

## 5 Diaspora Diplomacy and Public Diplomacy

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### INTRODUCTION

*Diaspora diplomacy* is a fairly new term that has gained currency at a time when the process of cultivating external relations is a multidimensional process open to many participants.<sup>1</sup> This particular sub-branch of diplomacy is about engaging a country's overseas community to contribute to building relationships with foreign countries. A migrant community becomes a diaspora if it retains a memory of, and some connection with, its country of origin. Without that memory or connection, migration simply becomes one more footnote in the movement of people that has occurred throughout history since the first groups migrated from what scientists regard as humankind's original home, Africa, perhaps 150,000 years ago.

Diasporas have gained increasing prominence in international relations due to their distribution and growing size. The International Migration Organization estimated that, in 2010, some 214 million people were first-generation migrants, and resided outside their countries of birth; this represents a sharp increase over the 2000 figure of 150 million.<sup>2</sup>

Within diplomacy, diasporas are mainly relevant in bilateral relations, but they also play a wider role in relation to regional or global issues. For the most part, it is the original country that takes advantage of diaspora connections, but, as we shall see, sometimes the process works in reverse. A host country to diaspora communities can mobilize them to advance its ties with their particular country, or more generally, to burnish its own global profile as a country practicing enlightened policy. By their very nature, most of these activities come under the rubric of public diplomacy.

While we may segment and scrutinize diplomatic activities under different labels (political, economic, cultural, consular, educational, public, etc.), the actual process of building relations is a single, holistic, and seamless activity. Each step that is taken has multiple consequences that go beyond the immediate objective. Also noteworthy is the idea that diaspora communities, in forming connections among members in their home and host cultures, create transnational networks and exemplify global connectivity and the functioning of multidimensional networks.

This chapter looks at the role of the diaspora in the public diplomacy of the home and host countries. The first section provides a taxonomy of the different types of diaspora communities based on migration patterns and time periods, as well as conditions in the receiving countries. The second section discusses methods used by home countries to build connections with the diaspora, including specific policies and economic, political, and public diplomacy practices. Discussion on “reverse diplomacy” surveys some of the practices host countries use to engage diaspora communities within their borders. The chapter concludes with thoughts on how social media is transforming communication with diaspora public diplomacy.

## UNDERSTANDING THE GLOBAL DIASPORA

Among the oldest migrating communities to retain its memory and connection is the Jewish diaspora, which has held on to its identity for two millennia. Other more contemporary diasporas have emerged from migrations over the past two hundred years. When, why, and where migrant communities move affects their capacity to act as contributors to external relations. Not all migrating communities retain their memory or connection to their country of origin. By segmenting these movements on the basis of the date and principal cause of migration, we can build up a taxonomy that provides insights into their relations with both their home and host countries.

### Origins of Diaspora Communities

One prominent migrant group consists of those who embarked on the historical journey to the New World. The descendants of Europeans who moved to North, Central, and South America after the sixteenth century lost most of their familial contacts with the countries of origin, even while retaining their linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage. They are today seldom viewed as diaspora communities by their origin countries, even when they enjoy cultural, linguistic, and other ties with them.

Another group consists of slaves and indentured laborers: Those taken from Africa as slaves in the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries retained only sketchy memories of their origin, culture, and language. They, too, are not seen as diasporas, even though some have attempted to trace their roots; this offers African states, especially in West Africa, a potential source for connections.<sup>3</sup>

Among the oldest group of migrants that retain vivid memory of their original homelands are the descendants of indentured laborers taken by the British from the undivided India of the nineteenth century into different colonies in East and South Africa, the Caribbean, and the South American mainland. These places became today’s Guyana, Fiji, and Mauritius. In contrast, those from India taken by the French and the Portuguese to Africa,

whether the island of Reunion (which adjoins Mauritius) or Madagascar, or to the West Indies, retained very little of their original cultural connections to their places of origin, no doubt owing to the assimilative nature of French and Portuguese colonial rule.

The movement of traders constitutes another group. Across Southeast Asia, the descendants of Chinese traders can be found in virtually every country, their migration having begun in the seventeenth century. They have retained their cultural identity and the regional dialects of their ancestors. The same is true of the Indian migrants, mostly from the south, who migrated mainly to what were then Burma and the Malay Peninsula. A common feature of trader migrants of both ethnicities is that they are now firmly rooted in their countries of adoption, despite cultural insularity vis-à-vis the host country.

