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### **Causal Mechanisms in Diaspora Mobilizations for Transitional Justice**

Maria Koinova<sup>1</sup>

Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9280-9736>

and

Dženeta Karabegović

Division of Political Science and Sociology, University of Salzburg, Salzburg,

Austria

ORCID: 0000-0002-7143-2084

### **Abstract**

Transitional justice and diaspora studies are interdisciplinary and expanding fields of study. Finding the right combination of mechanisms to forward transitional justice in post-conflict polities is an ongoing challenge for states and affected populations. Diasporas, as non-state actors with increased agency in homelands, host-lands, and other global locations, engage with their past from a distance, but their actions are little understood. This introductory article to a special issue develops a novel

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<sup>1</sup> Contact Details: Maria Koinova, [mkoinova@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:mkoinova@warwick.ac.uk), @mkoinova

framework to study causal mechanisms and their underlying analytical rationales – emotional, cognitive, symbolic/value-based, strategic, and networks-based – linking diasporas and local actors in transitional justice. Mechanisms featured are: thin sympathetic response and chosen trauma, fear and hope, contact and framing, cooperation and coalition-building, brokerage, patronage, and connective action, among others. The contributors theorize about causal mechanisms and their sequences involving diasporas in multi-sited transitional justice processes and bring empirical evidence from various world regions.

## **Introduction**

Transitional justice (TJ) and diaspora studies are both interdisciplinary and expanding fields of study. Finding the right combination of mechanisms to forward transitional justice in post-conflict polities is an ongoing challenge for both states and affected populations. Diasporas, as non-state actors with increased agency in homelands, hostlands, and other global locations, engage with their past from a distance, yet their actions are little understood. There are transitional justice claims among recent conflict-generated diasporas, such as Syrians, and more established diasporas such as the Armenian, Bosnian, Congolese, Kurdish, Jewish, Palestinian, and Tamil, among others. Nevertheless, the academic field as a whole is little theorized.

The fields of diaspora studies and transitional justice intersect on an empirical level, as conflict-generated diasporas attempt to remedy injustices in an original homeland. Such diasporas are based on refugee experiences passed to further generations. Sporadic case studies have formed the field; systematic comparative examinations and large quantitative studies are still in inception. Hall's simultaneous

survey of Bosnian diaspora in Sweden and Bosnia-Herzegovina (2016), a JEMS special issue on comparative dimensions (2018), and a cross-national survey conducted in 2017 by the ERC project “Diasporas and Contested Sovereignty,” are exceptions providing systematic comparisons across cases, through qualitative or quantitative methodologies.

This special issue focuses on *causal mechanisms and their underlying analytical rationales* – emotional, cognitive, symbolic/value-based, strategic, and networks-based – linking diasporas and local actors in transitional justice. The authors discuss mechanisms such as thin sympathetic response and chosen trauma, fear and hope, contact and framing, cooperation and coalition-building, brokerage, patronage, and connective action, among others. Rationales mean principles to arrive at an analytical estimate or conclusion. These speak to established and new analytical paradigms in International Relations: from rational-choice and strategic calculations, to ideational, constructivist, and social-network approaches, to more recent consideration of emotions and cognition in international politics, which we integrate through interdisciplinarity.

An analytical approach based on underlying rationales of causal mechanisms deepens our thinking of diasporas and their agency in causal processes. It also enriches the transitional justice literature by considering perspectives emphasizing traditionally neglected voices; we integrate scholarship on affective and cognitive dimensions to better understand diaspora engagement.

We give a brief overview of scholarship that already links diaspora studies and transitional justice and review major works considering causal mechanisms through qualitative methodology and the broader literature on diasporas, conflicts, and post-conflict reconstruction. Our novel contribution is a *classification of the rationales*

*underpinning these causal mechanisms.* We offer empirical evidence from the articles of this special issue, and our own fieldwork.

### **Diasporas and Transitional Justice**

Mainstream scholarship on transitional justice has moved beyond legal remedies to address past atrocities with trials, lustration policies, and truth commissions. At present it considers victim-centered restorative justice mechanisms and bottom-up initiatives (Teitel 2008, Olsen 2010, Riaño and Baines 2012, Sharp 2013, 2014). This brings the necessity to understand the ways transitional justice is intertwined with other issues, such as socioeconomic status shaping how claims are enacted, forwarded, and sustained (Shaw, Waldorf, and Hazan 2010). Scholars have broadened the debate to consider power imbalances between actors involved in seeking justice globally, emerging from various structural impediments, but still having an impact on how claims are framed (Nagy 2008). A recent volume in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* discusses transitional justice and reconciliation, informing thinking about normative implications for transitional justice in complex and politicized settings (Hughes and Kostovicova 2018). In the search for lasting solutions, scholarship is becoming more inclined to be inclusive of various approaches to TJ, including intersectional ones, (Rooney and Ni Aolain 2018).

