Voice After Exit: Diaspora Advocacy

by
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Executive Summary

Diasporas seeking to champion causes for their countries of origin are no longer hindered by distance and isolation, as demonstrated by their influence with government, media, private sectors, and other prominent groups in both countries of origin and of settlement. Despite a growing voice, however, advocacy success hinges on smart policy, rooted in unity, commitment, and focus.

This report examines the largely understudied sphere of diaspora advocacy as seen through a wide variety of groups, from humanitarian relief organizations and religious groups to affiliates of political parties and virtual networks. Such advocacy, to a great extent, pushes for issues that affect diaspora members' status in their countries of origin or destination, such as citizenship, migration status, and voting rights; those that affect the homeland, such as human rights, good governance, and political participation; and those that have bilateral implications between countries of origin and settlement, including trade policy, humanitarian relief, and development policy. In general, advocates express identities, acquire influence or resources, present a strong ethnic group consciousness, and work for changes in policies or practices to yield conditions more conducive to development.

Many, but by no means all, diaspora groups and individuals engage in advocacy, which varies widely across targets and issues. And, as with all types of advocacy, each organization has its own constituencies and agendas. This report describes the methods that diasporas can employ (including outreach with international organizations, mass media, and potential allies) to influence governments in their countries of origin and settlement. Direct lobbying, use of traditional and new media campaigns, fundraising, lawsuits, demonstrations, electronic communication, and political participation prove successful when coupled with strategic implementation.

The report concludes that effective advocates must command the right resources and have in place a method to deploy them for maximum impact. Money and fundraising prowess are important resources, but alliances are also invaluable, as are robust connections with influential people. At the same time, the ability of a diaspora to influence policy, and the scope and form such advocacy take, also depend on the "target" country's political system.

If successful, diaspora advocates gain further influence and strength as governments and organizations in turn court their support.

I. Introduction

In Albert Hirschman's classic book on social choice, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, Hirschman describes three choices that "consumers" (whether of products or political systems) have when they are discontented: change to another "product," voice their discontent in the hope of stimulating change, or put up with the status quo.[1] Emigrants, in a sense, already exercised the first of these options when they left their countries of origin and settled in another; however, along with their descendants, they show a commitment to continuing "voice" when they engage in advocacy on issues concerning their country of origin or ancestry.

Diaspora communities, organizations, and individuals are increasingly vocal and influential in their countries of origin and of settlement. While government is their primary target, they also seek to influence international organizations, the media, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other actors.

Diaspora advocacy has become at once more immediate and more abundant in the era of electronic communications, as the ease of organizing diaspora members across distances and national boundaries has removed old constraints. Web sites, discussion groups, and social networks of diaspora members have proliferated, resulting in a multiplication of the organizational potential of groups and even individuals.[2]

Of the roles that diasporas play in development, advocacy is among the least studied. This study surveys a range of cases to identify forms of diaspora advocacy, the primary concerns targeted, and the means through which diasporas advance their causes. It gives an overview of diaspora advocacy by presenting examples that, taken together, address five questions:

- Who participates in diaspora advocacy and diplomacy?
- Who or what are the "targets" of their efforts?
- What means do they use to advance their causes?
- What are the issues on which they focus?
- How effective are they?

Diaspora engagement in countries of origin is so varied as to defy generalization. The analysis that follows identifies patterns of advocacy and illustrates them with examples relating to each question. While it is by no means comprehensive, the study attempts to provide a framework for thinking about the topic. The examples presented below suggest some answers to our opening questions.

[1] Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970).
[2] Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, *Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009).

II. Who Participates in Diaspora Advocacy?

Diaspora advocates are members of diaspora communities with grievances, ambitions, and/or agendas that they promote by enlisting the support of other actors. Although diasporas are communities that maintain active links to their communities of origin, not all members of these communities engage in advocacy on behalf of their countries of origin. Moreover, some immigrants and their descendants choose complete assimilation in their countries of settlement and abandon all ties with their countries of origin. (This does not necessarily prevent people in destination countries from identifying them as members of a diaspora and imputing to them an agenda that, in fact, does not interest them.) Active membership in a diaspora is a matter of individual choice, although social pressure surely plays a role in that choice. Engagement in advocacy is a further choice.

Diaspora organizations are enormously diverse. Advocates are drawn from ethnic affinity groups, associations of migrants originating from the same locality, alumni associations, religious organizations, professional associations, charitable organizations, development NGOs, investment groups, affiliates of political parties, protest movements, humanitarian relief organizations, schools and clubs for the preservation of culture, virtual networks, and federations of associations.

A. Representation and Legitimacy

Emigrants and their descendants who choose to engage in advocacy and diplomacy face issues of representation and legitimacy as soon as they claim to represent a broader public interest. Who is entitled to speak for whom? One of the first questions decisionmakers must ask when confronted with diaspora advocates is, "Who are these people and whom do they represent?"

Many diasporas are fragmented and fractious; competing factions advocate for competing agendas. Some diaspora groups and individuals make no claims to represent anyone but themselves, advocating on the strength of their ideas, the justice of their cause, or their access to resources. But many others advocate on the basis of particular political, religious, ethnic, territorial, or historical agendas. A priority of many diaspora organizations, therefore, is to gain recognition from the "targets" of their advocacy — whether these are the governments of origin or destination countries, the public in these countries, donors, mass media, or others.

The targets of diaspora advocacy, especially public authorities, also have an interest in the legitimacy of their diaspora partners. If the diaspora organizations they work with are not recognized as genuinely representative in the source community, public authorities may be charged with naïveté, cynicism, or playing favorites.

The government of Mexico is one that has tried to address the question "Who speaks for the diaspora?" by sponsoring the Consultative Council of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (CCIME), composed primarily of *elected* leaders from diaspora communities.[3] The council

[3] Institute for Mexicans Abroad / Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (IME), "Consejo Consultivo," www.ime.gob.mx/.

makes recommendations to the government about its policies toward the diaspora and helps set the agenda of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME), a branch of the Foreign Ministry. The council freely criticizes and disagrees with government positions when it feels called upon to do so, which — paradoxically perhaps — bolsters the confidence of both parties that disagreement does not mean alienation. The fact that most of IME's members are elected (although the election procedure is far from perfect) goes some way toward protecting the government of Mexico from charges that its diaspora policy is arbitrary or purely self-serving.[4]

Competing claims to representativeness and legitimacy are most stark in situations of civil conflict, as in Sudan, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and many other countries. Emigrants often replay the conflicts of their homelands in diaspora and try to enlist the governments and civil society institutions of the settlement country in their cause. Diaspora groups whose origin is in a refugee flow often remain bitterly hostile to the government of their country of origin, even after a degree of reconciliation has been achieved in that country. In the case of Armenia, discussed below, diaspora objections have slowed reconciliation with Turkey at a time when both official and popular opinion in Armenia has seemed to favor it.

