by Floya Anthias

This paper evaluates the use of the concept of 'diaspora' as an alternative way of thinking about transnational migration and ethnic relations to those ways that rely on 'race' and 'ethnicity'. It examines the heuristic potential of the concept, as a descriptive typological tool and as a social condition and societal process. Both approaches are described and key elements within each are assessed. It is argued that although very different in emphasis, and though containing different strengths and weaknesses, both approaches are problematised by their reliance on a notion of deterritorialised ethnicity which references the primordial bonds of 'homeland'. It is also argued that both approaches are unable to attend fully to 'intersectionality', that is to issues of class, gender and transethnic alliances. It is concluded that although potentially enabling a broader sweep of questions that can relate to the transnational aspects of population movements and settlement, the concept of 'diaspora', as it has been articulated so far, does not overcome fully some of the problems identified with the 'ethnicity' problematic. Key words: class, concepts, culture, diaspora, ethnicity, gender, intersections, transnational migration.

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Recent debates on the configuration of ethnic and 'race' boundaries in an era of global transformations, have re-focused academic attention on the concept of 'diaspora'. 'Diaspora' denotes transnational movement and ties in with arguments around globalisation and the growth of non-nation based solidarities (Robertson 1992, Appadurai 1990) in the contemporary period. Debates on globalisation have identified the economic and political dismantling of national borders, as well as the growth of transnational cultural formations (Featherstone 1990, Robertson 1995). New notions of diaspora identities and experiences (in, for example, Hall 1990, Gilroy 1993, Bhabha 1990, Cohen 1993, 1997, Clifford 1994, Brah 1996) have emerged. This also follows a wider tendency to insert and promote a less essentialised and more historically and analytically informed vocabulary into the traditional concerns of 'race and ethnic relations', which have dominated the field (see, for example, Miles 1989, Anthias 1990, Anthias and Yuval Davis 1992, Hall 1990, Gilroy 1993, Mason 1994, Brah 1996). Claims have been made for the concept of 'diaspora' that require casting a critical eye over it. The term now constitutes kind of mantra, being used to describe the processes of settlement and adaptation relating to a large range of transnational migration movements (see for, example, Vertovec 1996, Baumann 1995, Nandy 1990, Parekh 1994, Safran 1991, Sheffer 1986, Smart 1987). However, it could be argued that it is an over-used but under-theorised term (Vertovec 1996).

In this paper, I shall evaluate the heuristic potential of the concept. According to Gilroy for example (1997): 'Diaspora is a valuable idea because (it is) . . . an alternative to the metaphysics of "race", nation and bonded culture coded into the body' (p. 328), and puts 'emphasis on contingency, indeterminacy and conflict' (p. 334). This is

an important claim and lies alongside the view that diaspora involves a conception of identity that avoids the essentialism of much of the discussion on ethnic and cultural identities (Hall 1990). This is because diaspora refocuses attention on transnational and dynamic processes, relating to ethnic commonalities, which can recognise difference and diversity. In this paper, I draw attention to the disjunction between what the term 'diaspora' purports to do, and what in fact it often fails to do. My argument is primarily that the concept of diaspora, whilst focusing on transnational processes and commonalities, does so by deploying a notion of ethnicity which privileges the point of 'origin' in constructing identity and solidarity. In the process it also fails to examine transethnic commonalities and relations and does not adequately pay attention to differences of gender and class. This failure seriously hinders the use of the concept 'diaspora', as an enabling device, for understanding differentiated and highly diverse forms of transnational movement and settlement. The issue of gender is particularly important, given the increasing recognition of the ways in which gender, ethnicity and class intersect in social relations.

Beyond the Ethnicity and 'Race' Paradigms

Part of the reason why the diaspora concept has become so widely hailed relates to some of the perceived failures of the ethnicity and 'race' paradigms. It also relates to the influence of the postmodern versions of the diaspora, found in the influential writing of diasporic black writers like Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy.

The ethnicity paradigm, like the 'race' paradigm which it often merges into, has tended to focus on processes within the nation state rather than at the transnational level. Despite the more recent interest in hybridity and syncretic cultures, the bulk of the literature in the field has been concerned, at different times, with processes of

assimilation, integration and accommodation or ethnic conflict and exclusion. Where exclusion has been a dominant theme, this has tended to be restricted to those 'ethnic minorities' that are constructed in 'race' terms. In practice, it is these latter groups that have formed the bulk of interest within academic and policy discourses. Indeed, the use of the term 'ethnic minority', has tended to assume that the dominant group within the state does not possess an 'ethnicity'.

Ethnic paradigms, as heuristic devices, enable a concern with boundary formation (Barth 1969, Wallman 1979), social identity (as in Watson 1977), the cultural contents of groups (Ballard 1994), and with processes of disadvantage and exclusion (Rex 1973). However, the tendency to homogenise ethnic groups coexists uneasily with the empirical work (like that of Modood et al., 1997 and others) which shows diversities within groups in terms of class and gender locations. Yet most of the work undertaken on differentiations within such groups has come from those who critique essentialist notions of cultural identity and ethnicity (Bhachu 1988, Brah 1996, Anthias 1992a). These pay attention to class and gender location, distinctive trajectories of migration and settlement, and internal differences of power, position or claims.

With regard to the 'race' paradigm, much academic debate has argued that 'race' terms are inadequate either because racism can exist without 'race' (Balibar 1991, Anthias 1990, 1992b) or because the term is ideological and should be abandoned (Miles 1989, 1993). As an enabling device the 'race' paradigm delivers concerns with the negative categorisation of population groups, and their structural disadvantages. However, the social positioning of these groups is often not related to their migration and settlement trajectories. Their location and constitution within their country of origin (as class subjects, for example) has been seriously under-explored. The terms 'ethnicity' and 'race' turn the analytical gaze to processes of inter-group relations within particular territorial borders; an exception is the political economy approach relating to 'migrant labour' (for example, Castles and Kosack 1973, Castells 1975). Such terms have not enabled a focus on the symbiotic ties between migrants, the country of origin (or homeland) and the country of settlement.

