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Sending States and Diaspora Positionality in International Relations

Abstract

Diaspora politics is of growing interest to International Relations (IR), yet theorizing about sending states' engagement of diasporas in different global contexts has been minimal. Central to this article is the question: How do challenges to postconflict statehood shape a sending state's diaspora engagement? I provide a fresh socio-spatial perspective on "diaspora positionality," the power diaspora political agents amass or are perceived to amass from their linkages to different global contexts, which speaks to utilitarian, constructivist, and governance rationales, and to emerging IR relational and positional theories. This power is relative to that of other actors in a transnational social field, in which sending states and diasporas operate globally: it is socio-spatial, defined by social relationships among diasporas across the globe, and by their linkages to specific spatial contexts. I argue that postconflict states view the positional empowerment of diasporas in distant locations as an asset to their statebuilding. Diasporas are not controlled, but involved in extraterritorial processes through partially rationalized, partially implicit governance practices. The article focuses on Kosovo as a postconflict de facto state, and brings evidence from extensive multi-sited fieldwork in Kosovo in 2013, and the UK, US, Sweden, Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland in 2009-2017.

Keywords: diaspora, international relations, contested sovereignty, socio-spatial, postconflict states

Introduction

Diaspora politics is of growing interest to International Relations. A 2012 Forum in *International Political Sociology* offered a critical perspective on IR theory considering diasporas as unitary non-state actors in an international system, where nations and states are bound by the principle of state sovereignty (Ragazzi 2012:95). Contributors argued that "inside" and "outside" of the state are not clearly delineated between diasporas and sending states. Diasporas are "loosely organized and shifting networks of solidarity" (109), individuals, networks, and institutions (Koinova 2012:100) constructed as a category and governed at a distance (Kunz 2012:104; Varadarajan 2012:98). Building on this discussion and this journal's larger vision to feature plural perspectives on statehood in a critical conversation with mainstream IR theories, this article offers a novel *positional* approach about how sending states engage diasporas in global contexts, relating to broader issues of the art of government and state sovereignty.

Central are the extraterritorial practices of postconflict sending states. Like other states, they experience contested sovereignty in an international system where territoriality and sovereignty are challenged and authority and legal jurisdictions overlap (Krasner 1999), fragmented into functionally defined arenas (Huysmans 2003:220), involving concrete socio-temporal practices (Walker 1991), and enacted symbolically (Bartelson 2014:2). They also face their own sovereignty challenges, due to weak institutions, insufficient economic resources, internal ethnic and sectarian divisions, and disputed borders and international recognition.

How do challenges to postconflict statehood shape sending states' diaspora engagement? I provide a fresh perspective on socio-spatial "diaspora positionality": the power diaspora political agents amass or are perceived to amass from their position in linkages to other global contexts. This perspective provides complementary insights to IR utilitarian, constructivist, and governance rationales concerning sending states' diaspora engagement, yet is clearly connected to a governance rationale considering diaspora engagement as involving a variety of practices. I argue that postconflict states are likely to view positional empowerment of diasporas in distant locations as an asset to their state-building. This consideration is partially rationalized and partially implicit. Empirically, the article focuses on Kosovo as a postconflict *de facto* state, with evidence from extensive fieldwork in Kosovo in 2013, and in the UK, US, Sweden, Germany, France, and the Netherlands in 2009-2015.

Theorizing Sending States and Extraterritorial Diaspora Engagement

The term "diaspora" is contested. Depending on "ontological politics" (Ragazzi 2012:107), diasporas could be considered unitary actors (Collier and Hoeffler 2000) or multiple actors with identities not "given" but constructed by governments, diaspora entrepreneurs, and other agents (Sökefeld 2006; Ragazzi 2009; Kunz 2012). I use Adamson and Demetriou's definition, emphasizing connectivities: "a social collectivity that exists across state borders and that has succeeded over time to: 1) sustain a collective national, cultural, or religious identity through a sense of internal cohesion and sustained ties with a real or imagined homeland and 2) address the collective interests of members of the social collectivity through a developed internal organizational framework and transnational links" (2007:497). *Diaspora entrepreneurs* are individual and institutional agents who actively make claims on behalf of original homelands. *Sending states* are original homelands that maintain durable linkages with diasporas abroad, and incorporate diasporas into policy areas, such as health, labor, economy, culture, education, voting, and foreign policy (Collyer 2013; Gamlen 2014). *De facto states* designate polities with limited governance and proclaimed independence legally, and are non- or partially recognized by other states.

Three major streams theorize about motivations of social agents to engage diasporas abroad: utilitarian, identity-based, and governance.¹ In a *utilitarian* rationale, sending states engage diasporas as potential *resources* for material power (Gamlen 2014; Delano and Gamlen 2014; Ragazzi 2009, 2014) and social capital (Brinkerhoff 2011a). Remittances constitute 13-20% of the GDP of Armenia, Haiti, Moldova, and Nepal (World Bank 2010). Direct investment in small, medium, and large enterprises (Smart and Hsu 2004), diaspora bonds (Leblang 2010), philanthropic contributions (Sidel 2003; Brinkerhoff 2008), tourism (Coles and Timothy 2004), lobbying foreign governments (Shain and Barth 2003), and transfer of expertise (Lucas 2001) are very important. Sending states engage hometown associations to foster low-scale development (Brinkerhoff 2011a). They develop programs to attract returnees (Welch and Hao 2013), but may foster migrants to "achieve a secure status" in host-states for "sustained economic and political contributions" (Portes 1999). Sending states adopt multi-tiered policies depending on migrants' perceived utility abroad versus home (Tsourapas 2015), and thereby "tap into the diaspora" to "share the success" (Delano and Gamlen 2014).

¹ To date, Gamlen 2008, Delano and Gamlen 2014, and Ragazzi 2014 have developed the most comprehensive

Utilitarian accounts capture important dimensions of diaspora politics, but are limited in several ways. Their theoretical emphasis is on cost-benefit calculations for material or social capital. Such premises, while often true, are not exclusive. Diasporas may be positioned in contexts offering other types of empowerment - symbolic, through geographic terrain, or concentration of networks and discourses - with other implications for engagement. Interactions between sending states and diasporas may not be clearly strategic. These accounts also do not discuss conflict or postconflict sending states.

The *identity-based (constructivist)* rationale shows how sending states cultivate diaspora identities to maintain links with the original culture. A symbolic connection could be fostered through "transsovereign nationalism" (Csergo and Goldgeier 2004), reproducing the nation via co-nationals abroad without annexing territories. There are cosmopolitan principles, with multiple identities, citizenships, and residencies (Appiah 2006); narrower nationalist principles with citizenship restrictions (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001); or combinations (Bauboeck 2005; Ragazzi 2014). The discussion mirrors classic civic versus ethnic nationalism debates (Varshney 2002), where sending states cultivate migrants by a civic principle, regardless whether they are majorities, or by a nationalist principle favoring one group over another. Sending states foster these links through commemorations of important holidays (Naujoks 2013); mother-tongue education and nation-state curriculum (Kenway and Fahey 2011); teachers spreading national discourses (Tsourapas 2016); support for religious institutions (De Haas 2007); home country visits (Cohen 2008); and media and laws to benefit co-nationals (Waterbury 2010).