The trader migration has continued. The influx of Chinese businessmen, entrepreneurs, and shopkeepers in Africa in the past several years has been subtle and pervasive; there are now more than one million Chinese in Africa, and more pour in each year.<sup>4</sup> That situation is replicated in parts of Latin America.

Migration of professionals and technicians followed specific policy changes in some host countries. The Hart-Celler Act of 1965 in the United States eliminated restrictive “national origins” quotas, permitting those that came for advanced studies in fields ranging from medicine to engineering and the liberal arts to settle if they found jobs. This permitted skill-based migration. Australia, Canada, and the UK implemented their own versions of similar policies. In the name of family reunion, relatives were also permitted to migrate. This has created large groups of Chinese, Indians, Koreans, Vietnamese, and others in the United States, and similar ethnic clusters elsewhere.

Other migrant communities emerged through labor demands. The oil boom of the 1970s in the Persian Gulf and North Africa created widespread movement of labor, mainly into Arab states, but even after living there for fifteen or twenty years, such laborers, semi-skilled and skilled, do not qualify for long-term or permanent residence permits, much less citizenship. Their situation remains fragile, and they are liable to repatriation anytime if they transgress the regulations of these states.

Foreign students make up a rapidly increasing demographic. Of the tens of thousands of Chinese, Indians, Koreans, Taiwanese, and other Asians who go to North America to study, a sizable percentage stay on as migrants. A significant proportion may eventually return, bringing with them advanced skills and technologies, while others become investors in their home countries. Special programs run by the United Nations and by individual countries capitalize on this “brain gain,” and this, too, becomes part of a set of global, diaspora-oriented networking connections.<sup>5</sup>

Increased globalization has contributed to the migration of mobile professionals. This migration consists of today’s bankers, business and

investment advisors, and top corporate managers, in demand in many advanced countries, some of which, like Singapore, offer special inducements, particularly to the graduates of top management, technology, and other professional schools. They have high potential as participants in global networking.

Several of the above categories overlap, or morph into one another. For instance, when Idi Amin drove out Uganda's "Asians" in 1972, sizable numbers migrated to the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, becoming even more successful as traders and entrepreneurs.

The diaspora profile varies greatly in different locations, and that conditions their interest and engagement capacity regarding the home country. Workers and technicians on permits that need continual renewal will not undertake activities, especially political ones, that expose them to risk, especially in authoritarian countries. This applies to the workers from Asia or Africa that serve in oil-rich states in the Gulf and North Africa, as well as the ill-paid maids from Indonesia and the Philippines who work in wealthy Singapore and Hong Kong. The descendants of historical migrants often have dim recollections of the homeland, and insufficient interest in its politics. That holds true of diasporas in South and Central America, and the Indian migrants in former British colonies. One also finds an interesting paradox in the separation of distance and many generations: communities retain cultural, religious, and linguistic memory, but no personal or familial links. In contrast, the new professional migrants often retain sharp interest in their homeland, but it is the environment of the receiving country that affects their public diplomacy profile.

### **Host or Receiving State Environment**

Where the diaspora are located also influences the level of migrant activities. Conditions in the host or receiving state can shape the contour of what activities are permitted or discouraged. The United States and Canada are countries largely composed of migrants, apart from the original inhabitants of those sprawling lands that now constitute a small minority. It is not surprising that these nations offer a generally hospitable environment to migrants, notwithstanding a new hostility they exhibit toward undocumented foreign nationals.

African, Asian, and Latin American migrants to North America do encounter local prejudice with racial overtones, but they are visible at the apex of their professions to a depth and degree that is unique for diaspora populations, compared to other countries. This facilitates their public diplomacy role. For instance, the number, diversity, and political activism reflected in the "ethnic" publications of such diasporas, whether they belong to Chinese, Indian, Korean, Mexican, or Vietnamese groups, has no parallel elsewhere. Typically, such publications carry stories of their engagement

in the local, state, and federal politics of the adopted country, as well as detailed news of important developments in the homeland. They serve as instruments of public diplomacy, and often of citizen diplomacy, as well.