The nexus of diaspora studies and transitional justice scholarship initially developed based on issues of displacement (Harris Rimmer 2010). Transitional justice measures such as truth commissions (Young and Park 2009, Hoogenboom and Quinn 2011, Bala 2015), reparations for displaced populations (Bala 2015), restitutions including land returns, criminal prosecutions (Duthie 2011), participation in tribunals, and court cases evoking universal jurisdiction in host-lands (Roht-Arriaza 2004) have

been considered sporadically. In the case of returnees, research has addressed legal measures to ensure they are taken care of, integrated within post-conflict settings, and feeling protected (Haider 2014). Research advocates that displacement needs to be considered as part of a larger toolbox in transitional justice processes, although diasporas as long-distance actors are not yet part of such calculations or only in limited ways (Harris Rimmer 2010, Duthie 2011, Bala 2015). Apart from a few recent exceptions (Koinova and Karabegovic 2017, Orjuela 2018), such linkages across the globe and different contexts are little understood.

Diasporas have been widely studied as engaged in conflict, post-conflict, and development processes in homelands and host-lands (Shain and Barth 2003, Bauböck 2005, Adamson 2006, Koinova 2011, Brinkerhoff 2011, 2016, Koinova and Tsourapas 2018). A socio-spatial positionality of diasporas in different global locations could empower them to mobilize for homeland political affairs (Koinova 2017). Experiences of diasporas surviving displacement and trauma can increase desires for transitional justice in original homelands, with a variety of grievances to mobilize upon (Wiebelhaus-Brahm 2016; Karabegovic 2016). Orjuela argues that pursuing transitional justice has become a globalized activity via the myriad of political, legal, and discursive opportunity structures that proliferate in many parts of the globe. Such political opportunity structures enable diasporas to make claims about transitional justice, and to create spaces to pursue their agendas through commemorations or legal means (2018).

Our previous work addresses the ways diasporas mobilize locally and globally to address past abuses, demonstrating how claims become scaled up from the local to global levels of engagement (Koinova and Karabegovic 2017). Other work acknowledges that homeland actors involve diasporas and vice versa (Bala 2015,

Baser 2017). Rather than focusing on emotional attachments to homeland or their own agency, transitional justice needs to incorporate diasporas within holistic and comprehensive approaches (Duthie 2011, Bala 2015, Baser 2017). In this special issue we consider the importance of diaspora engagement from a variety of perspectives at various stages of a transitional justice process (inception, development, resolution), focusing on *causal mechanisms*.

Our consideration of causal mechanisms is analytical, looking into emotional, cognitive, symbolic/value-based, strategic, and network-based rationales that link diasporas and transitional justice processes from different locations. These are not always mutually exclusive and could overlap. Yet in a specific context, a particular rationale tends to dominate in a causal mechanism. Numerous mechanisms could seek to redress a violent past. Distinguishing the rationales on which they are based, and the sequences and contexts in which they occur, provides fine-grained analysis applicable to comparative, statistical, and holistic approaches.

For example, a transitional justice process with an emotional causal mechanism could be difficult to resolve if offered solutions do not address that emotion. Solutions based on strategic calculations when an emotional or a symbolic mechanism is at play may have little value. We do not think causal mechanisms have only one and exclusive rationale on which they are based. Strategic mechanisms could factor in existing emotions, and emotions could be strategically deployed. Yet, a causal mechanism's dominant rationale, animated in a specific context, could become influential for how the trajectory of a transitional justice process evolves.

### **Causal Mechanisms in Existing Scholarship**

Which *causal mechanisms* link diasporas to transitional justice processes in original homelands and beyond? How do these operate *globally*? Systematic examination has not been conducted so far. This introduction to the special issue sets the stage for this topic. We first briefly review how causal mechanisms have been considered in scholarship on diasporas and International Relations. We further develop our novel classification of the variety of *rationales* through which such causal mechanisms operate, and substantiate these with empirical evidence, considering the articles published in this special issue.

Recent advances have brought more attention to causal mechanisms in both qualitative and quantitative scholarship. Causal mechanisms are at the core of the qualitative process-tracing method, which has grown in International Relations, Sociology, and Philosophy of Science (Hedström and Swedberg 1998, Mahoney 2003, George and Bennett 2005, Goertz 2006, Gerring 2008; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, 2008). George and Bennett (2005) likened causal mechanisms to domino chains, where pieces have their own characteristics, but appear in a specific sequence of relationships with other pieces, or in a process. The domino piece is not the cause for the entire process, yet specific features can be found in other processes associated with other cases. Quantitative experimental studies have also contributed to the use of causal mechanisms (Goertz 2006).

