Diaspora Diplomacy, Emotions, and Disruption
A Conceptual and Analytical Framework

By Alina Dolea
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Abstract

The article advances diaspora diplomacy scholarship arguing that enabling and disruptive emotions mediate diaspora assemblages comprising states, transnational non-state actors and other international actors; and that diasporic agency, practices and discourses can’t be fully analysed and understood if divorced from their underpinning emotions. After reviewing existing literatures and current gaps, I propose a theoretical and analytical framework to study diaspora diplomacy that links (1) identity, belonging and transnational ties in diaspora, (2) with media, migration and digital diasporas, (3) distinguishes between diaspora as category of analysis (entity) and category of practice, and (4) integrates emotions and discourses. I then apply this framework to a corpus of 21 semi-structured interviews with representatives of the Romanian diaspora organizations in the UK to explore how they define their (emotional) ties with home and host state, and how they construct their identity. Recommendations and further reflections are formulated in the end to inform policy making in diaspora diplomacy.

Diaspora and public diplomacy: current gaps

Public diplomacy scholarship defines diasporas as non-state actors conducting people to people diplomacy (Cull, 2008) and often as citizen diplomacy (Huijgh, 2019; Popkova, 2022). Single country case studies are dominant, covering a wide range of state-diaspora relations and diasporas: Indian (Abraham, 2012; Rana, 2009), Chinese (d’Hooghe, 2015; Li, 2012), Israeli (Attias, 2012), Lebanese Americans (Trent, 2012), Romanian (Dolea, 2022), Russian (Popkova, 2019), Turkish (Uysal, 2019), and Latin American (see Bravo & De Moya, 2021, and Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic - Bravo, 2014; Bravo & De Moya, 2015; De Moya, 2018). The Routledge International Hand-
book of *Diaspora Diplomacy* edited by Liam Kennedy (2022) adds more new case studies from global north and global south, thus contributing to the mapping of existing scholarship to date.

PD studies investigate the diplomacy by diaspora and diplomacy through diaspora (Ho and McConnell, 2017) using most frequently an analytical perspective rooted in international relations and focused primarily on the nation state as unit of analysis: states are increasingly acknowledging the emergence of diasporas as actors in international relations, using and instrumentalizing them for relationship-building and achievement of policy goals. This is best captured in the typology proposed by Brinkerhoff (2019) that identifies diasporas as agents in their own right, instruments of other’s diplomatic agendas, and circumstantial partners on shared interests. Citizens in diaspora, on the other hand, are seen more ambivalently: as a welfare problem to be managed (Cull, 2008) and a source of threat to the image and reputation of the country of origin (Dolea, 2015), but also as a resource of soft power in cultural diplomacy (Cull, 2022). The approaches that dominate are still state-centric functional and normative despite the calls for expanding disciplinary boundaries to study diaspora diplomacy (Brinkerhoff, 2019; Dolea, 2022, 2023; Ho & McConnell, 2017). The paradigm of relationship building between states and diasporas has been equally dominant, reflecting a rather essentializing and homogenous understanding of diasporas along national identities lines and assumptions of loyalty which obscure diversity, tensions, adversarial relations (Uysal, 2019) and disruption (Dolea, 2022) when state-diaspora interests aren’t aligned, shared or convergent. Furthermore, as shown by Popkova (2019), “alt agents” of non-state public diplomacy in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian states not only disrupt the official state-supported narratives and propose more complex ones but also become dissenting transnational diasporas.
Diaspora diplomacy has emerged as an interdisciplinary field of study at the intersection of diaspora studies and diplomacy studies as pointed by Ho and McConnell (2017) in their seminal article that pushed for reconsidering territorial dimensions and understanding populations betwixt the domestic and foreign within the paradigm of transnationalism. Theorizing diaspora diplomacy, Gilboa (2022) highlighted the diversity of perspectives and disciplines that engage in studying diaspora (history, economics, geography, political science, sociology, anthropology, communication, law) as well as the lack of cross communication and agreement between them, which ultimately impacts the field and creates conceptual fog and anarchy. A systematic review of scholarship is beyond the scope of this article; yet, diaspora is analysed in relation to home or host states as objects of governance (Gamlen, 2013; Ragazzi, 2017), new diplomats (Stone & Douglas, 2018), for interpersonal work (Cull, 2008), outreach and engagement (Arkilic, 2022; Birka & Klaviniš, 2020), mobilization (Koinova, 2013; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003), empowerment (e.g. as cyberwarriors Chernobrov, 2022), conflict resolution and terrorism prevention (Curtis & Jaine, 2012), development (Sinatti & Horst, 2015; Weinar, 2010), promotion of homeland nation brand (Dolea, 2018; Thussu, 2020), lobbying (Berkowitz & Mügge, 2014), influencing public opinion and providing material assistance (Koinova, 2018).

Scholars in diaspora diplomacy have gradually shifted their focus from the state to the diasporas, adopting transnational approaches more established in migration and diaspora studies. Transnationalism is one of the most frequently adopted analytical paradigms to study migration and different forms of trans-border mobility (Baucöck & Faist, 2010) "used both more narrowly – to refer to migrants’ durable ties across countries – and, more widely, to capture not only communities, but all sorts of social formations, such as
transnationally active networks, groups and organisations.” (Faist, 2010, p. 9). Yet, with few exceptions (e.g. Popkova, 2019), transnationalism hasn’t been fully explored and problematized by public diplomacy scholars looking at diaspora actors, practices, and discourses, being more frequently used by scholars from other disciplines; this impacts on the scholarship produced as the complexities of diasporas’ split existence betwixt home and host states and their consequences (Dolea, 2022) remain largely under researched.

Another area that has been neglected in diaspora diplomacy deals with the emotions and the emotional ties of diasporas, as studies (especially in public diplomacy) tend to focus on the institutional, social, political, and economic ties of diasporas with home and host states. This is paradoxical as emotions have started to be investigated more systematically in migration studies (see Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015), in international relations (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2014; Crawford, 2000; Koschut et al., 2017), in psychosocial studies and diplomacy (Volkan, 1999, 2017). The focus on emotions opens an entire new area of study in diaspora diplomacy.

