Diasporas and Homeland Conflict[1]

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[This paper is the start of a new project. All comments are most welcome.]

Diaspora groups link processes of globalization to conflicts over identity and territory. Globalization has increased cross-border migration and decreased communication and travel costs, thereby making it easier for migrants to build and sustain links between the original homeland and current place of residence. Those forced across borders by war commonly have a specific set of traumatic memories and create specific types of "conflict-generated diasporas" that sustain and sometimes amplify their strong sense of symbolic attachment to the homeland. They build new identities that stress their links to the homeland and often profess an intention to return, once their homeland is "free."

Conflict-generated diasporas – with their origins in conflict, their identity linked to symbolically important territory, and their aspirations to return once the territory is liberated – often play critical roles with regard to homeland conflicts. As many scholars have noted, diaspora remittances are key resources to a conflict. In addition, and the focus of this research, such diasporas frequently have a particularly important role in framing conflict issues. Diaspora groups created by conflict and sustained by memories of the trauma tend to be less willing to compromise and therefore reinforce and

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exacerbate the protractedness of conflicts. Diaspora groups may be more confrontational and less willing to compromise than those in the homeland because members of the diaspora are less likely to pay the costs for continued fighting while they may benefit from their sense of commitment to the cause. This paper will start with an illustration of a few of the ways that the Ethiopian diaspora in North America link back to homeland conflicts and then sketch out a conceptual framework to analyze such links more systematically. It ends with some notes toward a research agenda on the relationships between diasporas and conflict.

The Ethiopian Diaspora and Conflict in the Horn of Africa

A quick sketch of the Ethiopian diaspora in North America suggests some of the ways that diaspora groups are linked to and shape the dynamics of conflicts and some of the puzzles with regard to diasporas and homeland conflicts. The overall Ethiopian community in the United States is estimated at 250,000, with a large concentration in the Washington metropolitan area. The migrants have come in waves, with the first wave of royalists who fled the Marxist military government known as the Derg in the early 1970s followed by leftist opponents of the Derg who fled the period of "Red Terror" in the mid- to late-1970s.[2] The rule of the Derg saw protracted conflict against the Eritrean People's Liberation Front as well as a series of nationally based insurgencies, including the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and most notably the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) that eventually created the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF)

[2] See comments by Abiyi Ford in "Ethiopian Diaspora and the Visual Arts: A Discussion," in Elizabeth Harney, *Ethiopian Passages: Contemporary Art from the Diaspora* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers for the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, 2003), pp. 111-12.

and seized power from the Derg in 1991. Since this transition, many in the diaspora have supported political organizations that are intensely hostile to the EPRDF regime.

The diaspora community in Washington is a critical arena where Ethiopian politics is contested and the boundaries of debates established and affirmed. The diaspora is powerful and has lobbied the U.S. government and international financial institutions to reduce aid due to human rights conditions in Ethiopia and raised funds for humanitarian and development projects. The community has a wide range of organizations and newspapers, maintains dozens of websites and e-mail lists, broadcasts weekly a number of radio and cable television shows, and has a strong influence on the strategies and tactics of political actors back in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Sports Federation on North America has a soccer league with 25 teams and an annual tournament that draws tens of thousands and is an opportunity to renew old friendships, build solidarity, listen to major diaspora musicians like Aster, and engage in political affairs as well as sports.[3]

The diaspora is by no means unified. Some favor the EPRDF government, others a range of opposition movements, and still others are supportive of movements such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) that seeks self-determination for the Oromo people who represent an estimated 40 percent of the Ethiopian population. Ethiopian political leaders, including those in the government and in the leading opposition organizations and liberation movements, regularly send delegations to brief their respective communities in Washington and to solicit their support.[4]

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[3] For some of the flavor see "Ethiopia: Ecstatic Mourning," *Africa News* July 12, 2002.

[4] The Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a General Directorate in charge of Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs and funds a radio station in Washington, for example, to channel its message to the diaspora. "Ethiopia: Finances a Radio Station in Washington," *Indian Ocean Newsletter* no. 1043 (24 May 2003).

A series of incidents suggest that diaspora groups are critical to Ethiopian political players back home:

- When splits within the core EPRDF group known as the Tigray People's Liberation Front erupted in March 2001, both factions immediately sent high-level delegations to the United States to influence how the diaspora understood the intraparty conflict and to build support for their respective factions.[5]
- Leaders of the political opposition within Ethiopia such as the Southern Coalition's Beyene Petros regularly travel to North America to solicit support and receive advice. When the Southern Coalition entertained the idea of engaging with the EPRDF regime and competing in the 1995 elections, the diaspora was sharply critical and threatened to label Beyene a traitor to the cause. Unable to ignore this pressure, the Southern Coalition ultimately boycotted the elections.[6]
- Many of the most vigorous and dedicated supporters of Oromo self-determination and the OLF are in the diaspora. These leaders insist on uncompromising and unqualified demands – liberation of all Oromia by military means – and support OLF military leaders who pursue this agenda rather than other Oromo leaders such as those in the Oromo National Congress prepared to engage in political competition with the incumbent regime.