This rationale speaks to IR constructivism, maintaining that ideas, values, and identities motivate agents in international politics. Sending states play an important role in awakening, constructing, reconstructing, and sustaining diaspora identities (Sökefeld 2006; Adamson and Demetriou 2007). As *International Political Sociology* readers are aware, this rendition of constructivism has been critiqued for its narrow sense considering identity construction. A definition of diaspora is itself a practice that produces a certain population (Ragazzi 2009). Sending states have recently "discovered" the "diaspora" as a category, re-labeling populations from expatriates (Kunz 2012), and problematic to valuable populations (Varadarajan 2012), or defining them nonterritorially (Busse 2015:75). Identity reproduction is pursued not strategically, but through activities tying ideas and materiality (Acuff 2012:13). Yet these accounts still do not consider how diasporas' embeddedness in different contexts play a role in formatting and sustaining sending states' identity-based extraterritorial practices.

The third, *governance* rationale features a variety of approaches. Sending states seek to govern diasporas through bilateral treaties (Valenta and Ramet 2012) or cooperation with international organizations (Gamlen et al. 2013). As readers of this journal are aware, diaspora governance can also be based on Foucault's (1991) "governmentality," where "multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge seek to shape conduct through the desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs of various actors" (Dean 2010:18). Populations are not simply "subjects," but individuals in a "set of processes which have to be managed naturally," through reflection on how to influence and take advantage of them (Foucault 2004:72-74, quoted in Ragazzi 2009:10, see also Bigo 2002). Individuals are encouraged to participate in self-regulation, so boundaries between state and society are relative (Gordon 1991:36).

Sending states shape but do not control diaspora conduct. They "(re)constitute diasporas through discursive and other practices, but also redefine governance techniques in times of neoliberal globalization" (Margheritis 2011:202). While governmentality does not necessarily entail governance through neoliberal means, neoliberalism defines such practices as dominating in the current global order (Ragazzi 2009). Delano and Gamlen (2014) argue that neoliberal practices glorify markets, outsourcing state functions, a "light" managerial approach, self-reliance in a "web of rights and obligations" (Bhawati 2003), and expectations for diasporas to market the sending state through functions previously reserved for the state or other private actors (Larner 2007; Pellerin and Mullings 2013). Such technological and bureaucratic practices establish the basis for governance through consular offices assisting and controlling migrant populations and diaspora offices and ministries with extraterritorial remit (Gamlen et al. 2013), and providing services and advice for migrant rights and regularization of host-land status (Margheritis 2011). Such practices challenge a narrow conception of a Westphalian state, as they intervene in regulating populations' affairs in other states, making diasporas integral to their own processes. Thus, "relations between authority, territory and populations are [differently] rationalized, organized, legitimized and practiced at the transnational and international levels" (Ragazzi 2009:383). No longer governed passively, diasporas expect to be "active in their own government" (389).

These approaches emphasize that sending states govern diasporas not simply through strategic calculations, but by engaging them in managerial processes. Sympathetic to this conversation, I take it further in a novel direction: how diasporas become empowered

positionally through embeddedness in different global contexts, and how such empowerment creates forms of rationalization or implicit consideration by sending states that foster long-distance self-regulation.

Diasporas and Postconflict Statehood

I focus my inquiry on a postconflict state, where a socio-spatial positionality rationale becomes quite visible. In a political environment where a weak government seeks postconflict reconstruction, diaspora empowerment becomes important to governance. Postconflict states – such as Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Kosovo, and Macedonia – are reconstructing institutions, regimes, and economy, facing challenges to sovereignty not experienced by states with strong institutions and no recent violence. They are interested in state-building, a “particular approach to peace-building, premised on the recognition that achieving security and development in societies emerging from civil war partly depends on the existence of capable, autonomous, and legitimate governmental institutions” (Paris and Sisk 2009:1-2). International agents often intervene to handle domestic functions such as security, law, emergency relief, health care, and capital management (ibid.; Call 2008). Institutions may be rebuilt, but governments are often plagued by partisan politics, war networks, or local belligerents. Guerrilla groups may carve territories (Buhaug and Lujala 2005) and proclaim autonomy or *de facto* statehood. Attitudes of wartime elites may be carried into postconflict reconstruction, with sporadic violence, and expectations that diasporas provide resources for internal warfare, lobbying international governments, staging demonstrations, and influencing public opinion (Shain and Barth 2003; Adamson and Demetriou 2007; Brinkerhoff 2011b; Koinova 2013). Postconflict state policies are almost by default pluralist and may be difficult to handle strategically.

Connections between sending states and diasporas continue after displacement, with wartime legacies. Conflict-generated diasporas are often former refugees, who may want to return but have difficulty doing so, or whose towns are inhabited by formerly antagonistic groups. Linkages with diasporas can also entail connections through clandestine non-state actors or movements. When deep divisions are mirrored in multiple diasporas, the sending state has minimal capacity to formulate coherent policies toward them.

Diasporas relate to postconflict states in multiple ways. They are powerful agents for economic reconstruction of homes, villages, and infrastructure, helping family members with

remittances. High-ranking personalities can return to take government positions (Brinkerhoff 2008), such as World Bank employee Ellen Johnson Sirlief, elected president of Liberia in 2005, and Ahmad Chalabi, who lobbied for US military intervention in Iraq and assumed high positions in postconflict Iraq. Executive and administrative participation in Somalia is high (Ismail 2011). Individuals can become high profile government advisors, as in Israel and Armenia; engage in forming new constitutions, and vote in referendums, as did Kurds for Iraq (Natali 2007); and aid establishment of truth commissions, as in Cambodia, Haiti, and Liberia (Young and Park 2009; Hoogenboom and Quinn 2011).

Pearlman's work on Lebanon (2013, 2014) is an exception in considering the agency of a weak postconflict sending state in diaspora outreach. She argues that weak states with multiple actors cannot claim "sovereign compulsory status of a state," so "primary outreach to diasporas is unlikely to be the quest for 'management' and 'control' characteristic of sending state outreach, as much as complex webs of competition for advantage back home" (2014:36, 2013). I build on this work and introduce a new analytical line of *sociopositional rationale* for diaspora engagement.

