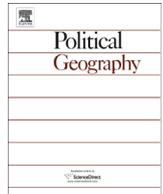




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## Intervention: Extraterritorial authoritarian power

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## 1. The extraterritorial gap

Marlies Glasius

This set of interventions aims to transcend the stark separation between political geography and the study of authoritarianism. The political geography literature on mobility has typically been focused on liberal democracies as sites of prospective immigration, not on authoritarian regimes as contexts for outward mobility. As such, it has critically examined uneven access and exclusionary mechanisms of liberal states (De Genova, 2013; Hyndman, 1997; Mountz, 2011). Recent contributions have also begun to examine the politics of so-called 'sending' states (Gamlen, 2008; Collyer, ed, 2013), and the implications of extraterritorial voting (Collyer, 2014; Caramani and Grotz, ed., 2015), but they have still typically neglected authoritarian 'sending' states.

The authoritarianism literature on the other hand continues to leave its territorial assumptions unexamined. Since the 2000s, comparative politics scholars have shown a renewed interest in the endurance of authoritarianism (see for instance Gandhi, 2008; Gerschewski, 2013; McMann, 2006; Schedler, 2013), but the orientation has overwhelmingly been domestic and comparative. There is increasing attention in this new authoritarianism literature to how states influence each other (Bader et al., 2010; Brownlee, 2012; Levitsky and Way, 2010; Tansey, 2016), but it has yet to

give sustained attention to population mobility, and spatial approaches have been almost entirely absent.

These blind spots in political geography and comparative politics leave us with an 'extraterritorial gap': an inability to perceive and analyze extraterritorial state power in general, and extraterritorial authoritarian power in particular (see Collyer and King, 2015; Lewis, 2015 for some rare and recent exceptions). Theoretically, this extraterritorial gap can be considered as one consequence of the oft-cited 'territorial trap' (Agnew, 1994) of 'methodological nationalism' (Gore, 1996; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002) that leading theorists of globalization have sought to transcend. Yet this particular gap was left wide open by globalization scholars. Intent on avoiding the reification of the state, they focused on economic actors, capitalist logics, and the spatiality of cities, flows and networks (Agnew, 1998; Castells, 1996; Harvey, 2006; Held et al., 1999; Ruggie, 1993; Sassen, 1991) rather than on manifestations of state power beyond territory. Recent work on bordering has begun to focus on extraterritorial state power (Bialasiewicz, 2012; Mountz, 2011), but the critical gaze of this work has typically been from the west out. It does not equip us with the tools to observe and theorize non-western states, more specifically authoritarian states, as exerting physical, material, symbolic power beyond borders.

As a result of this 'extraterritorial gap', important empirical phenomena have remained undertheorized. The Berlin Wall, once a potent symbol of 'closed' authoritarian rule, always represented an oversimplification of authoritarian rule of mobility. Today more than ever, it is an image that obstructs our ability to analyze contemporary authoritarianism. Authoritarian states are not giant prison camps, locking their populations in (see also our video on how authoritarian states control their populations abroad) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJgw5gHQNEE>. Labour migration states on the Southern Mediterranean such as Morocco, Turkey and Egypt have long since developed policies to combine the advantages of remittance income with the need to maintain control over populations abroad (Brand, 2006; Sunier, Linden, & Bovenkamp, 2016; Tsurapas, 2015). Nowadays, this state-sponsored mobility is part of a much broader trend. It encompasses very poor states almost exclusively reliant on remittances such as Eritrea, Tajikistan or Zimbabwe, as well as the wealthy Gulf states which have substantial student populations taking degrees in the West. Major

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powers China and Russia have witnessed a surge in highly skilled emigrants. These mobilities have advantages, but also carry risks for authoritarian regimes: people may not return, they may foment revolution from abroad, or they may return with dangerous democratic ideas.

In this set of interventions we show how authoritarian rule from the home state continues to be exercised over populations abroad, through the practices authoritarian regimes have developed to manage and offset the risks mobility poses to them. As a consequence, contemporary authoritarian rule structures socio-political space in ways that partially transcend both territorial jurisdiction and physical distance. We refer to 'rule of populations abroad' broadly, as encompassing the formal or informal regulation of exit itself, temporary and permanent residence abroad, first and second generation populations, and the regulation of return.

The immigration literature, casting relations between states and populations in terms of inclusion and exclusion (Hyndman, 1997; Torpey, 1999; Isin & Turner, 2002; Joppke, 2005; Mountz, 2011), has particularly focused on the exclusionary tendencies of formally democratic receiving states. The literature on sending states, on the other hand, has examined new mechanisms of inclusion, noting the increasing tendency to 'engage' (De Haas, 2005), 'claim' (Ho, 2011), or 'construct' (Ragazzi, 2012) its populations abroad as part of the polity.

Extraterritorial authoritarian rule can also usefully be understood as involving a 'politics of membership' (Brubaker, 2010), and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. However, 'inclusion' by an authoritarian home state does not have the same benign tenor as it does when applied to democratic home or host states. Despite what the veneer of legal terminology might suggest, the authoritarian state does not see its internal population as 'citizens' with 'rights', and when it facilitates mobility, or recognises and 'includes' populations abroad, this does not imply extension of citizenship rights, or even a balanced package of rights and obligations, to populations abroad. Inclusion in the authoritarian polity can take on repressive forms. And even when inclusion comes with benefits, these are not regulated or guaranteed. Inclusion is always precarious, conditional both on the exile's good behavior and on the "whim of the regime". The 'politics of membership' between the authoritarian state and its nationals abroad can take many forms. The Interventions presented here will illustrate the various and overlapping ways in which authoritarian regimes may approach their nationals abroad as *subjects* or *outlaws*; as *patriots* or *traitors*; as *clients* and as *brokers*, but never as citizens.