Another dimension of the Ethiopian diaspora that deserves analysis are the ways that identity relates to territorial attachment and the powerful symbols of "homeland."

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[5] These meetings were often contentious and sometimes escalated to reward police intervention. See "Ethiopia: Diaspora Unconvinced and Angry," *Indian Ocean Newsletter* no. 953 (9 June 2001).

[6] "Ethiopia: Negotiations in Washington," *Indian Ocean Newsletter* no. 658 (11 February 1995). See also Terrence Lyons, "Closing the Transition: The May 1995 Elections in Ethiopia," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 34:1 (March 1996): 121-142.

Ethiopians in the diaspora tend to have a territorially defined concept of an Ethiopian homeland that is key to their identity. For many, this "Ethiopia" continues to include Eritrea (independent since 1991) and stresses a romanticized set of royal attributes and symbols (despite the overthrow of the monarchy in 1974).[7] The Ethiopian diaspora is generally extremely hostile to the incumbent regime in Addis Ababa but many rallied to the regime when the territorial integrity of the Ethiopian state seemed to be under threat by the Eritreans during the bloody 1998 border conflict. In many cases, defending the homeland trumped profound political differences.

In sharp contrast, most Oromos in the diaspora reject this concept of an "Ethiopian homeland" and regard the Ethiopian state as an empire in which northern groups (Amharas and Tigreans, referred to as "Abyssinians" by many Oromos) dominate the South. As a consequence they argue that the Oromo people have the right to self-determination and an independent "Oromia" state. The Oromo diaspora therefore defines itself through its rejection of the nation-state of Ethiopia and through its loyalty to and support for an independent Oromia.[8] As with those whose identity relates to an Ethiopian homeland, the Oromo diaspora has a clearly territorially defined sense of identity. Maps, nationalist colors, and images of the Oromo national symbol the *odaa* tree cover the walls of Oromo restaurants, are displayed on bumper stickers on Oromo cars, and fill Oromo websites and publications.[9]

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[7] Many Ethiopian restaurants on 18th Street in Washington fly the old imperial flag and have maps that include Eritrea as part of Ethiopia, despite Eritrea's existence as an independent state since 1991. Needless to say Eritrean and Oromo restaurants display other symbols and emphasize different maps.

[8] The Oromo and Eritreans even organize their own separate soccer teams and tournaments in North America.

[9] Mekuria Bulcha, *The Making of the Oromo Diaspora: A Historical Sociology of Force Migration* (Minneapolis: Kirk House Publishers, 2002); Greg Gow, *The Oromo in Exile: From the Horn of Africa to the Suburbs of Australia* (Melbourne University Press, 2002); Greg Gow, "Translocations of Affirmation: Mediascapes and Cultural Flows among the Stateless Oromo," paper prepared for Cultures in Collision:

This paper will suggest a conceptual framework to explore the links between diaspora groups and conflicts in the homeland and why diaspora identities often focus on a territorially defined sense of homeland. How do diaspora groups relate to conflicts in their homeland? Is there a particular type of "conflict-generated diaspora" whose members retain specific types of links to the homeland as a consequence of their traumatic separation? Does a link to a territorially defined homeland where territory takes on meaning symbolically rather than instrumentally promote uncompromising positions with regard to conflict? Do diaspora groups tend to frame homeland conflicts in ways that inhibit compromise and constructive conflict resolution? If so, are their opportunities for third parties to work with conflict-generated diaspora groups to encourage them to support conflict resolution?

Diasporas and Territorial Identity

The involvement of migrants and exiles in the political affairs of their homelands is not new and has taken many forms over the centuries.[10] As the pace and scale of globalization has increased in recent years the location where key political, economic, and social developments take place are often outside the sovereign territory of a given state. Transnational politics in recent years has led, for example, to Mexican politicians campaigning for votes and financial support in southern California. Croatians in the diaspora reportedly provided $4 million towards Fanjo Tudjman's electoral campaign and

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Transnationalism and Identities, symposium held at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, 9 May 2003, found at http://www.transforming.cultures.uts.edu.au/collision/paper/gow.pdf.