Decades of war, repression, and dysfunctional institutions leave many societies with a legacy of mistrust that makes cooperation among diaspora groups difficult to achieve. For example, the Haitian diaspora in the United States has been deeply divided and has achieved little in terms of increasing attention to Haiti's needs, in the United States or internationally — although the 2010 earthquake seems to have instilled a greater sense of unity, at least temporarily. The Tibetan diaspora, by contrast, has generated enormous support for Tibetan human rights, cultural survival, and political autonomy worldwide. With the Dalai Lama at the helm, the Tibetans' espoused causes enjoy almost universal recognition and legitimacy within the diaspora and among its supporters.

B. *Motives for Engaging in Advocacy*

Referring in particular to advocacy pertaining to conflict in home countries, Jennifer Brinkerhoff of George Washington University and Robin Cohen of Oxford University have separately identified a number of motivations that lead members of diasporas to take action: to express their identities, to acquire power or resources, to assuage feelings of guilt as they seek to reconcile their preferences for the adopted country with their allegiance to a suffering homeland, to maintain a collective memory/myth about the homeland, to express a strong ethnic group consciousness, and to keep alive the expectation of a future return.[5] Diasporas also advocate for changes in policies or practices in order to bring about conditions more conducive to development.

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[4] There have been rifts within Mexican diaspora groups based on one group's feeling that another was too close to the government or the majority political party — which were virtually one and the same in the days of the Institutional Party of the Revolution's (PRI) 70-year monopoly on power. See Heather Williams, "From Visibility to Voice: The Emerging Power of Migrants in Mexican Politics," Global Migration and Transnational Politics (Working Paper no. 4, George Mason Univ. Center for Global Studies, March 2008).
[5] Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, "Digital Diasporas and Conflict Prevention: The Case of Somalinet.com," *Review of International Studies*, 32 (January 2006): 25–47.
Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1997).

Diasporas that have a strong sense of injustice or existential threat are highly motivated to advocate for their homelands. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), along with other Jewish organizations, has been famously effective in lobbying the US Congress to "ensure that Israel remains strong militarily and economically, and endures as a national homeland for Jews."[6] Advocacy on the part of the Armenian diaspora is stimulated by the memory of mass killings in Turkey at the end of the Ottoman Empire and the desire to have them recognized as genocide. Greek Americans — many only a generation or two away from the forced relocation of their ancestors from what is now Turkey — formed more than 20 new lobbying organizations after Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974. Their chief purpose was to advocate for a ban on US military assistance to Turkey. The Greek diaspora in the United States had not been very politically active before the invasion and in fact was divided in attitudes toward the then-ruling military junta in Greece. But Turkish aggression in Cyprus (even though it was provoked by an attempted coup in Cyprus instigated by the Greek junta) and the displacement of more than 200,000 Greek Cypriots by the Turks' division of the island brought unprecedented unity and activism to the diaspora.[7]

That same sense of injustice motivates many diaspora groups to advocate *against* their countries of origin. Tibetan and Uighur advocates of greater autonomy for their regions have very little scope to press their demands inside China, but externally they are active in calling for condemnation of human rights abuses visited upon these national minorities.

More positive motives for diaspora advocacy center on efforts to strengthen bilateral relations between the countries of origin and settlement, generally or in one particular area such as trade relations. Diaspora groups in the United States have spoken out both for and against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Central American Free Trade Agreement, and other bilateral trade agreements.

III. Who or What Are the Primary Targets of Diaspora Advocacy and Diplomacy?

Diasporas direct their advocacy efforts primarily at the governments of origin and settlement countries, but they also engage with international organizations, mass media, businesses, and other potential allies such as labor unions, churches, and NGOs. In turn, diasporas gain strength when governments and other organizations court their support.

Mexican emigrants and their descendants in the United States, for example, have lobbied both the US and Mexican governments for an extension of their political rights. In the United States, they have called for immigration legislation that would create a path to legal status for unauthorized immigrants, among other provisions. They have lobbied the executive branch and members of the legislature in Mexico to extend voting rights and dual citizenship to Mexicans abroad.

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[6] Morris S. Solomon, "The Agenda and Political Techniques of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)" (Washington, DC: The Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1993).
[7] "New Lobby in Town: The Greeks," *Time Magazine*, July 14, 1975.

Homeland governments are the most common objects of diaspora advocacy among first-generation migrants. As immigrants and their descendants become more thoroughly integrated into their countries of settlement, they are more likely to include destination-country governments in their advocacy sights.

Higher levels of understanding of how the political system works in settlement countries also lead advocates to reach out to other nodes of influence on decisionmakers, broadening the reach and power of their advocacy. For example, Mexican farm workers in the United States formed coalitions with US labor unions (e.g. the United Farm Workers), with churches in rural American communities, and with NGOs to draw attention to and address frequent violations of farm workers' labor and human rights in both Mexico and the United States.[8]

The Importance of the Political Framework

Both a diaspora's ability to influence policy and the scope and form such advocacy take depend heavily on the political system of the "target" country. In authoritarian political systems, influence is most likely to be exerted successfully through personal contacts, economic pressure, or external intervention. In representative systems, diasporas can take part directly (in the countries where they are citizens) or indirectly in the electoral process. In parliamentary systems, where elected representatives are subject to party discipline, politicians may be less responsive to direct contact with diaspora advocates — although in systems with proportional representation, small groups of diaspora citizens may have outsize influence on smaller parties in coalition governments. Federal systems often give greater voice to diaspora groups in electoral districts where diasporas are concentrated than to those in areas with smaller concentrations. The United States, with its long-established system of interest-group pluralism, gives ample scope for diaspora groups, even if small in number, to exert influence on elected representatives.

As the case of China illustrates, opposition to an authoritarian or semi-authoritarian government may come to be centered in diaspora communities because opposition from within the country may invite harsh reprisals. The government may also effectively control the media at home, so that diaspora communities become the only effective platform for advocacy. Often the actions and demands of the diaspora are relayed back to the country of origin through foreign news media or through Web-based communications. In such settings, the diaspora may target its advocacy indirectly, through external actors such as international news and social media, human rights organizations, or corporations that do business in the country of origin. The anti-apartheid movement, much of it operating from exile, had great success in building alliances with businesses, as well as international sporting federations (most of which excluded South Africa from international competition), the entertainment industry, university students, human rights groups, churches, and the media, as well as the governments of their countries of destination.

[8] Gaspar Rivero-Salgado, "Mixtec activism in Oaxacalifornia: Transborder Grassroots Strategies," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42, no. 9 (1999): 1439–58.

IV. What Means Do Diasporas Use to Advance Their Causes?

Diasporas employ a variety of means to influence governments in their countries of origin and settlement, international organizations, mass media, and potential allies. Their strategies include direct lobbying, media campaigns, fundraising, demonstrations, electronic communication, and electoral participation. The effectiveness of these efforts is tempered by the strength of personal contacts and transnational social networks, and by the resonance that advocates' goals have within the broader diaspora and key interest groups in their home and/or host countries.