Regime critics may be treated as *subjects*, to be repressed when rebellious. Surprisingly, mainstream definitions of state repression have considered territorial control over subjects to be a necessary condition of repression. Davenport follows Goldstein in defining repression as involving "the actual or threatened use of physical sanctions against an individual or organization, *within the territorial jurisdiction of the state*, for the purpose of imposing a cost on the target as well as deterring specific activities and/or beliefs perceived to be challenging to government personnel, practices or institutions" (Goldstein 1978, xxvii; Davenport 2007, p. 2, italics mine). This territorial focus is historically inaccurate, as illustrated by high-profile assassinations such as that of Leon Trotsky on Stalin's orders or the Shah's nephew by the Islamic Republic of Iran, but such political murders abroad might still be considered as exceptional incidents.

Today, extraterritorial repression is more pervasive, and authoritarian states have various functional equivalents to physical control at their disposal. This is demonstrated in the contributions by Moss and Michaelsen on Syria and Iran, and by Hirt and Mohammad on Eritrea. Authoritarian states can exert control in the digital sphere, hacking social media accounts, obtaining

confidential information, planting malware or sending death threats. And they can exert control and induce fear via relatives still in the country. As Moss and Michaelsen describe, subjecting the close relatives of critics abroad to (the threat of) arrest, harassment or torture can also be an effective form of muzzling people.

Another expression of subjecthood, in line with Tilly (1982, 1) famous dictum that the state is a protection racket, is extortion. This element is particularly evident in the case of Eritrea, a poor state with limited capacity that nonetheless succeeds in making much of its population abroad pay a 2% tax over their foreign income. It does so through a combination of repressive measures and appeals to patriotism, but also state services. Eritrea makes all sorts of legal transactions relating to the home state conditional on the subjects' compliance: birth certificates, titles to land or licenses are supplied to those who submit to the regime's demands, for taxes, silence or outward allegiance. In these cases, the authoritarian state treats its subjects abroad *as if* they were still under territorial jurisdiction, collapsing geographical distance. It can in large part compensate for the difficulty of physically apprehending and coercing subjects abroad by using digital tools, legal-administrative tools or the bodies of family members as proxies.

Potential regime critics abroad face a difficult choice: the best way to escape the repressive reach of the home state is to cut all ties: intimate and professional ties that may endanger relatives and associates, as well as any legal title relating to the home country, including ultimately their nationality. Thus they can only achieve full autonomy from their home state at the price of having no connections to it. The home state may then exclude them, treating them as *outlaws* without legal standing of any kind in relation to their home state. So, an authoritarian state has two quite different possibilities for dealing with its dissidents abroad: alternative to the option of repressing dissident voices abroad as if they were in-country, it can excommunicate them, i.e. place them outside of the community and out of communication from it. In these instances, the home state actively erects the jurisdictional borders that territorial displacement alone does not in fact establish.

In parallel and often in conjunction with coercive inclusion as subjects or exclusion as outlaws, there is a symbolic dimension to the state's relation with its people abroad. This corresponds to Collyer and King's idea of the state's 'discursive control of imaginative space' (2015, 193), exerted particularly in cyberspace and through media representations. In the interventions by Del Sordi on Kazakhstan as well as by Hirt and Mohammad on Eritrea, we see the authoritarian state approaching its people abroad as *patriots*. Such strategies relate closely to the general trend of sending states' increasing discursive recognition of nationals abroad as part of the nation-state, but again in the authoritarian state this takes on a particular inflection. What authoritarian discourses aimed at populations abroad do may be termed 'loyalty conflation': they are adept at eliding the differences between people, nation, state and government and conflating these different loyalties in discourses of 'national loyalty' (Shain, 2005). Populations abroad are particularly susceptible to this because their physical location in different territory may make them feel insecure about their own belonging, and hence less attuned to the distinction between nation and government.

As noted by Shain (2005, p. 165), inclusion as patriots is precarious, dependent both on the population abroad's 'good behavior' as well as the regime's changing interests. Just as loyalty to the nation is conflated with loyalty to the regime, actual or potential opposition to the regime is broadened out to reflect badly on patriotism. Whenever it suits, populations abroad can also be discursively excluded, and branded as *traitors*. This is particularly likely to happen to regime critics abroad, who may pose a political threat. Their residence outside the territory has denaturalized their

belonging, making them more vulnerable to this type of critique than opponents within.

Finally, as Del Sordi and Dalmaso show in their interventions, authoritarian patrimonialism can have an extraterritorial dimension. The authoritarian state can include its population abroad as *clients*. The Kazakh study-abroad scheme Bolashak, described by Del Sordi, can be considered as an officially-sponsored form of co-optation: it invests in the loyalty of a young, educated elite to the regime. During their stay abroad, most students remain in a state-sponsored bubble, their lives revolving around Kazakh events endorsed by the embassy. Returnees have access to better jobs and career opportunities than others. Thus, their fortunes and careers are tied to the home government, and temporary residence abroad is valued as an individual as well as a national asset. Dalmaso discusses another form of clientelist relations with a population abroad: Moroccans abroad do not have voting rights, but they do have access to various services not available to non-elite Moroccans in the country. The same is true for Eritreans abroad, as illustrated by the differential treatment of domestic and overseas members of the national football team. Morocco, moreover, has cultivated particular individuals for even closer ties. It targets those who hold political positions in host societies, in effect trying to deploy them as *brokers* of Moroccan interests in European politics. These clientelistic relations are of course much more advantageous to nationals abroad than inclusion as subjects to be repressed, involving *quid pro quos*, but it is still a relation of dependency, not to be confused with citizenship rights.

This discussion of the authoritarian state's approach to populations abroad as subjects or outlaws; patriots or traitors; clients and brokers is not meant to imply an exhaustive categorization. Rather, it begins to explore the various expressions of state power beyond territory that a focus on extraterritorial authoritarian practices can make visible. The four specific Interventions below demonstrate three new insights about extraterritorial authoritarian rule.

First, that, in line with Brubaker's concept of politics of membership, authoritarianism should be studied as a mode of *governing people* through a distinct set of *practices*, not as a structural regime type entrapped in its national territory. Second, that authoritarian governance beyond borders resembles, but differs from authoritarian governance within territorial borders, constraining certain traditional ways of controlling populations (i.e. imprisonment or censorship) but enabling functional equivalents as well as new modes of control. Third, these extraterritorial authoritarian practices to some extent bend and shape socio-political space, successfully transcending the limits of territorial space, legal-jurisdictional space, and physical distance. These insights should provide fertile ground for new research agendas exploring the unevenness of state capacity to rule within and beyond borders as well as the spill-over of authoritarian practices into what are formally designated democratic states.