Socio-spatial Diaspora Positionality in Transnational Social Fields

I theorize here about a *positional* rationale for sending state diaspora engagement.² This perspective adds value to IR scholarship, moving the analytical lens to consider interactions between sending states and diasporas embedded in a transnational social field with global contexts in *relational* terms. IR perspectives traditionally see the international system as constituted by state-to-state ties, following the influential work of Waltz (1979). More recently, they see networks of ties between social agents (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006; Nexon and Wright 2007). Nexon and Pouliot observe: "Relational theories, ranging from those using the methodology of social network analysis to post-structuralist modes of analysis, are recasting how we think about levels of analysis, actors, and the importance of social position" (2013:342). The pages of this journal discuss a variety of critical approaches related to the "practice turn" and relational perspectives, including Bourdieu's relational vision of social fields (Bigo 2011; Leander 2011), securitization through communication (Cavelty and Jaeger 2015), postcolonial relations (Rojas 2016), relations to discursive formations (Widder 2008), and subject

² Here I develop an in-depth theoretical discussion building on earlier ideas in inception.

positioning enabling governmentality alongside Foucault (Bulley and Lisle 2012), among others. Socio-spatial diaspora positionality speaks to this cluster of relational and positional theories.

Socio-spatial diaspora positionality is conceptualized as the power diaspora political agents perceive or are perceived to amass from socio-spatial position in a specific context and linkages to other global contexts. Diaspora positionality in a particular context is *relative vis-à-vis* other diasporas in a transnational social field, has a *power* dimension, and is *fluid* and *perceptual*. A socio-positional perspective informs utilitarian, constructivist, and governance rationales by showing that diasporas' global position could be an asset for sending states. The governance rationale is nevertheless better suited to the socio-spatial positionality perspective: agents in sending states rationalize taking advantage of strengths diasporas acquire through contexts, but in fragmented ways. Some rationalize more explicitly; others embed visions more implicitly in narratives or act in line with what Jeffrey (2013) calls "improvising the state," performing state-related practices in tailormade ways.

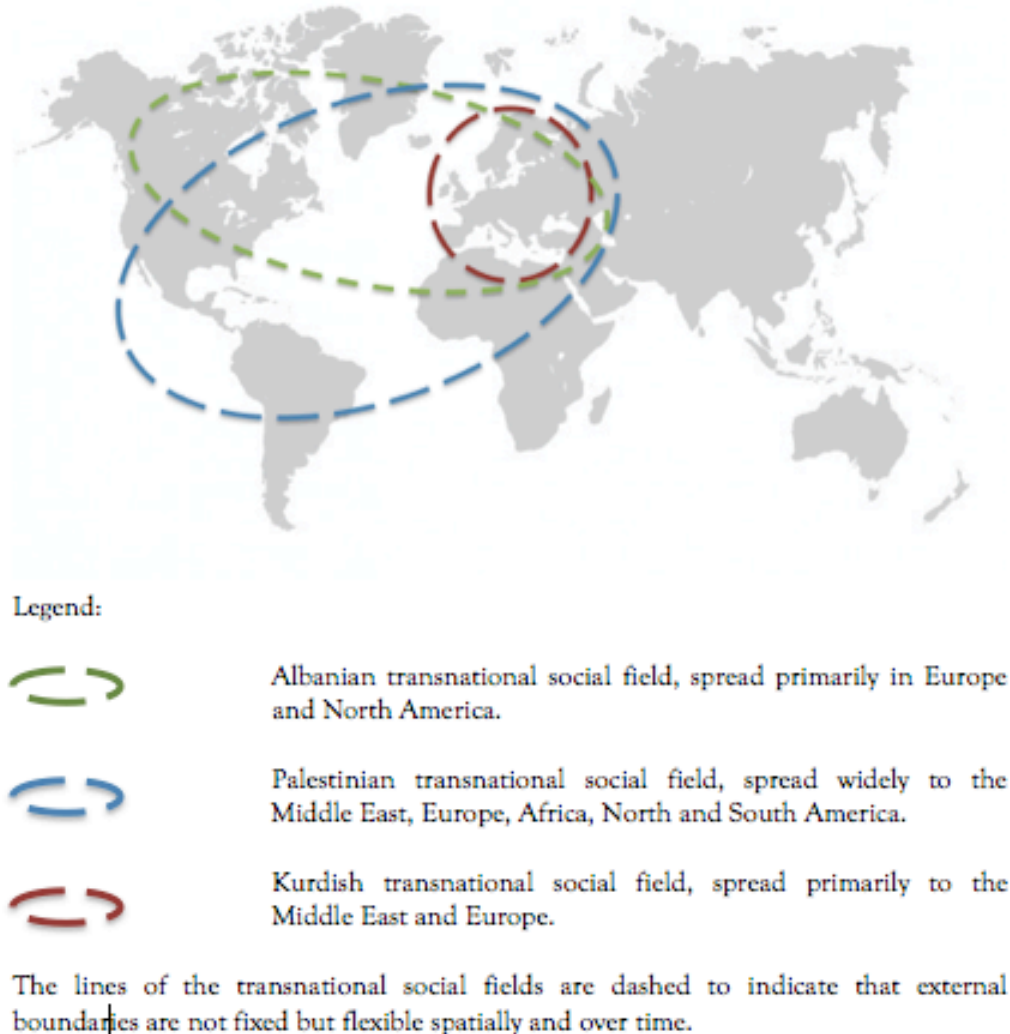
Both sending states and diasporas operate in what sociologists call a "transnational social field," a "set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed" (Bash et al. 1994; Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004:1009). In Bourdieu's classic understanding of a social field, repeated formal and informal interactions between individuals and institutions structure positions of power (1985). A "habitus," a set of nonconscious dispositions and "embodied histories" (Bourdieu 1990:56), forms the basis from which agents relate to differently positioned others (Martin-Maze 2011:3), and defines the field's boundaries. IR scholars take Bourdieu's theory further to study international actors, somewhat autonomous (Bigo 2011; Leander 2011) or intersecting with national fields (Vauchez 2011:342). They warn that Bourdieu's state-bound approach cannot be directly transposed to international politics, but importantly brings relational thinking (Guzzini 2013:89). Agents are not state or non-state actors defined by substances, but operate in a "totality of relations," occupying specific positions, defined by implicit rules, and establishing hierarchies, dependencies, and contestation among elites and non-elites (Pouliot and Merand 2013:32-33).

The *socio-spatial perspective of diaspora positionality* builds on but reimagines the Bourdieusian transnational social field and his *relational approach* focusing on *practices*. Such occur with a certain arbitrariness that does not reproduce "oppositions between reason and emotion and strategy as conscious and unconscious and spontaneous acts" (Bigo 2011:228).

