country and/or in settlement camps erected by the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees. This agency estimates the total number of refugees since the middle of 2014 to be around a million and a half.

The multiplicity of patterns of Iraqi intellectual elite migrating to the different urban and educational centers in American society did not hinder the eventual creation of rather highly trained communities of scientists, professionally trained physicians, engineers and financial and management personnel who kept one form of contact or another with their native country and built new associations of their own in their adopted homes. Their efforts to build such associations reached a rather critical level when a gathering of a number of their leaders held their pioneering meeting at the Library of Congress in the year of 2008 to set the early foundations for a new organizational structure upon which Iraqi intellectual elite could build more formal and rather complex organizational entities.

In the spring of 2009 such pioneering efforts reached a new level of maturity and development with the opening of an impressive intellectual gathering of several hundred Iraqi intellectual elite along with a number of Nobel Prize Laureates during the Iraqi-American Academics and Professional Conference hosted by The National Academies in Washington DC. A number of formal awards were presented to the different Iraqi scientists and professional leaders who
attended the conference followed by a celebration of the Iraqi musical achievements led by distinguished Iraqi artists and their American collaborators.

The process of formalization of Iraqi intellectual’s organizations reached a new level of advancement with the creation of the early formation of Together For Iraq (TOFIQ) at the conclusion of the Iraqi-American Academics and Professional Conference and later when TOFIQ was registered as Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with the State of Maryland in 2011. The main objectives of the organization are to promote all aspects of higher education in the native country and to coordinate its activities with those of the Iraqi educational institutions and professional organizations. A scholarly journal, TJMS, a biannual Journal of Medical Sciences, was launched by TOFIQ shortly after the establishment of the organization.

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The journal is "devoted primarily to Iraqi medical and health communities at academic and health institutions " in the United States and elsewhere where Iraqi intellectuals and scholarly-driven researchers may find a professional outlet for the findings of their research activities hence helping in the process of disseminating their knowledge to other scientific communities and research centers of the world. The Journal had already completed two recent issues which are available online and the expectations are that “sister” journals in other academic endeavors will follow in the near future.

Since its establishment, TOFIQ have staged a successful conference in March of this year on Addressing Iraq’s Current Humanitarian Crisis following the mass displacements of a million and a half Iraqis due to the violence and internal war against the extremism forces. Currently the Organization is pursuing its systematic efforts of recruiting Iraqi and American surgeons to travel to Iraq and assist with performing and training Iraqi professionals at their medical institutions and clinical facilities in the different parts of the native country.

**Conclusion**

The analysis of the concept of diaspora advanced in this paper shows that the elasticity of its use by sociopolitical writers has transformed its dynamics into a "cure-for-all" mechanism to handle just about any form of population dispersion: forced or voluntary, mass movement or simply a small migratory group, nature-driven act or politically-induced movement. In so doing, they, have lowered its parameters, to use Moynihan terminology, so that it may assist them to explain almost any problem that have resulted from these movements. This "arrested path" of multiple usage stands in contrast to the phenomenal advancement in the theoretical and methodological realms of so many other concepts in modem social sciences. They have been successfully incorporated into networks of highly developed theoretical frameworks and empirically tested conceptual schemes that are found in the leading research journals of their respective disciplines.
International laws of immigration coupled with the varied roles played by the different agencies of the United Nations in dealing with problems of refugees, forced or voluntary, have placed considerable other limitations on the methods of description and modes of analysis generally used by writers who rely on the concept of diaspora. These limitations are considerable in the study of mass dispersion or the limited refugee-type movements. Furthermore, the vast majority of diaspora-driven studies are descriptive studies which are not much of help to the modem push for more quantitatively oriented studies that have shown accelerated advancement in the different disciplines of social sciences.

When the preceding limitations are looked at from both theoretical and methodological vantages, one would venture and call for the need to advance a "revolutionary paradigm" composed of a series of methodological steps that would guide researchers dealing with questions of population dispersion in a more systematic way. This paper has taken the first step toward that objective by proposing an elementary paradigmatic scheme.

NOTES

1. This paragraph was reproduced from an earlier paper by the author titled “A New Japanese business Paradigm: Meaning, Need Assessment and Implications for Organization Analysis”, Dokkyo International Review, Vol. 9, 1996, 371-386
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