Britain, and to a lesser degree Australia, also offers a hospitable environment. Britain features diaspora representation in its Parliament and in local elected offices that is far ahead of any other country, including Canada and the United States. All British political parties field candidates from migrant communities, and at any point in time, fifteen to twenty members of the House of Commons are descendants of migrants. It is also ahead of the curve in *reverse public diplomacy*, as we see below.

On the continent of Europe, the role played by diasporas is much more modest, and the environment less enabling than in Anglo-Saxon countries. The reason for this deserves reflection. For instance, the Turkish community in Germany, descendants of the *gastarbeiters* of the 1950s, won limited access to citizenship only in the late 1990s. At present, perhaps two serve as members of the *Bundestag*, as do two persons of Indian descent. However, the nearly 3 million-strong Turkish diaspora and the 100,000-strong community of Indian origin do not take a high public profile, much less engage in political activity locally or vis-à-vis the original homeland. But they are strong supporters of cultural cooperation, especially through the network of around thirty branches of the *Deutsche-Indische Gesselschaft*, the official friendship societies.

The situation of the population of Arab and African descent in France, which consists of several million, is similar, though politicians of diaspora descent are more active there than in Germany. French insistence on conformity by migrants to French cultural norms is hardly capable of real implementation, except through selective prohibitions, as visible across the *banlieu* of Paris and Marseilles. That, too, makes a public diplomacy role problematic for some of these communities.

In other parts of the world, be it in Fiji or in Malaysia, Indian diasporas face local political complexity that restricts their engagement in, or even deep interest toward, the homeland. Often, be it for the Chinese in Southeast Asia or for Indians in the Caribbean, there is a relative lack of interest in the political concerns of the original homeland that makes a public diplomacy role almost irrelevant, except in the sense of retaining residual interest in the well-being of the homeland. The governments of India and other concerned home countries tread warily, not wishing to rouse antipathy for their diasporas from the main community in these countries. Often, education in the home country is a source of connection, and sustains long-term interest. Thailand's situation is probably unique for Chinese descendants in its submersion into the local ethnicity, to the point where it becomes almost impossible to identify a distinct diaspora. Everywhere, though, the Chinese diaspora plays an economic role in the homeland that is discreet, pervasive, and unparalleled in comparison with other such groups.

## HOME COUNTRIES: REACHING OUT TO DIASPORAS

While the connections of the diaspora to the home country provide a critical spark for engaging diaspora communities, home countries can facilitate and strengthen those connections through their policies. Enhancing these connections can expand the role that diasporas play in public diplomacy.

Israel is the arch-practitioner and inventor of diaspora diplomacy. The near-global spread of Jewish communities and the horrors of the Holocaust give Israel strength and legitimacy to mobilize ethnic-religious connections. Because of Israel's unique history and its strong claim on the loyalty and political support of the Jewish diaspora, it can be said that everything in this essay applies to the intense, largely uncritical, and pervasive support that Israel enjoys from the Jewish diaspora communities. Much as other countries trying to mobilize their own diaspora might envy Israel, many simply do not have such ironclad linkages to "their own" people.

What are the ingredients that make for an effective outreach or public diplomacy to the diaspora community by the home country? How can the home country recreate and strengthen its connections to the diaspora?

### Home Country Policies and Practices

One of the first critical ingredients is a coherent policy by the home country for managing the affairs of their diaspora. On April 15, 2012, Indian External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna told a conference of Indian envoys in the United Arab Emirates that they must roll up their sleeves and pay as much attention to the welfare of Indian expatriates working overseas as they do to hard diplomacy. He also urged that special attention be given to the blue-collar workers among them, as they are the most vulnerable segment. Some have called this emphasis on the diaspora a "Krishna doctrine."<sup>6</sup>

China has long had its Overseas Chinese Commission as a state agency, and has cultivated these connections assiduously. When overseas Chinese faced a crackdown and subsequent massacre in Indonesia in 1976, China broke relations with Jakarta. Since then, it has worked with concerned states in Southeast Asia and elsewhere to support these communities, while also accommodating the concerns of states regarding their loyalty. Some African states have recently begun to develop a diaspora policy, and others are considering the steps they need to take. Kenya established a unit in its Foreign Ministry to reach out to the 1.8 million Kenyans estimated to be living abroad.