The exact boundaries of transnational social fields are problematic to define, as diaspora identities and interactions change across time and space. These fields, characterized by *social* relationships, are nevertheless embedded in geographic territories defining some rules in the field, in transnational but also context-specific ways. Here my approach emphasizes the *spatial* dimension of interactions between agents in these fields. Diasporas have specific linkages to contexts – homelands, hostlands, and other locations – that shape how they might be empowered to contribute to a sending state. In such contexts, a fieldwide “habitus” could be existent but weak, as agents’ life experiences are defined by spatial specificities. In contrast to Bourdieusian understanding of position acquired by social interactions only, a socio-spatial approach sees position as reflecting the empowerment of diasporas through contextual embeddedness. Such positional empowerment becomes considered by sending states in both rationalized ways and subconscious dispositions.

For example, an Albanian transnational social field, in which Kosovars operate alongside Albanians from Albania proper, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia as adjacent territories, is geographically spread primarily to Europe and North America. A field incorporating Kurdish territories in Turkey, Iraqi Kurdistan, Syria, Iran, and other neighboring territories in the Middle East is spread primarily to Europe and the Middle East. A Palestinian field is larger, as generations of Palestinians have migrated across the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, and to some degree Australia. Agents positioned in Brussels, with numerous EU institutions, would be empowered differently from those in refugee camps, for example: sending states would likely consider Brussels-based diasporas well positioned to lobby for homeland goals.

Figure 1: World Map with Overlapping Transnational Social Fields



The term *positionality* originates in feminist theory, considering knowledge production as situated in a particular context (Haraway 1988). Experiencing the world “in terms of gender, race, class, sexuality and other axes of social difference” entails different positionalities (Nagar and Geiger 2007). Feminists discuss identity-based positionalities; economic geographers consider positionality in *spatial* terms, as distant places are connected unevenly through global processes (Sheppard 2002:318-319). Spatial positionality is *relative*, because an agent’s position is always understood in terms of relationships; it involves *power relations*, since some positions are more influential than others; it is *fluid*, as it challenges configurations of relationships (318-319); it is *perceptual* rather than objective (Koinova 2012).

Diaspora positionality needs to be understood as *relative*, since agents with strong links to a particular context might have specific value for other agents in the transnational social field. Certain contexts can provide "division of labor" and "comparative advantage" to pursue certain homeland-oriented goals (Adamson and Demetriou 2007:510; Lyons and Mandaville 2010:132; Koinova 2012, 2013:18). Diasporas are embedded in specific contexts characterized by linkages to host-states, home-states, and other global locations, which empower them differently vis-à-vis other diasporas in the field. Sending states consider this empowerment an important nonmaterial dimension for their art of governance.

Positionality also entails a *power* dimension (Sheppard 2002). Power in IR is a contested concept, minimally considered regarding diaspora politics. A "soft power" perspective, building on Nye (2004) and focusing on ability to attract and persuade without control or coercion, is considered relevant for diasporas and public diplomacy (Gonzales 2011; Tsourapas 2016). Power in diaspora socio-spatial positionality is nevertheless based less on exercise of agency than on agents' embeddedness in context. It is different from Dahl's actor-based definition: "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (1957:202-203). Nor is it derived from control over resources or agenda-setting. Power in socio-spatial positionality is close to what scholars call "power to" achieve certain goals, shaped by social – I add spatial – structures operating consciously or subconsciously, and providing agents' "empowerment" (Lukes 1974/2005; Berenskoetter 2007; Rinkmar 2007). Power is not diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge, and "regimes of truth" (Foucault 1991; Rabinow 1991), nor hegemonic, but context-specific. It can be actual or potential, exercised with only a certain degree of autonomy. It can be deployed to achieve peace, prosperity, democracy, and development (Ringmar 2007), all sending state goals of diaspora engagement. Power is relational, not in the Bourdieusian sense of hierarchically constructed social capital, but based on socio-spatial linkages of diasporas to global contexts that structure the ways they become empowered vis-à-vis other diasporas. Power in socio-spatial positionality is less conducive to what Guzzini calls "steering capacity" in global governance, characteristic for institutionalist and policy-oriented approaches, than to governance based on informal rule (2012:6) and pluralist practices.

Positionality is also *fluid* (Sheppard 2002), depending on changing reference contexts and linkages diaspora entrepreneurs maintain with each other and the sending state. Linkages can be assigned more or less relevance for a homeland-oriented goal, and become stronger or

weaker over time. For example, the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) changed the positional status of Armenians who had settled in Lebanon after the 1915 genocide (Auron 2003). During and after the civil war, Armenians migrated *en masse* to the US, France, and other European countries. Lebanon and its positionality remained important in the Armenian transnational social field, but no longer a center for diaspora cultural activities, which shifted to the US and France.

Positionality is *perceptual*. Diaspora entrepreneurs may have identities, human capital, homeland linkages, or goals that shape their perceptions of power. Embedded in context, they view themselves or are viewed as able to pursue homeland-oriented goals in line with what Sen calls "positional objectivity": people in the same position are more likely to make the same observations or judgments (1993:126-45). Agents within sending states may have different perspectives and goals regarding the diaspora. But they voice perceptions and develop practices from the position of the sending state.

The perceptual property of positionality is clearly visible when juxtaposed to an objective "position" in a social network, where a position of power exists when a node commands high "centrality" or thick interconnectedness with other parts of the network (Bonachich 1991). Objective properties are measured by ties, node centrality, and structural equivalence, among others (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006). Socio-spatial positionality has perceptions of sending states and diaspora entrepreneurs about how power is contextually embedded.

A positionality perspective becomes quite visible in relationships between sending states experiencing contested sovereignty in postconflict states and diasporas abroad. With limited staff and resources, and often materially impoverished diasporas, such states are likely to consider alternative ways diasporas become empowered abroad, including positionality in different contexts, as discussed shortly.

Case Selection and Methodology

Kosovo was selected from a universe of postconflict cases of *de facto* states: Palestine, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Somaliland, among others. In the face of sporadic violence, such polities seek legitimization of statehood. Diasporas are often important, as they can provide support when other agents are constrained by international restrictions. By

2017, Kosovo had received 115 diplomatic recognitions, though is not yet fully recognized as a state.

The *comparative perspective* is crucial, as I focus on Kosovo's engagement with the diaspora in 2008-2013 in US, UK, Sweden, Germany, and Switzerland. The methodology cannot be confined to conventions about case study research through immersion in a single case (George and Bennett 2004), or comparative research based on small-N cases (Lijphart 1971). Both approaches, valid when studying phenomena within and between states, are problematic when studying *relationships* between agents on the international systemic level. They exemplify the pitfalls of "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer and Glick Shiller 2002; Adamson 2016), not suited to global relational dynamics. Here comparisons of host states are used to illustrate - rather than causally trace - variations in how sending states perceive and engage diaspora empowerment in different contexts.