This article goes beyond stating emotions matter in diaspora diplomacy. I argue emotions mediate diaspora diplomacy; diasporic agency, practices and discourses can’t be fully analysed and understood if divorced from their underpinning emotions. I agree with Ho and McConnell’s conceptualization of diaspora diplomacy “as diaspora assemblages composed of states, non-state and other international actors that function as constituent components of assemblages, connected through networks and flows of people, information and resources [...] at times work to reinforce state power, thereby reterritorializing, or at other times, exhibit deterritorializing forms of power” (2017, p. 250). Yet, I consider it essential to expand the conceptualization of diaspora diplomacy as diaspora assemblages mediated by emotions
that can be both enabling and disruptive; furthermore, these assemblages are fields of power where identities, differences in status, power and relations within diaspora and between diaspora and other actors are constantly negotiated and articulated through discourse. This brings to the fore the tensions and the complex emotions within the diaspora assemblages, the “diaspora positionality” (Koinova, 2018) and the constructivist dynamics of the assemblages; the various actors constituting the assemblages are strategically projecting and taking stances, making claims, proposing projects on behalf of and in relation to diaspora. Adopting a constructivist analytical framework to examine the emotions-mediated diaspora assemblages allows (1) to uncover the continuous interplay, negotiation, and interaction within the assemblages, (2) to account for situation-specific and context-specific positions of actors, (3) to trace the historicity, typification, and gradual institutionalization of relations, practices, claims, emotions and discourses. Thus, it is possible to unpack the seeming ‘uniformity’ of diaspora as entity and the homeland loyalties conflated in the concept of citizen diplomat that obscure diversity, contestation and challenges from within diasporic communities; it also opens avenues for researching the making of diaspora as actor through the claims, projects and stances articulated by diaspora as well as in the name of diaspora by other actors.

I thus propose a theoretical and analytical framework to study diaspora diplomacy that (1) posits the centrality of identity, belonging and transnational ties in diaspora, (2) highlights the role of media and the digital nature of diasporas, (3) distinguishes analytically between diaspora as category of analysis (entity) and diaspora as category of practice, and (4) emphasize the key mediating, enabling and disruptive role of emotions and discourses.
An analytical framework to theorize and study diaspora diplomacy and emotions

(1) Diasporas: identity, belonging, and transnational ties

Uses and definitions of the term diaspora abound with often different perspectives, within and outside academia, therefore it is important to clarify the terminology. Diaspora is considered to have become an academic concept during the 1970s (Dufoix, 2018). Cohen (2008) notes the classic use of the term for the study of the Jewish experience, dispersion of Africans, Armenians, and the Irish. From the “classical” diasporas, the term has evolved and expanded to include expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities (Safran, 1991) and more recently the concept of digital diaspora gains traction (Nedelcu, 2018). In reaction to the proliferation and stretching of the term to accommodate various agendas, Rober Brubaker (2005) cautioned about the emergence of a “‘diaspora’ diaspora’ - a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space” (p.1), in an article that became seminal for the field. He posits that constitutive of diaspora are: 1. dispersion in space (voluntary, forced, or traumatic, generally across borders); 2. orientation to a homeland (existing, projected, or imagined “homeland” or centre as an authoritative focus of value, identity, and loyalty), and 3. boundary-maintenance (involving the preservation of a distinctive identity in relations to a host society or societies) (Brubaker, 2005).

In the 25th anniversary edition of his seminal work, Global Diasporas, Cohen lists the basic features of diaspora: “members of a defined group have been dispersed to many destinations; they construct a shared identity; they still somewhat orient themselves to an original ‘home’; and they demonstrate an affinity with other members of the group dispersed
to other places." (2023, p. 1). Expanding on these ideas and drawing on Wittgenstein’s rope metaphor to explore games and Safran’s (1991) work on key components of diaspora, Cohen proposes nine strands of what he calls “a diasporic rope” (2023, p. 3): dispersal (from home), expansion (outside homeland), retention (of a collective memory about an original homeland), idealization (mythization of the real or imagined ancestral home and the collective commitment to maintain it), return (to homeland), distinctiveness (a strong ethnic group consciousness), apprehension (in relation with host societies), creativity (in host countries) and solidarity. Cohen cautions these strands are not fixed or indeed completely applicable when analysing any or all diasporas; instead, they are intertwined and mutually reinforcing, rendering visible the complexities of diasporas.

This article conceptualizes diaspora along the lines of Brubaker and Cohen as they highlight the centrality of belonging and the complex transnational ties that ultimately impact the identity building process within diasporas between here (host land) and there (homeland), at individual and collective level, and are essential for understanding how they play out in diaspora diplomacy. Diaspora is a deeply political idea, linked to social and political identity and to the debates about citizenship, belonging and exclusion (Sigona et al., 2015); diaspora is equally linked to the power relations that come into play when articulating who is ‘in’ and who is ‘out’ of the nation-state, who belongs to certain groups and who does not, as diasporas have been “inside the demos but outside the polis: inside the nation, but outside the state” (Sigona et al., 2015, p. XXII). Brah (1996) stresses this important aspect in his reflections on the perpetual in-the-making people’s sense of belonging in diasporic contexts and its (re)emergence in constant interplay with ‘host’ cultures. The in-betweenness and belonging of migrants is constantly negotiated not only in relation to the host, but also to the
homeland, especially as migration is increasingly circular and people migrate further to other destination countries or return to homeland and emigrate again at a later stage; Boccagni (2010) points out transnationalism conflates three quite distinct ‘motherland references’ including social ties at distance with one’s motherland, social ties at distance with one’s family and emotional and affective ties with immigrants’ earlier lives.

Therefore, I argue the questions of identity and belonging can’t be de-coupled from the analyses on diaspora diplomacy, since the politics of fear (Wodak, 2015) and rise in xenophobia in political campaigns at local, national and global level (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015). Away from homeland, dealing with constant othering processes and negotiating their status and rights in the receiving states (following elections or immigration legislation), migrants and diasporic groups are experiencing a perpetual in-betweenness which ultimately impacts their sense of belonging both here and there, but also neither here nor there. These are essential aspects to be included in the study of diasporic projects and more broadly diaspora-state relations to expose complexities and tensions and to understand their dynamics.