[10] Nancy Foner, *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Migration* (Yale University Press, 2000); Alicja Iwańska, *Exiled Governments: Spanish and Polish* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1981).

were rewarded 12 of 120 seats in recognition of their key electoral role.[11] Worker's remittances, estimated to total $100 billion a year, are critical to the economies of a number of states. They represent the single most valuable source of new capital for Latin America and the Caribbean and are more important to that region than foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, foreign aid, or government and private borrowing.[12]

This paper will focus on a specific subset of migrants that I will call "conflict-generated diasporas."[13] These migrants are characterized by the source of their displacement (violent, forced separation rather than relatively voluntary pursuit of economic incentives) and by the consequent nature of their ties to the homeland (identities that emphasize links to symbolically valuable territory and an aspiration to return once the homeland is free). This definition, developed further below, is much narrower than the definitions proposed by such key recent works on diasporas as Gabriel Sheffer's recent *Diaspora Politics.* Sheffer defines "ethno-national diaspora" as a "social-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries."[14] This definition is too broad to be useful in tracing the influence of diasporas on homeland conflict.

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[11] See "Special Report: Diasporas: A World of Exiles," *The Economist* 4 January 2003, pp. 25-27.
[12] According to a recent report, "In 2002, remittances accounted for nearly 30 percent of Nicaragua's GDP and 25 percent of Haiti's. They amounted to more than 10 percent of GDP in two other Central American countries – El Salvador (15 percent) and Honduras (12 percent) – and in two Caribbean nations – Guyana (17 percent) and Jamaica (12 percent)." See Report of the Inter-American Dialogue Task Force on Remittances, *All in the Family: Latin America's Most Important International Financial Flow* (Washington, D.C.: January 2004), p. 4.
[13] On defining diasporas see William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myth of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora* 1:1 (1991): 89-99; Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Robin Cohen, *Global Diaspora: An Introduction* (London: University College London, 1997); Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, eds., *Migration, Diasporas, and Transnationalism* (1999); Östen Wahlbeck, *Kurdish Diasporas: A Comparative Study of Kurdish Refugee Communities* (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1999).
[14] Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 9.

While Sheffer argues that whether migration was voluntary or forced does not matter for diaspora formations, others argue that cases where trauma is associated with the original dispersal often generate "a vision and memory of a lost or an imagined homeland still to be established."[15] Diasporas that are "born from a forced dispersion," according to Chaliland, often "conscientiously strive to keep a memory of the past alive."[16] One way to keep the past relevant is to keep alive the hope of returning, once conditions allow, even if this aspiration is remote. What distinguishes conflict-generated diaspora groups from other types of migrant groups and diasporas is that this specific type of migrant has conflict in the past and an aspiration of return to the homeland in the future.

The identity and social mobilization of conflict-generated diaspora groups relate to a very specific and symbolically important and territorially defined "homeland." Some have suggested that globalization and the development of diasporic identities will make territory and boundaries less salient as "supranational" identities develop and political, social, and economic life becomes deterritorialized.[17] Appadurai, for example, writes that "ethnicity, once a genie contained in the bottle of some sort of locality (however large) has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders."[18]

In many cases, however, conflict-generated diaspora groups define their identity in large part by their strong attachment to a homeland that is defined in territorial terms.

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[15] Thomas Faist, "Transnationalization in International Migration: Implications for the Study of Citizenship and Culture," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23:2 (March 2000), p. 197.
[16] Gérard Chaliland, ed., *Minority Peoples in the Age of Nation-States* (London: Pluto, 1989), p. xiv.
[17] Östen Wahlbeck, *Kurdish Diasporas: A Comparative Study of Kurdish Refugee Communities* (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1999), p. 27.
[18] Appadurai, 1990, 306.

Rather than seeking to build a transnational virtual community, many diaspora groups retain and amplify attachment to the territorial aspect of their identity, even if they are physically distant and even unlikely ever to travel to that territory. A sense of solidarity and attachment to a particular locality can generate a common identity without propinquity, where territorially defined community and spatial proximity are decoupled. Conflict-generated diaspora groups are not societies to promote Esperanto or to study long gone cultures but rather are social networks that link past conflict, the contemporary challenges of living in a host state, and an aspiration of return to a particular piece of territory that is the symbolically important homeland. Diaspora websites and publications emphasize the symbols of the nation state – maps, flags, symbolic geographic features or local plants. Often the language of exile emphasizes the links to homeland as a very much earthly place by speaking of the "original soil" and the need to maintain "roots" in times of dispersal and uprooting.[19]