Mexico has more than fifty consulates in the United States to service its huge diaspora, which numbers over 30 million, including nearly 10 million who are undocumented. Consulates are especially useful as connectors with diaspora communities. Unlike embassies that operate in the national capital and deal with a clutch of weighty high-diplomacy issues, consulates are "on the ground," more closely attuned to a local ethos. If consulates run their

visa and other services well, they gain a strategic advantage in connecting, especially with diasporas who depend on such services.<sup>7</sup> As a Mexican colleague put it, for the consulate, communication with local authorities is more direct—otherwise, the job could not be done. In an embassy, official channels must be strictly observed. Also, prevention, as well as reaction, dominates the daily work. *Prevention* is achieved through campaigns directed to the diaspora in matters ranging from health to labor rights. *Reaction* is carried out through quick responses by highly professional consular officers in the Protective Service Department.

Interestingly, unlike in many emerging and developing countries, virtually no Western foreign ministry has a special unit or agency charged with handling its diaspora abroad. Clearly, there is room for some learning by these countries.

### Building Financial Links

Another initial step of home governments toward their diaspora is to entice them to invest at home. According to the World Bank, the remittances that such migrants send to their countries of origin have grown exponentially, from \$132 billion in 2000 to \$440 billion in 2010.<sup>8</sup> The main remittance recipients in 2011 were India, \$55 billion; China, \$51 billion; Mexico, \$26.6 billion; and the Philippines, \$21.3 billion. Moldova, with a population of 4.3 million, earns one-third of its GDP through the money sent back by its diaspora, which mainly works in Europe.

Diaspora investment can be via bank deposits, purchase of bonds, acquisition of property, and portfolio and foreign direct investment. For developing states, this taps into a useful source for funds and embeds the diaspora more firmly into the home country as a friendly agent. Special facilities are offered as inducements not available to the general category of foreign investors. In general, wealthy potential investors are savvy, and beyond a certain point, such inducements work only when they offer clear economic gain, say in the shape of arbitrage between prevailing international rates of return or the interest rates on deposits in the countries of residence, vis-à-vis the inducement offered by the home country. Sentiment works only up to a point.

### Political Links

There are various avenues and goals associated with facilitating political links. Since 2002, India has held an annual jamboree, a “*Pravasi Bharati* Conference,” attended by up to 1,000 overseas Indians; this event rotates between different Indian cities, and is co-hosted by the government and a major business association. It provides a platform for both public discourse and for serious confabulation on issues affecting the overseas community.

Mexico has a “Consultative Council of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad”; their 120 members are Mexicans or Mexican-Americans residing in the United States, and are elected by Mexican community in the United States for three-year periods. Its members come from diverse backgrounds, most of them from citizen-based organizations, and sometimes they have found it difficult to achieve agreements. Their successful actions include, for instance, a student scholarship fund. Mexico has also used this group in its public diplomacy in the United States, in relation to dealing with local authorities, though some observers are critical that this diaspora is not sufficiently active in lobbying U.S. policymakers. Overall, it is an interesting experiment to use a truly representative elected body to advocate diaspora public affairs, which works for both the home country and the diaspora.<sup>9</sup>

India and Pakistan have mobilized their diasporas to project national viewpoints in the plural U.S. political process, particularly through constituency persuasion aimed at Congress members. The communities engage in fund-raising efforts during elections at local, state, and federal levels. India openly used its diaspora after its 1998 nuclear tests to counter U.S. sanctions, mandated under its law, holding out the attraction of the huge Indian market. This effort was repeated during the negotiations leading to the 2008 Indo-U.S. civilian nuclear agreement. In a coordinated public diplomacy effort, Indian industry bodies invited up to fifty U.S. congress members to Delhi.

Political activity with diaspora communities should be approached with caution. Often, designated embassy officials keep close contact with community leaders, but sometimes these efforts transgresses diplomatic norms and result in allegations of improper action and adverse publicity. In 2011, the U.S. authorities publicly charged Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of gathering intelligence from among its diaspora and intimidating those who opposed the Pakistani government. On the other side, Nigeria has occasionally felt that some of their diaspora attempt to interfere with home politics, and that, too, becomes a diplomatic issue.