(2) Media, migration and digital diasporas

Scholars in public diplomacy have examined diaspora groups as actors and publics in the context of digital diplomacy and the transformation of diplomacy in the digital age (Duncombe, 2019; Manor & Adiku, 2021). These studies are useful in charting how the relationships between diplomatic institutions of countries of origin and diasporas have been changed by digital technologies which facilitate the dialogic communication of diplomatic representatives with the diaspora communities and vice-versa.
Yet, these studies need complementary perspectives to allow scholars to examine and understand the mediated nature of diasporas: media and migration is an established field of study that offers more critical insights to balance the often-dominant policy-driven migration research, as well as public diplomacy research. The transdisciplinary field of media and migration problematizes issues of identity, belonging, representation, borders, and rights, having expanded at an accelerated pace during the last decade: in the introduction of the SAGE Handbook of Media and Migration, editors Smets et al (2020) clarify they refer to media as objects, texts, symbols, technologies, and organizations, while migration refers to the many different forms of human migration and mobilities, both within states and across borders, and the encounters they provoke, with a focus on inequalities. Scholars in media and migration emphasize that diasporic and migrant groups are constantly negotiating their identity, values and belonging (Triandafyllidou, 2001) and (social) media are spaces of visibility where they communicate interests, make claims, and mobilise identities (Georgiou, 2013; Trandafoiu, 2013). The information and communication technologies (ICTs) allowed dispersed populations to gather, mobilise and act across borders facilitating the emergence of digital diasporas (Candidatu & Ponzanesi, 2022; Nedelcu, 2018); yet, precarious migrants have been both empowered by ICTs and controlled by states’ surveillance regimes (Nedelcu & Soysüren, 2022).

Diminescu (2008) coined the term the connected migrant as a paradigmatic shift from the uprooted migrant, pointing “mobility and connectivity … act as a vector that ensures and guides the lines of continuity in migrants’ lives and in the relationships they have with their environments at home, in the host country or in between” (p. 568). The web has affected diasporic self-representations and issues relating to strategies of visibility (Diminescu & Loveluck, 2014).
This is an important aspect as despite the digitalization and hyper-visibility of diversity and opinions, Georgiou (2022) cautions there are paradoxical migrant (in-)visibilities in digital mediascapes.

Engaging with media and migration studies allows scholars researching diaspora diplomacy to avoid an essentialized approach on diasporas and their identities (Triandafyllidou, 2001, 2009) and to acknowledge the diverse contexts in which the diasporic experience emerges both bottom up (through various forms of agency and self-reflexive positions of diasporic actors) and top down (diasporas as objects of governance, Gamlen, 2013). It makes possible to examine the mediation of diasporic experience through the interplay between media and other public, often competing discourses (Beciu et al., 2018) and their role in shaping migration and migration policy (Trandafoiu, 2022).

(3) Diaspora as entity and as category of practice

To advance diaspora diplomacy scholarship, I argue we need to follow Brubaker (2005):

“we should think of diaspora not in substantialist terms as a bounded entity, but rather as an idiom, a stance, a claim. We should think of diaspora in the first instance as a category of practice, and only then ask whether, and how, it can fruitfully be used as a category of analysis. As a category of practice, ‘diaspora’ is used to make claims, to articulate projects, to formulate expectations, to mobilize energies, to appeal to loyalties. It is often a category with a strong normative change. It does not so much describe the world as seek to remake it. As idiom, stance, and claim, diaspora is a
way of formulating the identities and loyalties of a population. Those who do the formulating may themselves be part of the population in question; or they may be speaking in the name of the putative homeland state.” (p. 12)

Such a distinction avoids the essentialization and homogenization of diasporic communities through ethnic lenses, as well as ethnic groupism. It allows to identify who makes claims, who takes stances and initiates projects, who constructs loyalties, identities and diasporas as actors both within diasporic groups (bottom up) as well as on their behalf (top down). In a later work, Brubaker (2015) adds further: “rather than speak of ‘a diaspora’ or ‘the diaspora’ as an entity, a bounded group, or an ethnodemographic or ethnocultural fact, it may be more fruitful—and it would certainly be more precise—to speak of diasporic stances, projects, claims, idioms, and practices. We can then explore to what extent, and in what circumstances, those claimed as members of putative diasporas actively support, passively sympathize with, or are indifferent or even hostile to the diasporic projects pursued in their name” (p. 130). These additions are important as they reveal the symbolic struggles and inequalities, the constant negotiations, competitions and tensions within diaspora, in-between diasporas, as well as between diaspora and other actors that constitute the complex diaspora assemblages.

Assessing existing scholarship in diaspora diplomacy using Brubaker’s approach, it can be noticed that most studies have essentialized and homogenized diasporas, describing them following a positivist approach; the IR tradition with the state as unit of analysis explains the top-down approach for policy formulation. This however obscures the multiplicity of stances, positions, and agendas within diaspora. The pandemic, for example, has shown diaspora sub-groups
emerging and contesting both home and host governments’ policies on pandemic management and vaccination. This can be linked to the key debate about publics in public diplomacy, to the tensions, conflicts, protests emerging from domestic publics that the scholarship has largely avoided: as argued elsewhere, diasporas might be agents, instruments, and partners in public diplomacy, but they can also be disruptors (Dolea, 2022).

The way forward in diaspora diplomacy is to focus and develop more the constructivist approach on diaspora as category of practice, alongside the already existing scholarship. Studies on diaspora as entity can also be expanded through the adoption of more prisms (transnational, intersectional) to provide insights into the diversity of various socio-demographic groups and individuals that constitute diaspora (including marginalized and disadvantaged groups), as well as into their multiple ties to home and host state, along Cohen (2023)’s strands of a diasporic rope. Focusing on the different projects, claims and stances allows scholars to investigate positionality and perceptions of belonging (i.e. to diasporas, to homeland, to host countries, to Europe/West/Global North, etc); to expose the tensions and struggles between different identity layers (ethnic, national and transnational) articulated within the diasporic communities, aspects of inclusion and exclusion (politics and identity) – who is in and who is out – and what power relations underpin such discourses. Furthermore, such analyses can map the diversity of actors in the diaspora assemblage that instrumentalize, mobilize and construct diasporas as actors in their own discourses.