## 2. Repression without borders: diaspora activism, digital networks, and authoritarian power

Dana M. Moss and Marcus Michaelsen

As protesters clashed with regimes during the 2009 presidential election in Iran and the 2011 Arab Spring uprising in Syria, exiles and émigrés mobilized to lend their support from abroad. Equipped with laptops and mobile phones, these dissidents were poised to assist their compatriots by publicizing abuses and combating regime censorship and propaganda. A closer look into their mobilization dynamics, however, reveals a puzzle. While net-activism is typically conceived as an inexpensive and low-risk form of advocacy, many Syrian and Iranian expatriates viewed using social

media as high-risk. For example, as one Syrian-American youth activist from Michigan reported:

In the beginning, we were really careful because ... my mom's parents were back in Syria. I was not active on Facebook in the beginning because my mom was always like, "Don't do anything. If anything that you say affects my parents, I just wouldn't want that." And then there was the issue of if we want to go to Syria ... So in the beginning, it was mostly just watching. If it was something that I could do in Ann Arbor, then I would do it. *But I wasn't doing any of that social media posting or anything like that* (Interview conducted by Moss, 2014).

Why would "social media posting" be problematic for activists residing in safety thousands of miles from their home-countries? Emigrants should be doubly-advantaged by newfound freedoms in the democratic West and the affordances of digital media to express "voice" after "exit" (Hirschman, 1978; see also; Anderson, 1998). However, in contrast to existing accounts, we argue here that communication technologies fueling mobilization also better enable regimes to surveil, infiltrate, and punish activists across borders. Drawing on our research on Iranian and Syrian activism in the US and Europe, we illustrate how networked authoritarianism (MacKinnon 2011) has far-reaching consequences for activists abroad.

"Transnational repression" has been a long-standing, though largely overlooked, problem for diasporas with ties to authoritarian sending-states (Moss 2016a). Traditional means of spying, the assassination of prominent activists, and retribution against dissidents' families and colleagues at home have haunted numerous émigré communities (e.g., Brand, 2006; Lai 2010; Miller, 1981). Activists' use of social media in the digital age further increase their visibility and exposure to regimes intent on countering dissent in the diaspora. Regimes have also adopted these communication technologies to identify and track dissident networks, monitor their activities, hack and deface social media accounts and websites, plant malware, phish for confidential information, steal identities, and transmit private and public threats—to give just a few examples (Michaelsen 2016; Moss 2016b). The proliferation of digital communication technologies has therefore not only expanded the activist toolkit, but the state's repressive repertoire as well.

In light of this, members of the anti-regime diaspora face difficult choices due to the threats that their digital voice poses for relatives, friends, and colleagues at home. As the Iranian women's rights activist Mansoureh Shojaee described:

The more active you are outside, the closer you get to being labeled as a red line inside Iran ... Being an activist means getting a name, giving interviews, writing constantly—you can all do this freely here outside Iran and it is an opportunity. But day by day, *it puts your links inside the country more in danger* (Interview conducted by Michaelsen, 2015).

The journalist Negar Mortazavi echoed this concern, reporting that threats to contacts inside of Iran impose a weighty burden on activists outside:

They are very interested in discovering and breaking into networks ... It is about who you are talking to and connecting with to mobilize for a campaign ... I always have this fear that maybe there is a new method that I don't know about, that I am not paying attention to. Then, there is also the fear that the other side is not secure ... Cybersecurity is not my field and I am not even interested in it. But it's something that I *have* to follow just to be safe (Interview conducted by Michaelsen, 2015).

“Coming out” against regimes online not only poses threats to activists’ contacts at home, but can isolate regime critics abroad (Moss 2016a). For example, a Syrian activist named Nour attested that two of his relatives were interrogated by the regime after he created a Facebook page from the US in support of liberty in Syria during the 2011 uprising. This prompted many of his closest friends and family members to unfriend him in order to avoid getting into “trouble,” and he also “started to unfriend a lot of people just to spare them the headache.” As a result, activists like Nour experienced “extreme isolation and social stigma ... I lost everything, all my social connections” (Interview conducted by Moss, 2014).

Anti-regime mobilizers also risked permanent exile by speaking out online. A Syrian emigrant to the US explained that expressing solidarity with protesters in the governorate of Dar a on Facebook incurred regime attention and forced him into exile:

At the beginning, at [March] 15th, I was pro- Dar a. Everybody started putting videos of what’s going on on his Facebook, at a high cost ... We have a friend who is an Intelligence officer ... so [my mom] figured, why shouldn’t I ask him about my son? She thinks because I’m writing something with pro- Dar a ... I might be in trouble. And she was correct ... One week after, the 23rd of March, my mom called me .... She told me never come back [to Syria] ... “because you put video of the demonstration in Dar a and changed [your] profile picture to black.” That’s it. This is how intolerant they were (Interview conducted by Moss, 2014).

Regimes also track and scapegoat activists who use social media to create international awareness of human rights violations in the home-country (Michaelsen 2016). The journalist Masih Alinejad, who received significant international attention for her Facebook campaign against the mandatory veil in Iran, was targeted through smear campaigns in the Iranian state media:

They started broadcasting programs that portrayed me as morally corrupt, as a prostitute, a drug addict. Repeatedly they asserted that I am in the service of the UK, the Queen, the intelligence services, the MI6 ... [T] hey announced on television, as a news information, that I had been raped (Interview conducted by Michaelsen, 2015).

With these measures, the Iranian regime worked to name-and-shame activists abroad and to distance them from allies and audiences in the home country.

