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Book Review

Alan Gamlen, **Human Geopolitics: States, Emigrants, and the Rise of Diaspora Institutions**, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2019, 352 pp., \$93 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-19-883349-9

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Even though the concepts of migrant and migration have existed for many years, they have received more attention and been considered more problematic since the end of the Cold War, because of its connection to globalization and mass migration flux. Given the growth of transnational migration caused by these and other phenomena, states found themselves in a position that required taking action about migrants. They did this by creating new official diaspora engagement institutions. Alan Gamlen's book, *Human Geopolitics: States, Emigrants, and the Rise of Diaspora Institutions*, goes into detail about how and why there has been a rise in the number of diaspora institutions since the 1990s and their impact on geopolitics and international relations.

By defining diaspora institutions as "formal state offices dedicated to emigrants and their descendants" (p. 9), Gamlen excludes provincial or other level institutions, and diaspora NGOs from his analysis. The main question that the book tries to answer is what explains the rise of diaspora institutions and how they are changing the rules of world politics (p. 4-5). According to Gamlen's assessment, there are three phases to the global rise of diaspora institutions and each one has its own particularities. The first phase, covering the time from after World War II to the 1990s, has reference to a few countries that experienced regime shocks such as decolonization and democratization. These countries tried to bring together emigrants as part of a nation-building process. The second one, from the mid-1990s to mid-2000s, involves member countries in regional organizations, such as the European Union. Accordingly, they created their own diaspora institutions to have control over labor migration and to distinguish irregular migrants. The final phase, which is the most important according to Gamlen, started in 2005 with the support of international organizations such as the United Nations, epistemic communities, think tanks. This phase is still ongoing, and it comprises numerous countries experienced a rise in the number of diaspora institutions. Consequently, 118 out of 193 United Nations member states, had at least one diaspora institution by 2015 (p. 9).

Based on these three phases, the main argument of Gamlen's book is that the "global spread of diaspora institutions is a particular kind of socially scripted action" (p. 15). According to Gamlen, two hypotheses exist to explain why there has been a rise of diaspora institutions: tapping and embracing (p. 9). The tapping hypothesis is based on a realist and nationalist

approach, which focuses states' security and foreign policy interests. Countries that embrace this approach, see diaspora institutions as investment instruments to achieve their purposes. On the other hand, according to the embracing hypothesis, states establish diaspora institutions to embrace their emigrant citizens to seek national unity (p. 10). Gamlen argues that these two hypotheses might explain the first two phases of the rise in diaspora institutions, but not the third one. Instead, world polity theory, world society theory, and the study of Epistemic Communities better illuminate the underlying reasons for the rise of diaspora institutions since 2005 (p. 184).

The book is organized into eleven chapters that chronologically explain the historical development of diaspora institutions. Throughout Chapters 3, 4, and 5, Gamlen focuses on the first phase that witnessed the formation of diaspora institutions in accordance with exile ingathering and labor export strategies. In the subsequent two chapters, the book explores the second phase and gives examples of countries that are a member of regional organizations, such as the European Union and the African Union. Then, in Chapters 8, 9, and 10, Gamlen arrives at the third phase and examines the global rise of diaspora institutions as a policy diffusion created by Kofi Annan's project and some professional experts, whom he calls the epistemic community of migration optimists, to orchestrate a migration regime. In the final chapter, Gamlen summarizes his argumentations presented in the book and highlights his contribution to the field. He also expands horizons for future studies by presenting new questions. Throughout the book, Gamlen applies his methodology, which involves both quantitative and qualitative methods, and presents the data collected and classified. The quantitative data serves to exhibit the rise in the number of diaspora institutions, and the qualitative data gathers information from many countries to show the underlying reasons for the rise in the number of diaspora institutions through multiple factors. This collected data is presented at the end of the book in an exhaustive appendix, which provides a full list of diaspora institutions that are analyzed in the study, including the sources.

In general, the book is very well organized to prove a point, that the rise of diaspora institutions is all about human geopolitics, namely, "a kind of geopolitics involving a strategic competition over people but not over territory" (p.6). With the growth of transnational migration, especially since 2005, diaspora institutions emerged all over the globe by a decentralized and internationally supported process to manage global migration. Nonetheless, the book does not bring light to why there are still many countries without any diaspora institutions. If the diaspora institution has become an international norm since 2005, as the book suggested, why have all countries not reacted accordingly? Still, the book provides a different point of view to evaluate transnational migration, which is traditionally studied by sociologists.

Methodologically, applying multiple methods, i.e., quantitative, and qualitative, strengthens the book in terms of proving its arguments. Also, formal statements that are collected from the author's interviews, give insights to the quantitative data. Having said that, frequently giving references to the interviews, the relevant legal citations, and the diaspora institution names disrupts the chain of thought and sometimes makes it hard to follow the chronology. The introduction of new concepts such as *human geopolitics*, *safety valve labor export*, and *exile ingathering* provides a better comprehension of diaspora related topics.

The book, trying place itself as a reference book in the field, does not give much reference

to the existing literature. Diaspora studies is an extensive field, but the reader does not see an academic debate over subjects or theories mentioned in the book. Furthermore, some related topics are only mentioned briefly. For example, citing Tsourapas, Gamlen speaks about authoritarian emigrant states in the concluding chapter, but transnational authoritarianism implemented by diaspora institutions is worth considering and could be discussed more. There could be a stand-alone chapter treating security related issues concerning diaspora institutions. Finally, there are some countries' diaspora institutions that Gamlen frequently dwells on. It is understandable because they are usual suspects like Mexico, India, Israel, and the Philippines. However, there is a little explanation or analysis on countries considered to be developed. This could raise some questions such as, are diaspora institutions more important for developing or underdeveloped countries or are developed countries diaspora institutions more relevant to the main argument.

All in all, the book is well balanced to show the advantages and disadvantages of diaspora institutions. Throughout the book the author reveals the benefits of diaspora institutions and in the concluding part, he is not very optimistic about them. This juxtaposition gives a more realistic point of view, considering the increasing number closed border policies. Hence, it is a beneficial reference book for both public servants and social sciences scholars.

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