Some of the most highly mobilized diaspora groups are groups whose identities are linked to stateless and marginalized groups.[20] If one's identity group is secure back home, then the need to organize political activities abroad is less compelling and migrants may simply come together to celebrate their common culture or to promote development projects through hometown associations. The Oromo and (pre-1991) Eritreans from Ethiopia, the Kurds from Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, Tamils from Sri Lanka, Armenians (pre-1991), Croats (pre-1991), along with the Irish and Palestinians have identities that emphasize their position as national groups denied rightful homeland. Without a state to champion their rights, they compensate with strong diaspora networks. This is a different

[19] Hamid Naficy, "The Poetics and Practice of Iranian Nostalgia in Exile," *Diaspora* 1:3 (Winter 1991): 285-302.
[20] Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

experience than those migrants who may have fled conflict or political repression as in Central America, Iran, or Vietnam. Diasporas whose members both are displaced and denied even the right to fly one's own flag or to sing one's own anthem, identity and territory are conflated and accorded extremely high salience.

Conflict-Generated Diasporas

As noted above, while the concept of homeland is important to some degree to all migrant groups, conflict-generated diaspora groups are composed of people (or descendants of people) violently displaced from their homeland and so the link is often particularly traumatic and salient. Members of a diaspora may or may not be refugees in the international legal definition (and may not even have been born in the conflicted state) but a core part of their transnational identity is their link to a population engaged in conflict. This category ranges from Armenians and Irish[21] who may have lived for several generations in California or New Jersey, Tamils who left Sri Lanka initially to attend university in the United Kingdom, Kurdish or Croatian *gastarbeiter* (guest workers) in Germany or Sweden, and Oromos or Eritreans who fled war in Ethiopia as refugees and found asylum in Silver Spring, Toronto, or Hamburg. Diaspora groups are often key actors in homeland conflict and are one of the mechanisms by which local conflicts are globalized.

[21] For an interesting account of how one Irish American "discovered" that he was part of the Irish diaspora see Tom Hayden, *Irish on the Inside: In Search of the Soul of Irish America* (London: Verso, 2001).

Conflict-generated diaspora groups may be distinguished from other migrant groups and the broader category of diasporas along three dimensions: 1) the cause of the original migration; 2) relations with the homeland; 3) forms of social organization.

Cause of cross-border migration: Conflict-generated diaspora groups are driven across borders as a result of violent civil war rather than by economic need or opportunity.[22] This trauma is vivid in the minds of the first generation and is often kept alive in subsequent generations through carefully maintained commemorations and symbols.[23] In fact one of the functions of diaspora networks and institutions is to ensure that the original cause of their displacement is remembered and the grievance passed on to the next generation.

In many cases the initial migration was large, rapid, and included entire extended families and villages (or at least those who fled lost contacts with home villages where others were killed or dispersed in other directions). This is distinct from the pattern of many economically driven migrations where only subsets of a community such as the young men or young women migrate.[24] Because many who are violently dispersed lose specific links through kin to old hometowns, their attachments to the old homeland are more general and even more salient. The central importance of conflict continues to shape identities among diaspora groups in their new home country of residence and serves as a focal point for community mobilization and networks.[25]

[22] Of course distinguishing economic from political motives is difficult, as thousands of asylum cases every year demonstrate. But the distinction is important to understanding diasporas.
[23] Vamik Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1997).
[24] Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration and Domestic Work* (Stanford University Press 2001).
[25] Alejandro Portes, "Toward a New World Order – The Origins and Effects of Transnational Activities," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22:2 (1999): 463-77.

Sheffer, in contrast, explicitly argues that why someone migrates is not important to understanding the nature of diasporas and the behavior of the displaced. He argues that "contrary to a widely held view, except for serving as a basis for assessment of whether or not first-generation migrants would return to their countries of origin, and for assessing the nature of their initial contacts with their kinfolk back in the homeland, identifying the reasons for migration from homelands is not crucial for an understanding of the nature of diasporas, their organization, and their behavior in host countries."[26] Sheffer emphasizes questions of assimilation or maintenance of one's ethno-national identity as the core dilemma facing a member of a diaspora. Many conflict-generated diasporas, however, maintain a sense of identity as Armenians, Irish, or Oromos for generations. The initial trauma of violent displacement often generates a particular link to a homeland that economic migrants lack.

Relations with the Homeland: Developing out of the initial motivation for migration, diaspora communities have distinctive attitudes toward the homeland. In many cases homeland takes the form of a highly valuable symbolic attachment. As the intrinsic value of territory diminishes, as day-to-day activities focus on the new place of residence, the homeland's symbolic importance and salience to identity may grow.[27]

The trauma of violent displacement often creates a strong desire or declared intention to return. Many argue, however, that they cannot return until their homeland is free. Wahlbeck's interviews with Kurds in Europe found that nearly all professed a desire to return home when conditions allowed.