Under these conditions of threat, activists had to make careful, strategic choices about vocalizing their grievances and making their identities known. Nader (not his real name) who works to support civil society in Iran, for example, preferred to safeguard relations with fellow activists in Iran than to engage in public advocacy: “We have to be careful to protect the security of our partners inside Iran ... As long as you keep a low profile they leave you in peace. But as soon as you attract more attention ... there is a response. Therefore we follow a strategy of low profile” (Interview conducted by Michaelsen, 2015). A Syrian-American named Omar also reported engaging in “guarded advocacy” during the onset of the uprising in 2011 because identifying with the revolution on social media was a globalized proclamation of dissent (Moss 2016b). He attested that,

Especially on Twitter ... I felt like I should just keep my identity hidden at first. And a lot of people were like that and still are ... because going to a rally here, it’s probably not going to reach somebody in Syria. But *online, it’s global*. I just didn’t want my family [in Syria] to be affected ... That’s why I tried to keep my identity more hidden (Interview conducted by Moss, 2014).

Other members of the anti-regime community self-censored their views entirely. So despite the diaspora’s opportunities for mobilization from the West, the presence of their home-country regimes online undermined transnational connectivity and public solidarity during periods when expatriate voices were greatly needed.

Overall, as we find in our respective research on Syrian pro-revolution activism during the Arab Spring (Moss 2016a, 2016b) and Iranian pro-democracy activism after the 2009 election (Michaelsen 2016), emigres often play a significant role in contesting authoritarianism and violence from afar. In doing so, they often work to amplify the voices of repressed populations at home and become “bridge figures” in transnational advocacy networks (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Zuckerman 2015, p. 171). However, our research also demonstrates that regimes also punish activists who undertake social media campaigns and who express sympathy with dissidents online. Moreover, the regimes also benefit from the opacity and anonymity of the Web. Even when victims are threatened and collect evidence to definitively attribute cyberattacks to regime actors (Guarnieri & Anderson, 2016), it is difficult for authorities in the host countries to insulate the diaspora from outside threats. As a result, activists are often left to fend for themselves along the digital frontier (Moss 2016b).

Digitally-enabled repression may not deter public advocacy by exiles who have long made their views public, but it poses significant threats to dissidents’ relatives and members of clandestine advocacy networks. In addition, these threats deter the wider diaspora who wish to avoid being caught in the blacklisting dragnet from expressing their views. Although regime opponents in the diaspora may enjoy relative freedoms in the host country and unfettered access to platforms such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, they face serious dilemmas when using these technologies to contest abuses at home. At the same time, the intensity and frequency of attacks against activists vary according to their activities, protest cycles at home, and developments in the digital infrastructures. Further comparative research should expand our slender knowledge base in this regard.

In keeping with the perspective that authoritarianism is a globalized phenomenon, we submit that digitally-enabled transnational repression is not only promulgated by offending regimes themselves. Democratic governments and private corporations collaborate with these regimes in the pursuit of common enemies, particularly in the era of the so-called War on Terror, and for profit (Cooley and Heathershaw 2017; Diamond et al., 2016; Moss 2016a). We therefore argue that state repression should not be conceptualized as contained and self-perpetuated, but as the product of globalized ties and exchange. Scholars of mobilization, states, and contention should consider the ways in which authoritarian power is networked and deterritorialized, casting a menacing shadow over populations abroad.

### 3. Patriotism, patrimonialism and study abroad: Kazakhstan’s Bolashak program

Adele Del Sordi

In December 2016, the Republic of Kazakhstan celebrated 25 years of independence. In one of the many speeches he gave on the occasion, the President Nursultan Nazarbayev addressed the participants to the Republican Youth Forum, reminding them of their freedom of movement. “Today, you have the whole world in front of you”, he said; “in Soviet times, to go abroad was forbidden; even the lucky ones who could go [...] were followed by the secret services [...]. For you, instead, everything is open. You are happy people for this” (Akorda Press, 2016, Minutes 45–47).

Indeed, the contrast between the Soviet Union, where freedom of movement was heavily restricted, and today’s Kazakhstan,

where mobility is not only tolerated but actively encouraged, could not be stronger. This is especially true for younger generations. When he pronounced those words, Nazarbayev had just listed the number of young people from Kazakhstan who are currently pursuing a university degree abroad (50,000, to his count) and received congratulatory messages from participants of the state-sponsored study-abroad program Bolashak (Kazakh for “future”) from universities around the world (Akorda Press, 2016, Minutes 45–51).

In this intervention I will show how Kazakhstan's state-sponsored study-abroad program, far from causing brain drain or the influx of dangerous democratic ideas, binds students and alumni to the regime with a patriotic sense of gratitude as well as with career prospects. I rely on interviews with experts, students abroad and alumni of Bolashak. With the exception of public figures, presented with their full name, pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity of respondents.

Bolashak is the brightest example of how the government's approach toward mobility has changed since independence. The program was established on an initiative of Nazarbayev in 1993. Since then, the program has provided tuition fees, living expenses, and in some cases preparatory language classes to almost 12,000 students pursuing degrees in foreign universities. Despite the program's downsizing in 2011, when Nazarbayev University was established in Astana (Koch, 2015), Bolashak continues to finance the studies of about 700 students per year and is one of the best-known study-abroad schemes in the country (Del Sordi, 2017).

At the same time, the regime led by Nazarbayev remains authoritarian, characterized by personalized leadership, targeted repression, co-optation of large segments of the elite and a constant flow of legitimizing discourse relying both on economic performance and international recognition (Brill Olcott, 2010; Del Sordi, 2016; Schatz & Maltseva, 2012). In the following paragraphs I will illustrate two mechanisms through which the regime approaches participants and returnees of Bolashak. The first is *patriotism*. Second, Bolashak alumni are approached as regime *clients*.

