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Diaspora Engagement Seminars

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Voice After Exit: Diaspora Advocacy

Diaspora Engagement Seminar #7

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Voice After Exit

Kathleen Newland

Director,

Migration Policy Institute (MPI)

Voice After Exit

- Representation and legitimacy
- Targets
- Goals and issues
- Means
- Effectiveness

Who are these guys?

- Who represents whom?
- Some means can never be justified no matter what the ends (violence directed against civilians, terrorism, hate speech)
- Divided loyalties: is this a problem?

Who is the “target” of advocacy?

- “Outward” advocacy → authorities in countries of origin or ancestry
- “Inward” advocacy → actors in country of settlement
- International advocacy → United Nations and other multilateral institutions, regional institutions, international media, criminal courts, international public opinion

Goals and Issues

- Status: overseas voting rights and dual nationality
- Caste, ethnic and religious rights
- Development funding and disaster relief
- Commerce, free trade
- Foreign policy support in country of origin
- Democratization

Means of advocacy

- Lobbying
- Electoral politics in country of settlement
- Electoral politics in country of origin
- Lawsuits
- Fundraising
- Alliance-building
- Mobilization through social media
- Image-making: media, arts and culture
- Demonstrations
- Support for armed revolt

Effectiveness

- Size and concentration
- Commitment
- Unity of purpose
- Organization
- Resources
- Political context



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Diaspora Advocacy: Why should we care, and How to respond?

Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff

Professor, Public Admin & Intl Affairs

Director, GW Diaspora Research Program

George Washington University

Diasporas and Politics

- Ingenuity in pursuing political and socio-economic objectives
- Potential agents *and* instruments



Who are diasporans and why should we care?

First and foremost, they are

US residents

US citizens

They are also

- Stakeholders with their own interests and agendas
- Potential assets and partners for USG work

Diasporas as Interest Groups

- More ethnic than the ethnic
- Nationalist movements, e.g., Hindutva movement
- Reconstituting legitimacy for governments and constitutional processes, e.g., Liberia, Afghanistan

Hybridity

- Varying degrees and combinations of homeland and US culture. Diasporans are always influenced by both
- Diasporans can both “humanize” and “Americanize” U.S. foreign policy” (Shain 1999)
- NOT A ZERO SUM: if anything homeland engagement can make diasporans *more* American

Political Influence

- One of the largest contributions diasporas make to insurgencies is through diplomatic pressures
- Partisan interests may be at play under the guise of inclusive and democratic platforms (e.g., Rwanda)
- May also enhance quality of life in the homeland
 - US foreign assistance
 - Human rights accountability
- Peace building (e.g., Sudan)

What's in it for US policymakers?

- Reach into remote regions and territories
- Potential interlocutors between US policymakers and homeland populations (and possibly policymakers)
- Information and expertise
- Coordination

Possible Engagement

- Including diaspora associations in:
 - needs assessments, and
 - priority setting
- Purpose: Information *Exchange* +
 - recruit expertise and solicit information
 - share information about priorities and programming (exchange, coordinate)
 - utilize diaspora organizations as intermediaries to identify needs and priorities

How?

It's a process...

- Game theory: only with experience can we know who to trust
 - Avoid early winner take all commitments
- “Walk with me”

Djimé Adoum



Blogger and Mobilizer

- Famous within the diaspora
- Read and discussed in Chad

The Diasporan delegate

- Multistakeholder meeting
- “Walk with us”





THANK YOU

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American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute

Nadia Roumani

Co-Founder and Director,

American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute (AMCLI)

AMCLI

- Personal History
- CCFR study on American Muslims' influence on domestic and foreign policy
- 2006 Launch of American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute at University of Southern California
 - www.usc.edu/amcli

Muslims in America

- Approximately 5-7 million Muslims in the U.S.
- From over 80 countries + indigenous Muslims
- Cities with large Muslim communities
 - Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Detroit, Houston, Minneapolis, etc
- Priority issue areas for Muslim communities in U.S.

Effective Advocacy

- Framing the Issue
- Assessing Community's Needs
- Developing Professional Organizations
- Outlining a Deliberate Strategy/Campaign
- Connecting the National and Local
- Building Partnerships and Strategic Alliances
- Sustaining the Organizations

Building the Capacity of American Muslims to Advocate More Effectively

- Strengthen existing organizations and support development of new organizations
- Develop universal and moral messages that resonate with American values
- Educate on civic and political engagement
- Develop American Muslims' policy expertise
- Improve intra-Muslim conversations
- Build strategic alliances and participate in targeted coalitions
- AMCLI developed in direct response to these needs



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Amendment I to the U.S. Constitution:

“Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for redress of grievances.”

A. Philip Randolph:

“At the banquet table of nature, there are no reserved seats. You get what you can take, and you keep what you can hold.

If you can't take anything, you won't get anything, and if you can't hold anything, you won't keep anything. And you can't take anything without organization.”

Three Vital Ingredients for Civic Activism:

- 1) A constituency that cares:
 - A powerful devotion to its cause
 - Ownership of its issues (no outsourcing)

- 2) A community that understands:
 - The knowledge to take the right steps
 - The ability to learn & grow through experience and example

- 3) A civic culture that believes:
 - The faith that actions deliver results
 - Bottom-up demands for results, not just top-down appeals for help

Keys to Successful Advocacy:

- 1) Strong civic culture
- 2) Effective organization
- 3) Unity on consensus issues & main challenges
- 4) Compelling “asks”
 - U.S. Interests
 - American Values
 - Political Ambitions

Stages in the Evolution of Ethnic Activism:

- 1) Politics of Pity
- 2) Politics of Partisanship
- 3) Politics of Protest
- 4) Politics of Pressure
- 5) Politics of Participation



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THANK YOU!

Please visit <http://microlinks.kdid.org/events> for seminar presentations and papers

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