

# Diaspora Diplomacy Reconsidered: Mapping Possible Futures

## Call for Papers

### Convenors:

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### Abstract:

This workshop engages with the concept and practice of “diaspora diplomacy”, exploring how diasporas develop their own diplomacies and participate in a wider geopolitical worldmaking beyond the state, and considering the geographies of their diplomatic practices. From state-led efforts to mobilise migrants as cultural ambassadors, to transnational diaspora political participation, “diaspora diplomacy” operates in spaces where international relations and everyday life intersect.

The workshop situates diaspora diplomacy within broader debates in political geography, examining the fundamental ambivalence of diasporas as a paradigmatic “other” in relation to the state, its closest ally, or even its precursor (Tölölyan, 1991). Ho & McConnell’s intervention (2019) decentred the role of state in diplomatic practice and identified three forms of diplomacy *by* diasporas: Advocacy (championing causes), Mediation (being peacemakers and peacebreakers), and Representation (governments-in-waiting and similar). However, as contemporary diplomacy is being reconfigured through transnational networks, surveillance, remittances, and cultural practices, more conceptual and empirical engagement is needed with the institutional frameworks and lived dimensions of diaspora engagement:

- Sending states increasingly view diasporas as strategic assets, seeking to mobilise them for remittances, investment, or soft power, while also extending surveillance and governance beyond national borders.
- Receiving states simultaneously court diasporic populations as bridges for trade, security, and foreign policy purposes, while also restricting their political agency through securitised migration and integration regimes.
- Diasporic communities themselves engage with or contest these practices, drawing on hybrid identities, alternative nationalisms, and transnational networks to reshape diplomacy, from below.

The goal of this workshop is examining the role of diasporas in diplomacy to understand how international relations operate in practice and may develop in the future. It aims generally to challenge rigid assumptions and categories, such as the internal/external and territorialization/deterritorialization dichotomies, while also prompting a rethinking of both statehood and non-statehood.

We invite papers that explore themes including, but not limited to:

- Sending state diaspora diplomacy strategies, through comparative or single-case studies (e.g. India, China, Turkey, Morocco, Ireland), with attention to the tension between empowerment and instrumentalisation
- Receiving state approaches to diaspora engagement within migration, security, integration, and foreign policy frameworks
- Policy discourses that frame diaspora communities as agents of homeland development, and the opportunities and constraints these create for diplomats and intermediary actors
- Everyday practices of diasporic agency and diplomacy within diasporic communities, including forms of negotiation, resistance, and appropriation
- Triangular dynamics among sending states, receiving states, and diasporic communities, and the power relations that shape these interactions
- Critical perspectives on contemporary diaspora engagement, including continuities and ruptures with historical practices of population management
- Theoretical, conceptual, and methodological innovations in the study of diaspora diplomacy, including ethnographic approaches, spatial analysis, discourse analysis, and digital methods

We encourage contributions from across disciplines that engage with these questions and aim to rethink diaspora diplomacy beyond state-centric frameworks. The workshop will be designed in an interactive format, where participants will engage in collaborative discussions on their papers. Abstracts can be submitted via the [EISA website](#) until 11 February 2025.