As a former high commissioner to two countries that host sizable diaspora communities, Kenya and Mauritius (in the latter, the majority of the population is of Indian origin), I have experienced firsthand the discretion with which diaspora relations must be handled. It is a natural tendency at such places to counsel these communities to submerge their factional and sub-ethnic differences and act together, but at the end of the day, each diaspora is autonomous and knows its own situation well. Official representatives are no more than informal, friendly advisors. In Mauritius, in particular, India has experienced occasional over-involvement of its representatives in community affairs, which results in backlash and political embarrassment.<sup>10</sup>

Dual citizenship is another facility that is increasingly offered to the diaspora. For many Western countries, permission to citizens to claim rights



nationality of two or even more countries has long been in existence. For some former colonies that gained independence and retain a narrow construct of sovereignty, dual citizenship has not been easy to swallow. Yet some African states are actively considering this option to better connect with their diaspora.

Given the nature of familial, ethnic and “nationalist” sentiment, welcoming policies in home countries are obviously attractive. What the diaspora often does not broadly favor is involvement in home country partisan politics, even while some “community leaders” set up branches or entities abroad that are allied with home political parties. Sometimes, these leaders act as fund-raisers for the home parties, though this seldom has large impact. In the case of Nigeria, it has been argued that the diaspora has played a small role in the restoration of democracy at home. Conferences of the diaspora reveal that the majority has little interest in such politicking. On the other side of the fence, it is difficult to identify any country where the diaspora is a factor in domestic politics.

How well does home-country outreach serve the diaspora? Operational circumstances vary greatly in the ways in which different countries reach out to and mobilize their diaspora. We may note a progression in the way home countries reach out to diasporas: the first step is *exploitation*, where they are used in activities of direct advantage to the home country (e.g. bank deposits, investments, and the like); a second step is *accommodation*, where the home country begins to understand the motivation and real interests of the diaspora (e.g., granting dual citizenship, or easing visa regulations); a third step is *two-way networking*, where it interacts with them with sensitivity, using them as its public agents, to the extent that they are capable of, and accept, being used in this manner. This step also serves to give these communities a primacy and importance at home, as feasible.

### Home Country and Diaspora Public Diplomacy

We may also look more closely at the political, economic, cultural, educational, societal, and other connections that the diaspora offers. For some countries, be it Armenia, Cyprus, or Malta, the diaspora may be equal to or significantly larger than the population in the home country. That can mean, besides sizable inward remittance, that there are also possibilities for using the connections of the diaspora to advance home-state objectives in the target country. This works especially well in the United States, where the tripartite constitutional structure offers levers for such diaspora power in Congress. It may also mean caution in handling the diaspora, to ensure it does not to project too much of the external perspectives or agendas into that home state.

As economic actors who have access and clout in their countries, the diaspora becomes an instrument of outreach for the home state. In Kenya, and later in Germany, I found that key diaspora members could be used to provide access to high political personalities.<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere, diaspora figures

become key contacts in advising diplomatic mission on how to tackle complex markets, as narrated in an essay I wrote for a collection of case studies on Indian economic diplomacy.<sup>12</sup>

In the culture arena, the diaspora are natural ambassadors of the country of origin, and can play a special role in the development of its soft power in the target country. Again, this is borne out by practical examples. For instance, in relation to the Indian and the Chinese cinema, the large diaspora, spread virtually throughout the world, acts as a captive audience, which gives the film-makers of each country a first platform to reach a global audience. Similarly, the diaspora helps in building up a following for the music and dance of the home country.

There is hardly any musician of repute in India or Pakistan, classic or popular, who does not thrive on the oxygen of overseas support, which has led to a situation where much of such cultural expression overseas is now autonomous, not requiring official sponsorship. They also provide a support base as purchasers of paintings and other art from the home country, in effect creating new markets for such art objects. For the home country, it makes sense to factor in the diaspora in the cultural offerings it makes to countries where they are to be found in sufficient concentration. The same applies to satellite TV channels from the home country, now rendered even more ubiquitous thanks to internet-based broadcasts.