(4) Enabling and disruptive emotions and discourses

Emotions have been marginally discussed in public diplomacy scholarship (Di Martino, 2021; Duncombe 2019;
Graham 2014), and almost ignored in diaspora diplomacy. The rational actor models that dominated International Relations and the positivist approach in public diplomacy can explain the lack of emotions in current scholarship. In her seminal article, Crawford (2010) notes a systematic study of emotions was missing in international relations due to a) the ubiquity of rationality assumptions in international relations theory, b) a focus on cognition and “cold” cognitive processes when emotions were studied in relation to foreign policy decision-making, c) an unproblematised approach used when emotions recognised by security scholars as important - fear and hate are analysed, and d) the methodological concerns (e.g. their nature – ephemeral and deeply internal, measurement and evaluation of emotions, the issues of genuine/ authenticity vs instrumental display of emotions, the level and generalisation of emotions from individual to group, etc). She further reviews the biological, cognitive, psychodynamic, and social learning theories of emotion proposing a research agenda (Crawford, 2010). The last decade, however, saw a rise of scholarship theorising emotions in international relations (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2014; Hutchinson & Bleiker 2014; Koschut et al. 2017), with scholars privileging the socially constructed nature of emotions in defining them, as well as in exploring their expression and effects.

Similarly, in migration studies, scholars have been advocating for the integration of the understudied emotions into the study of migration dominated by economic and political analyses. Boccagni and Baldassar (2015) note that “at all of its ‘stages’, the migration process is characterized by important transformations along the migrants’ life course involving the transmission, reproduction and evolution of emotions in relation to belonging, identity and ‘home’. Indeed, the notion of ‘the migrant condition’ is a reference to the characteristic ambiguities and tensions around emotional connections
to ‘here’ and ‘there’.” (p. 74). This illustrates the dynamics of emotions at play in the migrants’ life and diaspora communities; it surfaces the ambivalence and contradictory nature of emotional stances as migrants’ attitudes towards home and host societies are evolving and might change over time. Furthermore, a variety of social actors (within and outside diasporic groups) may intensify, appeal, strategically and disruptively stir these emotions of migration, aspects that have been so far marginally discussed in diaspora diplomacy. Boccagni and Baldassar (2015) also highlight the link between emotion, space and place in the (re)construction of emotions and draw on the work of Sarah Ahmed (2004) to address their categorization: “emotions are socially and culturally constructed and spatially contingent, as well as fluid and emergent, there is hardly a way to reduce them in a theoretical and conceptual sense, to being either ‘positive’ or ‘negative’” (p. 76).

Drawing on these perspectives, I take a social constructivist approach to emotions, that emphasizes their intersubjectivity and sociocultural nature. I argue that central to understanding the experience of migration is the sense of loss and trauma that all displaced people, be it refugees, migrants, or expatriates have in common (Volkan, 2017): “loss of family members and friends; loss of ancestors’ burial grounds; loss of familiar language, songs, smells, food, in one’s environment; loss of country; loss of previous identity and its support system” (2017, p. 4). The loss and trauma of displacement (be it forced or voluntary) constitute the invisible luggage of those displaced (Dolea, 2023) and shape the identity construction and the belonging of diaspora in host countries; the concept of large group identity is very relevant for a psychosocial understanding of these processes as it refers to the sameness of individuals that are unknown to each other but have in common a mixture of myths and realities of the past that shape their sameness (Volkan 2018).
These can be connected to the strands of Cohen’s ‘diasporic rope’ highlighting the powerful emotional ties between the displaced, the homeland and the transnational community they identify with - the need and longing for belonging. Volkan (1999) proposes another two concepts that further allow researchers to understand identity making from this perspective: chosen glories (mental representations of heavily mythologized past events and heroes, and shared triumphs that are perpetuated and reinforced through rituals and ceremonies) and chosen traumas (mental representations of events that “caused the large group to face drastic losses, feel helpless and victimized by another group, and share a humiliating injury” (p. 50). The chosen glories and chosen traumas differ depending on the type of diaspora, its culture and psychology, but they are transgenerationally transmitted and impact on the adaptation and integration of the “newcomers”, especially when activated or triggered in contexts of existing or perceived threats to large-group identity; in such instances, Volkan (2018) argues a physical border also becomes a psychological border and newcomers are othered because they damage the host group’s psychological border and identity. In the current global environment with migration becoming a recurring topic on public, media, and political agendas, the understanding of how chosen glories and chosen traumas play out in diaspora as well as in host societies is essential: as more diverse actors in the diaspora assemblages take stances and make claims in the name of diaspora, these mental representations are easily instrumentalized, appropriated and stirred, including by extremist and illiberal actors seeking to strategically construct exclusionary narratives and discourses of fear, othering the diaspora – the perpetual newcomers and outsiders. These dynamics can offer insights into the enabling and disruptive role of emotions and trauma in triggering engagement and disengagement in diaspora diplomacy.
In studying emotions and trauma, subjective in nature, two aspects are key and have analytical implications: acknowledging emotions are political, following complex processes that turn individual emotions collective; adopting the nexus emotions – discourse – power (Hutchison & Bleiker 2017, Koschut et al. 2017), thus situating emotions in a (critical) discursive analytical framework. This is even more needed as emotions are discursive and discourses construct and reproduce relations of power (Dolea, 2023): discursive representations and constructions of emotions in text, talk and visuals circulate in public discourse, media and everyday life, the dominant ones ultimately becoming institutionalized in the form of policies. Therefore, analysing emotions in diaspora diplomacy would require an explicit and implicit level of analysis: the explicit naming and labelling of emotions and the implicit references to emotions, emotional states and feelings, with the acknowledgement that what is left out is sometimes equally important or even more important than what is said. The context and the situations can also be strategically constructed in discourse, as well as the position of the actors; analyses need to go beyond the identification of strategic narratives to identify the discursive aims of actors in diaspora diplomacy, the power relations they introduce, the contextualization of emotions, and the dynamics of identity building both bottom up and top down. Analyses also need to reflect critically on the role of media as actors with their own agenda, often amplifying and gradually imposing dominant discourses, narratives and frames about diasporas and migrants. In turn, they redefine their space and emotions, identity and belonging through media consumption of both home and host states. While social media have certainly become platforms of visibility and spaces of agency for diasporas and migrants, their voice is subjected to a “containment of the right to speak within a digital order of appearance: migrants speak as outsiders and as individuals who fit within given categories – entrepre-
neural or vulnerable agents who make no claims to equality or reparations” (Georgiou, 2022, p. 6).

Methodology

I draw on this theoretical framework to propose an empirical study of the Romanian diaspora in the UK, arguing the analysis and the insights collected are relevant for the wider diaspora diplomacy scholarship. My arguments are the extent of the Romanian migration phenomenon (1), its complexities (2) and its consequences for diaspora (3), with a focus on emotions.