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[26] Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 76.
[27] David Newman, "Real Spaces, Symbolic Space: Interrelated Notions of Territory in the Arab-Israeli Conflict," in Paul F. Diehl, *A Road Map to War: Territorial Dimensions of International Conflict* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1999), p. 13.

> I would like to return to Kurdistan, I think that I am the first family that will move back when Kurdistan becomes free. If there was a democratic leader , and peace and safety, after that I would go back. That is why I am here [Finland], because there is no security. I think that some day I will go back; it is impossible for me to imagine that I would stay here.[28]

This condition of longing for return while being unable to do so until circumstances back home change is emblematic of the ambiguous relationships diaspora groups have with both their homeland and host state.

Holding on to the myth of return provides a justification for the perpetuation of the diaspora and its organizational structure and leadership. Without the potential for return questions of assimilation would be more difficult to escape and pressure for institutional change harder to resist. The potential to return, even if remote, also strengthens the power of leaders who can claim authority with reference to traditional social structures in the homeland, sometimes making a diaspora an anachronistic organization that clings to old ways while the homeland evolves. With reference to the Armenian-American community, Gakavian writes "Whilst things in the occupied homeland may have 'moved on,' the diasporan communities will tend to desperately cling to pre-diasporan customs and structures, because they view themselves as the custodians of the national heritage, the repository of the 'true believers,' at least until such time as the homeland is able to take over this role."[29]

In some instances, the re-emergence of an independent state in the old homeland has transformed diaspora identities. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the creation of the independent state of Armenia, for example, created a sovereign territory that differed

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[28] Östen Wahlbeck, *Kurdish Diasporas: A Comparative Study of Kurdish Refugee Communities* (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1999), p. 107.

[29] Armen Gakavian, *The Reimagination of American-Armenian Identity since Gorbachev* PhD dissertation, University of Sydney, 1998 p. 49.

from the symbolic Armenia with which many in the diaspora identified. The very real specific territorial state raised questions of belongingness and has initiated what Tölölyan calls a shift from "exilic nationalism" to "diasporic transnationalism."[30] The newly independent state of Croatia led to a resurgence of identity among Croatians living in Canada.[31] These transformations, however, have led some members of the diaspora to return and others to alter their relationship with the homeland and to engage in fundraising and lobbying to protect the fledgling new state.

Form of Transnational Organization: Migration is a process that both depends on and creates social networks.[32] Conflict-generated diasporas characteristically develop networks based on solidarity that emphasize identity and work to keep nationalist hopes alive from abroad. These organizations and networks often engage in political activism in support of the struggle back home, including lobbying the host country or international organizations for support, engaging in public education and consciousness raising, supporting projects on behalf of the victims of the strife, or more active fundraising for arms and other war materiel.

Most conflict-generated diasporas develop social networks both to retain a sense of identity and to promote community self-help programs for finding jobs, housing, and managing immigration issues in their new host countries. They often form church groups, schools to maintain native languages and cultural practices among their children,

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[30] Susan P. Pattie, "Longing and Belonging: Issues of Homeland in the Armenian Diaspora," Transnational Communities Programme, Oxfod University, Working Papers no. WPTC 99 -11 found at www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/pattie.pdf; Khachig Tölölyan, "Elites and Institutions in the Armenian Transnation," *Diaspora*

[31] Daphne N. Winland, "'We Are Now an Actual Nation': The Impact of National Independence on the Croatian Diaspora in Canada," *Diaspora* 4:1 (1995): 3-29.

[32] See Alejandro Portes, "Economic Sociology and the Sociology of Immigration: A Conceptual Overview," in Alejandro Portes, ed., *The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship,* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1995).

and other social clubs to celebrate religious holidays or to mark other symbolically important dates and ceremonies. Martyrs Day (November 27), for example, is an important day for community mobilization among the Tamil diaspora. Annual events such as the Ethiopian soccer tournament in North America bring thousands together not only to compete and socialize but also to talk politics. Celebration of national holidays is a particularly important way to maintain links with the homeland and reaffirm borders between the diaspora community and the surrounding host country population. Iranians in the diaspora scrupulously celebrate *Nowruz,* the Iranian New Year held at the Spring Equinox. Celebrating Nowruz, one member of the Iranian diaspora notes, "allows practice of nostalgia and defiance of the unfamiliar Christian calendar simultaneously."[33] These social events further are instrumental in socializing the generation born outside of the homeland to the issues that define their membership in a diaspora group.