There is no doubt that the impetus for the contemporary revival of the term comes from the enterprise of 'diasporic' black writers like Stuart Hall (1990) and Paul Gilroy (1993, 1997) and this paper proceeds by considering the centrality of their contributions. It then looks at a more traditional sociological approach that uses 'diaspora' as a descriptive typological tool. An influential approach that treats diaspora as a social condition and as a societal process is then examined. These two approaches are

central, although there are others that stress political economy processes (for instance, Segal 1995) and the condition of 'exile' (Said 1979). For reasons of paying attention to the details of the arguments, and delineating the parameters of the two main approaches, I will focus on the work of Robin Cohen (1993, 1997) for the first usage of diaspora, and on the work of James Clifford (1994) for the second usage. I believe they present the most developed analyses within the two approaches, although within the latter the work of Stuart Hall (1990) and Paul Gilroy (1993) has been particularly important.

The Concept of Diaspora: Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy

'Diaspora' references a connection between groups across different nation states whose commonality derives from an original but maybe removed homeland; a new identity becomes constructed on a world scale which crosses national borders and boundaries. The etymology of the term is the Greek word [Greek Text Omitted] meaning a scattering of seeds. Although the term is often limited to population categories that have experienced 'forceful or violent expulsion' processes (classically used about the Jews), it may also denote a social condition, entailing a particular form of 'consciousness', which is particularly compatible with postmodernity and globalisation. It is seen by some to embody the globalising principle of transnationalism (for instance, see Waters 1995).

Stuart Hall has played an influential role in the recent popularity of the term 'diaspora'. His concern, over the years, has been to reconstruct an approach to cultural identity and 'race' which avoids the pitfalls of essentialism and reductionism. The concept of diaspora emerges as a way of rethinking the issue of black cultural identity and representation away from the notion of the essential black subject (Hall 1990). Hall wishes to focus on positionings; for 'histories have their real, material and symbolic effects' (1990:226).

The diaspora experience as I intend it here, is defined, not be essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.

(Hall 1990:235)

Hall's work is useful in historicising ethnic and cultural identity, but in the process reinserts a black subject, constructed historically, whose body is reinscribed with different societal effects: the sameness here wins over the difference that Hall so clearly wants to affirm and this is

largely because of the centrality of racialisation. This, to some extent, undermines a de-essentialised notion of cultural identity and does not adequately deal with the importance of inter-ethic, class and gender difference. However, the very strength of this position lies in the analysis of the interplay between historicised and differentiated cultural identities and the structural and systemic forms of subordination (and their resistance) that lie at the heart of the experiences of black subjectivities.

Gilroy's book, The Black Atlantic (1993), probably presents the most sustained theoretical defence of the concept of diaspora and has been hugely influential in encouraging writers on transnational migration and settlement to deploy the term as a heuristic device (for example, see Vertovec 1996). Gilroy's concern is to reconstruct the history of the West through the work of black intellectuals like Du Bois and Richard Wright whom he sees as inhabiting 'contested "contact zones" between cultures and histories'. Intermediate concepts like diaspora 'break the dogmatic focus on discrete national dynamics' which has characterised modern Euro-American cultural thought and reinstate the role of 'intercultural positionality' (Gilroy 1993:6). Like Hall, he rejects the notion of an essential black subject and the unifying dynamic of black culture. Instead, he relies on the concept of diaspora, as a heuristic means, to focus on the difference and sameness of the connective culture across different national black groups. The connective tissue is seen to lie in a discourse of racial emancipation, on the one hand, and the conflictual representation of sexuality, on the other, constructing communities that are 'both similar and different', or 'the changing same' to borrow Leroi Jones's term (1967). Relying for much of the argument on the hybrid but distinctive forms of music and performance, he roots the diasporic consciousness (or double consciousness, using Du Bois's famous phrase) in a relatively privileged knowledge space. Despite, however, referring to the centrality of gender and the representation of sexuality in constituting 'the changing same', Gilroy fails to give women any agency within the black diaspora and is more interested in the male gaze (see also Helmreich 1992).

Gilroy's insightful analysis of The Black Atlantic constitutes a highly original and historicised account of the continuities and discontinuities of the black cultural domain within the space of racial subordination, although it is essentially androcentric. This has been used to fuel a vast array of different conceptual uses of the term. The term has often been made to substitute theoretical work in substantive analysis. What may succeed for the black diaspora in its specificities, may not necessarily be translatable into a general theoretical tool. I will illustrate this with reference to two major contributions to the growing empirical and

theoretical literature on the concept of the diaspora.

Diaspora as a Typology and the 'Fit' with Globalisation

Robin Cohen's recent and ambitious (as he acknowledges) project on global diasporas (Cohen 1993, 1997) presents some interesting and challenging ideas on ways of rethinking the issue of movements of population and new forms of ethnic organisation. Such an emphasis provides an important corrective to approaches to ethnic and national boundaries that treat them in relation to fixed territorial and political borders. It also focuses on the trajectories of migration and settlement and the reconfiguration of ethnic solidarities. The rich array of empirical case studies presented enhance the theoretical exercise of understanding such movements of peoples and cultures. My task here is to interrogate the conceptual schema that underpins this important set of foci in Cohen's work.

The groups called 'diasporas' may have travelled across territories for a range of reasons: the essential element here is a spreading from an original homeland, and diasporas are defined descriptively with reference to that origin. Diasporas will continue to identify with the original homeland (or wider ethnic category if there is no territorial homeland). The homeland that Cohen refers to is metaphoric rather than territorial; the group need not be identified with a nation state but must constitute itself as a population category, usually a nation or ethnic group.

For Cohen, the central idea behind 'diaspora' is found in the forcible scattering of peoples denoted in the book of Deuteronomy (Cohen 1993:2). Subsequent definitions have related to the Jewish dispersion to 'Babylon'. This term has been taken up also by the African diaspora. Armenians and Greeks, along with Africans and Jews, form the traditional or classic diasporas. Cohen seeks to retain the objectivist definition found in the classical diaspora notion while showing openness to modern or global aspects arising from 'mass movements of population and the slow decline of the nation state' (Cohen 1993:14).