(1) Romanians are one of the largest European groups immigrating within Europe: Romania has a total population of 19 million (The Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2023) of which approximately 5.7 million Romanians are estimated to live outside Romania (The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). Romanians constituting the largest group of EU citizens residing in other EU countries (Eurostat, 2023). Official statistics vary and are incomplete due to several factors including the free circulation of citizens within the European Union, their voluntary self-registration with authorities in countries of residence, the reporting within and between institutions across and outside EU countries, as well as the complexity and circular nature of Romanian migration (Sandu, 2021).

(2) The emergence of new Romanian diasporas after 1989 (Sandu, 2021) is an interesting case as the displacement of significant percentages of one country’s population is most often associated with contexts of war, conflicts, natural disasters and the “classical diasporas” (Cohen, 2008). The origins of emigration from Romania can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century, but the recent, post-communist mass emigration is linked to Ro-
mania’s economic development as well as to the cultural, social, and political processes of Romania’s transition from a dictatorship to a democratic state and the challenges faced by people. Sociologists investigating this phenomenon point that in addition to the dominant labour migration, there are various forms of cross-border mobilities: an ethnic migration to kin states (e.g. Germany and Hungary), and a migration of minorities to the same ethnic group (e.g. Romanian Roma) (Anghel et al., 2019), short term mobilities and return migration.

(3) Romanian migrants and the Romanian Roma were often targeted by media and political campaigns in Western European countries (Dolea, 2018b; Dolea & Suciu, 2024), especially in the context of an accelerated rise of populism and anti-immigration discourses across Europe (Balch et al, 2014; Dolea et al, 2021); such campaigns were especially vivid in the Brexit referendum context (Beciu et al. 2017; Dolea, 2018a; Mădroane et al, 2020) and were extensively covered also by the Romanian media in terms of “an imminent ‘invasion’ or ‘siege’ of the British territory by the ‘masses’ or ‘hordes’ of Romanians, ‘the immigrants of poverty’” (Beciu & Lazăr, 2016). The shame (as moral emotion) and shaming of Romanian low-skilled migrants were analysed by Mădroane (2021) who posits that “the sources of shame are not only the stigmatising classifications that circulate in the home and host countries and public cultures, but also structural conditions of inequality” (p. 62); she shows this leads to migrants’ disempowerment (devalued selves as worthy of respect and recognition based on personal merit), but also re-authorisation in claims for rights and social change (Mădroane, 2021). All these offer a fertile ground for exploring a variety of transnational emotions, attitudes, and behaviours of Romanian diaspora in both home and host state and can inform studies among other diasporas to trace
the role of emotions and their potential enabling and disruptive impact in diplomacy.

Two main research questions structure the article: (RQ1) “How do representatives of diaspora organizations define their ties with home and host state?” and (RQ2) “How do representatives of diaspora organizations construct their identity?”. RQ1 aims to capture reflections on belonging and to explore how transnational emotional ties emerge in diaspora diplomacy, beyond the more often-studied diplomatic, economic, social, and political ties. RQ2 investigates how diaspora representatives situate themselves in the diaspora assemblage as field of power, identifying a typology of roles and identities they assume.

Twenty-one semi-structured interviews with representatives of the Romanian diaspora organizations and organizations that serve the Romanian communities across the UK were carried out online, via zoom, between September 2023 and November 2023. The selection of the representatives followed 2 steps: an initial invitation to participate in the study was sent to all the organizations listed on website of the Romanian Embassy in London under the section Organizations and association; another round of invitations was sent to representatives of the Romanian diaspora organizations or of other diaspora organizations serving the Romanian community following recommendations received from the first group of interviewees (snowball sampling). The interview guide included a first section with questions exploring personal trajectories and the organization, while the second section focused on the beneficiaries and the Romanian community in the UK more broadly. Each interview lasted between 1 hour and 2 hours, totalling over 30 hours of recordings. For this article, only responses to the first set of questions were used as they were relevant to the research questions.
The article adopts a transnational approach in which diaspora representatives are situated, thus overcoming methodological nationalism. As diaspora diplomacy is conceptualized as an emotion-mediated assemblage, the analysis aims to capture how diaspora representative construct their identity in interaction and by positioning themselves in relation to a variety of social actors and how emotions are constructed both explicitly and implicitly. Thus, the interviews are analysed using an analytical framework that combines critical discourse analysis with a focus on strategies of self-presentation (Wagner & Wodak, 2006), the concept of positioning in identity construction (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; De Fina & King, 2011) and the situation of communication from the French school of socio-pragmatics (Charaudeau, 2014). Such mixt analytical approaches have been also used, among others, by Beciu (2018) to analyse identity building strategies in debates and by Madroane (2021) to analyse shame, (dis)empowerment and resistance in diasporic media. Combining these approaches allows me to highlight how during interviews the interviewees label themselves, how they construct their present life situation in relation to past contexts justifying their engagement with the Romanian community and how they build their agency and position of power in relation to other social actors. The topics mentioned and the perspective from which the interviewees narrate their experiences are also captured. A key aspect is the construction of emotions and their link with modes of engagement (Beciu, 2018) understood as interviewees’ normative statements (appeal to or invocation of norms, values, responsibilities, commitments), evaluations, claims, etc. Special attention is given to how they recontextualize a series of past events that generated heated public debates in society (e.g. Brexit). I use recontextualization as understood by Fairclough (2003): “Elements of social events are selectively ‘filtered’ … some are excluded, some included, and given greater or lesser prominence” (p. 139).
Ultimately, the interviewees themselves construct diaspora in their discourse and the decision to establish or join an organization is a form of engagement in relation to diaspora. Their grassroots day to day activities allows them to bring perspectives on the diversity of categories and groups conflated in the top-down approaches on diaspora. This type of bottom-up analysis on their self-presentation, emotions, positionality and recontextualization is especially important as increasingly more actors formulate stances, claims and projects on behalf of diaspora and understanding who else is communicating for and on behalf of diaspora, in which context, and with what agendas is essential.

**Romanian diaspora in the UK — self-awareness stage triggered by Brexit**

Diasporas are as powerful as their awareness, notes Cull (2022). The UK is home to one of the largest Romanian diasporas in Europe, although the official statistics vary. The latest update of the EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics (Home Office, 2024) indicates 1.7 million Romanians have applied for a form of status, followed by Polish (1.2 million). In turn, the 2021 Census indicates 539,000 Romanians (576% growth compared to 2011 Census), making Romania the fourth most common non-UK country of birth and Romanians the 3rd most spoken language in England and Wales (ONS, 2022).