Setting the Terms of Debate around Homeland Conflict

Conflict-generated diaspora groups, as we have argued up to this point, form a link between conflict, territoriality, and identity. Homeland conflict is often the touchstone of identity and diaspora social organizations often mobilize around providing support for actors engaged in the conflict back home. Diaspora organizations thereby often become a factor that complicates processes of conflict resolution and may make homeland conflicts more protracted.

[33] Laleh Khalili, "Mixing Memory and Desire: Iranians in the United States," *The Iranian* May 13, 1998, found at www.Iranian.com/Features/May98/Iranams/index.html.

A number of recent studies have focused on the question of diaspora funding of homeland insurgencies. Collier and Hoeffler conclude that "by far the strongest effect of war on the risk of subsequent war works through diasporas. After five years of postconflict peace, the risk of renewed conflict is around six times higher in the societies with the largest diasporas in America than in those without American diasporas. Presumably this effect works through the financial contributions of diasporas to rebel organizations.[34] The Tamil diaspora provides critical funding to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the links between diaspora fundraising and conflict have been noted with regard to the Kurdish Workers Party, the Provisional Irish Republican Army, and Croatian political and military movements.[35] Diasporas sometimes lobby host governments for increased support for states engaged in conflict, as demonstrated by the Armenian and Croatian diasporas' efforts.[36]

Beyond the provision of financial resources, diasporas play important roles in setting the terms of debate around issues of conflict and identity. The concept of homeland is inherent in the diaspora identity and therefore serves as a focal point of diaspora political action and debate. Frykman notes "The homeland they do not live in any more is very likely to remain a crucial place of emotional attachment and decisively

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[34] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievances in Civil War," (Washington, D.C.: World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2355, 2000), p. 26.

[35] On the LTTE see Daniel L. Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau, and David Brannan, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2001). On the PIRA see John Horgan and Max Taylor, "Playing the 'Green Card' – Financing the Provisional IRA: Part I," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 11:2 (Summer 1999) and Paul Arthur, "Diasporan Intervention in International Affairs: Irish America as a Case Study," *Diaspora* 1:2 (Fall 1991). On the PKK see Michael Radu, "The Rise and Fall of the PKK," *Orbis* 45:1 (Winter 2001). On Croatia see Daphne N. Winland, "'We Are Now an Actual Nation': The Impact of National Independence on the Croatian Diaspora in Canada," *Diaspora* 4:1 (1995): 3-29 and R.T. Naylor, *Wages of Crime: Black Markets, Illegal Finance, and the Underworld Economy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 122.

[36] On Armenians see Moorad Mooradian, *Reconciliation: A Case Study of the Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission* Fairfax, Virginia: Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution Working Paper, forthcoming in 2004).

defines their strategies of identification."[37] As the intrinsic value of territory diminishes, as day-to-day activities focus on the new place of residence, the homeland's symbolic importance may grow. Geographical detachment removes the territorial concept from the "concrete to the metaphysical realm and from one that has relatively clear boundaries to one that is unbounded and abstract."[38] As Yossi Shain notes:

> For many homeland citizens, territory serves multiple functions: it provides sustenance, living space, security, as well as a geographical focus for national identity. If giving up a certain territory, even one of significant symbolic value, would increase security and living conditions, a homeland citizen *might* find the tradeoff worthwhile. By contrast, for the diaspora, while the security of the homeland is of course important as well, the territory's identity function is often paramount.[39]

For the diaspora, therefore, homeland is a special category of territory, laden with symbolic meaning for those who identify with it from afar.[40] As a consequence, diaspora groups are less likely to support compromise or a bargain that trades off some portion of the sacred homeland for some other instrumental end.

The "old country" is often romanticized and past glories and grievances kept alive in an "allegiance to the land of memories" as a way of asserting continued belonging.[41]

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[37] Maja Povrzanović Frykman, "Challenges of Belonging in Diaspora and Exile," in Maja Povrzanović Frykman, ed., *Beyond Integration: Challenges of Belonging in Diaspora and Exile* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001) p. 23.
[38] David Newman, "Real Spaces, Symbolic Space: Interrelated Notions of Territory in the Arab-Israeli Conflict," in Paul F. Diehl, *A Road Map to War: Territorial Dimensions of International Conflict* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1999), p. 13.
[39] Yossi Shain, "The Role of Diasporas in Conflict Perpetuation or Resolution." *SAIS Review* 22:2 (Summer-Fall 2002), p. 134. Shain goes on to cite Rabbi David Clyman as follows: "Israel is a make-believe land for American Jews. It's a symbol. They don't live here, they don't drive on the roads, or send their sons to the army…I don't make light of Jerusalem or the Temple Mount. But it's nice to live in New York, Philadelphia, and L.A. and to know that the Temple Mount is in our hands. But what is really to see up there? Mosques. And for what price?"
[40] Monica Duffy Toft, "Indivisible Territory and Ethnic War," Cambridge: Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Working Paper no. 01-08, December 2001, p. 7. See also David Morley and Kevin Robins, "No Place like Heimat: Images of Home(land) in European Culture," in Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires, eds., *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993).
[41] Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London, 1997), p. 185.

