

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of March, Saint Patrick's Day, since the 1950s, a custom has become established in the United States (1) - the Irish Prime Minister, the Taoiseach, offers a bouquet of shamrocks to the American president, symbol of the Republic of Ireland (Eire). These flowers recall the privileged relations that the Irish have forged with a country that hosts a diaspora of at least 30 million inhabitants, six times the population of the Republic of Ireland. The Irish claim 23 American presidents with ancestors on their island, the most well-known being John Fitzgerald Kennedy. This special link has allowed Ireland to take maximum advantage of the transatlantic relationship, becoming a location for American tech and pharmaceutical giants that generate 20% of jobs and 70% of tax revenues (profits on companies). Many Hollywood actors and directors also have Irish origins, such as John Ford who described in 'The Quiet Man' (2) the shift felt by his hero (John Wayne), a boxer traumatized by a fight (where he killed his opponent) when he decides to start a new life on the land of his ancestors. He is not welcome and has to deal with Irish traditions where social pressure is at its highest. The representations of the land of his ancestors are sometimes idealized and different from the real country.

According to researcher Judith T. Shival, the notion of diaspora is “a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, meaningful narratives, group identity, longings, dreams, allegorical and virtual elements, all of which play a role in establishing a diaspora reality”(3). She adds that “At a given moment in time, the sense of connection to a homeland must be strong enough to resist forgetting, assimilating or distance”. She recalls that originally, the term diaspora comes from the Greek 'speiro', 'seer', and the prefix 'dia', “through”. For the Greeks, the term meant migration and colonization. In Hebrew, the word was given to the Babylonian exile of the Jews from Palestine, a forced settlement far from the homeland of their ancestors. In the 21st century, the notion is no longer that of Jewish, Greek or Armenian communities. It is more widely attributed to political processes combining involuntary and voluntary migration, in the era of global communications and transportation accessible to as many people as possible. The motivations are very different if we consider refugees, expatriates, guest workers, immigrants, deportees, or even persecuted ethnic and cultural minorities...

Judith T. Shival gives the example of the Russian diaspora composed of 25 million people (figures estimated at between 20 and 30 million in 2026), which exploded after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. The "White Russians" (4) who opposed the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 had formed a first contingent (estimated at between 1.5 and 2 million people). The Palestinians, mentioned by Judith T. Shival, are an emblematic example of diaspora after their departure in 1948 from the new State of Israel whose existence they contested (800,000 people forced into exile). The Black diaspora is a third important example mentioned by the researcher. It is composed of the descendants of Africans (men and women) enslaved during the slave trade that led to forced exile, in appalling conditions. The Atlantic slave trade began in the 15th century with the development of the Portuguese and Spanish empires in the New World. Between the mid-15th century and the end of the 19th century, it is estimated that more than 12 and a half million captives were deported from Africa to the Americas and the Atlantic islands. More than one and a half million people perished during the crossing (5).

For the researcher Martine Hovanessian (6), the term diaspora remains polysemous. She associates this social construction with "a new category of otherness". Some groups claim a

«diasporic status»; others do not. Why choose the term «expatriate community» rather than diaspora? She evokes a new approach of the diasporas which "are linked to new configurations of contemporary migratory reality and to a change in scale of the migratory space". She quotes G. Simon (1995) and his "notions of international migration field, globalization of flows, spatial functioning of the global migration system by insisting on the existence of a true organization of the global migration space". From a "spatial perspective, diasporas are perceived in the game of 'architecture of complex migratory spaces' where 'the simplest form', that of the 'migratory couple uniting the country of departure and the country of arrival' is supplanted «by the interweaving of several migratory fields, relay spaces, and especially by the formation of networks of relations and channels overlapping with the bipolar migratory field». She quotes C. Quiminal (1995) who highlighted from a study of African migration in France, the notion of "migratory space", which plays on two spaces, "both on the country of origin and on the country of residence."

In a Tribune published between the two rounds of municipal elections in France (March 2026), a group of intellectuals and artists expresses their concern about the climate of suspicion towards the descendants of immigrants (7). The signatories recall that 'the French of branch' were watered with the same sap as the 'native French'. The term 'diaspora' is not trivial. It is closely linked to the Jewish, Armenian and Lebanese populations. It defines peoples "dispersed, driven from their country, who maintain among themselves emotional, cultural, economic or political ties beyond borders". We observed a return of some French people from diversity in the country of their ancestors. The reasons were either political in the face of the rise of xenophobic speeches held by extremist parties, or economic with a tense job market (in France) encouraging them to open new opportunities. They valued their dual culture, an undeniably added value. It is not a massive phenomenon but a trend. It is explained by individual paths that remain in the minority. The Franco-Algerian gymnast Kaylia Nemour competed in the 2024 Olympic Games under the banner of Algeria, because her talent had not been recognized in France. She opened a new track, a bet that turned out to be winning. The authors of the Tribune cite the sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad who warns about the risk of instrumentalization of the notion of diaspora by naming thus "of the children and grandchildren of immigration, they are symbolically kept in a status of eternal passengers, as if their presence in France was still, fifty years later, nothing more than a technical stopover."

European countries, with a tradition of emigration - southern countries (Italy, Greece) or central and eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, ...) have significant diasporas in the United States. They are above all Americans, and their achievements have enriched American history. The children and grandchildren of African or Maghreb families have experienced the same fate. The success of Zinedine Zidane (footballer and coach), Omar Sy (actor and producer), Leïla Slimani (writer and journalist) or Najat Vallaud-Belkacem (several times minister) is that of French persons with multicultural family heritages that have enriched France. They are «role models» for all young people. United in diversity.

Dr Benedicte Halba, president of iriv ([www.iriv.net](http://www.iriv.net)) author of a weblog on migration - <https://actions-migration.blogspot.com/> 6 April 2026- article published by the association Salam (in its monthly Newsletter)

- (1) Cécile Ducourtieux « Quand l'Irlande fait une leçon d'Europe à Donald Trum », Le Monde, 31 mars 2026
- (2) John Ford "The quiet man", USA, 1952
- (3) Judith T. Shuval , Researcher at the University of Jérusalem, article « Diaspora Migration : Definitional Ambiguities and a Theoretical Paradigm », 2000, IOM, International Migration Vpl 38 (5) 2000 ISSN 0020-7985, ISSN 0020- 7985
- (4) Article published by the Figaro Vox-  
<https://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/societe/2017/11/06/31003-20171106ARTFIG00334-revolution-bolchevique-la-douloureuse-memoire-des-russes-blancs.php>
- (5) Mémorial of slave trade in Nantes (France)- <https://memorial.nantes.fr/la-traite-atlantique-et-l-esclavage-colonial/> téléchargé le 6 avril 2025
- (6) Martine Hovanessian, « La notion de diaspora », Journal des anthropologues : <http://journals.openedition.org/jda/2696> ; DOI : 10.4000/jda.2696 Association française des anthropologues, 2015
- (7) Tribune published by a team of intellectuals and artists, 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2026-  
[https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2026/03/17/nommer-diaspora-des-enfants-et-petits-enfants-de-l-immigration-revient-a-les-maintenir-dans-un-statut-d-eternels-passagers\\_6671710\\_3232.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2026/03/17/nommer-diaspora-des-enfants-et-petits-enfants-de-l-immigration-revient-a-les-maintenir-dans-un-statut-d-eternels-passagers_6671710_3232.html)