Coherent with the legitimizing narrative of the state as provider of economic prosperity and stability (Del Sordi, 2016), the regime uses Bolashak to articulate “a norm in which citizens are expected to have gratitude for the state's generous giving” (Koch, 2015, p. 89). Operating the ‘loyalty conflation’ described by Glasius above, the regime discursively links the opportunity to study abroad under Bolashak with feelings of gratitude and obligation towards the government. For instance, in the speech to the Republican Youth Forum mentioned above, the president saluted Bolashak students for their “patriotism, love for knowledge and desire to apply their skills back in the country” (Akorda Press, 2016, Minutes 40–41). In typical fashion, Nazarbayev often mentions how Bolashak was born out of his own initiative, highlighting the far-sightedness he showed in sending young people abroad, on government money, in times of economic crisis (BNews, 2013). A typical statement is that “this generation is the only one in Kazakhstan, and among just a handful in the world, who can boast such a fortune” (Akorda Press, 2016, Minutes 39–40). Former participants repeat this narrative, underlining the generosity of the program, and the decisive role of the President in creating it. Back from her studies in the US, Saule declared that she has come to “better understand the politics of our leader, trying to push our country forward through such programs” (Bolashak alumna, phone interview conducted by Del Sordi, 2015). Bolashak is also associated with a general positive judgement on the country's performance. Several respondents said something along the lines of “the initiative of sending 3000 people is a step towards modernization, globalization [...] and economic development” (Aijamal, Bolashak alumna; Interview conducted by with Del Sordi, 2015).

The regime's inclination to foster conflation between gratitude,

positive opinion on performance and patriotism is particularly evident when considering the mechanisms through which the regime discursively includes and excludes Bolashak participants. Already during the selection process, applicants are required to pass a Kazakh language exam and to answer questions on national history and culture (Interviews with several participants conducted by Del Sordi, 2015). While the test on national history is not a crucial one, given the relevance of patriotic education in the national school system (Rapoport, 2012), the language requirement seems to be a serious reason for exclusion and, according to some, for discrimination against those students who do not speak Kazakh (mostly ethnic Russians, but not only; Koch, 2015, pp. 933–94). A few applicants with high academic profiles reckon that they were excluded from the program because of their poor performance on the language requirement (for instance, Farida, Bolashak applicant for 2013; Interview conducted by Del Sordi, 2015). The choice to prefer Kazakh-speaking, patriotic-oriented candidates could be related to the task, informally given to Bolashak participants, to promote of Kazakh culture abroad both among fellow nationals and foreigners.

Kazakhstani students who are on other funding schemes notice that Bolashak participants have “a better knowledge of the Kazakh language and culture” and are sometimes “aggressive”, reproaching Russian-educated students for not speaking the national language properly (Aida, self-funded student; Interview conducted by Del Sordi, 2016). Furthermore, associations of Kazakh students abroad like the Kazakh Societies and KazAlliance not only contribute to keeping students in a state-sponsored “bubble” of Kazakh-speaking, patriotic-oriented fellows while abroad; they also actively promote Kazakhstan's “culture, music and traditions” among foreigners (Del Sordi, 2016) KazAlliance, in particular, has the declared goals of creating a community feeling and making students “feel like home” (Bexultan Abdilzhaliil, KazAlliance Director, London, 2016) and acting as a force of soft power and cultural influence (Aiupov, 2015; see also; Del Sordi, 2017).

Bolashak graduates are then required to show their patriotism by going back and giving back. The regime acclaims those who do with special events, like the celebrations for the Twentieth anniversary of the program (BNews, 2013). Students who decide to remain abroad or do not perform well enough in their studies on the contrary are publicly condemned. Authorities sue students who do not manage to complete their degree and fail to return the scholarship; and graduates who do not return to Kazakhstan after completing their studies face the loss of family assets and come on the radar of the secret services (Del Sordi, 2017). A similar treatment is given to alumni who complain about difficulties in finding jobs. The official narrative that a Bolashak grant guarantees a successful career does not always correspond to the reality (Perna et al., 2015); and the blame for the difficulty to find a job is narratively shifted on the alumni themselves. Officials talk about the so-called “Bolashak syndrome” (Koch, 2015, p. 87), according to which alumni come back with exaggerated expectations and oversized self-esteem, despising local employment situations. Again, this is echoed by alumni. As one returnee put it: “some of the scholarship holders overestimate themselves, they think that they have a UK or a US degree so now they are better.” (Dimitry, Bolashak alumnus; Interview conducted by Del Sordi, 2015). Hence, the regime operates a clear contraposition: on one hand, there are patriotic alumni, who are grateful for the opportunity given and willing to give back to the country in any capacity; on the other, there are picky, unpatriotic, returnees, who either stay abroad or come back feeling superior to their home, behaving as if they are nostalgic for the foreign country they just left.

The opportunity to build a successful career thanks to participation in the program is at the basis of the other mechanism

through which the regime engages Bolashak participants. This is a form of extra-territorial system of co-optation: the *patron*-state provides students, its *clients*, a free top-class education and, consequently, the possibility to get a good job; it receives, in exchange, the loyalty of a young, educated elite, which is, as seen before, additionally bound to the regime by a feeling of gratitude and obligation. Bolashak is an asset for the regime for other reasons, as well: besides the obvious advantages in terms of knowledge transfer, the regime benefits from the program in terms of image, tying its name to something “noble” like learning and development (Sayasat Nurbek, former Bolashak Managing Director; Interview conducted by Del Sordi, 2016).

Bolashak participants sound optimistic about their future and about what their status of alumni means for it. Vika says:

“[When I applied, I thought:] I got this chance, it will be so great. I graduate and then I will be back and be in some managing positions, just because, you know, I am an alumna. And they will get me a good job.” (Vika, former Bolashak grantee; Interview conducted by Del Sordi, 2015).

Despite the “Bolashak syndrome”, and an objective difficulty of finding employment in one’s sector (Perna et al., 2015; Del Sordi, 2017), returnees seem indeed to be better off than their locally-trained peers. Their salaries are higher and, among them, the unemployment rate is significantly lower than the national average (Del Sordi, 2017). Policies reinforce this position of privilege: the program administration organizes career fairs and advertises vacancies’ among alumni, and returnees interested in government jobs qualify directly for the second step of the administrative ladder (Del Sordi, 2017).

The regime also underlines the role of Bolashak in promoting social and geographical mobility in a large and unequally developed country. While the programme is not, in itself, a symptom of a patrimonial relationship, it becomes such through the official narrative, which depicts the regime as a generous provider for the children of “pensioners and low-income families” (BNews, 2013). Former participants repeatedly express their gratitude to the state for establishing such a program, thanks to which “many bright students from ordinary families have the opportunity to study abroad” (Asel, Bolashak alumna; Interview conducted by Del Sordi, 2015).