I gathered data through *multi-sited research*, informed by 60 semi-structured interviews in 2013-2017 among policy makers from governmental, nongovernmental, and international organizations, party representatives, diaspora returnees, and representatives of Kosovo Albanian diasporas in the UK, Sweden, Germany, and Switzerland. Primary research through semi-structured interviews is especially important to capture perceptions, crucial to understanding the positionality perspective. The interviews were conducted in Albanian, English, Swedish, and German. I also used secondary sources to illustrate arguments related to Switzerland and the US.

I analyze the sending states' extraterritorial politics toward the Kosovo Albanian diasporas in the US, UK, Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden. Estimated at 113,661 people (US Census 2000), the US-based diaspora has been dominated by descendants of anticomunist migrants who left Albania after World War II and settled primarily in New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC (Hockenos 2003). UK-based immigration is more recent, associated with refugees and those who fled Albania after the Cold War, estimated at 70,000-100,000, and well organized in London (*ibid.*). The diasporas in Switzerland (around 340,000) and Germany (around 550,000) originated in "guest worker" emigration from former Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s (Albanian Diaspora 2010), constituted primarily of Albanians from Kosovo and Macedonia. Switzerland and Germany host almost 60% of migrants from Kosovo (World Bank 2011), concentrated in Zurich, Lucerne, and Bern, and respectively in Berlin, Stuttgart,

Frankfurt, and Munich. The Sweden-based diaspora, primarily from Kosovo in the early 1990s, is concentrated in Malmö and Gothenburg.

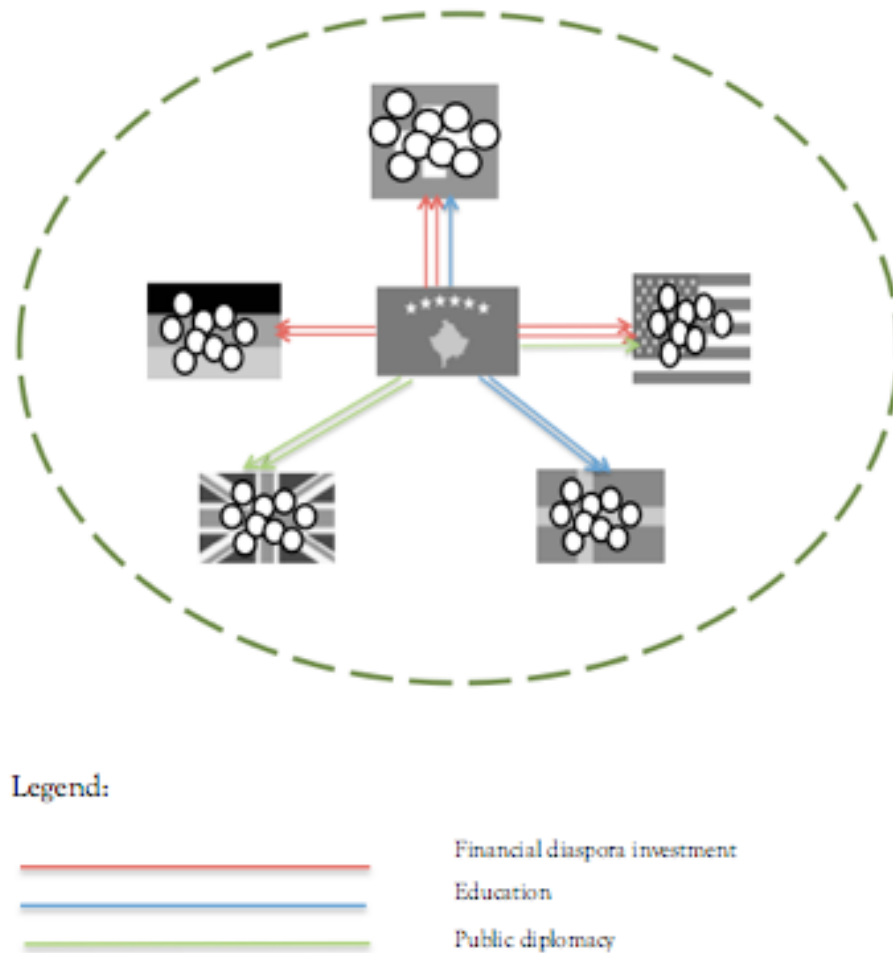
Postconflict State-building in Kosovo and the Role of the Diaspora

The Kosovo Albanian diaspora has been highly important for the evolution of Kosovo from an autonomous region in Serbia in 1989 to a *de facto* state in 2008. Immediately after the Serbian regime of Slobodan Milosevic curtailed Kosovo's autonomy in 1989, Kosovo Albanians emigrated *en masse* to the US and Western Europe. In 1991, a nonviolent movement under the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) developed parallel institutions to maintain the livelihood of segregated Kosovo Albanians (Hockenos 2003). In 1998-1999, warfare between Kosovo Albanians and the Serbian regime culminated in ethnic cleansing and large-scale forced migration. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) emerged as a radical movement from diaspora circles, and developed subversive activities in Kosovo and northern Albania (ibid). A galvanized diaspora provided wartime funds, lobbying, and fighters (Perritt 2008), and helped draw NATO into its 1999 military campaign. Between UNMIK's arrival in Kosovo (2000) and Kosovo's independence (2008), the UN, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and EU assumed major state-building functions in Kosovo refugee return, developing and monitoring political processes and economic reconstruction (Skendaj 2014). Exhausted diaspora members considered state-building primarily for new institutions (Koinova 2013).

Interest in diaspora-related institutions surged after independence. The *de facto* state began seeking international legitimacy and self-sufficiency. Three years later, in 2011, a Ministry of Diaspora was developed from the Agency for Diaspora in the Office of the Prime Minister. In 2009-2012 the government adopted a National Strategy on Migration, primarily concerned with irregular migration and administration of legal migration (World Bank 2011). Its portfolio expanded in 2013. With support from IOM, Finland, and UNDP, intense consultation took place among more than 900 Kosovar diaspora members in thirteen countries, mostly Europe and the US (Cancel 2013). A Diaspora Strategy (2013) formed with strands for financial investment, education and curriculum initiatives, and public diplomacy.

The next three sections present empirical evidence speaking to utilitarian, constructivist, and governance rationales, and demonstrating that a socio-spatial positionality rationale was implemented in governance processes through a combination of partially rationalized and partially subconscious practices.