Benedict Anderson argues that "long-distance nationalists," are inevitably unaccountable and irresponsible:

> While technically a citizen on the state in which he comfortably lives, but to which he may feel little attachment, he finds it tempting to play identity politics by participating (via propaganda, money, weapons, any way but voting) in the conflicts of his imagined Heimat – now only fax time away. But this citizenless participation is inevitably non-responsible – our hero will not have to answer for, or pay the price of, the long-distance politics he undertakes.[42]

As Pnina Werbner echoes this concern and notes that diasporas often "feel free to endorse and actively support ethnicist, nationalistic, and exclusionary movements."[43] Finally, Fitzgerald suggests that some members of diasporas advance a "model of citizenship that emphasizes rights over obligations, passive entitlements, and the assertion of an interest in the public space without a daily presence."[44] Political leaders back home are often ambiguous about the political influence of those who left and emphasize emotional issues and may have lost touch with the everyday struggles in the homeland.

This frequently categorical, uncompromising framing of the conflict is quite powerful because exiles often have greater access to the media and the time, resources, and freedom to articulate and circulate a political agenda than actors in the conflicted homeland. Diaspora leaders and organizations are often hard-line "true believers" who operate as veto players. The cost of refusing to accept a compromise is often low (if the diaspora members are well-established in Europe, North America, or Australia) and the

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[42] Benedict Anderson, "The New World Disorder," *New Left Review* 193 (1992): 13. See also Benedict Anderson, "Exodus," *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Winter 1994): 314-27. Paul Stubbs, "Imagining Croatia? Exploring Computer-Mediated Diasporic Public Spheres," in Maja Povrzanović Frykman, ed., *Beyond Integration: Challenges of Belonging in Diaspora and Exile* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001) pp. 200-201 argues that Anderson's argument is a caricature of the more complex relationship between diasporas and nationalism.
[43] Pnina Werbner, "The Place Which is Diaspora: Citizenship, Religion, and Gender in the Making of Chordic Transnationalism," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28:1 (January 2002), p. 120.
[44] David Fitzgerald, *Negotiating Extra-Territorial Citizenship: Mexican Migration and the Transnational Politics of* Community La Jolla, Calif.: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, Monograph Series no. 2, 2000, p. 106.

rewards from demonstrating steadfast commitment to the cause is high (both in personal/psychological terms but also as a mechanism of social mobilization).

In some cases, leading intellectuals have sought exile in order to continue to engage in political debate. Major cultural figures including authors, filmmakers, and musicians frequently are based abroad and their framing of issues relating to identity, memory, and conflict resonate powerfully back home. Diaspora groups often control major media outlets both in host states and in the homeland. Armenians in the United States, for example, support one daily and eleven weekly newspapers in Armenia, along with countless newsletters, Internet sites, and e-mail distribution lists.[45] Videotapes or cassettes of exile political speeches or demonstrates may circulate in a homeland where such activities are more dangerous.

Uncompromising diaspora positions therefore often constrain the ability of actors in the homeland to propose different ways to understand the struggle or to engage in constructive conflict resolution. As suggested by Maney in his study of transnational movements and civil rights in Northern Ireland, external supporters "not only can exacerbate problems encountered by domestic coalitions but can also introduce additional obstacles to the effective pursuit of social change."[46] The devotion to the cause by the diaspora may make it more difficult for political actors back home to accept compromise solutions that may be condemned as appeasement or treason among the émigrés. In Armenia, for example, the first post-Soviet president Ter-Petrossian sought to base

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[45] Khacig Tölölyan, "Elites and Institutions in the Armenian Transnation," *Diaspora* 9:1 (2000): 107-35. Karim H. Karim, "Diasporas and their Communication Networks: Exploring the Broader Context of Transnational Narrowcasting," paper presented at the Virtual Diasporas and Global Problem Solving conference, The Nautilus Institute, Berkeley, Calif., April 2002, found at www.nautilus.org/virtual-diasporas/paper/Karim.html.
[46] Gregory M. Maney, "Transnational Mobilization and Civil Rights in Northern Ireland," *Social Problems* 47:2 (2000), p. 153.