The Romanian diaspora in the UK is a first-generation diaspora, at the stage of emerging self-awareness. The interviewees consider Brexit, and later the pandemic, were key moments that triggered the emergence of a Romanian diaspora in the UK: with few exceptions, most organizations were established during or after 2016.
“Paradoxically, after Brexit ... when people had to register, everybody from the Romanian authorities to the British authorities realised how many Romanians are here... plus, Brexit triggered an engagement with the British state: you need to do something, apply for the settled status” (cultural organization representative, personal interview, October 16, 2023).

Brexit is thus recontextualized as an auspicious moment that made the Romanian diaspora visible for the authorities, generating in turn an engagement of Romanians with the British state. It is equally regarded as a rejection and a moment of collective suffering for Romanians which led to a loss of trust. A heavy emotional terminology and a powerful metaphor depicting the harming of a collective body (“you hit us”) are used, further intensified through the construction of Romanian emigration as a forced one; the Romanians are thus portrayed as collectively suffering from a double rejection from both the country of origin and destination.

“In January one of the MPs asked me how to get to the Romanian community ... I told they need to love and engage with Romanians, because these people are forced out of their country because of corruption. We came to you [i.e. UK], and you hit us with Brexit, so you need to take steps towards gaining our trust back.” (Stefania Banu, Roconect, personal interview, October 13, 2023).

The emotions around Brexit are reiterated also as part of personal identity construction and a motivation-trigger to set up an organization. The night of the vote and the aftermath are vividly constructed through the metaphor of sadness that is materialized as heavy (“enormous”), felt both
individually and collectively; the sameness with the period when Romanians didn’t have the right to work in the UK is emphasized. The parallel with the past and the feeling of witnessing history repeating itself is recurrent in other interviews:

“I was terribly hurt by Brexit. I really suffered a lot [...] being in England for so long and having gone through all the processes of applications [for visa]. I felt we were going back ... I followed the evolution of votes till the morning, and I cried. I suffered! When I went out, I felt an enormous sadness in the air. I was talking with other moms at school because where I live there are many Romanians, and it is called Little Romania. And the mothers were also very upset. And this made me even sadder. I felt the need, the urge to help, to do something [...] to help people” (Tudorita Poenaru, RCCT, personal interview, October 22, 2023).

Multiple identities and typology of diaspora leadership roles

The interviewees situate themselves in a transnational field from the very beginning of the interview when they introduce themselves. They share their arrival in the UK and personal journey of development and then the engagement with the Romanian community through discursive strategies of storytelling that develop gradually into testimonials and even confessions of their personal hardship and very personal feelings and emotions. With few exceptions, most are self-made, and they reflect on their own experiences as migrants who started from scratch or students who came to study and continued in the UK (in some cases as illegal
migrants before Romanians had the right to work in the UK); others came to the UK as professionals from other Western European countries. Throughout the interview, each participant mobilizes different identities: the individual identity of a Romanian migrant, the social identity constructed in relation to the profession they have and various collective identities – member of the Romanian community at large, representative of an ethnic or religious group, member of the British society (through naturalization and dual citizenship).

“I am a Roma human rights activist. I’ve been an activist from 1996 back in Romania [...] I came to the UK in 2010 when Romanians had limited rights to work [...] I’ve collected scrapped metal and we managed to survive for a while. After they opened the labour market I got employed in constructions. [...] my trigger to reengage was the lack of efficiency of Roma policies.” (Virgil Bitu, ROTA, personal interview, November 5, 2023).

They reconstruct the context of their decision to engage with the Romanian community in the UK as well as the tensions of belonging and identity construction: some even share an initial rejection of the Romanian community because they wanted to leave Romania behind. The motivations to establish an organization vary and are justified as a duty to pay forward, as giving voice to the voiceless, as feeling compelled to put a stop to an injustice, as a (moral) imperative to do something, as doing something from the heart, as well as a desire to share positive emotions, create connections and ties with homeland.

Representatives of the Romanian organizations position themselves as key nodes in the diaspora assemblage and network of diaspora diplomacy as a field of power rela-
tions. They see themselves primarily as an equal: a link and connector between the Romanian authorities, local British authorities, the local Romanian-speaking community, and other ethnic communities. The typology of roles includes community leaders, cultural mediators between the Romanian and the British culture, partners of home diplomatic authorities, entrepreneurs, facilitators of contacts with host state authorities, activists giving a voice to the unheard, representatives of the marginalized and neglected, mentors, observers of the community, digital influencers and gatekeepers, especially as social media is essential in the lives of the “connected migrants”.

“We bring together people from very different places and mindsets. For example, Pentecostals, Baptists, Adventists, Orthodox. It was a lot of work and developed relations in time with them [...] We are the link [...] We are the interface between the local community, the Romanian community, the Romanian Roma and the local authorities.” (Malina Virtejanu, Belfast Intercultural Centre, personal interview, October 10, 2023).

A recurring pattern in the interviews is the construction of trust and responsibility; they talk especially about the vulnerable members (as opposed to the elites) of the Romanian community that they largely represent, thus constructing a spectrum of vulnerability: Romanians who lack language and functional literacy skills, understanding of the UK systems or IT skills, come from underdeveloped areas of Romania, are lonely, victims of domestic violence, homeless people, people with addictions, young women, mothers, single men or sole providers for their families, Romanian Roma, LGBTQ+ Romanians, victims of misinformation and disinformation. Several representatives highlight their motivation of estab-
lishing an organization was the complete lack of support for vulnerable members of the community in the areas where they live across the UK, stressing the importance of grass-roots work to cultivate trust.

“Sitting with them without any hat or function [i.e. status]. Just a friendly chat to listen to people to hear their needs. It all starts with food. People come to eat, but they gradually trust us and share their problems, so we can help them. People need to trust us before they open; they want to build trust first, before talking.” (Tudorita Poenaru).

The representatives of the Romanian organizations are seen by local British authorities as representing Romanian community and as leaders of the community. Consequently, they are invited in mixed local committees or groups on key issues such as modern slavery, exploitation, trafficking, domestic violence.

“The local institutions see Link Centre as a Romanian centre. And I am seen as the representative of Romanians both by themselves and the local authorities and other organizations ... My role is to explain the culture to the police and vice versa to communicate from the police to the community.” (Delia Chiuzbaian, LINK Community Center, personal interview, September 29, 2023).