A. Lobbying and Direct Participation in Government

Lobbying — the effort to persuade policymakers to act in a manner favorable to one's interests — is an important method of many of the diaspora advocacy efforts discussed in this study, be they around issues of development, commerce, or conflict. In some cases, organizations develop with a primary goal of appealing to policymakers; in others, lobbying becomes necessary as a way to advance their interests. Working within and across national borders, diaspora groups network with and lobby government agencies and legislatures in their countries of residence and origin, international agencies, and influential nonprofits (e.g. Amnesty International).

Intense lobbying efforts by Indian Americans, both through the US India Business Council and through lobbying firms hired by the Indian government, were instrumental in persuading the US Congress to pass the 2008 Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Agreement, meant to overcome India's energy crisis and place civil nuclear facilities under the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) . (The agreement was controversial because of India's status as a nuclear weapons state that has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which under prior US law barred cooperation with India on nuclear issues or trade in nuclear fuel or equipment.) Indian Americans reached out to the 43-member Congressional Black Caucus and 20-member Hispanic Caucus to expand legislative support for the agreement. The main lobbying group, the US India Political Action Committee (USINPAC),[9] created a strong foundation by reaching out to Indian Americans settled in various regions of the United States, creating a youth committee to perpetuate the new vision of Indian American leadership, and starting a national outreach program to bring together different Indian American viewpoints. USINPAC solicited donations from members directly and through its Web site, who then wrote letters to congressional representatives urging them to support the deal. USINPAC tracked the agreement's progress closely, making campaign contributions to 22 members of the House of Representatives and nine senators in areas with significant Indian American populations and leveraging the support of other congressional delegations.[10] USINPAC also followed the progress of the deal in Congress by tracking which representatives were already in favor of it and which ones needed to be

[9] US India Political Action Committee, "Indian-American Community Welcomes Congressional Passage of the Us India Civil Nuclear Agreement," www.usinpac.com/nuclear_deal/index.html..

[10] Allison Freedman, "USINPAC and the U.S.-India Nuclear Deal: Lasting Influence or One Shot Victory?" CUREJ – College Undergraduate Research Electronic Journal, Univ. of Pennsylvania, College of Arts and Sciences, 2009, http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1119&context=curej.

targeted for further attention. When progress on the deal stalled in India, USINPAC met with senior leaders of the Congress Party, parties on the left, and the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to understand their differing perspectives on the issue.[11]

B. Lawsuits

Vietnamese Americans have greatly influenced US policy toward Vietnam through most of the advocacy techniques discussed in this study. The Vietnamese diaspora was one of the first to use litigation in their campaigning. In March 1994, 250 Vietnamese Americans sued the State Department to force it to review the US immigration applications of Vietnamese boat people held in Hong Kong rather than repatriating them and compelling them to reapply to immigrate. The involvement of Vietnamese Americans has also been instrumental in US pressure, ultimately successful, to persuade the government of Vietnam to release thousands of political prisoners.

C. Fundraising

Diaspora advocates have long used fundraising as a tool for causes in home or host countries. Diasporas raise funds at a range of levels and through a variety of mechanisms. Events are usually organized by diaspora groups rather than by individual diaspora members (in part so that the groups can assert their credibility among their target populations). However, many individual diaspora members donate money to causes and candidates that they believe are worth supporting. Mechanisms to raise funds have diversified in recent decades as online fundraising has gained traction. Common methods of solicitation include contributions at charity events or through auctions and sales, membership dues, online donations in response to email campaigns, and direct person-to-person contributions.

Often, advocating for home-country policies means raising money for political parties. Political parties from many origin countries have created party organizations at the municipal and regional level in migrant communities, including the Mexican Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), the Dominican Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), the Brazilian Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), the Armenian Dashnak Party, and India's BJP. Dominicans in New York have gained considerable political leverage in the Dominican Republic by raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for candidates during election cycles, much of it through $150-a-plate dinners.[12] A single fundraising dinner in Houston, Texas, in 2007, organized by supporters of Ghana's main opposition leader (and former president) Jerry Rawlings and his National Democratic Congress, reportedly raised $700,000 from members of the Ghanaian diaspora located in at least nine major cities across the United States and Canada.[13]

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[11] As of July 2010, the deal had been signed but not implemented and remained a subject of US-India negotiations. "Indo-US nuclear deal moving forward, says SM Krishna" *Daily Times*, June 3, 2010, www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010\06\03\story_3-6-2010_pg7_35.

[12] Adrian D. Pantoja, "Transnational Ties and Immigrant Political Incorporation: The Case of Dominicans in Washington Heights, New York," *International Migration* 43, no. 4 (2005): 123–146.

[13] World Bank, *Concept Note: Mobilizing the African Diaspora for Development* (Washington, DC: Capacity Development Management Action Plan Unit [AFTCD], Operational Quality and Knowledge

After natural disasters and during wars, origin-country governments have set up fundraising accounts and diaspora advocates have collected large sums to contribute to government-run funds. For example, during the Ethiopian-Eritrean war, money for the war effort flowed from the Eritrean diaspora to a national defense bank account advertised on www.dehai.org, a diaspora Web site.[14] Out of political and defense concerns, donor governments considering supporting or working with a diaspora organization should evaluate the role that diaspora funds and fundraising have played in supporting home-country conflicts. Fundraising in the diaspora by the Tamil Tigers, for example, often bordered on extortion, and the Tigers were declared a terrorist organization in the United States and elsewhere.

Diaporas have, even more frequently, raised funds for disaster relief and channeled them through NGOs or religious institutions. In some cases, the government of the country of destination has encouraged diasporas to organize themselves and establish charitable institutions to handle contributions. US President Bill Clinton is said to have approached Indian diaspora leaders in the United States after the Gujarat earthquake in 2001, starting a conversation that led to the creation of the American India Foundation (AIF), a nonprofit organization that works to advance India's social and economic development. Not only does AIF raise funds for projects in India; it also engages in what might be called "demonstration advocacy:" "demonstrating innovations in areas which the government can then adopt and scale up with their far greater resources."[15] Diaspora contributions for relief efforts and development projects often build bonds of trust with the origin-country government that enable the diaspora to be more effective advocates when more contentious issues arise.

D. Electoral Politics and Direct Participation in Government

In addition to fundraising for political candidates, an increasing number of countries allow their citizens abroad to vote in domestic elections. As a result, diaspora communities are increasingly likely to host political candidates from their home countries on the campaign trail. This was the case in July 2010, when Peruvian presidential candidate Keiko Fujimori visited Paterson, New Jersey — home to one of the largest concentration of Peruvians outside of Peru — to court diaspora votes in advance of the April 2011 election. Fujimori promised her audiences that she would push for congressional representation of the diaspora in Peru's congress.[16] Dominican politicians have long courted votes as well as campaign contributions from the Dominican diaspora in New York City.

Services Department, September 7), http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTDIASPORA/General/21686696/conceptnote.pdf.