In order to do this he lists seven criteria for allowing the term diaspora to be used by and for a group. These are: dispersal and scattering; collective trauma; cultural flowering; troubled relationship with the majority; a sense of community transcending national frontiers; promoting a return movement. He suggests (1993:22) that the old diasporic practice of sojourning has become a feature of the new global economy and that the static terms of migration theory with their emphasis on the binary process of travel from and return to are no longer particularly useful.

Cohen's typology constructs five different forms of diasporic community: victim; labour; trade; imperial; and cultural. He acknowledges that some take dual or multiple forms or change their characteristics over time. His examples are drawn from the experience of Jews as the proto-typical form; Africans and Armenians as victim; Indians as Labour; British as imperial; Chinese and Lebanese as trading; and Caribbean as cultural (Cohen 1997). A great deal of interesting material is used, and with regard to the cultural diaspora, Cohen draws on the insights of Hall and Gilroy on the Caribbean experience. However, there is an over-celebratory and at times panegyric account of diasporic success (Cohen 1997). Moreover, Cohen's work is characterised as much by a foreclosing of questions as their opening up. Such questions particularly relate to issues of difference and diversity (by treating each diaspora group as a unity), a failure to investigate inter-ethnic processes, and a lack of concern with the intersectionalities of class and gender. I will return to these problems in my general evaluation of the term. I will concentrate here on Cohen's conceptual schema, particularly the issue of typology, with reference to (a) the use of objectivist criteria and (b) the construction of unitary categories.

(a) Typology: Objectivist Criteria

Typologies may function as heuristic devices and Weber's ideal type has a number of analytical uses (see Weber 1947/1975), particularly for the purpose of comparison. However, Cohen's typology is descriptive and inductivist: in allocating a group to one of the types, there is a reliance, essentially and foremost, on the origin or intentionality of dispersal. In some cases it is the actual occupational patterning that determines allocation to a 'type' (labour, trading), in others it is 'an experience' of forceful and violent displacement (victim), or penetration (imperial), in others it is the development of a particular synthesis of cultural elements (the cultural). Such a typology provides an incommensurable comparative schema. There is no enabling device for understanding the different dimensions in relation to one another.

A problem of another order relates to the implicit explanatory potential that is given to the typological device of depending on the origin or intentionality of dispersal. One example will illustrate the problem: the factors that motivate a group to move, whether it be labour migration or forceful expulsion, do not constitute adequate ways of classifying the groups for the purpose of analysing their settlement and accommodation patterns nor their forms of identity. They would only be adequate if this motivation was seen to have necessary social effects. It is possible that force and violence may act to reproduce the attachment of the group to the homeland as a nostalgic

and myth-like dream. Labour migration may lead to the search for economic rewards in order to further the economistic aims of migration and to justify the apparently voluntary nature of the exit. But these are points to investigate rather than to assume. The forms of the transnational movement have no necessary social effects and any patterns must be discovered through substantive research. The importance of the typology must be that it acts as a heuristic device for the purpose of comparison and aids in addressing such processes and others. Cohen does not provide systematic evidence of this comparative potential.

(b) Unitary Categories and the Assumption of 'Community'

In order to sustain the distinctiveness of diasporic groups from others, Cohen needs to present 'diaspora' as a unitary sociological phenomenon which is divided (as subspecies, say, of flowers or seeds), into different types. He himself provides a horticultural analogy, somewhat tongue in cheek, at the end of the book!

Diaspora formulates a population as a transnational community. The assumption is that there is a natural and unproblematic 'organic' community of people without division or difference, dedicated to the same political project(s). Cohen suggests that the sense of unease or difference faced by members of diasporic groups causes them to identify with co-ethnics in other countries. It may be that this can be shown to be the case, although why 'unease' would necessarily lead to the growth of ethnic solidarity (rather than trans-ethnic solidarity) is not explored. A notion of primordial bonding seems to lie at the heart of the 'diaspora' notion.

Cohen acknowledges that the factors that give rise to the diasporic movement will differ for different groups. Within these groups there will be different push/pull factors at different times and for different destinations. Asylum, forceful expulsion/exile, trading/labour migration, brain drain are all factors that can account for different categories within, for example, the Greek diaspora. Cohen constructs a typology distinguishing different diasporas on this kind of basis. On the basis of such differences and others, however, one could argue that his typology could be as applicable to differences within particular diasporas as it is between them.

The idea of diaspora tends to homogenise the population referred to at the transnational level. However, such populations are not homogeneous for the movements of population may have taken place at different historical periods and for different reasons, and different countries of destination provided different social conditions, opportunities and exclusions. Let us take as an example

the identification of the Greek diaspora. Greeks of the diaspora include those thrown out of Asia Minor in 1922 and more recent Gastarbeiters as well as Greeks still living in Turkey and Albania. What do the Greeks in Germany who travelled as Gastarbeiters and the Greeks of Smyrna who were forcibly expelled have in common? What do they have in common with the Greeks in London, who are mainly students, professionals or ship-owners? Are Greek Cypriots members of the Greek diaspora, since they have never been part of the Greek nation state although most of them would regard themselves as part of the Greek nation? The forms of Cypriot migration to and settlement in Britain were those of other new Commonwealth migrants rather than those of Greek migrant workers to Germany and Sweden, or those of the expelled Greeks from Smyrna. The movement to America and Australia from Greece and Cyprus, however, was more similar and therefore their social position in these respective countries more in line with each other. What do migrant women who work in ethnic ghettos and do not speak the language of their country of residence (like our mothers) have in common with us (whose language is first and foremost English)? Do I need to adopt the hat or the badge? What is that badge? Who can classify me? Such questions are central, it seems to me, to any analysis: the diaspora is constituted as much in difference and division as it is in commonality and solidarity.

Diasporas are not homogeneous in another sense: they may have formed different collective representations of the group under local conditions. In addition, the extent to which they organise around cultural symbols, develop ethnic cultural organisations and promote their ethnic identity will be diverse. Different groups within the overall category will have different political projects; this may include the crosscuttings of gender, class, political affiliation and generation. In many cases, however, they may be attached to the homeland in terms of national feeling and, indeed, see their role as being to uphold the interests of their original homeland. However, the politics of the homeland (what Anderson 1995 calls a nationalism from afar) may have significant differences to that of those 'who stayed'. It may assume a heavy sense of guilt and overcompensation, a ritualistic and symbolic fervour often found in the attempt to retain the old ethnic ingredients (leaving groups in a type of time-warp). There may be differences depending on how near or far the diaspora are from the original homeland (if there is one): for example, there is some evidence that Greeks from Australia and America are less concerned with retaining the ethnic culture of the homeland than Greeks and Cypriots in Britain or France (Anthias, forthcoming).