Whether including patriotic returnees and excluding unpatriotic ones, supporting Kazakh Societies, or reminding the clients-alumni of their good fortune, the regime of Kazakhstan has found ways to effectively engage its temporary population of students abroad. The practices presented here demonstrate that freedom of movement is no longer an evil to be avoided by authoritarian regimes, but can become an asset in terms of legitimacy and co-optation. Instead of authoritarianism being constrained by territorial boundaries, the socio-political space where patriotism and patrimonialism can be utilized has been expanded beyond national borders.

#### 4. The Eritrean regime’s transnational strategies: ruling the diaspora through indoctrination and coercion

Nicole Hirt and Abdulkader Mohammad

Eritrea is not only among the top refugee-producing countries in Africa and among the most diasporic societies in the world, but it has also developed one of the most sophisticated structures to monitor its citizens abroad. In this intervention, we examine the transnationalisation of indoctrination and coercion in the Eritrean context.

Eritrea, a former Italian colony, was federated with Ethiopia by

the UN in 1952 and became independent in 1991 after 30 years of struggle. The Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) emerged in the mid-1970s and started to develop transnational structures to mobilise and control Eritrean war refugees around the world. After independence, the liberation front (re-named People’s Front for Democracy and Justice or PFDJ in 1994) took over the government and introduced a two percent rehabilitation tax for Eritrean nationals in the diaspora. This tax became controversial after renewed war with Ethiopia from 1998 to 2000 and the introduction of an open-ended national service for all adult Eritreans inside the country starting from 2002. The time unlimited service implies that the recruits are subjected to a form of state-controlled forced labour (for details, see Hirt and Mohammad 2013). It led to a mass exodus of the younger generation and caused a sharp increase in the numbers of Eritreans living abroad. Today it is estimated that over one third of the population have settled outside the country. Initially, the regime tried to prevent people from fleeing by applying a shoot-to-kill policy at the borders. In recent years, it has reduced border controls, and today both Eritrean and Sudanese officials are involved in human trafficking (Van Reisen and Mawere, 2017). The PFDJ regime has remained in power for a quarter of a century despite its failed policies, the absence of rule of law and a dismal human rights record. We argue that the stability of this non-democratic political system depends on the government’s transnational strategies to indoctrinate and coerce the diaspora to fulfil its demands (see also Hirt, 2015).

Transnational authoritarian governance is an under-researched topic. Those who have addressed the subject of transnational politics (Adamson, 2002, p. 156; Adamson and Demetriou, 2007; Lyons and Mandaville, 2012) point out that authoritarian governments use diaspora networks as fundraisers and as a political lobby. They show that non-democratic attitudes and opinions are often widespread among diaspora populations, even in democratic host countries. Diasporas must be regarded as heterogeneous groups that reflect the ideological, ethnic, and religious differences of the homeland. These transnational citizens are frequently involved in homeland politics (Kosłowski, 2005, 25), and diasporas can either challenge or reinforce the stability of the home regime (Adamson 2002, p. 156). In authoritarianism studies, the stability of authoritarian regimes is often taken to be based on three pillars: legitimation, repression (coercion), and co-optation (Gerschewski, 2013). We argue that the Eritrean regime exercises control over its diaspora through both legitimation and coercion.

The government actively strives to win the loyalty of the diaspora youth by organising them politically, indoctrinating them with a nationalist ideology and fostering their long-distance nationalism (Anderson, 1992). The purpose of this is to keep them as a source of income and to use them as political messengers who defend the PFDJ’s policies in their respective host countries. They are mobilized to protest alleged international conspiracies against the Eritrean nation.

The ruling elite makes use of transnational media to legitimate its policies by means of TV and radio broadcasts, pro-government websites and social media (Bernal 2013). Contrary to the harsh reality on the ground, these media paint a colourful picture of development goals achieved regarding health, education and construction. They show happy national service recruits singing and dancing while they are building micro dams. These pictures aim at reviving the “good old days of the armed struggle” and display an image of a proud nation rebuilding itself by relying on its own human and material resources in spite of the manifold international conspiracies against Eritrea. This message implies that criticizing the leadership equals being a traitor who puts the existence of the nation at risk.

The pro-government diaspora’s firm belief in the regime’s

ideological messages is clearly demonstrated in its reaction to the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea (COIE). In June 2016, the COIE stated that the Government of Eritrea has purported systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations that amount to crimes against humanity (UN General Assembly, 2016). The regime's reaction has been to brand the report as "an attack, not so much on the government, but on a civilized people and society who cherish human values and dignity" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2015; June 9). This argument sounds grotesque to the outsider, but makes perfect sense to the regime supporter who has been taught to believe that the government is inseparably linked to the people. In this logic, accusing the government is perceived as an insult to every single Eritrean national. Accordingly, hundreds of Eritreans travelled to Geneva from all corners of Europe to protest the "appalling report". Among the protesters were people whose relatives have been incarcerated by the regime for more than a decade.

This does not mean that all diaspora Eritreans are government supporters. However, even opponents still pay the two percent diaspora tax, although it is difficult to assess what percentage of the diaspora population in democratic countries fulfil their home governments' demands. The state of Eritrea has never published a budget detailing the income it derives from the diaspora tax and from other donations. What we do understand, through long-term observation, is *how* the regime successfully exercises coercion in the context of democratic host states. It uses the diaspora's feelings of obligation and attachment towards family members at home, exerting pressure on such relatives inside Eritrea, for example by refusing to renew business licences of citizens whose relatives abroad do not pay the levy. It also refuses to issue unwilling payees vital documents, such as birth and marriage certificates or the right to inherit property in the homeland.