[14] "Since independence, Eritreans in the wider diaspora have been asked by the government to pay 2 percent of their income to the state, as a 'healing tax'; during the recent conflict with Ethiopia even greater demands were made of the diaspora, and their contributions paid for much of the conflict's costs." Nicholas Van Hear, "Refugee Diasporas, Remittances, Development, and Conflict," *Migration Information Source*, June 2003, www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=125; See also Victoria Bernal, "Eritrea On-line: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and the Public Sphere," *American Ethnologist* 32, no. 4 (2005): 660–75, 671.

[15] American India Foundation, "Why AIF?" on the AIF Web site at www.aifoundation.org/aboutUs/whyAif.htm. consulted October 18, 2010.

[16] Associated Press, "Peruvian Presidential Candidate to Stump in Paterson," July 22, 2010, www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2010/07/peruvian_presidentail_candidat.html. Elizabeth Llorente, "Peruvian

Returning diaspora members in some cases play a large part in home-country politics, shaping domestic agendas with views and ties formed abroad. Returning Somalis are a significant presence in the government of Somaliland, a province of Somalia whose declaration of independence is largely unrecognized but that functions autonomously nonetheless: as of 2009, ten ministers in a cabinet of 29, leaders of two out of three political parties, the head of one of two legislative chambers, and 30 members of the 82-member House of Representatives were returnees.[17] The president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, worked at the World Bank in Washington, DC, for many years and developed close ties with the African American diaspora.

Home-country ministries and agencies are often staffed with returning diaspora members who built experience and networks while working or studying abroad. Many of the technocrats returning to Afghanistan after the removal of the Taliban government were educated in the West or had worked with Western aid agencies and NGOs in Pakistan as refugees. Returning diaspora members may experience resentment among those who never left, as was the experience of many of the Afghans returnees in relation to Islamist and traditional elites. Diaspora experience and support are no substitute for a domestic power base. Without that, diasporas may be seen as agents of a foreign power, lacking legitimacy in the affairs of the country of origin.[18]

These cases illustrate how "domestic" politics are made transnational by diaspora involvement. It should no longer surprise anyone, for example, that "political campaigns in Liberia are shaped by transnational networks that link Monrovia with communities in New Jersey, Providence, and Minneapolis."[19]

E. Making Use of Media for Advocacy: From Postcards to Online Posts

Diasporas use the Internet in general and social networking sites in particular to keep in touch and promote their causes. Using media for diaspora advocacy dates far back before blogs and Facebook posts to tried-and-true methods such as letter-writing campaigns, newspaper op-eds and radio interviews, and demonstrations staged with an eye to the TV camera.

The multifront information-sharing of African Americans seeking the end of the Italo-Ethiopian war (1936–41) remains an example of old-fashioned — but not outdated — media advocacy. The African American press reported regularly on the crisis, examining the

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Candidate Fujimori Courts Votes in North Jersey," *The Bergen Record*, July 22, 2010, www.northjersey.com/news/072210_Peruvian_candidate_Fujimori_pushes_for_congressional_seat_in_North_Jersey_stop.html.

[17] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Somalia's Missing Million: The Somali Diaspora and its Role in Development* (Somalia: UNDP, March 2009), www.so.undp.org/index.php/Somalia-Stories/Forging-Partnerships-with-the-Somali-Diaspora.html.

[18] Jonathan Goodhand and Mark Sedra, "Who Owns the Peace? Aid, Reconstruction, and Peace Building in Afghanistan," *Disasters*, ODI (London), published online in March, 2009.

[19] Terrance Lyons and Peter Mandaville, "Global Migration and Transnational Politics: A Conceptual Framework" (Working paper no. 1, George Mason Univ. Center for Global Studies, Project on Global Migration and Transnational Politics, March 2008), http://cgs.gmu.edu/publications/gmtpwp/gmtp_wp_1.pdf.

conflict from a racial angle and spreading dispatches from the Associated Negro Press in London, Paris, and Geneva. African American scholarly publications provided vital sources of anti-fascist, anti-racist information and news. "It was through these sources that African Americans learned of the critical events surrounding the conflict and informed one another of efforts to support Ethiopia," writes Sharon Gramby-Sobukwe.[20] She adds that the Ethiopian Research Council (ERC), collaborating with a large network of organizations, "published analyses of conditions in Ethiopia, maps, the constitution, and fact sheets on Ethiopian history. This information was sold at churches, lodges, NAACP meetings and rallies, social and study groups, from door-to-door, and on street corners." [21] The efforts to change US policy were unsuccessful, but resource mobilization within African American communities and among African representatives served to provide aid to the sick and wounded as well as food and clothing to refugees.

Diaspora members commonly pressure their host or home-country governments to support or denounce a particular issue by sending letters, collecting signatures, or petitioning members of congress. These efforts range from small-scale to huge. For example, during the Ethiopian-Eritrean war (1998–2000), Eritreans in Somerville, Massachusetts, sent 120 letters to US senators from Massachusetts and Rhode Island on behalf of relatives arrested in Ethiopia, hoping to persuade Congress to put pressure on Ethiopia to cease such actions.[22] At the other end of the spectrum, the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) and the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) cooperated to send 150,000 postcards to then–President Clinton to protest the 1997 visit of Azerbaijan's then–President Gaidar Aliyev. The mass mailing supplemented demonstrations by AAA and ANCA that focused attention on Aliev's human rights record.[23] The Armenian diaspora, widely considered to be one of the most effective ethnic lobbies in Washington, uses media campaigns alongside individual communications to legislators and participation in electoral campaigns.

Similarly, members of diasporas and their political allies often write opinion pieces in major newspapers, blogs, and news-related Web sites to express their opinion as well as advocate for a certain position. Kofi A. Boeteng, a leading advocate for external voting rights for Ghanaians, regularly wrote informational and opinion articles on www.modernghana.com to build support in the diaspora base and among resident Ghanaians.

The Internet has become an important tool for both formal and informal connections among diaspora networks, individuals, and policymakers. It provides a transnational platform for advocates to communicate issues to people living all over world. Organizations such as US Copts Association, a diaspora organization representing native Egyptian Christians, incorporate interactive use of information technology in efforts to advance their political

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[20] Sharon Gramby-Sobukwe, "Africa and U.S. Foreign Policy: Contributions of the Diaspora to Democratic African Leadership," *Journal of Black Studies* 35, no. 6 (2005): 779–801, 789.
[21] Gramby-Sobukwe, "Africa and U.S. Foreign Policy," 779–801, 788.
[22] Victoria Bernal, "Eritrea On-line: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and the Public Sphere," *American Ethnologist* 32, no. 4 (2005): 660–675, 665.
[23] Rachel Anderson Paul, "Grassroots Mobilization and Diaspora Politics: Armenian Interest Groups and the Role of Collective Memory," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 6, no. 1 (2000): 24–47, 31.
Armenian Assembly of America. "Home of the Armenian Assembly of America," www.aaainc.org.
Armenian National Committee of America, "Armenian National Committee of America | Home," www.anca.org.

agendas.[24] More than other advocacy measures such as lobbying or demonstrating, the Internet offers individuals and small, dispersed groups a chance to voice their beliefs through chat rooms, forums, and blogs. Through Web sites, advocates can quickly disseminate information about their work to the general public, governments, and NGOs that might be willing to help them in their cause.