Such continuing attachments to homeland, however, may not be an adequate reason for treating all these groupings with such an orientation as belonging to a single conceptual category. In fact one is tempted to assume that the thing that most binds them together is an attribution of origin. If this is the case it already assumes that which it purports to investigate. The explanans becomes the explanandum. The fact that a population category may be identifiable by an attributed origin (other or self), does not provide sufficient grounds for treating it as a valid sociological category. The differences within the category may be as great as those between the categories. This is not merely a theoretical matter; power hierarchies within groups cannot be addressed. The different positioning in social relations both within and between the groups, and within the wider society of settlement, fail to get addressed. The issue of gender and class formation is particularly crucial. Gender indeed is a missing term in Cohen's account of diasporic formations. I return to this issue in my general evaluation of the concept towards the end of this paper.

Diaspora as a Condition: The Nation Destabilised

The postmodern versions of diaspora (Hall 1990, Gilroy 1993, Clifford 1994, Brah 1996) denote a condition rather than being descriptive of a group. Not only is the condition one structured through the trajectory of movement but it is one which seeps into the very fabric of the modern (or postmodern) condition itself. This condition is put into play through the experience of being from one place and of another, and it is identified with the idea of particular sentiments towards the homeland, whilst being formed by those of the place of settlement. This place is one where one is constructed in and through difference, and yet is one that produces differential forms of cultural accommodation or syncretism: in some versions hybridity. To treat diaspora as a condition is to pose the problem in terms of the specificities pertaining to the process of territorial and culture shifts. Here issues around the destabilising effect of transition and movement of the individuals' cultural certainties may be explored and the ontological and epistemological effects researched.

This version of diaspora denotes a process at the holistic level and not just in terms of the group or intergroup relations; the diaspora process is organically related to globalisation and cultural mixing (or syncretism/hybridity). Transformations occur in all of the social parts and not only in the diaspora group itself. Such processes involve transnational and trans-ethnic mixing. A diasporic space is created that transgresses the boundaries of ethnicity and nationalism (see the work of Brah 1996). The problematic involved in the use of this formulation is similar to that of globalisation if not identical with it. The diasporic process is one whereby social unities around nation become destabilised. This approach is most developed in the work

of James Clifford (1994).

According to Clifford's (1994) influential position, the nation state is subverted by diasporic attachments which construct allegiances elsewhere. Moreover, the diaspora category rejects the autochthonous claims of 'tribe' which stress continuity and the natural connection to the land. The diaspora claims to belongingness do not come from claims to inhabit original territory since they need the right to inhabit a different territory to their constructed and deferred homeland. This enables the diaspora to recognise the basic problem of all autochthonous claims: how long does a territory need to be inhabited by a group in order for such claims to be made?

Identity becomes more syncretic; British born Cypriots, Australian Greeks, British Blacks, Muslims and Asians, German Jews, Russian Jews, Armenian Jews, American Italians and so on. Clifford refers to this as selective accommodation: the desire to stay and be different. This challenges the nation state form as embodying a given national group and constructs it as trans-ethnic and transnational also. I will look at the idea of the global world view and therefore subversive and transgressive potential of the diaspora and its radicalising relation to the nation state, which are the central planks, I believe, of this approach.

Thinking Globally, Living Locally: Beyond Ethnicity

Clifford suggests that diasporas think globally but live locally. Such a depiction lies at the heart of much recent globalisation theory (for example, Featherstone, Lash and Robertson 1995). Nomads (Bradiotti 1994) and hybrids (Bhabha 1994, Pieterse 1995) have been claimed to embody the modern or postmodern condition. Such approaches suggest that the bonds of ethnic ties and the fixity of boundaries have been replaced by shifting and fluid identities. Recent research supports this view (Back 1996, Bhavnani and Phoenix 1994, Modood et al. 1997, Anthias forthcoming). Such shifts fundamentally alter the ethnic landscape. None the less, it is too easy to interpret this as the actual dismantling of ethnic imperatives across a range of identity and cultural narratives and to treat the new agents of 'diasporic space' (Brah 1996), as unproblematically throwing out their investments in the resources of ethnicity politics. For whilst, at one level, there is evidence that the cultural and identity choices of individuals and groups are becoming broader through migration and transnational movement, there is also evidence of the growth of ethnic fundamentalisms (Assad 1993, Chhachhi 1991). Also, as indicated indeed by some of Cohen's work mentioned earlier, there exists a continuation of 'ethnic' solidarities and attachments to the symbols of national belonging and continuing investment,

emotionally, economically and culturally in the 'homeland' by a range of organised social groupings within transnational migration movements (also see Lemelle and Kelly 1994).

If this is the case, then the perception of diasporas as breaking 'the ethnic spectacles' with which the world was previously viewed, may vastly underestimate the continuing attachment to the idea of ethnic and therefore particularist bonds, to a new reconstructed form of ethnic absolutism. For example, to what extent can we really refer to Black Muslims or nationalist Greeks, in constructing a transnational category, as they certainly do, as thinking globally? Their legitimation and strength may certainly be gained by global connections. The legitimacy of the claims may be sought in a more global international context. However, they may be essentially reconstituting a form of local and particularist ethnic absolutism.

The emphasis on the transgressive potential of the diaspora is certainly worth exploring: the problem is that it is often asserted. For example, Clifford suggests that the diasporic condition gives rise to the recognition of the relativity of autochthonous claims in general. If this were the case, one would expect diasporic groups to be less essentialist and nationalistic with reference to questions of territorial and other political rights than those who still remain within their original homeland or nation state borders.