Figure 2: Kosovo and Diasporas in the Albanian Transnational Social Field



Diaspora Financial Investments

Speaking to a utilitarian rationale, Kosovo officials sought to govern the diaspora for material power through financial investment, using practices not necessarily in the Diaspora Strategy. Individual remittances have been the largest source of external financing, given that one of four Kosovo households has at least one member living abroad (World Bank 2010); 25% receive around €600 million per year (Diaspora Strategy 2013). Direct financial investment is also important, although numerous interviewees found it still minimal. Exact data are difficult to obtain, since Kosovo's Statistical Office does not gather information on whether Foreign

Direct Investment (FDI) stems from diaspora sources (R1 2013). The Ministry of Diaspora has identified about 500 diaspora entrepreneurs interested in investing in small factories, mostly construction or primary agricultural production, with sporadic interest from large entrepreneurs in the energy sector (R2 2013). While affluent individual business entrepreneurs have emerged in various parts of the transnational social field, the majority has not been affluent. The average diaspora salary is €1,700 in resident countries: around 33% in construction, 11% in restaurants and hotels, 11% in manufacturing, agriculture, and other services, with only 7% in managerial positions (Rinvest 2007).

As diaspora affluence *per se* is not decisive for sending state engagement, one might consider that sending states are motivated by diaspora size to engage in some contexts compared to others. I argue that size is indeed important, as larger groups are better organized and easier to solicit than individuals. Yet size does not directly translate into financial investment. For example, the diaspora in Switzerland is smaller than that in Germany, but in 2013 when I conducted my fieldwork, the strongest visible investment was from Switzerland. Bexhdet Pacoli, CEO of a Swiss-based construction and engineering company, built the 5-star Swiss Diamond Hotel in Pristina. The entertainment complex Vali Ranch near Gjilan was built by the owner of another Swiss construction business. The "ethno-village" near Pristina, where Albanian culture is celebrated with music and theater, was built by Valdet Avdiu, also from Switzerland. Kosovo officials consider the diaspora in Switzerland easier to govern than that in Germany, since it is highly concentrated in a small state, where ties among members are strong and sending state activities can be more effective (R3 2017).

I argue that a socio-spatial positionality rationale exists beyond utilitarian logic regarding diasporas' financial investments. Sending state and diasporas operate in a transnational social field, and specific positions in that field empower diasporas in two ways toward Kosovo's financial investment: the power diaspora entrepreneurs amass from the context in which they are embedded and the specific linkages they maintain with elites in the sending state. Regarding financial investment, the diaspora in Switzerland, Germany, and the US has been considered much more important in positional terms than those in Sweden or the UK. Such considerations have not been mentioned explicitly in the Diaspora Strategy, emerging in partially rationalized, partially subconscious ways.

Switzerland has been considered an empowering context, since it has a large diaspora but pays serious attention to diaspora engagement in economic development. In 2011 a

bilateral agreement was signed for investment protection (Johnson and Sachs 2014). The Swiss government is interested in measures to integrate migrants returning from Switzerland (R5 2013); it sponsored an NGO initiative, *Diasporas for Development*, to work on investment strategies. In contrast, sources close to the German government mentioned that diaspora investment in Kosovo is important for Germany, and several entrepreneurs have already made investments, but the biggest concern is to engage stakeholders to thwart Kosovo's illegal migration (R7, R8 2013). This statement was made as Germany was experiencing a large wave of Kosovars seeking refugee status. From the diaspora view, Germany's context has nevertheless been conducive to financial investment because it fosters "rewarding of members for hard work" (R9 2015).

Similar arguments about empowerment through context can be made regarding the US-based diaspora. US government programs and initiatives have supported Kosovo's business and entrepreneurship (US Embassy 2010). The context is also perceived as important for financial investment, because it fosters individual entrepreneurship in a political culture of individualism and low taxation, and has attracted Albanian migrants who seek entrepreneurial opportunities and competition in market terms. Compared to some European countries, the US is considered as offering opportunities for quick upward mobility and accumulation of capital, even to the first migration generation, still emotionally connected to their homeland and inclined to invest in it. This perception is important, as recent research shows a more complicated view. Upward mobility in the US has stagnated in past decades (NCPA 2014), but perceptions in Kosovo, crucial for positional thinking, have not, as numerous respondents mention.

There is a contrast in how Sweden and the UK are engaged. Sweden with its high taxation welfare state is considered as not fostering the same degree of entrepreneurship; thus financial investment in Kosovo has been minimal (R10, R11 2013). The majority work in highly taxed jobs or receive social benefits, with little room for accumulation of capital. More attention to Kosovo's economic development has been paid only more recently, regarding Sweden (R12 2014) and the UK. Since the diasporas in both countries emerged from refugees of the early 1990s, and Kosovo Albanians in the UK are not yet a major part of London-based financial institutions, sending state elites have considered their positional power to contribute to Kosovo in domains other than financial investment.

The second way sending states consider diaspora positionality is by evaluating the transnational linkages to diasporas in specific contexts. Short distances and concentration of Kosovo Albanians in several Swiss cities, for example, have facilitated thick connections to the homeland through circular migration (R2 2013). The nature of ties is also important, with implications beyond physical proximity. Thick linkages between investors and prominent returnees and local politicians are often built on political credentials from pursuing independence. Endorsement of investment opportunities from former Prime Minister Hashim Thaci was considered important. Thaci spent much of his life in Switzerland, where he organized the KLA that battled the Serbian regime in 1998-1999, and a hub for radical diaspora activities developed. Behgjet Pacolli, who lobbied for Kosovo independence, is leader of the New Kosovo Alliance party and former First Deputy Prime Minister. Harry Bajraktari, a member of the National Albanian-American Council, a US-based organization that actively lobbied for independence, launched one of the biggest investment schemes in Kosovo after 1999. Even before independence, Dino Assanaj, a major US-based KLA activist, became chair of the Privatization Agency, and built an "International Village" of expensive homes for diaspora and other international persons near Pristina (Koinova 2013). Florin Krasniqi, a New York roofing company owner who organized a major fund-raising campaign to aid the KLA during the 1998-1999 warfare, became an MP from the opposition party Vetevendosje, with ambitions to invest in a small power plant in the Decani region during privatization (Winne 2010). Another entrepreneur, with ties to an American-Canadian company, aims to build a power plant in the Dukadjini region to process coal from substantial reserves (R9 2013).

Positionality considerations regarding financial investment become highly visible in a postconflict *de facto*, cash-strapped state such as Kosovo, whose position in a transnational social field provides another layer of politics. It needs to target the best diaspora resources available and encourage diasporas to contribute as much as possible. A *postconflict de facto state* must deal with other obstacles to diaspora investment too. Solutions available to internationally recognized states – government matching funds for investments, or diaspora banks to lower wire transfer barriers and give loans – have not yet materialized. There is consensus among potential entrepreneurs, members of international organizations, and even government officials that corruption and problems with rule of law prevent diaspora members from financial investment. Property and technology must be guaranteed and potential legal disputes handled through still dysfunctional courts. It is not surprising that wartime credentials of diaspora

entrepreneurs and local politicians have provided a certain degree of self-regulation concerning Kosovo's extraterritorial financial investments.