Diaspora members have also provided assistance to their consulates in emergencies and for disaster preparation, as volunteers or with payment of a small honorarium. At times of mass evacuation of citizens, be it at the time of the First Iraq War of 1992 or during the Libya civil uprising of 2011, hard-pressed embassy staffs of different countries have used this method. This has a salutary public diplomacy dimension, in that it exposes the community to the complexity of such evacuation; in effect, wins their support. The simple principle: it is better to have potential critics inside the tent as helpers than outside throwing stones at a faceless bureaucracy.

#### **REVERSE DIPLOMACY: HOST COUNTRIES AND DIASPORA**

The countries where diaspora groups are installed have begun to use them to build connections with the original home country, as also to embellish their own public profile. In effect this is “reverse” diplomacy, another variant on established techniques. This is best illustrated through examples.

Australia, the UK, and the United States have appointed immigrants and their descendants to high-profile diplomatic positions in their countries of origin. Shortly after the Second Iraq War ended, the United States sent an ambassador of Iraqi origin to Baghdad. In 2004, the UK picked a senior official of Bangladeshi origin working in another department as its high commissioner to Dhaka. The limited nature of similar appointments underscored the deliberate nature of the British gesture. Australia’s current High

Commissioner in New Delhi is of Indian descent. Uganda's High Commissioner to India has been a woman, Nimisha Madhvani, and a member of one of the country's leading business families; the appointment is doubly innovative against the background of the country's efforts to attract back to Kampala the "Asians" that had fled under Idi Amin's misrule. The underlying assumption in all such appointments is that the receiving state will feel flattered by receiving back its diaspora exemplars.

Diplomatic services belonging to the same cluster of Anglo-Saxon countries now select a wide ethnic mix in their intake of young entrants. It seems as though priority is given to assigning them to their country or region of origin. Besides the domestic advantage of such affirmative action, officials that straddle two cultures also usually find themselves at ease at these appointments.<sup>13</sup>

For this cluster of countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and the United States), the diversity in public service appointments serves both domestic and external public diplomacy objectives. For instance, appointing ethnic minority figures to high visibility jobs nurtures a multiethnic self-image the countries wish to project. Political parties in Britain and Canada lead in appointing ethnic figures to cabinet and ministerial office. For some years, Lord Swaraj Paul, a leading entrepreneur, co-chaired the prestigious Indo-British Forum, and has been succeeded by another prominent Indo-British businessman, Karan Bilimoria.<sup>14</sup>

In 2011, the U.S. State Department launched an initiative, "The International diaspora Engagement Alliance" (IDEA), which promotes and supports diaspora-centered initiatives in entrepreneurship, volunteerism, philanthropy, diplomacy, and social innovation.<sup>15</sup> The Caribbean region has been one of the targets, and it cultivates diaspora giving in areas of education, health, nutrition, and disaster relief in countries of origin. This is public diplomacy in the best sense: engaging ethnic communities as agents of change vis-à-vis home countries. One may expect other countries to emulate such reverse diaspora diplomacy.

As we observed under the rubric of "enabling environment," countries on the continent of Europe tend to be more conservative with such appointments. For instance, in France, one sees the emergence of minority ethnic figures in ministerial and other official appointments, but relatively few are in the diplomatic services. We seldom hear of Arab-, African-, or Turkish-origin officials in the foreign ministries of France or Germany.

## DIASPORA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

We cannot leave our discussion of public diplomacy and the diaspora without looking at the role of the new media. As mentioned earlier, the many

“ethnic publications” one finds in countries illustrate the desire of diaspora communities to connect and enhance communication among its members. The advent and proliferation of advanced communication technologies greatly reduced the costs, while enhancing the means, of communicating on a global level. The social media has added an interactive dimension that not only facilitates communication between a government and its diaspora populations around the globe, but also enhances communication within diaspora communities.

Diaspora groups, especially those based in advanced countries, tend to be avid users of social media, and post the largest number of messages on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, especially in relation to issues relating to the home country that “go viral,” with hundreds of thousands of posts on anything that catches their fancy. In relation to home countries, they are driven by a volatile mix of emotive sentiment: pride in the home country’s heritage, culture, and ethos, and embarrassment bordering on shame at its contemporary failings, be they failures in governance, corruption, or societal disabilities. This has a frequent public diplomacy dimension, in terms of shallow understanding of the real situation at home, and a normative, prescriptive attitude. From the perspective of the home country, it becomes vital to engage them on their own turf, use Web 2.0 tools, and reach out to them in “smart” ways, in an idiom that they understand.