An illustration of Clifford's ideas here might be found in the views of the Cypriot, Turkish or Greek diasporas on questions like: are the Turkish settlers in Cyprus, brought from mainland Turkey after 1974, to be expelled if there is a solution? The Turkish Cypriots entered Cyprus in the fifteenth century - is that not long enough to give inalienable rights to claims of territory? Are the claims of those who inhabited a place before recorded history different to those who arrived by boat, train or air (as Clifford asks)? Evidence suggests in fact that diasporic Cypriots, Greeks and Turks, are just as likely to provide nationalistic and chauvinist arguments which serve the perceived political interests of their respective political representations within the nation state as those who still live in Cyprus (see Anthias 1992a, Anthias, forthcoming). There is also a concerted effort by the Cypriot State to use their diasporas as a resource for pursuing the ethnic project of Cyprus, and evidence that the Greek mainland state sees the use of the Greek diaspora as an ethnic resource (Kontos 1995). In the case of the Greek Cypriots, the desire is to use the diaspora in order to promote a solution to the Cyprus problem, and at times has included the desire to re-establish a majoritarian Cypriot State. In the case of Turkish Cypriots the diaspora is sought to promote the retention of effective separation, albeit within

a weak federal structure.

Similarly, the evolution of syncretic cultural elements may take the form of tolerance to different cultures and may involve dialogue. Alternatively, it may be that the process leads to ghettoisation, ethnicisation or forms of ethnic and other fundamentalism on all sides (within the dominant group as well). There is contradictory evidence which suggests that the meaning given to syncretism may be highly variable, particularly given the rise of ethnic localisms and fundamentalisms; the panegyric must await evidence of the arrival of the 'bridegroom'!

Moreover, the postmodern category of diaspora generally fails to provide a class and gender analysis of the processes of migration, settlement and accommodation (for an exception see the work of Brah 1996). This has been an ongoing critique levelled by feminists, particularly 'black' and anti-racist feminists against research on migration and 'race' in general (hooks 1981, Carby 1982, Anthias and Yuval Davis 1992). This critique can also apply to the ungendered notion of diaspora. I shall return to the issue of class and gender (and intersectionality) in the next section.

'Diaspora' Assessed

Although there are some common features in Cohen's and Clifford's approaches there are also significant differences. Cohen provides an objectivist typology for judging whether a transnational movement constitutes a diaspora. The orientation to a symbolic homeland is a key feature for defining the category. This is indicated by the place he gives to a return movement and continuing affective bonds, including travel and investment in the homeland or ethnic group. Diasporic forms flourish in the global era, and this in turn draws out the particular strengths of the diaspora as a form of social organisation. Clifford, by contrast, has an almost diametrically opposing view. Diasporas challenge ethnicity and ethnic absolutism. Ethnicity is replaced by hybridity, certainty is replaced by critique. The cultural and territorial movement also involves a shift in world view: the diaspora think globally.

Despite these important differences in emphasis, I believe that Cohen and Clifford share two central difficulties. These I will call (a) the problem of primordiality in the retention of the essential importance of the bond to homeland, and (b) the problem of intersectionality relating to class, gender, trans-ethnic alliances and power relations.

The Problem of primordiality: Bonds that Tie and Deterritorialised Ethnicity

Diaspora generally functions as a celebration of difference and the maintenance of links with ethnic and national belongingness, with roots (despite the disclaimer that it is 'routes' that are important within the postmodern version). This tends to neglect the aspects of ethnicity that relate to boundaries of exclusion rather than boundaries constructed through identity and common experience. Since that experience will be different in different places the bonds must be those of origin rather than position/experience. The phenomenology of displacement, however, if that were the key to the category, would not necessarily always construct some notion of homeland or 'homing', to use Brah's term (1996). Whether it did would be a matter of empirical investigation at the level of the local and particular. Such work has yet to be fully undertaken and the jury is still out.

Diaspora entails a notion of an essential parent - a father, whose seed is scattered (although Cohen admits that he toyed with the idea of a more feminine version!). The original father(land) is a point of reference for the diaspora notion: it is this constant reference point that slides into primordiality, however much it is refined and reconstructed as in Clifford's work. The mythical figure of the fatherland precedes the affirmation of bonds with the siblings in other countries: it is also a sexist analogy (the seeds or sperm of the father . . . a more trivial point perhaps but . . . (see Helmreich 1992 for a critique of Gilroy's ungendered and potentially sexist use of 'diaspora' in The Black Atlantic). Organic and self-evident communities, recognised through a shared origin, are endowed in the postmodern version with 'global' eyes. Is diaspora more than a deterritorialised ethnicity?

If there is an ethnicity in the diaspora (and there clearly is), then like all ethnicities it formulates itself in relational and contextual terms; different narratives around identity and culture come into play to pursue particular political projects. Therefore, the question of the political allegiances of different agents within diaspora groups is never given. Partially, attention must be given to the ethnic projects of the nations within which they are identified: the original homeland and the country of residence. With regard to the former, some nations are reluctant to use the term diaspora to describe their emigres, for it takes on a subversive meaning in the context of the nation-building project or contestation. In contemporary Cyprus, for example, the state is reluctant to designate Cypriots living abroad as a diaspora because of the connotations this has in terms of loss of identity and unlikelihood of return. The Cypriot state, therefore, wishes to retain the use of the term 'migrant' for Cypriots abroad, even those of the second and third generations, because it wishes to retain the group. This is the result of the demographic challenge posed by the Turkish invasion of the island in 1974 and the

movement of populations this has entailed within Cyprus, and from Turkey to Cyprus in the Turkish held north of the island. And yet the meanings given to 'being from Cyprus' vary greatly within the second and third generations although Cyprus is always, in one way or another, a continuing reference point (Anthias forthcoming).

Cohen notes the competition between two loyalties: to the homeland (and the co-ethnics) and to the country of settlement. At the same time Cohen suggests that the diasporic experience liberates the group from the representational and ideological chains of the 'nation'. The retention of nationalism (see Anderson 1995) and the uses to which diasporas are put by the nation state are not fully explored. Diasporas may finance national struggles and projects. For example, Jews in America may support the State of Israel, and the Irish in America may support the Irish Republican Army, Cypriots abroad may support, depending on whether they are Greek Cypriots or Turkish Cypriots, a particular solution of the Cyprus problem. The political activities of migrants may be dominated by reference to homeland struggles (this is true of many ethnic associations of immigrants in general - see Rex 1991), although those of their children may be more likely to be focused around issues of exclusion in the country of settlement (see Anthias 1992a) or may reconstruct ethnic fundamentalist projects as modes of resistance (Afshar 1994, Saghal and Yuval Davis 1994). Also the nation state calls on its diaspora for help and sees it as a resource, investing in the maintenance of bonds and identity and giving preferential treatment to returnees.