The Internet provides a forum for factions within diasporas to present their arguments, reach out to potential allies, and even engage in direct debate. In the wake of the 2009 coup in Honduras, a number of Web sites cropped up where journalists and researchers shared information not available through major newspapers or CNN with those in the diaspora.[25] Associated blogs and comment streams provided a way to circulate information and document human rights abuses. Diaspora members used the material to call for censure of the "transition" government, including a motion condemning the coup, passed through electronic voting by the American Anthropological Association,[26] even as other diaspora members used the Internet to argue the constitutional basis of the regime change.

One example of a news-based site used by diasporas is www.dehai.org.[27] In order to pay for network resources, the site charges a US$20 yearly membership fee, waived for residents of Africa. During the 1998–2000 border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, dehai.org reached a peak membership of over 2,000 subscribers, dispersed across several countries in Europe and North America.[28] Meanwhile, the Eritrean government used the site to dispense information and raise funds. As with other forms of advocacy, governments of origin or destination may have a strong influence on diaspora-run Internet sites, be it overt as in the case of dehai.org or deliberately obscured.

While online communication is broadly accessible, it is not universally so. Costs of setting up and maintaining Web sites must be borne by someone; a number of the sites visited during research for this study had not been updated in years, or were no longer available because the owners could not pay server costs. There is an inherent bias against economically disadvantaged, rural populations and others without regular, affordable Internet access or sufficient computer skills or literacy. Moreover, Web sites do relatively little to capture the attention of those not already interested in following a particular issue. Often, another medium must be used to draw attention to a topic before people outside a narrow community of interest will visit Internet sites devoted to it. The Internet is companion to, not a substitute for, more traditional advocacy methods.

F. Promoting (and Protesting) Countries of Origin Through Art and Media

Diasporas share the heritage of their countries of origin through art, music, films, literature, photography, cuisine, crafts, and other cultural artifacts. Actively promoting these — and at

[24] Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, "Digital Diasporas and Governance in Semi-Authoritarian States: The Case of the Egyptian Copts," *Public Administration and Development* 25, no. 3 (2005): 193–204, 197.
[25] Honduras Coup 2009, http://hondurascoup2009.blogspot.com.
Vos el Soberano, http://voselsoberano.com.
[26] American Anthropological Association (AAA), "Proposed AAA Statement in Support of Hondurans Resisting Military Dictatorship," http://blog.aaanet.org/2009/12/17/aaa-honduras-resolution-vote-jan-xx.
[27] Eritrean Community Online Network, DEHAI. "Dehai News-Mailing List Archive," http://dehai.org.
[28] Victoria Bernal, "Eritrea On-line: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and the Public Sphere," *American Ethnologist* 32, no. 4 (2005): 660–675, 665.

times using them as tools of protest — is a form of cultural diplomacy or advocacy. Exposure to the culture of a country through its diaspora may serve as a portal through which people in a host country develop a broader interest in the diaspora's homeland — including its political and economic circumstances.

Country-of-origin governments often promote culture as a way of raising the profile and burnishing the reputation of their country. Diaspora members may cooperate in these efforts or pursue them independently. For instance, through GhanaExpo, a US-based Ghanaian family provides a Web-based platform for sharing and discussing news, movies, music, live FM radio, photos, market information, and even audio versions of the Bible and the Quran.[29]

Diaspora groups also use cultural products such as films or exhibits to advocate for social change. For instance, in June 2010, Truth and Reconciliation for the Adoption Community of Korea (TRACK) mounted an exhibition in Seoul that incorporated 90,000 price tags, each representing an adopted child, to protest the commercialization of adoption and discrimination against unwed mothers and children born out of wedlock.[30] TRACK is led by the "adoption diaspora" — Korean-origin adults who were adopted and grew up outside of Korea. Together with adoptive families and unwed mothers in Korea, they advocate for equal access to social benefits for unwed mothers and seek to diminish the harsh social stigma that leads many to abort or give up children for adoption. The exhibit was followed by a BBC radio documentary, "Korea's Lost Children." The movement has had some success: according to TRACK, the government of South Korea is committed to changing domestic law to provide equal income subsidies to unwed mothers.

G. The Power of the Image

Sophisticated diaspora groups have long since learned the power of visual images to create powerful impressions. There are few more effective tools for advancing a cause than to give it a human face. During the Nigerian civil war of 1967–70, arguably the most powerful weapon of the outmanned and outgunned Biafran secessionists was a London-based fax machine that spewed images of starving children and other civilians.[31] In retrospect, some have argued that the enormous international humanitarian response to the needs of the Biafran population was manipulated by Ibo secessionists abroad and the governing forces in Biafra, with the effect of prolonging the war. Diasporas both respond to and use images of suffering to mobilize humanitarian relief within their own communities and to press governments and other organizations in their countries of settlement to respond generously to humanitarian needs.

Diaspora groups also use images to promote a modern and progressive image of their country of origin as a desirable partner in economic and political undertakings. The India of high-tech industry, Bollywood films, and diligent, English-speaking workers is competing

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[29] GhanaExpo, http://ghanaexpo.com..

[30] Truth and Reconciliation for the Adoption Community of Korea (TRACK), "Setting the Record Straight," http://justicespeaking.wordpress.com..

[31] For examples of the photographs that were used at the time, see www.westafricareview.com/vol2.2/biafra/bpic.htm.

with and perhaps slowly replacing the ancient images of bullock carts and ragged children, not least through the efforts of the Indian diaspora.

H. Demonstrations

When the quieter means of advocacy prove insufficient, diaspora advocates turn to protest. Following the 1999 capture of Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan, Kurds participated in organized mass demonstrations in dozens of localities, particularly in Western Europe, bringing Kurdish issues to worldwide attention and generating pressure on Turkey to improve its treatment of its Kurdish population. In spring 2006, tens of thousands of Latino immigrants and citizens of Latino descent demonstrated in cities across the United States in favor of comprehensive immigration reform. Persistent demonstrations against the apartheid regime in South Africa helped to turn governments away from "constructive engagement" policies with the regime and increase the pressure for political change.

V. What Are the Main Focuses of Diaspora Advocacy?

The issues that diaspora advocates take up cover a wide range, but can be roughly divided among issues that (1) affect the status of the members of the diaspora in their countries of origin or destination, (2) affect the homeland, and (3) have bilateral implications between the countries of origin and settlement. Citizenship, migration status, and voting rights are some of the prominent issues in the first category; human rights, good governance, and political participation are among the most common in the second; and trade policy, humanitarian relief, and development policy fall into the third. Below, we explore examples from each category.