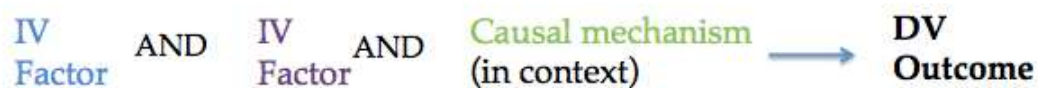
The growing attention to causal mechanisms brought a proliferation to such a degree that Mahoney counted 24 definitions of the term (2001:579-580). We use here an influential early definition considering causal mechanisms as “analytical constructs that provide hypothetical links between observable events” (Hedström and Swedberg 1998:135). This definition is in congruence with the understanding of Falley and Lynch that causal mechanisms, even if “portable concepts,” still interact with a



context that defines why and how a hypothesized cause would contribute to a particular outcome (2009:1145). Therefore, a causal mechanism in one case may not bring the same outcome in another yet will be the same mechanism.

This special issue aims to define the rationales through which such mechanisms help diasporas engage as global actors with transitional justice processes in original homelands. We do not claim these mechanisms will lead to specific outcomes of transitional justice or reconciliation. Such outcomes depend on combinations of causal mechanisms and other contextual factors that form causal chains and eventually build processes leading to a specific outcome. Each article focuses on how a causal mechanism or sequence of mechanisms becomes part of such larger causal processes. Our major attention is on the causal mechanisms, the “domino” pieces in such chains, to specify their underlying rationales. See Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Causal Mechanism as Part of a Larger Causal Process**



Legend:

IV – independent variable (factor);

DV – dependent variable (outcome);

Causal mechanism – a specific independent/intervening variable in a context with its own causal properties that are “portable” across cases.

Scholarship on diasporas and conflict and post-conflict studies has “imported” causal mechanisms from Social Movements, Historical Institutionalism, International Relations and Political Geography. Most have discussed *framing*, *brokerage*, *diffusion*, *learning (socialization)*, *ethnic outbidding*, *boomerang effects*, and *scale shifts*, yet only sporadically regarding transitional justice. *Framing* regularly occurs

during mobilization, as diaspora activists shape messages to the interests of agents they want to influence in those contexts (Haney and Vanderbush 1999, Adamson 2013, Brkanic 2016, Koinova 2011, Koinova and Karabegovic 2017, Godin 2018). *Framing* is particularly important in social movements, indicating “schemata of interpretation” of meanings and identities proposing solutions to ongoing problems (Benford and Snow 2000:614). Exile politicians seeking to remove communist and authoritarian regimes want to “market the American creed abroad” (Shain 1999). Diasporas often appeal to liberal values even if advancing nationalist creeds (Koinova 2011) or maintain thick connections to transnational kin networks (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Mandaville and Lyons 2011). Frames related to guilt and obligation are also often used in diaspora politics (Adamson 2013:70, quoting Hammond 2007).

*Brokerage* is associated with initial linking of earlier fragmented networks, divided by “structural holes” (Burt 1992, Goddard 2009). From this perspective, the power of diaspora members who link such networks comes not from material or symbolic resources, but from their ability to position themselves as a connector (Koinova 2011, Adamson 2013). As Brinkerhoff demonstrates, diaspora entrepreneurs occupy an “in-between advantage” to pursue specific homeland-oriented goals, derived from their simultaneous linkages to homelands and host-lands (2016). In conflict studies, Adamson and Koinova (2013) and Koinova (2014) pointed that parliamentarians, who sympathize with minorities and mobilize against international oppression, could also be “brokers,” as they link diaspora groups among themselves and with other political actors.

Once networks are established, ideas and knowledge could travel by the *diffusion* mechanism, even if spread of information need not be always fostered by human agency. News that a transnational corporation had bought the ore mines at the

site of a former concentration camp of the early 1990s diffused quickly through networks linking local Bosnian population in Prijedor with globally spread diaspora (Koinova and Karabegovic 2017).

The causal mechanism of *learning*, often associated with *socialization*, emphasizes the agent who acquires knowledge, whereas *socialization* emphasizes the agent who spreads it. Yet in essence, these mechanisms are associated with adoption of norms and rules. Social environments shape agents embedded in them, including interests to act within a given community (Checkel 2017:592). Learning and socialization, spelled out as causal mechanisms or implicitly considered in narratives, have been strong in linking diasporas in remote locations with memorialization of past atrocities in original homelands. Orjuela argues that children in the Rwandan diaspora have been socialized with particular interpretations of the Rwandan genocide (2018), a finding applicable also to other diasporas with traumatic past, most notably the Jewish and Armenian. Socialization could be contested, as some might be interested in glorifying some actors and denigrating others, such as in memorialization initiatives in Switzerland, some of which attribute a “hero-like” status to members of the radical Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), challenged by others.<sup>i</sup>