To conclude, 'the bonds that tie' are heterogeneous and multiple. Identity and cultural narratives of belonging take on 'ethnic' forms which are themselves centrally linked to location, in terms of territory and social positioning. The diaspora notion, signalling as it does some continuity of reference with 'homeland', needs to formulate a theoretical conception of ethnicity that avoids primordiality. Indeed, one conclusion from this discussion is not so much that diaspora is an alternative to 'ethnicity', but rather that it requires a much clearer delineation of the latter's articulations.

The Problem of Intersectionality: Class, Gender, Trans-Ethnic Alliances and Power Relations

I argued earlier that unless attention is paid to difference and then material is presented to show that these differences are transcended by commonalities of one sort or another and in certain contexts, the idea of a community of Jews, Greeks or others even as 'imagined community' cannot be sustained. I have indicated in my discussions of Cohen and Clifford, that there appears to be a general failure to address class and gendered facets within the

diaspora problematic. The image of the diasporic individual in Bhabha (1990) is of the cosmopolitan rootless but routed intellectual. This raises the question of class differences: what are the commonalities between a North Indian upper-class Oxbridge-educated university teacher and a Pakistani waiter or grocer? How meaningful is it to refer to them as part of the Asian diaspora in Britain let alone the Asian diaspora more globally?

For Cohen diasporas are particularly adaptive forms of social organisation and they are at a distinctive advantage in the global era: 'Compared with the members of the host society, those who belong to a diaspora characteristically have an advantageous occupational profile . . . they are less vulnerable to adverse shifts in the labour market' (1997:172). This may be true, though Cohen has not provided adequate evidence for it, but it cannot be true of all diasporas and of all the members of particular diasporas. In addition, even if this were true at the substantive level, it does not of itself say anything about the advantages of being a diaspora, though it may reflect the economic and cultural capital that members of particular territorial origins may bring with them, the opportunities or exclusions of location and the success of the strategies they have employed to counter disadvantage, such as ethnic communality and gender strategies (Anthias 1992a). The commonality constructed by racism or other factors that determine social positioning is different to that constructed by notions of the shedding of seeds. The differentiated ethnicity and cultural syncretism and the different uses to which it is put by different class categories of transnational migrants needs investigating.

Gendering the Diaspora

With regard to gender, the role of men and women in the process of accommodation and syncretism may be different. Women are the transmitters and reproducers of ethnic and national ideologies and central in the transmission of cultural rules (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1989). At the same time they may have a different relation to the nation or ethnic group since they are not represented by it and are generally in a subordinate relation to hegemonic men who are also classed (Kandiyoti 1991, Walby 1994, Anthias 1992a). Women may be empowered by retaining home traditions but they may also be quick to abandon them when they are no longer strategies of survival (Anthias 1992a, Bhachu 1988). What is clear is that they experience two sets of gender relations or patriarchal relations, those of their own classed and gendered group and those of the main ethnic group represented in the state.

To what extent do women of all social classes and

groupings have access to 'global' thinking, on the one hand, and to what extent do specific gendered social relations lead to a greater incentive for grasping the global mettle, on the other? How central are women to the ethnic projects of diaspora groups? There is a great deal of evidence (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1989, Anthias 1992a, Brah 1996) that the cultural elements around gender, particularly relating to women's roles and sexuality are central concerns of ethnic projects, both inside and outside diasporas. Transnational and trans-ethnic communities of women are key areas of exploration here that have yet to be fully undertaken. However, again, central in any such exercise is the development of the understanding of the relations between gender, ethnicity and nation in order to investigate the gendered nature of diaspora groups: my argument here is that a diaspora is a particular type of ethnic category, one that exists across the boundaries of nation states rather than within them. If the 'diaspora' notion is to claim the capacity to be gendered, it must do this by clarifying the 'ethnic' dimension that lies at its heart.

The issue of gendering the diaspora can be understood at two different levels. At the first level of analysis, it requires a consideration of the ways in which men and women of the diaspora are inserted into the social relations of the country of settlement, within their own self-defined 'diaspora communities' and within the transnational networks of the diaspora across national borders. For example, some of the work done on women migrants and their descendants in employment (Phizacklea 1983, Anthias 1992a, Westwood and Bhachu 1984) within national labour markets is one facet of such a concern. Such work indicates the distinctiveness of the labour market experiences of 'diasporic' women in relation to that of men and is able to investigate the interactions of gender, ethnicity and racialisation in the labour market, for example. It may also be able to address the extent to which the cultural and structural shifts involved for such women produce more emancipatory and liberating experiences, and it may help to fight entrenched systems of gender subordination (or not). However, this focus on the distinctive experiences of diasporic women is only one level of analysis.

The other level of analysis, regarding gendering the diaspora notion, relates to an exploration of how gendered relations are constitutive of the positionalities of the groups themselves, paying attention to class and other differences within the group, and to different locations and trajectories. Such an analysis will consider the ways in which gender relations will enable a group to occupy certain economic niches, for example, or to reproduce dynamically, in a selective way (in terms of the selective accommodation that Clifford refers to) the cultural, symbolic and material relations it lives within. Here gender lies at the very heart

of the social order.

I want to summarise an agenda for gendering the diaspora here:

Firstly, one set of loci could explore the extent to which ethnic cultures are constituted as travelling and syncretic cultures through rules about sex difference, gender roles, sexuality and sexism. This includes the role of the family and other institutions and discursive formations in the reproduction and dynamic transformation of central facets of culture. This also includes specific analyses of the ways in which gender relations mark the boundaries between one group and another and the extent to which determinants of 'authenticity', of being regarded as a 'true' member of the group, within transnational movements, may be defined through conformity to gender stereotypes. For example a 'true' Cypriot man is one who conforms to gender specific rules concerning sexually appropriate behaviour (Anthias 1989).