One example is Ahmeddin, whom we spoke to in the context of a focus group interview with five Eritreans living in Norway who are not engaged in homeland-related political activities, aimed at understanding why they paid the diaspora tax. Ahmeddin fled from Eritrea to Sudan in 1982 and moved to Norway in 1988. His siblings live scattered across the world. In 2009, an inheritance conflict evolved between Ahmeddin's mother and her husband's second wife - both claimed the family house as their personal property. When Ahmeddin's mother approached the civil court, the judge requested her to present the tax clearances of all her children abroad to be eligible for a share of the house. Accordingly, Ahmeddin and his siblings, who had never paid the two percent tax before were forced to pay all their dues retrospectively from 1992. With the amount they had given to the government, they would have been able to buy two new houses (Focus group Interview conducted by Hirt and Mohammed, 2015).

While being subject to coercive measures, diaspora Eritreans also enjoy numerous privileges compared to the resident population: According to Woldemikael "the subjects are placed in two groups: diasporas and locals. Diasporas live abroad and are assigned a higher status than locals." (2013: xiv). Eritreans in the diaspora may travel to Eritrea and back to their host country without restrictions; they are exempted from the national service and do not have to undergo military training; and they enjoy privileged treatment when they come to spend their holidays in Eritrea as tourists. In contrast, Eritreans inside the country have only obligations and enjoy no rights, not even the possibility to live a self-determined life in dignity. They do not enjoy freedom of movement, even within the different regions of the country.

A perfect example demonstrating the two-class citizenship model is the state's double standard treatment of the national football team. The last national team was composed of both local and diaspora players in an attempt to counter the wave of

defections which had plagued Eritrean football in the past. As detailed in the *New Yorker*, the local Eritrean players nonetheless chose to defect after a World Cup qualification game in Botswana in 2015, due to their experience of second-class treatment: "The team members based abroad—in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, and elsewhere—were flown in and put up in a five-star hotel [during training in Asmara]. The local athletes moved into a guesthouse with no electricity and no running water, where they slept four to a room. While the foreign-based players were paid in dollars, the rest were told that they would receive nakfa—and then were given nothing". During a layover in Nairobi, "the foreign-based players wandered through the terminal, shopping and eating. The local athletes sat at their gate in hard blue plastic seats, uncomfortably eyeing one another, while their coaches and the president of the Eritrean National Football Federation sat behind them, holding their passports. The players felt like hostages. 'The others can do anything they want, but you just sit and wait,' Henok Semere, a striker, said" (Okeowo, 2016). Consequently, the young local players decided to defect and to apply for political asylum abroad.

The transnational strategies of the Eritrean regime contribute to its stability in different ways: Eritreans abroad procure about one third of the national budget and are one of the government's most reliable financial resources. In addition, they send remittances to their relatives who depend on their material support because they are trapped in the national service without the possibility to sustain themselves and their families. Those Eritreans who are left inside the country live without perspectives for their future and are in permanent fear of being arrested by the government's security agents who have woven a tight surveillance network. Therefore, they are not willing to get involved in active or passive resistance. They cling to the hope of following their peers who have left and turned into privileged members of the diaspora – at least the lucky ones who made it to Europe without falling prey to human traffickers or stranding in Sudanese refugee camps or Libyan prisons. These combined factors are prolonging the life of Eritrea's autocratic regime and have prevented long-overdue political and economic reforms including the abolition of the time unlimited national service.

## 5. Between representation and participation: investigating the transnational politics of membership of the Kingdom of Morocco

Emanuela Dalmaso

In 2011, when in Morocco streets were full of people demanding political reform, some Moroccans living in European cities gathered in support. But the extent of the mobilization outside Morocco was very limited. Why did Moroccans living abroad, who can more safely criticize the regime, not do so at a time of mass demonstrations inside Morocco? I will suggest that this is because Morocco, and in particular the Monarchy, treats its people abroad not as political citizens, but as clients and brokers. Moroccans abroad are treated as clients insofar as different Moroccan institutions, mainly controlled by the Monarchy, offer them exclusive services and facilities not available to Moroccans inside the country. The majority of Moroccans abroad do not claim the right to fully exert their citizenship in Morocco, because they are already enjoying it in their country of residence and, more importantly, they can combine this with the clientelistic privileges offered by Morocco. Some Moroccans abroad are also treated as brokers by the Kingdom. The brokers are Moroccans abroad who have been identified by the Monarchy, because of their status in their countries of residence, as persons that can serve the Kingdom's interests and in particular its struggle over the Western Sahara. This group of people are regularly invited to Morocco to participate in various

events such as the *bay'a*, the prestigious ceremony of allegiance to the King. They may also be appointed members of one of the various commissions the King has established over the time.

Moroccans living abroad represent 10 per cent of the total population of today's Kingdom of Morocco. Remittances are instrumental in keeping Morocco's economy afloat. According to the Bank of Morocco, to quote the last data available, during 2014 Moroccans abroad sent the equivalent of 59,9 billions of Dirham in foreign currencies which corresponds to 6.5% of the GDP (Bank al-Maghrib, 2015:68). Thus, Moroccans abroad play a pivotal role for the regime's stability. As a consequence, the Monarchy maintains absolute control of the strategies meant to create a strong bond with the Moroccans abroad. This intervention focuses on the Monarchy's effort to monopolize the public sphere of Moroccans abroad by keeping it within the boundaries of institutions that are under its control, and to cast its subjects in the role of clients and, in some cases, brokers. The argument made rests on interviews with relevant Moroccan officials (see also Dalmaso, 2017) and Moroccans with dual citizenship in Belgium, France and the Netherlands. Interviews have been anonymized at the request of the respondents.

Moroccans abroad do not enjoy full citizenship rights in Morocco: they do not have the right to cast a vote from abroad and to elect representatives in overseas electoral districts. This has not always been the case. Former King Hassan II, while far more authoritarian than his son Mohamed VI, granted Moroccans abroad the above mentioned rights between 1984 and 1992. He did so, as Brand (2010) has demonstrated, so as to counter both real and promised changes in French law permitting greater immigrant integration, which could have weakened the bond between Moroccans abroad and the Kingdom. Another reason was to maintain the political loyalty of Moroccans abroad in carrying on his battle over the Western Sahara (Brand, 2010). Mohamed VI, while sharing his father's priorities and despite announcing his intention to grant Moroccans abroad voting rights, decided in the end not to bet on the Parliament to foster the bond with his subjects abroad.