*Ethnic outbidding*, featured first by Rabushka and Shepsle (1972), is associated with polarization of ethnic divisions giving rise to more than one ethnic faction (Chandra 2005:235). When a faction seeks constituent support in the same ethnic space as other factions, and to up the ante, it becomes radicalized. Several studies on the Kosovo diaspora have shown that the nonviolent movement led by the Democratic League of Kosovo since independence in 1991 was “ethnically outbid” by the KLA in 1998 (Demmers 2002, Koinova 2011, Adamson 2013). Ethnic outbidding

is a mechanism mostly associated with destabilization. Yet Chandra argues that this same mechanism has a potential to lead to democratic outcomes, since ethnic identities are fluid and multidimensional. One needs, however, proper institutions to create an environment to thrive (2005:236).

Two other causal mechanisms have political and spatial dimensions: *boomerang effects* and *scale shifts*. “Boomerang effects” (Keck and Sikkink 1998) and “spiral effects” (Risse et al. 1999) were catapulted into International Relations through study of human rights. When human rights are violated in an illiberal country, activists appeal to international organizations, external NGOs and other liberal states to pressure their own state to introduce human rights reforms. Wayland argues that such boomerang effects could be discerned in diaspora politics, but diasporas are different actors as they participate simultaneously in domestic and international politics (2004). In the context of institutional reforms, Brinkerhoff also demonstrates that diasporas can exert pressure from abroad, but also shuttle back and forth through these contexts (2016). *Scale shifts* are studied in social movements and geography, emphasizing that claims are not simply reproduced between contexts, but endure changes of “meaning and scope of the object or claim,” as they engage with global audiences (Tarrow 2005:121). Adamson and Koinova (2013) show how political claims formulated by identity-based movements are shifted in their scale in the global city of London to engage with different media and publics.

Often using the process-tracing method, these studies have treated causal mechanisms as parts of process narratives without theorizing about the mechanisms per se. Adamson first offered a valuable theoretical impetus to think about causal mechanisms in diaspora politics. She argues that transnational brokerage, strategic framing, and ethnic and sectarian outbidding are mechanisms of mobilization;

resource mobilization and lobbying-persuasion have causal implications on actual conflict once a diaspora is mobilized (2013:68). The determinism with which the mechanisms are treated regarding causal implications needs further scrutiny in our account on transitional justice, as opposite effects could be discerned: a diaspora activist could lobby, persuade, and seek to mobilize resources, to engage reluctant diaspora members to participate in difficult transitional justice processes; also framing does not stop once a diaspora is mobilized, as claims could be framed and reframed to scale them “up” and “down” toward different publics. We find that for a new research program, such as diaspora mobilizations for transitional justice, understanding *underlying rationales* rather than causal implications, contextually bound and depending on specific empirics, provides a promising avenue for both scholarship and policy-making. Seeing through the rationales underlying these mechanisms allows us to develop solutions to address specific causes at specific parts of usually long causal processes associated with transitional justice. We turn to these underlying rationales next.

### **Underlying Rationales for Diaspora Engagement with Transitional Justice**

We propose that the causal mechanisms connecting diasporas as global actors with transitional justice and memorialization processes in original homelands are underpinned by rationales not previously theorized upon. We consider five such rationales: emotional, cognitive, symbolic/value based, strategic, and network-based. One of these rationales becomes dominant when animated in a certain context at a certain point of time, although the relationship between the different rationales is more complex. As discussed in this special issue, such complexity concerns emotion and cognition, for example; it would be also hard to influence emotions or cognition without communicating symbolically or strategizing. Nevertheless, the underlying

rationale through which a causal mechanism becomes activated gives researchers analytical leverage to isolate the major grounds on which a particular activity occurs in a larger transitional justice process. Actors – including diaspora members – could be influenced at any stage of this process. These rationales are systematized in Table 1, giving non-exhaustive examples of diasporas from articles in this special issue.

**Table 1: Causal Mechanisms and Their Underlying Rationales**

<b>Underlying Rationale</b>	<b>Causal Mechanism</b>	<b>Diaspora under Study</b>	<b>Author's Name in This Special Issue</b>
<b>Emotional</b>	Fear, anger, resentment, hope, pride, trauma sharing <sup>ii</sup>	Albanian, Bosnian, Ukrainian	Nikolko; Quinn
<b>Cognitive</b>	Thin sympathetic response, reframing, contact, perceptions	Haitian, Cyprus-related	Quinn, Psaltis et al. Nikolko
<b>Symbolic/ Value-based</b>	Learning, socialization, chosen trauma, apology	Ukrainian, Kurdish	Nikolko, Koinova
<b>Strategic</b>	Strategic framing, cooperation, vertical and horizontal coordination, coalition-building, control, crowdsourcing	Bosnian, Syrian, Armenian	Karabegovic, Stokke and Wiebelhaus-Brahm, Koinova, Tenove
<b>Network-based</b>	Boomerang effects,	Armenian,	Koinova, Stokke

	brokerage, connective action, diffusion, patronage	Syrian	and Wiebelhaus- Brahm, Tenove
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### *Emotional Mechanisms*