Secondly, more substantive work is needed to research the extent to which diasporic or racialised groups (like all subordinated social groups including those of class), may be subjected to two sets of gender relations: those of the dominant society and those internal to the group. For example, gender rules may construct women as mainly responsible for the domestic domain, and endow them with a particular burden of 'femininity' within dominant discourses and practices in the receiving countries, and within the diaspora. However, they may be gendered in different ways within their own ethnic groups, or countries of origin. This suggests that both the gender relations, and the ethnic cultural processes of the group, will be affected by mainstream rules about gender relations. This also entails exploring how the social and economic position of men and women, within the 'diaspora', is partially determined by the ways in which gender relations, both within the ethnically specific cultures of different groups, and within the wider society, interact with one another. This interaction has implications for both the positioning of men and women from these groups, for the whole of the group, and for social relations more generally. These gender relations may produce a particular class structuration for different migrant and ethnic minority groups, in conjunction with labour market processes and racialisation.

Thirdly, in the case of diasporic groups, women's labour market participation and their use as cheap or family labour within their own ethnic group may act to counter some of the exclusionary effects of racialised labour markets (Anthias 1983, 1992b). This use of women, which is dependent on strong familial networks, may give rise to particular forms of economic activity and adaptation (such

as self-employment, small-scale family enterprises and so on). This is manifested in the development of ethnic economies, small-scale entrepreneurship, and petit bourgeois class formation. The forms of the appropriation are culturally specific, however, and work in interplay with local markets (Anthias 1983). They may lead to particular forms of class structuration within the migrant group itself. Researching such issues more extensively may develop understanding of the different incorporation of men and women within the diaspora and the differences between minority ethnic groups.

Fourthly, a further set of loci, relates to issues of state and nation. Some analyses have suggested that women may have a different relation to the nation, and the nationalist project, as well as to globalisation processes. For example, in my own work, I have argued that women may be related to the project of the nation in diverse ways: as mothers of patriots, as symbolic of boundaries and as carrier of culture (for an analysis see Anthias and Yuval Davis 1989). Women are often used to symbolise the nation, depicting it as a woman mourning her loss. One example is found in the case of Cyprus (Anthias 1989). After the 1974 coup and Turkish invasion of the island, posters appeared everywhere of a black clothed woman weeping, but bravely with fist held high, and the caption underneath read 'Cyprus, our martyred motherland'. How does diasporic positionality relate to these processes?

A further dimension of such a set of foci would explore the multi-faceted relations of gender and the state. On the one hand, women may be constructed by the state as members of collectivities, institutions or classes. They may be seen, alongside men, as participants in the social forces that set the state its given political projects in any specific historical context (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1989), and as an integral category within wider social forces. On the other hand, they may be relegated to the private sphere and be a special focus of state concerns. This may be exemplified by special rules denoting their role in human reproduction, by particular kinds of ideological and discursive positioning, and by particular forms of economic incorporation. Furthermore, diasporic women may be constructed as outside the proper boundaries of the nation, and through racialisation, may be positioned in a particularly disadvantageous position in social relations, having limited rights to citizenship (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1989).

The kinds of loci for gendering the diaspora, suggested above, pinpoint the need, in substantive research, for a framework that pays full attention to the centrality of gender on the one hand, and to intersectionality, on the other. Firstly it may be possible to see ethnicity, gender and class as crosscutting and mutually reinforcing systems

of domination and subordination, particularly in terms of processes and relations of hierarchisation, unequal resource allocation and inferiorisation (Anthias 1996, 1998). Racialised or diasporic working-class women may be particularly subordinated, through an articulation of social divisions, which produces a coherent set of practices of subordination within a range of social, economic and political contexts. Secondly, the intersections of ethnicity, gender and class may construct multiple, uneven and contradictory social patterns of domination and subordination; human subjects may be positioned differentially within these social divisions. For example, white working-class men may be seen to be in a relation of dominance over racialised groups, and over women, but may themselves be in a relation of subordination in class terms. This leads to highly contradictory processes in terms of positionality and identity. The exploration of reinforcing aspects of the divisions, and their contradictory articulations, opens up fundamental political questions also. In other words the discussion of connecting social divisions is not purely theoretical. It has a direct relevance in terms of how inequalities, identities and political strategies are conceptualised and assessed.

Trans-Ethnicity

Diaspora has a transnational referent: that is certain. But its capacity to be trans-ethnic in terms of forging solidary bonds with crosscutting groups, both from within the dominant category or with other groups also on the margins, is more difficult to sustain. A truly trans-ethnic solidarity must reject all forms of ethnic fundamentalism, for it requires dialogue. If for Cohen, diasporic groups are old forms of social organisation that precede and will outlive the nation state and particularly 'fit' with the new global era, then it is the old solidaristic bonds of a deterritorialised ethnicity that are central: trans-ethnicity is not on the agenda. If for Clifford and others from within the postmodern frame, to borrow Ali Rattansi's words (Rattansi 1994), the diasporic condition leads to breaking the essentialised mould of the nation and the indigene, then why is the theme of home and homing such a powerful metaphor in this approach?

To what extent is the hailing of the commonality of black diaspora across space (found in the work of Gilroy 1993), conducive to forging inter-ethnic bonds between Caribbeans and other groups who share a social and economic position within a particular nation state and across the boundaries of nation states? Asians and Afro Caribbeans are both racialised albeit in different ways. To claim transnational bonds for the African diaspora may function to politically weaken transethnic bonds with other groups sharing a more local or national context of

contestation and struggle. The question is then raised about the capacity of the diaspora claim for entailing the political mobilisation of racialised, subordinated or oppressed groups within nation states. It also raises the question of the forms of political mobilisation, in an international context, if they are to be mediated by claims to ethnic commonality which may have precedence over struggles around economic and other material resources.