At the time of the evacuation of Indian technicians from Libya in 2011, India used the social media to reach out to the scattered pockets of these workers, who were for the great part unregistered, with numbers and whereabouts unknown.<sup>16</sup> Twitter and social media networking contacts with families and friends around the world overcame these information gaps.

A Kenyan example illustrates innovative use of modern communications technology, with a diaspora angle. At the time of post-election civil riots in that country in which lost their lives, one problem was to locate the villages and clusters where losses were at their worst. A Kenyan based in the South Africa, Ory Okolloh, who had gone back to Kenya to vote and observe the election, applied phone call cluster tracking to identify the trouble spots, calling this *ushahidi*, which means “witness” in Swahili. This method was used subsequently in Haiti and Chilean earthquakes to locate main disaster spots.

Diaspora diplomacy also carries some risks. From the perspective of countries host to a diaspora, the main danger is that a foreign country may use the diaspora to play politics with them, or to interfere in its internal affairs. When such incidents take place, they are settled through discussion and quiet withdrawal of officials that have transgressed.<sup>17</sup> Table 5.1 summarizes the intervention of different diaspora groups in public diplomacy.

Table 5.1 Typology of Diaspora in Public Diplomacy

Diaspora character	Receiving country attitude	Home country policy	Consequence	Comments
Historical migrants who outnumber the home-country population	Mostly well integrated, yet retaining cultural and linguistic roots	Finds it useful to rekindle old connections, for benefit of home-country development	Can produce new source for economic connections, and for PD	
Old migrants (e.g., descendants of indentured labor, workers; as with Indians in Africa, Caribbean, Fiji, Mauritius)	Usually well embedded in local environment, retain cultural links with old country	Respect their situation, work for close relations with that country, limited PD role	Gives home country permanent stake in good ties with migration state, plus broad PD platform	Home state must not over-use them for own objectives
Professionals that went to rich countries 1960s onwards (Australia, Canada, UK, United States)	Many at top rungs of society, keenly aware of home country, look to linkages; often break through glass ceilings (but this does not happen in continental Europe, with their traditional mindsets)	Reach out to them, cultivate connections, use as PD agents	Encouraged as investors, venture capitalists and technology sources; powerful PD contributors, increasingly in both directions	Bilateral and international connectors; often loudest claimants for benefits and recognition from home state
Contract workers in Arab and other states, house maids, pursuing economic opportunities	No long-term residence rights, no citizenship	Look after welfare, strive to reduce exploitation, aid during crisis (e.g., Libya in 2011)	Biggest source of inward remittances, but do not receive due recognition; limited PD role	Home states need to give them more attention

Students from developing states in advanced countries, many hoping to take up jobs and migrate	Increasing restrictions on post-graduation work, or circumscribed with rules	Assist them during education phase, ambivalent about their migration hopes	Sometimes home country spurred into improving own education facilities; strong PD agents both ways	Some among them will return when home conditions improve, producing “brain-gain” (e.g., as in Taiwan, South Korea, China, India)
Undocumented migrants, lured by dreams of rich economic prospects	Tight restrictions, imprisonment for those caught, push back to countries of origin	Attempts to check outflow, usually not successful (as in South Asia, Africa)	Paradoxically, some “illegals” become successful entrepreneurs; this shifts them from a PD liability (for the image of home country) to assets	Home countries can do more to look after them, the more so as target countries often unmindful of their rights
Professionals with scarce skills (doctors, nurses, top-end specialists), actively targeted by rich states	Offered jobs, residence and eventual citizenship (e.g. Canada, Singapore, US)	Often view this as “brain-drain”, apply exit fees and bonds, which seldom reduces outflow	Important actors for PD, increasingly in both directions	Again, key to future connections between state
Businessmen, often belonging to communities with traditional commercial aptitude	Always able to rise to the top, even when migration may have taken place in adverse conditions (“Asians” from Uganda), highly valued	Valuable connectors, rich source for PD connections of the broadest kind	Source for FDI, technology transfer; contribute to positive image for home country, build networks that contribute to PD and familial links	Many are “international” families with multiple passports, and global interests

## CONCLUSION

We now see awareness in many countries of the role that diasporas can play in building good international relationships between pairs of countries and in enhancing the country brand. It is fascinating for me that this is one area in which it is the countries of the Global South that have mainly taken the lead. Western states are now playing catch up in using these communities as allies and empowered agents.

