

Comparative Perspectives between the Afghan and Somali Diasporas

Similarities (and many apply to other poor countries)

- Migration patterns – refugees, economic migrants, cross-border traders - hence heterogeneous
- Migration processes - insecurity, conflict
- Activities – remittances, political engagement, social networks, transnational connections, internet, mobile phones etc.
- Clan structures (and political differences) – not universal in Afghanistan
- Religion (and nationalism, anti-imperialism)
- Large diasporas and overseas populations
- Failed and collapsed states in reconstruction
- International community agendas (whose interests?)
- Sustainable return and reconstruction (myth?)
- Settlement patterns, maintain traditions (myth?)
- Divided families as a norm
- Subsistence economies and harsh environments make migration inevitable
- Conflict and ongoing insecurity
- High levels of humanitarian aid influence migration patterns and identities
- Interests of neighbouring countries

Differences

- Involvement of women in migration strategies and transnational activities (very low in Afghan diaspora)
- 'Religion' influenced reception in neighbouring countries (Afghanistan positive, Somali negative)
- Religion less important 'organizing principle' for Somali than Afghan diaspora – clan, lineage more important
- 'Near' diaspora more important (financial flows) for Afghanistan than Somalia
- Role of nationals of neighbouring countries of Somali origin
- Stage of the state-building process
- Higher dependency on remittances in Somalia (qat)
- Contribution of diaspora to physical infrastructure (clinics, Universities etc.) higher in Somalia?

Dynamic Factors Influencing the 'Organization' of Diasporas (return, remittances, investment)

Diaspora factors

Divided diasporas - different migration patterns, clan, political affiliations etc.

Mobility can undermine affiliation and organization (nomadic tradition)

Length of time in settlement (second generation)

Competing interests for diaspora attention (e.g. new asylum seekers)

Not 'street wise' and situation at home has changed

Home country factors

Weak/failed/collapsed state

Lack of engagement with diaspora - resentment

Conflict

Civil society and administrative infrastructure

Insecurity/corruption is disincentive to invest

Borders

Private sector

How remittances are spent

Host country factors

Immigration policy (refugee status bars return, threat of deportation, portable pensions etc.)

Integration and employment policies

Dispersal policy

Islam and xenophobia

Economic marginalization

Divided families

Policy Implications

Home country policies

Basic conditions for economic activities

Consistent tax policy

Good governance (corruption) and 'rule of law' (customary, formal etc.)

Economic and banking system rebuilding (although hawalha works) (free trade zones)

Formal contact to mobilise diasporas

Political participation from overseas (voting rights, dual citizenship)

Host country policies

Welfare system

Employment

Inclusionary social policies?

Coherent migration policies

Immigration policies (including dual citizenship)

Recognition of economic migration from highly-impooverished economies as essential livelihood strategy

International community

Move away from return vs. integration myth

Recognition of economic migration from highly-impooverished economies as essential livelihood strategy

Internet

Future Research Priorities

Afghan diaspora

Situation of returnees
Ethnographic research in Afghanistan
Desertification and livelihoods and migration

Somali diaspora

Second generation
Role of internet
Ethnographic research in country
Role of women in migration, transnationalism etc.
Changing role of Islam inside and outside Somalia
How to implement mobile services
Environmental change, nomads and livelihoods
Qat
Comparison of impact of diaspora in regions

Comparative research

Hawâla systems
Integration and engagement at home
Evaluate impact of diaspora remittances and investments
Quantitative studies – diaspora numbers and characteristics, scale of remittances, aid
Changing attitudes and policies of home states and international community towards remittances and diaspora
Other comparisons – Mali?
Motivations of the diaspora
Comparisons of diasporas in different host countries (political systems)
Understand the ‘informal’ sector
Consider benefits of creating a formal sector
Role of humanitarian aid in migration patterns