Regarding trans-ethnicity as hybridity there are a number of difficulties that I have explored elsewhere (Anthias 1997), particularly with regard to the conception of 'culture' that is involved. The main problems relate to the assumption that non-diasporic ethnic culture is itself non-hybrid, and constituted as an essence; that cultural elements can all freely mix through the voluntaristic agency of individuals; that all cultural components are compatible and therefore a pick and mix of elements is possible; that all components of the cultural melange are equal in terms of power and that all subjects have equal access to the totality of cultural components. A range of questions are then raised:

- 1. Under what conditions is a synthesis of cultural elements possible?
- 2. Which elements of culture become destabilised?
- 3. To what extent do groups seek to affirm their existing identity in the face of threat by the receiving culture?
- 4. Which social groups are most reluctant to negotiate their cultural rules and which aspects of culture do they wish to protect?
- 5. Are some aspects of culture more difficult to 'mix'?
- 6. How important are the institution of the family and kinship, the position of women and religious and moral rules, particularly around sexuality, for this?
- 7. What are the difficulties encountered in terms of 'translation'?
- 8. To what extent is there a truly politically radicalising potential in this 'condition' and what are the different forms that the condition takes?

Conclusion

Through an examination of some of the terms that are prominent in research on issues of transnational migration and settlement, it is evident that the categories we use have implications for defining the bounds of the object and the social relations around it.

The resurrection of the old term 'diaspora' has been partially prompted by the impasse that the notions of 'racial and ethnic minorities' created with their emphasis on inter-group processes and their static notions of culture and difference. Diaspora draws part of its impetus from the difficulties identified with existent ethnic and 'race' paradigms, particularly with regard to recognising highly differentiated transnational population movements and synthetic or 'hybrid' forms of identity.

Diaspora, however, has by no means replaced nor indeed could it replace a concern with ethnicity. Indeed, my discussion has indicated that diaspora itself relies on a conception of ethnic bonds as central, but dynamic, elements of social organisation. More theoretical work is needed to rethink the notion of 'ethnicity' that lies at its heart. In addition definitions of the object of academic and policy issues in ethnic terms continues. Although there has been much critical discussion about the shortcomings of ethnicity paradigms (see, for example, Omi and Winant 1986, Gilroy 1987) and of the term 'ethnic minority', the newest survey from the Policy Studies Institute is called 'Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage' (Modood et al. 1997). This exemplifies the extent to which, in Britain, the term 'ethnic minority' (and indeed minority ethnic), a shorthand for New Commonwealth migrants and their children, is alive and well.

The 'race' paradigm, one could argue, is no longer as dominant as it was ten years ago. That 'race' as a biological marker of difference, has no genetic basis, is generally acknowledged. 'Race' constitutes a taxonomy of groups in racist discourse, but also enables, some have argued (such as Omi and Winant 1986), the identification of population groups that are subjected to forms of prejudice, discrimination and other forms of racially constituted violence and subordination at the individual, systemic and institutional levels. 'Race' may also be an important component of identity (Gilroy 1987). So although 'race' does not exist as a scientific or epistemic category nor is it representational of the 'real', it is none the less a discursive category with real effects (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1992, Goldberg 1993).

It has also been claimed that 'race conscious' policies have undesirable unintentional effects in reifying and reproducing the very categories they wish to correct (see Anthias 1994, Appiah 1992). They fix individuals in groups and assume that they are positioned in one or another 'race' (see Solomos and Back 1996, Solomos 1993 for useful accounts of recent approaches to 'race' and racism in Britain).

The concept of 'diaspora', however, cannot replace a concern with racialised social relations. I have argued in

fact that 'diaspora' turns the analytical gaze away from the dimensions of trans-ethnic relations informed by power hierarchies and by the cross-cutting relations of gender and class. The relationship between forms of exclusion, and indeed differentiated inclusion, and the emergence of diasporic solidarity and political projects of identity, on the one hand, and dialogue (as in hybridisation), on the other, are important loci for research. Such hybridisations may be uncomfortable as well as empowering, alienating as well as emancipatory. The contours of these need much more research. The research needs to be undertaken not only in terms of 'cultural syncretism' but also in terms of the relations of subordination and exclusion embodied in 'ethnic', 'race', class and gender processes.

'Diaspora' has turned the gaze to broader social relations that can encompass politics, economy and culture at the global, rather than national level. It pays attention to the dynamic nature of ethnic bonds, and to the possibilities of selective and contextual cultural translation and negotiation. However, the lack of attention to issues of gender, class and generation, and to other intergroup and intra-group divisions, is one important shortcoming. Secondly, a critique of ethnic bonds is absent within diaspora discourse, and there does not exist any account of the ways in which diaspora may indeed have a tendency to reinforce absolutist notions of 'origin' and 'true belonging'. Finally, the lack of attention given to transethnic solidarities, such as those against racism, of class, of gender, of social movements, is deeply worrying from the perspective of the development of multiculturality, and more inclusive notions of belonging. For a discourse of antiracism and social mobilisation of a transethnic (as opposed to transnational) character, cannot be easily accommodated, within the discourse of the diaspora, where it retains its dependence on 'homeland' and 'origin', however reconfigured. Unless used with caution, it may close the space of interrogating inter-ethnic allegiances within the nation state, the systematic appraisal of forms of racism, and the problems of anti-racist strategy, both within, and outside, national borders. It fails to provide a radical critique of ethnic rootedness and belonging, as exclusionary mechanisms, in social relations. It also fails to provide a systematic theorisation of the intersections between ethnicity, gender and class.

The critical eye I have cast on the notion of diaspora indicates that the concept of 'diaspora' can only act as a heuristic advance if it is able to overcome the very problems found in earlier notions of ethnicity. It therefore needs to be formulated within a paradigm of 'social divisions and identities' (Anthias 1996, 1998) that is able to treat collective solidaristic bonds as emergent and multiple, and to acknowledge the political dynamics of these processes. Such an approach requires looking at the

location of 'ethnic' solidary bonds within other ontological spaces, such as those of gender and class, and must pay full attention to issues of power. A refining and reworking of the terms we use is urgent, but, as we have seen, given the complexity of the phenomena, it is not an easy task. Clearing the space for such an enterprise is but a beginning.

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Enterprising Women. London: Routledge.

Biographical note: FLOYA ANTHIAS is Professor of Sociology and Head of Sociology at the University of Greenwich. She has written extensively on issues of 'race', ethnicity, migration and gender. She is currently completing her latest book, on the social division of identity (Macmillan) and writing up a research project on British Cypriot and British Asian identities.

Address: School of Social Sciences, University of Greenwich, London.