Diaspora diplomacy is a niche activity that contributes to relationship building between states. It is likely to gain in importance in the years ahead, for the reasons detailed above. Many developing and emerging states are now alive to its potential. I imagine Western states will also look to weaving these non-state actors into their outreach systems. Given their character, diasporas are a natural instrument for improved public diplomacy, also contributing to image enhancement. My study of the role played by the Indian diaspora also suggests that when persons of Indian descent face crisis, regardless of whether they are Indian citizens or not (as in Burma in 1962, Uganda in 1972, and Fiji in 1987), New Delhi has marshaled its diplomacy.<sup>18</sup> For the home country, this means a permanent stake in the welfare of the country of emigration and special care in managing that relationship in order to avoid a situation that might rebound on the diaspora. Leaving aside such worst cases, the diaspora is a hugely worthwhile asset.

## NOTES

1. K. Rana, "India's Diaspora Diplomacy," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 4 (2009): 361–372.
2. International Migration Organization, <http://www.iom.int>
3. Liberia came into existence as home to many descendants of former slaves that returned to Africa.
4. *The Economist*, April 23, 2011.
5. This term "brain gain" is deliberately chosen by the authors of such programs to provide a counterpoint to the notion of "brain drain." U.N.'s TOKTEN program is one example of such multilateral activity.
6. *Hindu*, April 16, 2012.
7. These come from personal experience as a consul general in San Francisco (1986–1989), and observations offered by Mexican participants in the distance learning courses I have taught at DiploFoundation.
8. *The World Bank, Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011*, <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECPROSPECTS/0,,contentMDK:21352016~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:476883,00.html> (accessed on 26 May 2012).
9. See Gustavo Cano and Alexandra Délano, "The Mexican Government and Organized Mexican Immigrants in the United States: A Historical Analysis of Political Transnationalism (1848–2005)," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33(5) (2007): 695–725.
10. K. Rana, "Island Diplomacy," *Indian Express*, New Delhi, June 7, 2003.

11. A leading member of the diaspora helped me establish direct contact with President Daniel Arap Moi in 1984 when I served as high commissioner in Kenya. See Rana, *Inside Diplomacy* (Manas, New Delhi, 2000), 62–63. Indian newspapers reported in the past that in the late 1980s major diaspora businessmen had helped the Rajiv Gandhi government to reach out to U.S. and UK leaders.
12. At San Francisco, when in 1986–1989 we attempted for the first time to organize marketing of Indian software services, young Indian software engineers became our voluntary advisors; this and other details are in: K. Rana, “Networking with Local Partners: Experience in Silicon Valley, Mauritius and Germany,” *Economic Diplomacy: India’s Experience* (CUTS, Jaipur, 2011), 197–208; [http://www.cuts-international.org/Book\\_Economic-Diplomacy.htm](http://www.cuts-international.org/Book_Economic-Diplomacy.htm)
13. This comment is based on personal observation, and discussion with such diplomats.
14. For an examination of the utility of such eminent person groups, please see K. Rana, “Building Relations through Multi-Dialogue Formats: Trends in Bilateral Diplomacy,” *Journal of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations*, Kuala Lumpur, 10 (December 2008).
15. See U.S. State Department, International Diaspora Engagement Alliance, <http://www.state.gov/s/partnerships/diaspora/index.htm>
16. *The Japan Times*, June 18, 2012.
17. Rana, “Island Diplomacy.”
18. Rana, “India’s Diaspora Diplomacy.”

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# **Relational, Networked, and Collaborative Approaches to Public Diplomacy**

The Connective Mindshift

**Edited by R. S. Zaharna  
Amelia Arsenault  
Ali Fisher**

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