A. Advocating for Overseas Voting Rights and Dual Nationality

One of the most consistent demands that diaspora populations make to their countries of origin is the right to vote and to retain their original citizenship even if they adopt the citizenship of the country in which they have settled. In pursuing these demands, they have had considerable success. About 115 countries allow nonresident citizens to vote, and 11 countries reserve seats in their legislatures for the diaspora. Migrants return home to participate in elections (Israel and Turkey), vote at overseas embassies (Indonesia and Algeria), vote by mail (Spain, Italy, Portugal) or vote via the Internet (France). More and more countries are allowing their expatriates to participate in the electoral process. Some recognize dual citizenship or do not actively seek to strip citizens of their status if they acquire citizenship in another country.

At the same time, nonresident voting rights remain controversial. India refuses to permit nonresidents to vote, although it gives them other privileges. Armenia accepted the idea of nonresident voting and then reversed its decision. The Philippines requires overseas Filipinos who wish to vote to sign a statement that they will be returning to reside in the country within three years. Some argue that diasporas may unduly influence electoral results, whose consequences they do not have to bear, and that their preferences differ from

those of resident citizens. This has indeed been shown to be true, for example, in Croatia and Armenia. In some cases, including Mexico and Iraq, far fewer voters than eligible have turned out for elections, despite intensive campaigns to get out the vote. Diasporas have learned from others' experiences: as Ghanian diaspora members lobbied the Ghana government for the right to vote abroad and for dual citizenship, the Diaspora Vote Committee (DVC) drew on Filipino and Senegalese laws and experience.[32]

Citizens of Ecuador were among the earliest diaspora populations to advocate for nonresident voting rights and dual citizenship, starting with a petition in 1967. It took 28 years and many disappointments before the Ecuadorean legislature finally approved dual nationality, with voting rights for expatriates, in 1995. Emigrants from Colombia achieved success more quickly, as their initial appeal for dual citizenship and voting rights occurred just as constitutional reform was getting under way in Colombia. An amended constitution, approved in 1991, included the desired political rights for Colombians abroad. Not coincidentally, the overseas voting procedures finally agreed to in Ecuador bore a close resemblance to those adopted by Colombia.

Members of the Dominican diaspora, particularly in the United States, have also been advocating for overseas voting since the 1970s. Organized into hometown associations and political clubs, they lobbied members of the Dominican Congress and contributed money to the campaigns of candidates who supported their objectives.[33] The Dominican government set up a commission after the presidential elections of 2000 to study the options for voting by Dominicans abroad, with the goal of making it possible for emigrants to vote in the 2004 presidential election. After a series of discussions and consultations in the country and abroad, the commission set up procedures for voting abroad. Diaspora voter participation in that election was 66.8 percent — very high when compared with the less than 25 percent participation rates of the Iraqi and Mexican diasporas in the United States.[34]

Hungary's far-flung diaspora was quick to ask for voting rights after the end of Communist rule, but encountered marked ambivalence from its new political class. A 2004 referendum on providing dual citizenship to ethnic Hungarians in neighboring countries failed when low turnout invalidated the bare majority in favor. Despite a strong media campaign sponsored by the World Congress of Hungarians and the major center-right political parties, voter apathy and concern about the impact of nonresident voting on economic and political stability in the neighborhood combined to derail the process. A number of countries with minority populations in neighboring countries, or substantial immigration from them, have shown reluctance to adopt dual nationality and, in some cases, nonresident voting.[35] India, for example, accepts dual nationality with a group of high-income countries including the United States and the United Kingdom, but not with its impoverished neighbors. It makes no provision for nonresident voting, however, despite diaspora enthusiasm for it.

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[32] World Bank, *Concept Note: Mobilizing the African Diaspora for Development*, 20.
[33] Adrian D. Pantoja, "Transnational Ties and Immigrant Political Incorporation: The Case of Dominicans in Washington Heights, New York," *International Migration* 43, no. 4 (2005): 123–46, 128.
[34] Michael Jones-Correa, "Under Two Flags: Dual Nationality in Latin America and Its Consequences for Naturalization in the United States," *International Migration Review* 35, no. 4 (2001): 997–1029, 1002–3.
[35] Mayra A. Waterbury, "From Irredentism to Diaspora Politics: States and Transborder Ethnic Groups in Eastern Europe" (Working paper no. 6, George Mason Univ., Global Migration and Transnational Politics, July 2009).

Diaspora members feel that they deserve political representation in part because their remittances are so important to their countries of origin, often keeping the national accounts afloat. Michael Jones-Correa, writing about Latin America, argues that "immigrants have been able to translate their economic muscle into political leverage, winning concessions from political parties and legislatures in their countries of origin, regularizing their status as citizens, allowing dual nationality, ownership of land and easy access when returning, among other things."[36] There remain important exceptions to that generalization in other parts of the world, however — leaving aside those countries of origin where no one votes.

B. Advocating for Caste, Ethnic, and Religious Rights

Many of the diaspora organizations discussed here advocate for fair treatment and representation of their nations or ethnicities. USINPAC[37] has created Indian caucuses in the House of Representatives and Senate, with enough leverage to derail the career of former Virginia governor and senator George Allen for insulting his opponent's Indian American volunteer with the slur *macaca*.[38] Recognizing the potential leverage to be gained from vote-seeking public officials, the Web site of the Pakistani-American Public Affairs Committee (PAKPAC) offers a set of guidelines to obtain the votes of the 7-million-strong American Muslim community.[39]

Some diaspora organizations that advocate against discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, and religion collaborate with human rights organizations to increase their credibility and visibility. For instance, the US-based NGO Nepali-America Society for Oppressed (NASO)[40] Community advocates for the rights of the Dalit community in Nepal, which still faces discrimination. NASO has organized several seminars in the United States to discuss ways to incorporate Dalit rights into Nepal's new constitution.[41]

Religiously based diasporas have formed advocacy organizations to increase awareness of their religion and advocate for their right to worship as they choose. The Baha'i community worldwide has mobilized opinion against the government of Iran, which has branded them apostates and subjected them to persecution. The Falun Gong movement emerged in exile as a major critic of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) after the movement was banned in China in 1999. Its followers criticize the CCP for human rights abuses against Falun Gong practitioners and lobby Western governments to put pressure on China to honor freedom of religion.

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[36] Michael Jones-Correa, "Under Two Flags: Dual Nationality in Latin America and Its Consequences for Naturalization in the United States," 997–1029, 1001.
[37] USINPAC, "US India Political Action Committee | Indian American Community," www.usinpac.com.
[38] A *macaca* is a kind of monkey, and the term was used as a pejorative epithet among French colonialists in the Congo. Allen may have heard it from his mother, who grew up in Tunisia under French colonial rule. Tom Curry, "Gaffe Underscores Indian-American Clout: Sen. Allen's Blunder Puts Focus on Growing Group of Donors and Voters," *MSNBC.com*, August 17, 2006, www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14395449/.
[39] Pakistani American Public Affairs Committee, "For Candidates," www.pakpac.net/Candidate.asp.
[40] "NASO Community," http://nasocommunity.com/default.aspx.
[41] The Advocacy Project, "Nepali-American Society for Oppressed Community (NASO)," www.advocacynet.org/page/naso..