Maintaining Identity through Educational Initiatives

Speaking to an *identity-based* rationale, the Kosovo Diaspora Strategy developed a second pillar about preservation of cultural identity and language, using educational initiatives as governance practices to maintain the diaspora. The document mentions that 20,000 diaspora children abroad benefit from Albanian language education, with around 400 teachers in after-school programs. Some teachers worked voluntarily during the 1990s and 2000s, and the "home-state needs to compensate them financially" (R4 2013).

Diaspora positionality is also considered during extraterritorial engagement with identity-based politics, even if references to diasporas' global positions are not mentioned directly in the Diaspora Strategy. In practice, Kosovo institutions seek expertise from environments already conducive to Albanian education abroad, such as Sweden. Adamson and Demetriou (2007) make a similar argument about Sweden and Kurdish diaspora education. Kosovo's officials rationalize some of their practices; they see education in Sweden as good and largely free, compared to other industrialized states, where fees have skyrocketed. Numerous diaspora members in Helsingborg, Gothenburg, and Malmö have taught the language to Kosovo Albanian pupils as a mother tongue in the Swedish educational system, acquiring expertise that could be governed long-distance to favor Kosovo's state-building. A key diaspora entrepreneur, an advisor to the Diaspora Ministry, argues that demand for educational materials in Albanian originated from Switzerland and other countries (R11 2013). Yet diaspora members from Sweden have shaped such policies, and are also sought to take part in educational exchanges with Kosovo and Albania as a kin-state, and to participate in media and publication programs (R13 2014; focus group 2014).

Advancing a diaspora positionality perspective is different from arguing that the *de facto* state sought to engage the most highly educated diaspora. In fact, most wealthy, educated migrants left Pristina in the 1990s and settled in the UK. The diaspora in Sweden originated in emigration of blue-collar workers in the Trepca mines in Northern Kosovo, who were dismissed in the early 1990s by the Serbian regime and fled to Sweden with their large families (R11 2013). They took advantage of free education, quickly learning to teach Albanian in a Western context. Mother-tongue education in Sweden is developed by the state, with no leeway for

diaspora entrepreneurs to change the curriculum. The Swedish context, not initial background, empowered diaspora entrepreneurs to engage in Albanian-language educational affairs.

A major endeavor of Kosovo as a sending state has been to develop an Albanian-language curriculum for diaspora children with origins in Albania proper and other territories in the Balkans as part of the transnational social field. Sending state officials together with diaspora members developed the curriculum to consider national identity, while Kosovo's contested sovereignty created a dilemma on how to practice this identity (R14 2013). An interviewee argued:

The Ministry of Education titled this initiative "The Curriculum for Albanian Schools in Diaspora."... Then immediately the question emerged as to which national identity are we trying to develop? Others said, of course, Albanian. Why Albanian, we are Kosovo? OK, the majority of our people are Albanian. Then came up the issue: isn't it then the task of Albania, which is the mother country, to develop such curriculum and to maintain and develop Albanian schools in the diaspora? And why we, a small Kosovo with our problems, try to do their task? So the answer was, we want to start the initiative, they have not thought about this, and they do not have such a strong diaspora in European countries as we do, where the educational system allows for the schooling in native languages. OK. We need to cooperate with Albania. But then the Serb citizens of Kosovo in the diaspora, which curriculum are they going to follow? Of course, they will go to the Serbian state, because their diaspora belongs to Serbia. (R14 2013)

This discussion indicates wider challenges to a postconflict state, reflecting debates about ethnonational versus civic diaspora engagement. The Diaspora Strategy explicitly mentions "any person dwelling or emplaced outside Kosovo who was born or has family origins in the Republic of Kosovo," based on a 2010 Diaspora law. It implies sending state engagement with ethnonational diversity of concerned populations, including Kosovo Albanians, Serbs, Turks, and Roma, among others. Even if aspiring to be rooted in a civic principle, the strategy mentions that a "definition of a diaspora member is a theoretical challenge, taking into account the difficulties to define this community itself," and refers extensively to the Albanian community and cooperation with Albania. A representative of an international organization argued that actual diaspora engagement practices take place primarily on an ethnonational principle (R15 2013). A leader of a Serbian institution in Gračanica near Pristina argued that engaging state institutions in Pristina has nothing to do with local Serbs (R16 2013). Although

a strategic document formulated diaspora identity in both civic and ethnonational terms, actual sending state practices engaged diaspora identity primarily through the ethnonational version. This speaks to Ragazzi (2009) and Kunz (2012), seeing sending state practices as defining a how diasporas are categorized.

Public Diplomacy for Promotion of State Identity

The third major way Kosovo engages its diaspora is via governance of public diplomacy. The Diaspora Strategy notes a need for "promotion of state identity," characteristic for a *de facto* postconflict state, which needs its diaspora not simply to lobby a host-state's foreign policy, but to shape the state's international image and aid endorsement of sovereignty. Broader diaspora engagement in public diplomacy takes place not simply via ethnic lobbies in foreign policy making, but via a "light-touch" managerial and nation-branding approach characteristic of a governance rationale. Browning argues that nation-branding entails a brand aimed at enhancing competitiveness in a neoliberal world order. The goal is to communicate values and identity narratives to both external actors of the state and citizens at home and abroad, and to police the "content of the conduct" (2015:195-221). Whether directly engaged or not in lobby organizations, larger diaspora and especially personalities with high visibility – musicians, actors, sport stars, and others – are sought to communicate such values broadly and internationally.

Kosovo as a small postconflict *de facto* state has limited capacity to reach out to the world. It is burdened by lack of full diplomatic recognition and a negative image from 1990s warfare (Xharra and Waehlich 2012). Public diplomacy is particularly important for polities that need to turn an image of a wartorn society into one with greater potential (2011). Months after proclamation of independence in 2008, the Israeli company Saatchi and Saatchi won a Kosovo government tender to launch an advertising campaign, "Kosovo – The Young Europeans," capitalizing on the fact that Kosovo has the youngest population of Europe (average age 25). Eventually criticized for overspending and lack of ethnic and age-based diversity, the campaign nevertheless put on the map the importance of "people power" and individuals in furthering independence. The potential diaspora role was further highlighted by the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Waehlich and Xharra 2011), discussing ways to engage the diaspora, including suggestions for policies from Armenia, Israel, and Serbia. The

Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded with opening a position of Deputy Foreign Minister to engage the diaspora.

A government-based respondent said it was decided to diversify the traditional foreign policy portfolio to change Kosovo's image. "Tectonic shifts" since independence - "one of the most progressive constitutions in Europe with legal embeddedness of LGTB and other rights" - have gone unnoticed: the image still reflects events and tensions in the divided city of Mitrovica. Individuals in Kosovo and the diaspora can spread a better image through social networks. Pop-star Rita Ora from Britain raised the Kosovo flag in a clip viewed by thousands. Football player Xherdan Shaqiri, a second-generation Kosovar who plays for Bayern Munich, wore the Kosovo flag during a game (R17 2013). Important figures come from sports (mostly Europe), and performance (mostly US) sectors (Xharra and Waehlich 2011). Engaging the first Kosovo MP in Sweden has also been important (*ibid.*).

