

Interview

Martin Baumann

To cite this article: Martin Baumann (2020, September 18) Personal communication [Email interview], Turkish Journal of Diaspora Studies, 1(1), 140-142, DOI: 10.52241/TJDS.2021.0015

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.52241/TJDS.2021.0015>



© 2021 Martin Baumann. Published with license by Migration Research Foundation



Published online: 30 March 2021



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)

Interview

Martin Baumann

Department for the Study of Religions, University of Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland

Q1. *The concept of diaspora is used to define almost any community who has a distinct identity tied with an imagined or territorialized nation outside the resident country. Nationalization of the concept of “victim” diaspora seems no longer prevailing but communities beyond the territory of a nation generally fit the picture. Migration or exile is not the only cause to form diasporic communities. To some studies, socially, culturally, religiously, ethnically, linguistically, and/or geopolitically amalgamated communities are also deemed to form diaspora. Having said that, what do you think about the impact of the proliferation of the usage on the conceptualization of diaspora? And/or, how would you conceptualize diaspora?*

A1. Victim diasporas are still around and it is the enduring collective memory of people who had been persecuted who perpetuate exactly such a recollection. As for my conceptualisation of diaspora, please see an article of mine attach (Baumann, 2000). And yes, numerous articles since the mid-1990s are around and continue to discuss concepts of diaspora.

Q2. *States are increasing their efforts all around the world for diaspora engagement; however, they still lack in giving efforts in internationally debated policies. This does not mean that states do not have diaspora policies of their own but we don't see the diasporic issues discussed among states perhaps due to political and socio-cultural sensibility. Is it possible for states to consider debating diaspora internationally beyond assimilation or nationalization policies?*

A2. I agree to your observation, in particular as various states view diaspora communities with suspicion. And yes, it is possible for a state debating diaspora internationally beyond assimilation or nationalization policies in concepts such as multiculturalism and moderate secularism (see Tariq Modood) and participatory parity (see Nancy Fraser 2018). The idea of such approaches is to enable a participation of diaspora groups in the social, economic and political resources of a society.

Q3. *Since the world entered into the nation-state system, territorial states have not been able to contain nations, rather led to increasing diasporas. So how do globalized nations and governance impact territorial state and diaspora relations?*

A3. To complicate a question to answer this in a few sentences. You might refer to expositions by Steven Vertovec, Rainer Blauböck, Peggy Levitt and other with regard to these multiple-entangled question.

Q4. In general, diaspora studies are not at their peak values. A small number of scholars dedicate their time to diaspora issues. For those who are eager to study this subject, what are the fundamental approaches to studying the concept of diaspora? Why is it important to study and how do you see where diaspora studies are heading to or need to go?

A4. Diaspora studies are of interest as these transcend the nation state and points to inter- and transnational connections of parts of a nation-state's population. Diasporas can be both conservative or highly innovative in nature. On the conservative site, a diaspora community might preserve language, habits, customs and religious expressions which have been changed in later decades in the country of origin (see the example of German or Swiss people in South America, settling there in the 19th century). On the innovative site, due to a lack of religious control by authorities, diasporas are laboratories of cultural and religious changes, changes which much slower take place in the country of religion in subsequent years.

References

Baumann, M. 2000. Diaspora: Genealogies of Semantics and Transcultural Comparison, *Numen*, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 313-337.