Diaspora groups that have not been involved in advocacy may turn to it out of concern about events in their home country. The aftermath of violent riots targeting Muslim neighborhoods in Gujarat, India, in February and March 2002 (after a Muslim attack on a train carrying Hindu pilgrims) revealed the contribution of diaspora activists to ethnic and religious tensions in the country. Extremist Hindu organizations such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Congress), with strong diaspora support (as well as close ties with the Hindu-influenced Indian government then in office), put all the blame on the initial attack that set off the riots, while other diaspora constituencies such as Gujarati Muslims in the United Kingdom demanded accountability from government officials who looked away from or even encouraged the violence in which the great majority of the victims were Muslims.[42]

C. Advocating for Development and Disaster Relief

As other studies in this series show, diaspora members play numerous roles in home-country development, including through philanthropy, volunteering, and investment. As advocates, they may support development programs and policies by lobbying the governments of their countries of residence and origin, appealing to international institutions, or working to raise awareness among broader populations.

The African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) seeks to expand and enhance the contribution of African diasporas by connecting organizations working for development in Africa from outside the continent with organizations on the continent working toward the same goals.[43] It also advocates in favor of specific development goals and approaches, working with the British Department for International Development (DFID), international development agencies, other donors, and NGOs. Each year, it sponsors a day of interaction among nine UK-based, African-led development organizations and donors. Each annual meeting focuses on a particular theme; the 2004 theme was especially relevant to diaspora advocacy — "transforming the local everywhere" — with a focus on how Africans in the United Kingdom promote change both there and in their regions of origin.[44]

Diasporas can also serve as bridges. Mexico's hometown associations are perhaps best known for their social investment in the 3x1 Program, but their role as mediators makes them worth mentioning as an example of diaspora advocacy. Under the Program for Mexican Communities Abroad, begun in 1990, hometown associations became the principal interlocutors between the Mexican government and Mexican-American civil society.[45] While Mexican hometown associations are the most numerous and well established, the Ghanaian, Salvadoran, Mauritanian, Senegalese, and Malian diasporas all have analogous institutions throughout the world, mostly in North America and Europe. Many of these organizations play a role as interlocutors with their governments, a role that is most effective when

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[42] Ajay Gandhi, "The Indian Diaspora in Global Advocacy," *Global Networks* 2, no. 4 (2002): 357–62, 360.
[43] African Foundation for Development, "AFFORD-UK," http://afford-uk.org.
[44] African Diaspora and Development Day (AD3) 2004, "Theme: 'Transforming the local everywhere: Africa here, there, Africa everywhere'." MyAfrica, May 30, 2004, http://myafrica.ru/addinfo/data.php?id1=189.
[45] Will Somerville, Jamie Durana, and Aaron Matteo Terrazas, *Hometown Associations: An Untapped Resource for Immigrant Integration?* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2008), www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Insight-HTAs-July08.pdf.

individual associations combine into federations that have a wider network of constituents, greater resources, and more impact.

According to a 2008 Migration Policy Institute (MPI) report,[46] Mexican hometown associations have become significant political actors in the United States (the country of destination for 90 percent of Mexican migrants) on controversial immigration issues. At the state and regional levels, as the authors point out, "One of the earliest civic mobilizations of Mexican HTAs [hometown associations] in Southern California was in response to Proposition 187, a hotly contested 1994 referendum that aimed to exclude unauthorized immigrants from access to a wide range of public services including education and health care. More recently, California HTAs have mobilized against California Assembly efforts to limit the use of consular identification cards and in favor of comprehensive immigration reform." Most Mexican hometown associations in the United States multiply their clout by acting through federations composed of HTAs whose members come from the same state in Mexico.

In response to the devastating January 2010 earthquake, Haitian diaspora groups enlarged their focus from directly providing money and services to lobbying governments, international organizations, and corporations for disaster-relief funding, supplies, and eased travel restrictions. Despite sending substantial remittances (more than $1.3 billion in 2008 alone), the fractious Haitian diaspora was once shunned for "abandoning" its homeland — and elements of it were seen to pose a political threat to whatever government was in power. Through sharing human and financial resources and lobbying donor governments, diaspora members and organizations became an invaluable postearthquake conduit for Creole-speaking doctors, nurses, project managers, and advisers, and even reconstruction planners. Some were also able to mobilize funds. The US-based nonprofit National Organization for the Advancement of Haitians (NOAH), for example, secured a $100,000 donation from AT&T in July 2010 for a relief project to ensure a safe, potable supply of water for Haitians in remote areas.[47]

As part of the reconstruction process, members of the diaspora and groups such as the Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress are lobbying for eased travel and greater political and economic participation in Haiti (a campaign already started before the earthquake). Their lobbying succeeded in getting the Organization of American States (OAS) to hold a special meeting of Haitian diaspora groups in March 2010 "to map out plans for reconstruction and to ensure that the Haitian diaspora is included, not only by the government but also by contractors and nongovernmental organizations."[48] The diaspora has a continued role to play in leveraging funds for and carrying out development projects.

D. Advocating for Commerce

In order to improve business climates, facilitate better market access, and generate entrepreneurial opportunities, diaspora members and networks may advocate for

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[46] Ibid.

[47] "AT&T Makes $100,000 Contribution to Haitian Earthquake Relief Effort" *PRNewswire*, July 9, www.noahhaiti.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1..

[48] Shaila Dewan, "Scattered Émigrés Haiti Once Shunned Are Now a Lifeline" *New York Times*¸ February 3, 2010, www.nytimes.com/2010/02/04/us/04diaspora.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all.

international, regional, and local business partnerships and trade agreements. Such "commercial diplomacy" potentially generates economic development within home and host communities. It may also foster economic liberalization and financial literacy in the home country.

NAFTA exemplifies diaspora engagement in "commercial diplomacy." Patricia Hamm argues that Mexican Americans involved in the negotiation of NAFTA were motivated more by business interest and concern for the broader Hispanic American community than altruistic support of the homeland.[49] NAFTA was strongly supported by the Hispanic Alliance for Free Trade. This business-oriented coalition included the Latino Business Association, US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Texas Association of Mexican Chambers of Commerce, the League of United Latin American Citizens, and members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus including US Representatives Eligio "Kika" De La Garza (Texas) and Bill Richardson (New Mexico). More conditional support came from The Latino Consensus on NAFTA, a coalition of civil rights groups, including the National Council of La Raza. They hoped for nonmaterial gains such as greater visibility and recognition of Hispanic Americans, a platform for voicing grievances, and political empowerment on both sides of the border. Community interests led to the allocation of funds through the North American Development Bank for investment in US-Mexico border infrastructure, environmental mitigation, and sustainable development in areas where NAFTA causes job loss.