At first glance, public diplomacy seems to target high visibility personalities regardless of context, so diaspora positionality might not matter. I argue that diasporas in countries associated with Kosovo's international recognition are more targeted than others. They are perceived as having more "power to" engage in diplomatic processes, as the host-state is engaged in other state-recognition activities. The first transnational meetings on public diplomacy took place in the US, the traditional context to lobby for Kosovo's independence before NATO's 1999 intervention and aftermath (Koinova 2013). After 2008's proclaimed independence, power in diplomacy shifted, as EU states - Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain - refrained from recognizing Kosovo as an independent state. The UK has been considered to have more diplomatic leverage in EU-based foreign policy than the US, considering Kosovo a subject of EU foreign and enlargement policy.

Demonstrating how positionality could be fluid over time, relationships with the UK-based diaspora developed in more depth. Selimi (2011) argues that this relationship is a classic example of how history and sentiment count in such engagement. The UK, not the largest investor in Kosovo, or hosting a large Kosovo Albanian diaspora, is viewed as the country to aid Kosovo through diplomatic channels. In June 2011, Kosovo's Foreign Ministry, UK Embassy, and British Council in Kosovo signed a memorandum, "Communication with Europe through Diplomacy" (KNCEI 2016), which Foreign Minister Enver Hoxhaj called part of "our strategy to successfully conclude the processes of recognition," by "strengthening institutional communication with European states which have still not recognized Kosovo." It aims to

involve advocacy, public personalities, civil society, intellectuals (MFA 2011), and alleged public diplomacy with a political foundation (R17 2013).

Conclusions

Academic discussion of *why* and *how* sending states engage diasporas has so far regarded motivations in utilitarian, identity-based (constructivist), and governance rationales. I advance a complementary *socio-spatial* rationale of diaspora *positionality*, putting at the analytical forefront diaspora embeddedness in home-states, host-states, and other locations in a larger transnational social field, defined by *social* interactions among sending states and diaspora agents, embedded in specific *spatial* locations. Diaspora positionality is relative, based not on absolute categories but on relationships among diasporas in different contexts and sending state(s); it has a power dimension viewed as empowerment to potentially achieve certain homeland-oriented goals, is fluid over time, and is perceptual..

Empirical evidence from rich multi-sited fieldwork has shown how the socio-positional rationale permeates utilitarian, identity-based, governance rationales, as sending states could consider how diasporas' embeddedness in contexts *empowers* them to enhance material and social capital, construct or foster national or cosmopolitan identities, or participate as self-sustained agencies in transnational governance. Kosovo authorities seek the diasporas in the US, Switzerland, and Germany for financial investments, Sweden for educational matters, and the UK and US for public diplomacy and branding coined by the sending state. The socio-spatial perspective is nevertheless best accommodated by theories of governance, as diaspora engagement takes place through partially rationalized, partially implicitly driven practices, performed by multiple agents beyond sending state authorities. A postconflict state could have an official strategy but little capacity to manage extraterritorial processes, adopting a "catch-all" approach reflecting or deviating from official strategy and considering diasporas agents of governance through self-regulation. The multiple actors in diaspora engagement, whether agents of sending states or diaspora entrepreneurs, understand that contextual empowerment could be an asset to a cash-strapped polity.

This article has also discussed how sovereignty is contested and reflected in the governance of diaspora politics in a postconflict state. Such state is plagued by limited institutional capacity and brain-drain due to warfare or underdevelopment. This prompts its elites to engage the diaspora by including them in extraterritorial social practices rather than

through full-scale management. First, a positional perspective becomes highly visible, since there is no affluent or well-networked diaspora to engage, and sending state elites need to achieve most with minimal effort. They consider diaspora positionality a nontangible resource, empowering diasporas through context. Second, postconflict states are also plagued by linkages between diaspora entrepreneurs and sending state authorities with war legacies. Credentials of a diaspora member from previous fighting for Kosovo's independence are often translated into self-initiative and opportunities for financial investment. Such linkages are not simply thick or thin as global interactions, but carry specific substance, here wartime loyalties turned into postwar legacies. Such linkages, as well as local corruption, could prevent other diaspora members from participating in sending state processes. Third, a postconflict state may not necessarily engage the diaspora through a civic national identity. Evidence from Kosovo's educational curriculum development demonstrates that international pressure to include civic principles for diaspora engagement may be strategically defined but not implemented, or be complemented by practices reifying an ethnonational identity. Finally, especially a *de facto* state such as Kosovo may systematically seek diasporas to legitimize statehood and policies through public diplomacy. Even with little institutional capacity, public diplomacy aiming at state recognition might be fostered with more vigor than by internationally recognized states.

Discussion of Kosovo's sending state engagement with diasporas is an instance of a larger phenomenon, to be expanded upon with empirical evidence from other transnational social fields with different global spread, boundaries, and internal dynamics. Further empirical research with Armenian, Kurdish, Palestinian, and other transnational social fields could shed light on how sending states, *de facto* states, or areas of limited governance engage conflict-generated diasporas in global contexts. This perspective challenges a simplistic understanding of sovereignty as internal and external, and a model of relationships between diasporas, host-states, and home-states, since diasporas may be linked to more than one sending or host-state. Kosovo sending state agents included Albanians in Albania and other Balkan countries in their considerations. Armenians might be considered not only by Armenia proper, but by Nagorno-Karabakh as a *de facto* state, and Turkey and Lebanon with Armenian populations. Kurds in Europe have linkages to the Middle East, including Turkey, Iraqi Kurdistan, Syria, and Iran. Palestinians are linked to West Bank and Gaza, Jerusalem, refugee camps, and other Middle East territories. In these fields, sending states are weak states, plagued by conflict and attempts at postconflict reconstruction.

The ramifications of a socio-spatial diaspora positionality rationale go beyond linkages between diasporas and polities experiencing contested sovereignty. A transnational social field perspective on IR expands thinking beyond states, while focusing on states, their levels of sovereignty contestation, and diasporas belonging to a particular field. Contextual empowerment of diasporas could take place vis-à-vis other diasporas in that field, but the *relations between different agents* are context-specific and field-specific, not state-specific. A stronger state with more capacity than a weak one would still be part of assorted relationships with diasporas, durable or *ad hoc*, cooperative or conflictual, or based on specific content. Both contexts in which diasporas are embedded and substance and frequency of linkages between them and sending states shape the art of diaspora governance.

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