However, representatives point out the unequal power relations: they are asked to be partners of the British authorities and other NGOs to disseminate information because they have access in the Romanian community; but they are not actually recognised and are not successful in receiving
funding because they are seen as white other, and this is a group that has no problems. This brings to the fore the issue of deservingness, the emergence of a hierarchy of migrants and an invisibility of certain categories, as well as the rise of xenophobia and racialisation in the UK post-Brexit (see Sime et al., 2022). Organizations are fighting to show that vulnerable Romanians need assistance and support, hence resources from the state. Some do that along the issue of rights (access to services and support as a legal right Romanians have here), others focus on highlighting how vulnerable the community is. Again, the issue of deservingness emerges which is an emotional construct. This can reinforce stereotypes of Romanians as a problem to be managed, rather than a resource for the British state.

“this [i.e. lack of success in getting funding] is not only in the Romanian community. This happens to the Polish as well... Because the white other category is not prioritized or acknowledged.” (Mariana Plamadeala, RUDA, personal interview, October 24, 2023).

The Romanian diaspora organizations assume a competition logic in relation to other actors, both vertically (with authorities) and horizontally (with other associations). The interviewees make assessments and evaluations about the Romanian diaspora situating it in a comparative logic and inferiority position vis-a-vis other diaspora organizations, as all diaspora organizations are competing for attention, legitimacy and resources in relation to the British state.

However, the Romanian diaspora organizations reproduce a competition logic between themselves, instead of a partnership one which ultimately weakens the potential of Romanian diaspora’s soft power. This can be partly explained through the emerging stage of the diaspora, as with
few exceptions the organizations are very young and too fo-
cused on immediate needs to be able to develop structures, 
processes and standards. The fierce competition for visibility 
and resources, the prioritization of branding and PR logics 
(instead of a focus on professionalization) can be linked also 
to the rupturing of the fabric of trust during communism, 
but also pre-communist lack of trust in Romanian society 
which leads to an endemic lack of trust in each other cur-
rently in Romanian society (Voicu et al., 2020). Furthermore, 
in the East, the communist heritage has included a culture of 
mistrusting neighbours and voluntary organizations (Uslaner 
& Bădescu, 2003), which can explain the slow development 
of such Romanian diaspora organizations.

“There is no support between [i.e. Romanian] 
associations. There is a sort of competition. A Romanian one. As only we are in competition 
with everybody and ourselves and everyone around us as we are the best” (Eutalia Leon-
te, RO KENT CIC, personal interview, October 23, 2023).

Representatives of diaspora organizations with a longer 
history or especially interested in capacity building, mobilize 
normative statements, appealing to norms, values, and re-
sponsibilities. They focus especially on the need of profes-
sionalization, ethics, accountability, and overall leadership 
development within the Romanian diaspora.

“Qualifications and standards are essen-
tial especially when working with vulnerable 
members of the community. This makes the 
difference between a hobby and volunteer-
ing in the free time and having a profession 
and a vocation to serve a community.” (Adina

“.. those who assume leadership roles realise that they can influence public opinion and political opinion through their actions and words; and it’s easy to speak [empty] words, instead of words with substance [...] you need to be up to date or you risk repeating the same things and trigger no change [...] each leader should redefine their aims and motivation and should review their needs because I believe we are beyond survival mode” (Cristina Irimie, Romanians in the UK, personal interview, October 31, 2023).

**Transnational emotional ties and the diasporic rope – retention & idealization & return**

The representatives of the Romanian organizations reflect on the emotional needs and feelings of the Romanian migrants, talking on behalf of their communities about the need of belonging amongst diaspora members, about their sense of being forced to emigrate from Romania and the idealization of a return to homeland.

“We try to show that the Romanian community has things to be proud of... we bring a positive emotion. We offer a Martisor [i.e. a traditional spring token] [...] People have a nostalgia for home [...] they miss home, they like it at home with its goods and bads. When people see a Martisor, they remember their home, their childhood, their mother and father, relatives, they remember everything; it is such a beautiful moment...” (Corneliu Berdilo,
“There is a category [of migrants] that is with one foot here and with one foot in Romania; everything they earn they send in Romania, and they continue to build big houses, which happened also 20 years ago ... They live here, but automatically they think that house in Romania is for their future, so they don’t feel as they are here because they are waiting to go home. But we know this ‘when I go home’ is actually never.” (Cristina Irimie)

The constant negotiation and in-the-making identity are clearly articulated in stances that refer to the self-perception of Romanian migrants as being “exploited” in the UK. Not only the emigration from Romania is thus constructed as being “forced”, but the remaining in the UK is equally imposed on them by circumstances – there are thus some Romanians who are depicted as having no choice, being almost trapped between here and there, but neither here nor there. The consequences of such experiences are not only the lack of integration, but also a profound disconnection and disengagement in diaspora; they become vulnerable to nostalgic tropes of times gone-by (e.g. communism), propaganda narratives, anti-establishment and extremist discourses that promise a sense of justice and belonging to an imagined community aiming to disrupt the status-quo.

“Romanians don’t integrate here and feel they don’t belong here [...] They feel exploited by this country that takes from them too many taxes, that they work too much and rest too little [...] they live here, but their mind and heart is in the other country. And there
[in Romania] they don’t trust the authorities and don’t see themselves returning there too soon. The ones who have children here live with the constant frustration that they need to be here for their children, but they don’t feel like they belong. And this is very painful to be unable to find your place here and to be forced to live here.” (Stefania Banu, Roconect, personal interview, October 13, 2023).

A gender element is brought forward by several interviewees who talk about the different groups within their communities: an unexpected finding was the hardships of single men in the UK or of men who are sole providers for their families who are back in Romania or here in the UK, while the wives are staying home to care for small children. Another one was the very small online community of 20 mothers on Facebook that grew over a period of 10 years to an organization gathering over 28,000 Romanian mothers all over the UK. These gender perspectives are brought to the fore by such bottom-up approaches that avoid the essentialization and homogenization of diasporic communities. Both gender and cultural stereotypes are mobilized: the expectation from men to be brave and endure, the Romanian gender dynamics in the family with women expected to perform traditional roles and tend the house, while men provide for the family; the burden of both roles is not discussed because it is a tabu in Romania, while in the UK conversations about mental health and wellbeing are not only socially acceptable, but institutionalized through programs and policies.