Box 1. Diaspora Organizations Responding to Changed Needs

The Haitian case shows that the focus of diaspora and diaspora associations can change over time. Expanded mandates attest to diaspora organizations' ability to respond quickly to origin-country needs. Once a "fun-loving social organization" of doctors who came together to invite singers and poets from Pakistan, the Pakistan-American Public Affairs Committee (PAKPAC) grew into a nationwide political lobbying nonprofit to improve US-Pakistan relations and media representation of Pakistanis and Pakistani Americans.[50] Originally formed to support schools and mosques in Bangladesh, provide scholarships for students, and assist in disaster relief, the Bianibazar Association of London and the Baniachang Association of East End in the United Kingdom now provide leadership on voting rights and racial discrimination.[51] The London-based Tamil Solidarity Movement (TSM) is an advocacy group that was founded after the military defeat of the Tamil Tigers in 2009 ended their struggle for an independent Tamil state in Sri Lanka. The TSM retains the goal of an independent state but rejects violence. It relies instead on advocacy, starting with members of the British parliament and companies that do business in Sri Lanka.[52]

[49] Patricia H. Hamm, "Mexican-American Interests in U.S.-Mexico Relations: The Case of NAFTA," (Working paper no. 4, Univ. of California–Irvine, Center for Research on Latinos in a Global Society, 1996), www.escholarship.org/uc/item/3wx2g9f2.
[50] Ali Eteraz, "Pride and the Pakistani Diaspora" *Dawn*¸February, 14, 2009, www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/Pride-and-the-Pakistani-Diaspora.
[51] Somerville, Durana, Terrazas, *Hometown Associations*.
[52] Shyamantha Asokan, "War by Other Means," *Financial Times*, October 17-18, 2009.

VI. Conclusions and Policy Options

The examples above give some indication of the characteristics of effective diaspora advocacy. Success is rooted in unity, commitment, and focus. The advocacy "targets" of a highly factionalized diaspora will find it difficult to know to whom they should listen — and thus find it easy to choose, cynically, those whose message is most convenient for the receivers. If unity is out of reach, then at least mutual tolerance and some coordination of effort is desirable. The Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenia National Committee of America are rivals for funds and influence — but on important issues they collaborate, as we have seen. The commitment of members is the diaspora advocacy effort's fuel cell. No person or institution on the receiving end of advocacy can be expected to expend political or financial capital on behalf of a constituency that seems lukewarm about its objectives. In other words, the target cannot be expected to care about an issue more than its proponents do. A diaspora advocacy group that has too many objectives risks confusing its interlocutors about what is really important. Successful advocates are consistent in their priorities and will negotiate on lesser issues in order to achieve the most important goals.

Effective diaspora advocates must also command resources and have a strategy to deploy them for maximum impact. Money (or fundraising prowess) may be the most important resource, but it is not the only one. Alliances are invaluable, as are deep connections with influential people in both countries of origin and destination. Of course, money will help pave the way for achieving both of these. It is notable that in 2004, one in five of AIPAC's board members were top fundraisers for either the Republican or Democratic presidential candidates. AIPAC's influence in the US Congress and administration stems largely from campaign contributions by its wealthy members, supplemented by its ability to mobilize highly motivated voters. Moral stature may not be bankable, but diaspora organizations that have the support of figures like the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, and Amartya Sen gain immeasurable credibility. Sophistication in the use of mass media is also a critical resource. It is hard to imagine a successful advocacy campaign that does not make use of either traditional or new media — and preferably both.

Finally, a diaspora group's connectedness is a good predictor of its ability to succeed in advocacy. Effective diaspora advocates are likely to be well integrated in their settlement countries and to maintain their networks both there and in their countries of origin. Lack of partisanship is an asset for sustainable influence, although tying the advocacy group's fortunes to a single party or faction may produce short-term gains. Finally, it is essential for diaspora advocates to cultivate a thorough understanding of the institutions they are trying to influence. The effectiveness of US-based Jewish organizations in lobbying for Israel has inspired many other diasporas to emulate them. The American Jewish Committee, for example, has trained diaspora organizations from India, Mexico, and Nigeria, among others, in how the US political system works and how to be effective lobbyists.

Should Donors Support Diaspora Advocacy?

Diasporas conduct advocacy on a wide range of topics, only a few of which are discussed above. Many of the topics raise questions about the role of governments in supporting and encouraging diaspora advocacy. Development agencies have an interest in diaspora advocacy because, as we have seen throughout this series, diasporas are important actors

and stakeholders in development in their countries of origin. They are only one kind of voice among many interest group voices, but one with particular expertise and insight into development. Advocating for projects, fundraising, identifying needs, debating priorities, and contributing expertise all bring diaspora advocates directly into the development territory familiar to USAID and other donor organizations. Listening to diaspora advocates is a matter of self-interest for donors, but it requires a discriminating ear. Each diaspora group has its own constituencies and agendas. Understanding the relationships of diasporas with institutions and communities in their countries of origin is a prerequisite to intelligent diaspora engagement.

Support for diaspora advocacy carries dangers for both diaspora members and donors. Donor support may open diaspora members to charges of cooptation by the targets of their advocacy, and thus erode their legitimacy. For the donors, support to diaspora organizations may look like an attempt to manipulate the diaspora and twist its priorities to those of the donor. It may also seem to reward the emigrant over the development actors within the country of origin — including the government. Both parties need to be on guard against such distortions.

For donors, an enabling framework is the best approach to diaspora advocacy, capable of encouraging the voice of diaspora members without rewarding their exit. Some of the ways that this approach can be pursued include the following:

- ***Listen*** to less well-organized and financed diasporas, so that the donor gets a more representative picture of diaspora views. Inclusive forums open to all diaspora voices will expose donors to those that have capabilities or ideas to contribute to a development partnership.
- ***Support the right to organize*** across borders. In regularizing diaspora policies, European institutions have established norms that help decrease potential tensions.[53] The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, for example, asserts as a matter of principle that, "persons belonging to national minorities should be able to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across State borders to develop cultural and economic links."[54]
- ***Train*** diaspora groups in how development agencies work, so that such groups may develop their capacities to advocate realistically.
- ***Evaluate*** specific programs of diaspora engagement (such as USAID's African Diaspora Marketplace) so that best practices can be identified and built upon. Replicating best practices should be an advocacy target in itself.
- ***Consult*** diaspora advocates in the policymaking process in order to understand what coincidence there is between the donor's goals and those of the diaspora.
- ***Share information*** on policy goals with diasporas, so they can identify common goals and advocate with country-of-origin governments around those goals.

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[53] Mayra A. Waterbury, "From Irredentism to Diaspora Politics: States and Transborder Ethnic Groups in Eastern Europe" (Working paper no. 6, George Mason Univ., Global Migration and Transnational Politics, July 2009).

[54] Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) High Commissioner on National Minorities, "The Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations and Explanatory Note," 2008, www.osce.org/item/33388.html?ch=1189.

While working to enable diaspora groups to engage effectively in advocacy, donors should be strengthening their own capacities to listen and respond (when appropriate) to diaspora advocacy. This capacity should reside in overseas offices of the donor agencies as well as in headquarters. Indeed, it should infuse all parts of governments that deal with diaspora issues, from foreign policy and national security to immigration and civil rights. Diaspora advocates can be allies of donor governments, but should never be treated instrumentally as mere "tools" in development policy. They should neither be overlooked nor taken for granted.

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