Armenia's foreign policy on state interests and make conciliatory gestures toward Turkey. The Armenian diaspora in the United States and France, however, regarded this as selling out their core issue of recognition of the Armenian genocide. Ter-Petrossian eventually fell to Robert Kocharian who followed the diasporas traditional anti-Turkish attitudes.[47]

Conclusions and Thoughts for Additional Research

[This part of the paper includes a number of very preliminary ideas – all manner of comments are actively solicited and will be much appreciated.]

To analyze the roles played by conflict-generated diaspora groups in homeland conflicts, this paper suggests a framework that includes the following:

- A focus on the salience of homeland as focal points to diaspora identity. Conflict-generated diasporas tend to organize around specific forms of territorially demarcated identity, not vague cultural values. The emphasis on territory is related to an aspiration – perhaps "myth" – of return to a free homeland.
- In addition to recognizing the important role played by diaspora funding of insurgent groups and states engaged in conflict, this paper suggests greater attention to the ways by which conflict-generated diaspora groups tend to frame homeland conflicts. As parties with great interests in the conflict but

[47] Yossi Shain, "The Role of Diasporas in Conflict Perpetuation or Resolution." *SAIS Review* 22:2 (Summer-Fall 2002), p. 126-7. Shain cites an observer as saying that hard-liners in the Armenian diaspora "are said to care less about the homeland's present and future than about the past's dead" p. 121. See also Morad Mooradian, *Reconciliation: A Case Study of the Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission* (Fairfax, Virginia: Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, forthcoming in 2004).

who are not directly exposed to the costs of escalating or continuing conflict, diasporas often frame conflicts in categorical ways that make compromise and settlement less likely. Diaspora framing often shapes (or distorts) the framing of parties to the conflict in the homeland.

Understanding how conflict-generated diasporas reinforce dynamics that make conflicts more protracted is important for third parties interested in promoting conflict resolution. How can external parties work to reduce if not end the roles diasporas play in encouraging conflicts? One project by the George Mason University Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution has worked with the Ethiopian diaspora through a process of extended dialogues that have helped the participants develop more complicated and therefore less categorical perspectives on the homeland conflict.[48] The Conflict Management Group in Cambridge, Massachusetts has organized a similar set of Diaspora Dialogues between Palestinian/Arab and Jewish Americans.[49] The case of Irish-American attitudes towards the conflict in Northern Ireland and the role some played in promoting the Good Friday agreement is an important example of how diasporas may promote dynamics that reinforce conflict resolution processes under the right circumstances.[50]

In order to explore the usefulness of this manner of analyzing the roles played by conflict-generated diaspora groups in homeland conflicts and to begin to test whether such links are more or less likely to make conflicts protracted, considerably more

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[48] A report on these dialogues is in process. The extended dialogue model was adapted from Harold H. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts* (St. Martin's, 1999).
[49] See "Diaspora Dialogues: Mission Statement," and Naseem Khuri, "Diaspora Dialogues," *Peace by Piece* (Winter 2003) both found at www.cmgroup.org.
[50] See Tom Hayden, *Irish on the Inside: In Search of the Soul of Irish America* (London: Verso, 2001).

empirical research is necessary. A collection of cases developed to draw out similar data could be the basis for more systematic conceptualizing and the development of more testable hypotheses. Below are just a few of the many questions that deserve greater attention.

- What is the universe of cases for “conflict-generated”diaspora? Key exemplars include Armenia (until 1989), Eritrea (until 1991), Oromia, Kurdistan (complicated by the tripartite “occupation”), Tamil Eelan, Ireland, Croatia (until 1991), and Palestine.

- How do these cases differ in their relationships to homeland conflicts from other diasporas generated by ideological conflict such as Iran, Cuba, Vietnam, El Salvador? If an ideological rather than “national” enemy controls the homeland, is the nature of the diaspora experience and the nature of the links between the diaspora and homeland different?

- Relationships between homeland insurgents and governments and diaspora groups are two-way. The LTTE, for example, dominates the diaspora and raises money through a de facto system of taxation of migrants.[51] LTTE requires Tamils to have a guarantor in Sri Lanka so that diaspora activities are self-policing.[52] The Eritrean diaspora similarly is thoroughly penetrated and controlled by the EPLF. During the war with Ethiopia, members of the

[51] On how this works in Scandinavia, see Oivind Fuglerud, *Life on the Outside: Tamil Diaspora and Long Distance Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1999).
[52] On in-group policing see Fearon and Laitin’s APSA paper, 1996.

Eritrean community fell under considerable pressure to buy no-interest "war bonds" from Asmara. Some in the Eritrean community report that it would be impossible to get a visa to visit relatives in Eritrea unless one was in good standing with the local EPLF officials who monitored contributions. Under what circumstances does the diaspora drive the agenda for the movement back home and when does the movement compel obedience and support from the diaspora abroad?