“The first generation of Romanians [i.e. in the UK] is in my opinion condemned to suffer as they will always live between two worlds […] it will never be totally adaptable no matter how
hard we would try [...] There is a collective suffering [i.e. among men] but it is covered as it is shameful for a man to show he is human, too, that he has a weakness” (Cristian Stanca-nu, My Romania Community, personal interview, October 25, 2023).

The transnational diasporic rope and the Romanian – British collaboration

The Romanian diaspora is an emotionally mediated assemblage in which diaspora organizations represent symbolically strands of the transnational diasporic rope that keeps the Romanian community tighter together, connecting Romanians with both homeland and the British host society.

Capacity building of Romanian diaspora organizations supported by authorities. Romanian diaspora organizations need to move to the next stage of development, focusing on consolidation and strengthening capacity. Some organizations show a misalignment between the mission, the activities and events carried out and the aspirational discourses of the leaders. For a sustainable development, diaspora organizations need to overcome this initial stage of overreliance on the personality of the leader who established the organization, expanding internal structures, adopting rules and regulations, principles of transparency, accountability, yearly public reporting and evaluation. There is a need for organizations and their leaders to distinguish between visibility opportunities, influence, and advocacy. As the Romanian diaspora has become one of the largest European diasporas in the UK, a variety of political and institutional stakeholders will increasingly seek to engage it; these opportunities should be used with a view of obtaining middle and long-term structural changes, rather than short term
gains. A paradigm shift is required from “photo ops” with the British and Romanian authorities to lobbying advocacy, policy influencing and structural changes for the Romanian community in the UK.

Knowledge exchange and networking opportunities between British and Romanian organizations, as well as targeted trainings can contribute to the capacity building, leadership development and professionalization of the emerging Romanian organizations. Such collaborations exist already, but they need to be recurring and extended to include joint trainings on key issues and skills (for example, training for project management and reporting, training to understand, recognise and counter misinformation and disinformation, fact-checking, debunking). The diaspora organizations will develop first internal routines and processes, then will be educators and multipliers of knowledge within the Romanian community, thus contributing actively to building societal resilience.

As disinformation was a topic repeatedly mentioned in the interviews, the Romanian and the UK Government should initiate campaigns to tackle disinformation. There is a need of recurring programs to strategically increase societal resilience, given the ongoing war in Ukraine and the threat posed by Russia to European security. Such programs should tackle disinformation, counter malign influences, and mitigate divisions amongst Romanian diaspora, along with other diaspora groups in the UK and the UK society at large. Propaganda theories highlight the importance of emotions. The emotional in-betweenness of migrants, the sense of rejection and abandonment by both home and host country constitute a fertile ground for propaganda and disinformation. Targeted approaches and bespoke communication campaigns are needed not only in Romanian diaspora, but also in diasporas with home countries neighbouring Ukraine.
as they continue to be strategically exposed to Russian propaganda.

A joint grassroots approach to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking. The Romanian organizations are key nodes in reaching out to the heart of the community. However, Romanians are spread throughout the UK and, as shown, have low trust in institutions, authorities and sometimes in Romanian NGOs. Therefore, bottom-up joint approaches are needed in addition to the top-down ones. Information campaigns in Romanian language (e.g., brochures, dedicated numbers, etc) should continue to ensure structurally the information is widely available and people suspecting a case of exploitation or abuse know what steps to follow to report. But a peer-to-peer approach in communicating about modern slavery and human trafficking would mitigate the risk of messages being rejected. For example, joint British-Romanian initiatives can create safe spaces for coming together to share experiences and difficulties of daily life as a Romanian woman in the UK; these can lead to conversations about feeling lonely, vulnerable under the umbrella of ‘carrying for women in community’ and ‘empowering women in community’; thus, no woman participant is a priori placed in a position of (recognising) being a victim (which is often times the case as no victim wants to be perceived and self-identify as victim).

Further reflections

There is a current turbulent and uncertain climate, a state of polycrisis and permacrisis, with compounded effects of post-pandemic, economic and cost of living crisis, a new era of intense geopolitical competition with wars, conflicts and tensions, elections across the world and climate change. Displacement, both forced and voluntary, will increase to unprecedented levels. In addition, the circulatory nature of
migration will add to the existing challenge of capturing in the official statistics the size of the dynamic and evolving diasporic and migrant groups; this can contribute to the invisibility of certain migrant groups (as it was the case of the Romanians in the UK) which impacts national and local policies, resource allocation and support measures, and consequently processes of adaptation and integration of migrants.

Such bottom-up approaches to analyse diaspora can inform policy making more accurately. In a world increasingly diverse, multicultural and multiethnic, essentializing and homogenizing diaspora along home nation-state lines obscures the heterogenous and intersectional make-up of diasporas. Approaches that avoid methodological nationalism highlight multiple belongings and identities that are constantly negotiated, and intersectional approaches reveal the diversity of groups. Within any one diaspora there are a variety of socio-professional, ethnic, class groups and agendas. Traditional and conservative views, progressive views, extremist views coexist and clash within diaspora groups. The imagining of homeland along the past vs along the future, nostalgia for different forms of governing and worldviews equally coexist. Furthermore, formal and informal leaders of diaspora organizations speak for or on behalf of diaspora, as do a range of political actors in both home and host countries with (different) aims to engage and mobilize diaspora. Regular stakeholder mapping and risk assessment are essential in diaspora diplomacy to identify actors, practices, discourses, and their agendas with the assumption these are competing and possible overlapping.

The psychology of diaspora and the emotions of migration are as important as the official statistics that profile diaspora and migrant group. There is a need for more awareness of processes and consequences of policies on immigration (e.g. the othering of particular groups; the hier-
archies of migrants; hierarchies of problems). This taps into the perception of belonging and the always in-the-making identity processes of migrants - in Volkan’s terms this feeds into the reinforcement of psychological borders and feelings amongst diasporas as a perpetual “newcomer” that ultimately hinder and complicate their integration in the host societies. Emotions can lead to reconceptualize the listening element in public diplomacy and diaspora diplomacy to include the understanding of complex psychological process beyond conflict resolution and negotiations: as nations are not stable structures, the domestic cultural tensions and struggles from homeland are brought in the host societies; the multiculturalism and multi-ethnic composition of nation-states bring to the fore the need to understand these social, cultural and psychological processes.
Author’s Biography

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