Nowadays the Monarchy's policies dealing with Moroccans abroad are mainly carried out via royal foundations, a type of institution developed under the previous reign and extended by Mohamed VI, as well as various new participatory institutions, such as the Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad. These institutions aim to foster the royal clientelistic bond with Moroccans abroad and, in some cases, to transform clients into brokers who can defend the Kingdom's interests.

Royal foundations serve various purposes, such as the dismemberment of government prerogatives and undermining of other civil society actors (Bencheikh & Khrouz, 2011), but they also help the King to establish his politics of proximity to Moroccans abroad. Indeed, while it is true that Moroccans abroad do not get votes, it is doubly true that Moroccans abroad get services that non-elite Moroccans in the country never receive. As a 2005 United States' diplomatic cable points out, royal foundations:

are meeting crucial needs that the Moroccan government ... does not have the capability of addressing on its own. Yet, key questions linger about the extent to which the King uses the foundations as true social organizations, political tools of the Palace, or something in between. In any case, the royal foundations appear to be the King's primary vehicle for executing his "politics of proximity" by which he is perceived to be close to the populace" (Wikileaks, 2005).

The effectiveness of this politics of proximity towards the Moroccans abroad was particular evident during the unrest of 2011.

According to a member of the Belgian branch of the Moroccan Association of Human Rights:

the majority of the diaspora was not against the King because they are afraid of losing their privileges ... The hospitality that is organized by the Mohamed V Foundation for the diaspora who returns for the holidays, the free legal advice provided by the Hassan II Foundation, etc. Moroccans abroad who have a problem can apply to the various foundations that will take care of everything. Moroccans in Morocco are not treated like Moroccans abroad ... Who comes from Europe is considered different, it is necessary to treat him well so that he will come back, bring money, invest and promote Morocco (Interview conducted by Dalmaso, 2015).

The politics of proximity implemented via the royal foundations are instrumental in turning the majority of the Moroccans abroad into clients. Moroccans abroad who benefit from royal foundations' activities have little interest in resizing a monarchical power that, in its negative consequences, does not directly affect those who live in democratic countries.

In addition to these extra services that every Moroccan abroad is entitled to benefit from, some Moroccans abroad may also profit from other opportunities that the Monarchy is willing to offer. Once a year hundreds of Moroccans abroad are invited to Morocco to participate in the *bay'a*, the allegiance ceremony to the King or to the ceremonies organized on that occasion in the Kingdom's embassies all over the world. According to a Moroccan abroad who has been invited to participate in the *bay'a*:

It is a bit like saying to somebody: you have been identified, we know that you are important. It's the same as the United States of America do, it's very useful for subsequently selling an American product abroad. And then it's very useful to establish a link with the Monarchy (Interview conducted by Dalmaso, 2015).

Indeed, the goal of such ceremonies is to foster the bond between the King and his subjects abroad and to identify those who can better defend the royal interests abroad. Once key people have been identified, the Monarchy may offer them new opportunities. During his reign, Mohamed VI has established various commissions and councils, where Moroccans abroad have also found a place. This makes it possible for the Monarchy to include in its institutions people that have been elected elsewhere. If the participation of Moroccans abroad would be focused on representative institutions such as the Parliament, those elected in other countries would not be able to participate. Instead, European politicians such as Najat Belkacem and formerly Khadija Arib can be elected to public office, respectively in France and The Netherlands, and can also be appointed by the King in one of his institutions, respectively in the Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad and in the Consultative Council for Human Rights. The members of such institutions do not owe their position to the choice of Moroccans abroad, whose interests they are meant to represent, but exclusively to the King's appointment. The right to be members or to participate in the activities of these institutions is in fact especially offered to Moroccans abroad who already held elective office in their countries of residence. As stated by a member of one of the many royal Commissions:

Moroccans abroad who are well integrated into their country of residence can be even more useful for their country. For example, nowadays we have Moroccans abroad who are elected in their countries of residence, in European countries,

Moroccans abroad have even been appointed as ministers ... The one who has lived abroad, who knows the topic very well, El Yazami [the President of the Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad] considers that, despite all, Moroccans abroad are integrating themselves elsewhere and that we should foster this trend ... (Interview conducted by Dalmaso, 2015)

Nowadays, Mohamed VI offers to his subjects abroad, instead of representation, a new form of participation. Every loyal Moroccan abroad can participate, but the Kingdom is particularly interested in offering the possibility to participate to a specific subcategory of its subjects abroad, those elected in public offices in their countries of residence. As declared by a Moroccan abroad elected in his European country of residence:

the first time I was elected I received invitations from the Moroccan Embassy for meetings with all the elected officials of Moroccan origin. I never went because participating in such meetings means that afterwards you must defend the interests of Morocco despite the fact that I was elected here. Now the strategy aims at co-opting the elite who has visible functions and positions here. They are ready to do anything, for example they ask elected representatives of Moroccan origin to organize trips with European elected representatives, particularly in Western Sahara (Interview conducted by Dalmaso, 2015).

The importance of the elected representatives of Moroccan origin in defending the Kingdom's interests on the Western Sahara issue is underlined also by a European civil servant who stated that:

Between 2000 and 2006 many elected representatives of Moroccan origin left the ecological party because of the question of the Sahara. Before this was not a main issue. The Socialist party did not have an opinion on this topic before 2000, after they became much more pro-Morocco. The elected representatives of Moroccan origin are themselves speaking to their party to explain that on this subject they should not be put in difficulty with the embassy and the associations sponsored by Morocco in Europe. More or less the same thing happens with the Armenian genocides when it comes to the Turks.

While still relying on coercive power, the Kingdom of Morocco is also developing increasingly sophisticated tools to answer to the challenges posed by globalization. Fostering clientelistic bond with subjects abroad via the activities of the royal foundations and proactively creating links with European citizens of Moroccan origin who are politically active in their respective countries are prominent parts of this new autocratic strategy.

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