An affective approach towards the study of transitional justice is still recent. As Barceló (2018) argues, whereas emotional engagement is considered to underlie individual and contextual factors leading to preferences for transitional justice, teasing out specific emotional mechanisms remains incomplete. His recent survey in Spain shows that negative feelings such as anger, fear, and sadness significantly increase desire for more justice towards past authorities; positive feelings such as pride, patriotism, and nostalgia have lesser effects, also indistinguishable from effects related to people reporting lack of engagement (2018:482). This new research conducted among local populations does not directly apply to diasporas as global actors.

In contrast to local populations, diasporas are often found to develop a traumatic identity that becomes “frozen” in distant locations, against the background of political processes that have moved on in the original homeland (Anderson 1998, Shain 2002). Emotions such as fear and anger have been found to motivate a diaspora to radicalize, especially when large-scale violence takes place in the original homeland (Koinova 2011). Being jaded from unsuccessful activism during prolonged crises, as among the Palestinian and Greek diasporas, leads to disengagement or only minimal engagement at specific points of time (Mavroudi 2018). Little is known about how emotions affect diasporas in the context of activism regarding transitional justice.

Sporadic evidence shows that individuals in the diaspora, subject to violence

themselves, either seek to memorialize the experience, including in the original homeland, or prefer completely to forget and move on with their lives and altogether disengage. Regarding the first group, in this special issue Nikolko (2019) considers the need to “share the trauma” as an emotional mechanism that helps initially develop historical narratives. Coupled with the fact that it was coming from a selected group of survivors, it built the first narrative about the Holodomor famine in Ukraine.

Our previous research on the Bosnian diaspora discerns similar wishes among those victimized to memorialize past atrocities. However, we found indicative that a group of concentration camp survivors named their NGO “Optimisti 2004,” associating it with a positive emotion of optimism. Although some became “re-traumatized” the first time they returned to Prijedor, this fueled further attempts at memorialization (Koinova and Karabegovic 2017).

Forced displacement does not always lead to proactive methods to memorialize but can also lead to disengagement. There is little diaspora engagement with transitional justice among the Kosovo Albanian diaspora; rather “disappointment” in diaspora circles after the 1998-1999 war due to neglect from homeland authorities. Following such disappointment, the diaspora left political developments in the hands of these authorities.<sup>iii</sup>

We caution that emotional mechanisms cannot be understood without considering context. While they need to be further identified and existing ones tested through contextual evidence, our preliminary findings suggest that negative emotions associated with physical and mental pain could prompt creation of a historical record, while positive emotions such as optimism and pride are more likely to make diasporas engaged in memorialization in the homeland.



### *Cognitive Mechanisms*

At the core of cognitive mechanisms leading to more peace and reconciliation is the understanding of one's own perceptions about the conflict and the place of the "other" in it. As Maoz argues, there are cognitive barriers to reconciliation, most notably frames that reinforce negative images or perceptions of the "other" that favor biases towards the in-group. Cognitive mechanisms conducive to reconciliation include replacing "win-lose" with "win-win" frames and fostering mutual disclosures of each party's views and beliefs (2004). Therefore "reframing" as a cognitive mechanism "should help one separate the offense and the offender" and "understand the offender's...basic human worth," conducive to forgiveness (Enright et al. 1998:56,54). Saunders warns that demanding forgiveness prior to dealing with active or suppressed emotions of anger and resentment may "place unwarranted psychological burdens," especially on victims, even if providing solutions to other individuals (2011:120). Therefore, acknowledgment is first necessary to link suppressed emotions with positive practices to transform them. As Govier (2003) and Quinn (2019) argue, acknowledgment needs to take place prior to any other acts of social rebuilding, such as forgiveness or reconciliation.

"Reframing" has not been considered regarding diasporas and transitional justice, but invoked in conflict resolution, specifically when diasporas became engaged in developing a peace deal. Lyons argues: "conflict-generated diasporas tend to have categorical perceptions of homeland conflicts. If these perceptions could be reframed and made more complex through a process of dialogue...then the diaspora's role in the conflict may be changed" (2004:12). Still, little is known about cognitive mechanisms connecting diasporas and transitional justice.

This is where Quinn makes a contribution to this special issue by discussing

the notion of a “thin sympathetic response.” She shows how it plays a role in diaspora engagement with a truth commission among Haitians in Canada. She argues that programs targeting the need to acknowledge the past are meeting perpetual mistrust from affected populations, whether victims, perpetrators, bystanders, or outsiders. An important step is missing in such programs: understanding how sympathy works as a causal mechanism. She sees “thin” sympathy, “thick” sympathy and “empathy” on a continuum from least to most engaged to acknowledge experience of the “other.” Therefore, “thin sympathy,” or simple identification with what happened to the “other,” is a crucial prerequisite for more advanced versions of engagement to emerge. Elite members from the Haitian diaspora in Montreal invoked “thin sympathy” among Canadian policy-makers for support for a truth commission aimed to address violence after a coup on Haiti’s President Aristide (Quinn 2019).

The article by Psaltis, Loizides, Lapierre, and Stefanovic brings to the fore the mechanisms of “contact” and perceptions of transitional justice. Contact engages formerly victimized populations and facilitates their acceptance of cohabitation. Bringing novel evidence from two surveys conducted among Greek and Turkish Cypriots, IDPs, and a settler diaspora, the authors demonstrate that in cases of contact between these groups, images of the “other” improve with more acceptance of future prospects for peaceful cohabitation. The more Greek Cypriot participants adhere to notions of retributive justice, the less they have been ready to live together with Turkish settlers. Therefore, contact is important to foster through confidence-building measures, school visits and dialogue workshops (2018). Contact is widely known as a cognitive mechanism of prejudice reduction, as it deconstructs negative stereotypes of the “other.” Contact works also through emotional channels, to reduce intergroup anxiety and threats, which could be realistic or symbolic. Perceptions of transitional

justice are a cognitive mechanism as actualized in the context of the conducted surveys, but themselves a product of earlier elite framing or teaching of history associated with the mechanisms of learning/socialization.

### *Symbolic/Value-based Mechanisms*

For some causal mechanisms the underlying rationale is based on the acquisition and perpetuation of specific ideas, values, and symbols. Our discussion pointed to “learning” and “socialization” as double-edged swords: new generations could still acquire old ideas and values from their predecessors, perpetuating conflict-generated identities, but they could also learn to deal with conflict transformation in new ways, especially if acquiring democratic values in liberal host-lands. Volkan’s concept of “chosen trauma” also belongs to this cluster of mechanisms. It refers to a conscious choice to share “mental representation of a massive trauma that group ancestors suffered at the hand of the enemy” (2001:79) As Nikolko demonstrates in this special issue, the initial narrative about the Holodomor became a “chosen trauma” over time in large parts of the Ukrainian diaspora, and was perpetuated during the Cold War and even in its aftermath (2018). Similar arguments could be made about the Holocaust as a chosen trauma in the Jewish diaspora, the 1915 Armenian genocide in the Armenian diaspora, the Nakbah in the Palestinian diaspora (Koinova 2017), the Srebrenica genocide in the Bosnian diaspora (Karabegovic 2014), and specific traumatic events associated even with “forgotten genocides” (Koinova 2019). Such “chosen traumas” are visible in the diaspora not only in narratives but also in commemorations that take place on specific days, playing an additional function to unify the diaspora. Symbolic mechanisms are also important for apologies and symbolic reparations yet are minimally registered in the diaspora. This is because states rather than non-state

actors are usually associated with such practices. Symbolic politics nevertheless occur, sometimes from unexpected actors, such as from Kurdish activists who apologized to Armenians about the devastating Kurdish role during the genocide (Koinova 2019).

### *Strategic Mechanisms*

At the core of strategic mechanisms is a rationale considering that symbolic, material and organizational resources are consciously deployed to meet specific goals. Not every attempt at transitional justice is strategic. Mobilizations could take place through “conscious and unconscious and spontaneous acts” (Bigo 2011:228) or in “partially rationalized, partially sub-conscious ways” (Koinova 2018:11). For example, one could strategically frame “contact” as desirable to foster tolerance and eventual reconciliation, as suggested here by Psaltis et al. (2019), but contact itself is a cognitive mechanism with some emotional implications. It is not surprising that we encounter several of these mechanisms in this special issue. *Framing* of claims to influence actors external to a movement, discussed also earlier, is engaged by most of the papers. Yet their major focus is elsewhere, on shedding light on coordinated efforts between diasporas, homeland, and host-land populations, to address grievances and engage with transitional justice concerning the original homeland. Mechanisms such as “coordination” (Karabegovic 2019), “vertical and horizontal coordination” (Stokke and Wiebelhaus-Brahm 2019), and “coalition-building” (Koinova 2019) provide novel theorizing about strategically linking diasporas with other actors in distant locations.

Karabegovic focuses on the mechanism of “coordination” between diasporas and actors in several locations in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina. She emphasizes

that the agency of diasporas and homeland actors is not the same regarding these places. Commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide is an important political issue for Bosnia-Herzegovina as a state, hence some government authorities are more active in engaging the diaspora in such commemorations. Translocal rather than state-bound relationships between the diaspora and specific places in Bosnia-Herzegovina bring more diaspora agency. These include collective remembrance of a Peace March, and commemoration of concentration camp and displacement experiences specifically regarding Prijedor. Diasporas are eager to travel and participate in such initiatives at specific days associated with local places. Consistent with our claim that a causal mechanism could be deployed in different contexts to different ends, this article shows how coordination with the diaspora is associated with reiteration of a narrative of suffering in the case of Srebrenica, relative isolation of diaspora actors regarding the Peace March, and some variation of the above in the Prijedor context (2019).

Two articles consider the mobilization of the Syrian diaspora to address human rights violations and seek justice, bringing different angles to cooperation. Focused on the impact of digital communication technologies on diaspora mobilization, Tenove considers the mechanisms of “*crowdsourcing*” of information and resources, and “*control*” as *digital repression*, alongside *connective action*, the latter discussed shortly as a network-based mechanism. Crowdsourcing enables diasporas to gather and share information and participate in online investigations that seek to accumulate and verify evidence of mass violence in the original homelands. Crowdsourcing is a deliberate strategy to garner funds and effort from a variety of global sources to support a particular cause, addressing justice claims as in Syria. Crowdsourcing also has secondary implications on networking by linking different types of actors in shared projects and framing the ways in which activists focus on the

human rights violations more than understanding the conflict dynamics through political or religious interpretations. In the age of global surveillance, digital communication technologies could become instrumental to control and silence diasporas, in the severe coercive form of “digital repression,” a phenomenon Moss (2016) called digitally enabled “transnational repression,” featuring clearly in Tenove’s contribution (2019).

In the article by Stokke and Wiebelhaus-Brahm, the mechanisms of “vertical” vs. “horizontal” coordination are at play. Vertical coordination entails building relationships between the diaspora and policy makers in host-lands and international organizations, while horizontal coordination concerns relationships with other actors on the level of civil society. The authors focus on the lack of cooperation between diaspora groups, which built “vertical” relationships with policy makers. While such vertical coordination is not the only mechanism that prevents different Syrian diaspora groups from cooperating each other, despite their common interests, it is one part of a chain, including the networks-based mechanism of patronage, discussed shortly. These mechanisms jointly account for the fragmented Syrian diaspora engagement to pursue claims against human rights violations and demand justice (2019).

Koinova’s article is focused on the causal mechanism of “coalition-building,” where diaspora actors of a similar political standing in civil society seek relationships among each other. Coalition-building is a more intense version of cooperation, when actors use interest-based strategies, brought together to joint actions through organizational involvement. While cooperation is a broader term and could take place through a variety of practices, coalition-building entails pulling together of symbolic, material and organizational resources to change the behavior of a common political

target. Analyzing interactions between Armenian, Assyrian and Kurdish diasporas to pursue claims for genocide recognition, the article shows that three factors are necessary for durable diaspora coalitions: a common adversary, a host-land context conducive to proliferation of transitional justice claims, and a single contentious issue on which diaspora could focus from abroad. Coalitions between two diaspora groups based on common experiences of victimhood can elicit long-term cooperation and high-level involvement, as among Armenian and Assyrian diasporas. This is in contrast to coalitions based purely on geopolitical or strategic interests, but missing experiences with common victimhood, which show less organizational involvement, such as among Armenian and Kurdish diasporas (2019).

#### *Networks-based Mechanisms*

At the core of network-based mechanisms is the connectivity of actors and their ability to spread information and mobilize these networks. Keck and Sikkink made a clear distinction between social entrepreneurs in networks, based on building specific ties among each other, and networks as structures, considered already constituted entities, mobilized by social entrepreneurs (1998). *Brokerage*, discussed earlier, is a mechanism of connection, where an actor bridges two unconnected networks, endowed with agency themselves. Brokerage is factored as a mechanism in the article of Stokke and Wiebelhaus-Brahm and is focused on the agency of people, while Tenove considers a variation of it, *connective action*, where digital information technologies and electronic platforms perform primary function. *Diffusion*, also discussed earlier, is another mechanism of connectivity, featured in Tenove's account. Information and symbolic communication diffuse through digital platforms in fast, thin, tumultuous, and global ways.

In contrast to emphasizing connectivity, but part of the same theoretical universe, are the causal mechanisms of *boomerang* and *spiral effects*, as well as *patronage*, where networks are considered structures. Koinova offers a critique on the Keck and Sikkink's "boomerang effect" through analysis of diaspora activism for genocide recognition. The usual assumption of the boomerang effect is that human rights activists in a home-state mobilize networks with other states and international and nongovernmental organizations, to pressure their home-state to democratize. This is not how complex diaspora mobilizations take place when connected to a respective home state. In Koinova's account, Armenian civil society activists in Turkey were more instrumental to engage with the Armenian diaspora on issues of genocide recognition than activists in Armenia proper. Armenia has been a home state less concerned with genocide recognition than with amassing remittances from the diaspora for its economic development. Thus, the Armenian diaspora is not the recipient of that boomerang effect, but the major initiator of it in remote locations far from a home-state. There is no straightforward relationship between diaspora, homeland and host-land, but a relationship spread through different global locations (2019).

The paper by Stokke and Wiebelhaus-Brahm is indicative about how the "patronage" causal mechanism played an important role to prevent Syrian diaspora activists from building viable relationships with each other. The vertical relationships Syrian diaspora activists built with some policy makers and international organizations were not as harmless as they looked on the surface. Networks of patronage became solidified in what Keck and Sikkink would see as "structures" and then mobilized, but included only selected actors among them, with specific patron-client relationships established within these networks, preventing linkages across



them (2019).

## **Conclusions**

While this special issue is novel in developing a unique classification of rationales underpinning causal mechanisms involved in the relationship between diasporas and transitional justice processes, we need to mention three other contributions as well. The first is to consider causal mechanisms not simply in isolation from each other, even with a dominant rationale in a particular context. In line with George and Bennett's idea (2005) that causal mechanisms are like domino pieces in larger causal chains, several mechanisms could together form a process that explains questions and outcomes. Articles in this collection show not one mechanism at play accounted for each article's central question. Many mechanisms occurred sequentially. Nikolko's piece shows that an emotional mechanism ("trauma-sharing") helped form the first narratives of Holodomor in the Ukrainian diaspora; a symbolic mechanism ("chosen trauma") helped solidify this narrative; and a strategic mechanism ("framing") managed to map the old historical narrative onto the diaspora interpretation of the current crisis in Ukraine. Russia instead of the collapsed Soviet Union now became the "evil power" regarding Crimea. As mentioned earlier, in the works of Stokke and Wiebelhaus-Brahm, and Tenove on the Syrian diaspora multiple strategic and network-based mechanisms are at play. While the large-N survey analysis conducted by Psaltis et al. could isolate "contact" and "perceptions" of transitional justice as important cognitive mechanisms to account for potential interest in cohabitation among local populations, diasporas and settlers in Cyprus, it is almost inevitable to discern other mechanisms, such as framing and learning/socialization, that have formed the captured attitudes. The articles by Quinn, Karabegovic, and Koinova show

that even if one central mechanism is at the focus of analysis, other mechanisms – most notably framing – may play an additional role.

This special issue also makes a second contribution by asking the analyst not simply to extrapolate findings about local actors onto long-distance diasporas. While negative emotions such as fear and resentment were found to be associated with desire for transitional justice among local actors, positive emotions such as hope and pride were also operational in the diaspora. Removed from daily concerns of the homeland, diasporas might respond with different emotions, symbolic actions, and strategies to the same transitional justice processes, compared to local actors. Also, diasporas' socio-spatial linkages to different places could account for how actively they might get involved. Karabegovic shows that diasporas might be more active translocally with memorializations in places from which they originate, expecting original homelands to engage them, when state-wide interests are at stake. Moreover, some cooperative relationships between diasporas and others sympathetic to their cause could be formed only in the diaspora. Koinova shows that durable coalitions between Armenians and Assyrians could emerge mainly outside the Caucasus and Middle East, and in contexts liberal enough to be conducive to political collaboration among civil society actors.

A third contribution is demonstration with ample empirical evidence that research incorporating diasporas into analysis of transitional justice troubles a binary focus of transitional justice on “internal” domestic pressure and “international” dimension stemming from activities of global institutions. We bring the analysis closer to understanding that transitional justice processes need to be analyzed “beyond statist paradigms” and consider diaspora positionalities in the interstitial spaces between homeland, host-land and other global locations (Koinova 2018).

We conclude on a note with which our discussion started: causal mechanisms linking diasporas to transitional justice processes could not be clearly associated with specific outcomes of these processes but need to be analyzed in interaction with specific contexts in which they operate. Therefore, we advocate for more data-intensive studies in the future to elucidate such dynamics.

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<sup>i</sup> Koinova, interview in Zurich, Switzerland, November 2017.

<sup>ii</sup> Fear, anger, resentment, hope and pride are emotions. Trauma sharing is an activity of communicating an emotional and mental state.

<sup>iii</sup> Koinova interview, 18 June, 2013, Kosovo, Pristina.