

**Diaspora Strategies in Transition States:
Prospects and Opportunities for Armenia**

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1. Introduction

The Armenian Ministry of Diaspora, in collaboration with the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia and USAID, is currently working to conceptualize, develop and implement a diaspora strategy for Armenia. We were invited to Armenia to meet with various actors involved in diaspora initiatives and to present an overview of how other countries engage their diaspora, with a particular focus on business and professional networks, to the Board of the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia and to suggest potential paths forward. We visited Armenia from November 11th to 15th 2009, presenting to the Board on November 14th. During our visit we met with a number of representatives from organizations forging links between Armenia and its diaspora (full list in Appendix 1). The purpose of this report is to present some preliminary thoughts on the emerging Armenia Diaspora Strategy. Our analysis should be read as embryonic and partial given it is based on solely on three intensive days of meetings with senior actors in Armenia (see Appendix 1) and desk research. To be clear then from the outset, this is a commentary paper designed to ask questions and provoke debate and is not a formal substantive analyses of the Armenian approach to engaging its diasporic population. A more complete picture could only be achieved through further research both with respect to institutional capacity and diaspora engagement programmes in Armenia and in relation to the nature and existing organizations and networks within the diaspora.

We begin with a brief introduction to the rapidly expanding field of diaspora strategy, noting that many nation states around the world are now seeking to rekindle and refashion their relations with overseas citizens and populations. Our review is both brief and schematic and readers who are interested in our more extended views on the current status of international (best) practice in the field of diaspora strategy are directed to the global comparative analyses we have undertaken elsewhere for the Irish and Scottish Governments and for the Asia Pacific Foundation in Vancouver in Canada (Ancien, Boyle and Kitchin 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, Boyle, Kitchin and Ancien 2009; Boyle and Kitchin 2011) We then note that across the past decade Armenia too is seeking with renewed vigor to reconfigure its historical relationship with its diaspora and to recast this

relationship for the twenty first century. We provide a commentary on four aspects of this embryonic strategy: a) the institutions which are devising and implementing diaspora policies, b) nation building and the forging of an imagined 'Armenian World', c) development, diasporic business networks and global economic competitiveness, and d) the thorny issue of extending citizenship, and indeed experimenting with models of dual citizenship. In our conclusion we set out what we consider to be the five priorities facing the Armenian diaspora strategy into the future.

2. Introducing Diaspora Strategies: nation building, global competitiveness, citizenship

According to the World Bank (2011) there currently exists 215.8 million migrants dwelling beyond their countries of citizenship, approximately 3.2% of world population. Only 16.3 million or 7% of total emigrants are refugees. The top ten emigration countries in order of significance are Mexico, India, the Russian Federation, China, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, the Philippines and Turkey. The top immigration destinations are the United States, followed by the Russian Federation, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Canada. But not all expatriates belong to a diaspora and not all members of a diaspora are expatriates. The term 'diaspora' first gained salience within the humanities and social sciences in the 1950s, and referred to a population and their descendants scattered permanently by force who share a common culture and heritage and who retain a stronger identification with their homeland than their new residence. More recently, the term has been redefined to include those who scatter voluntarily, those that integrate and assimilate with their new host culture whilst maintaining some aspects of their cultural heritage, and those that maintain complex, physical and virtual, transnational connections with a homeland including those that migrate on a temporary basis (Saffran 1991, Cohen 1997; Tsagarousianou 2004). In essence then, a diaspora consists of a non-resident population who share a national, civic or ethnic identity associated with a particular homeland through either being born in the homeland and migrating or being the descendants of emigrants.

Contemporary interest in developing explicit and systematic strategies aimed at creating, managing and energizing relationships with diasporic populations has its origins in three important historical shifts, which are serving to define national governance in a globalised world. These shifts relate to questions of global competitiveness and economic development, the de-territorialization of nations and nations performing as global networks, and challenges to citizenship in the increasingly mobile twenty first century. Firstly, whilst diasporic groups have always played a significant role in supporting or undermining the development of domestic political projects, the twenty first century is witnessing a new wave of nation and state building, and as a corollary a fresh and novel impetus for new migrant contributions to political, social and cultural causes in and for the homeland. At a more profound level, the renewed interest in nation building both at home and in diaspora points to a historical severing of the assumed Westphalian rootedness of nations in specific territories and the re-imagining of nations as extra-territorial. Secondly, whilst emigration was once viewed as an indictment of the failure of development policy (the so-called brain drain), in some states at least overseas migrant communities are now being re-appropriated as a potential catalyst for economic expansion and the securing of global competitive advantage. For these states, leveraging and harnessing the resources, knowledge, and talents of migrants from overseas locations, rather than simply seeking to encourage return migration, is now a desirable policy approach. Finally, as the percentage of the world's population dwelling beyond the borders of their homeland increases, and as an era of dual and multiple citizenship has arisen, there has emerged unprecedented demand for nation states to redefine the models of citizenship, including the legal status, entitlements and obligations upon which they are predicated. The result has been both a clarification by source countries of migrants' rights and obligations, a re-designation of existing categories of entitlements and obligations, and the introduction of entirely fresh categories of citizenship.

Historically, diasporic communities have played an active, and at times key, role in the rise and fall of political causes and political movements in the homeland. This support has taken the form of leadership and organisation, volunteering, moral and political solidarity, fundraising for political parties, the provision of armaments and explosives,

and the dissemination of political propaganda. This is especially true of victim diaspora or diaspora whose history is fraught with the trauma of a natural or human disaster (earthquake, tsunami, hurricane, genocide, famine, warfare) and who reside in diaspora in exile with seemingly heightened patriotic fervour. Nation building continues to serve as an important progenitor of state interest in engaging diasporic communities. At its most basic level, the twenty first century is providing a new and historically unique wave of nation building projects. According to Lainer-Vos (2010), at a more substantial level building the nation has come to imply a simultaneous building of the nation at home and in diaspora. Here, renewed interest has been given to ‘recharging’ short term return visits, social and cultural activities, honours and awards systems, and communication and ICT links. Whilst this move might be read as a recognition that diasporic loyalty can no longer be taken for granted, a more profound interpretation points to a reconceptualisation of relationships which have hitherto been assumed to exist between nation and territory. For Agnew (2005), contemporary interest in building nations at home and in diaspora points to a preparedness to de-territorialise the nation and to cast or re-territorialise the nation as a global network.

Growing interest in diaspora strategy can also be traced in part to new thinking in development studies regarding the role of emigration in the development of source countries. Historically, emigration has been viewed as a barometer of the success or failure of national economic strategies; the greater the loss of talent, the more impoverished the strategy. Policy interventions have tended to focus only upon arresting the ‘brain drain’ and fostering return migration, and increasing the scale and improving the deployment of migrant remittances. Since the early 1990s, however, countries of origin have begun to enquire more seriously into possible ways in which the energy and talent of émigrés might be levered and harnessed from diasporic locations. Now, attention is being given to increasing philanthropic donations, generating ‘roots’ or return tourism, and building business networks and diasporic investment. Useful reviews of the changing status of emigration in debates on the competing virtues of emerging national development strategies can be found in Larner (2007), Leclerk and Meyer (2007), Solimano (2008), Faist (2008), and Bakewell (2009). The World Bank, through its

Knowledge for Development Programme, has played a key role in this transition in thinking (Kutznesov 2006). Meanwhile, Annalee Saxenian's (2006) *The New Argonauts: Regional Advantage in the Global Economy*, has proven seminal in foregrounding the role of brain circulation and business networks in transferring technology and entrepreneurship from Silicon Valley to emerging regions in China, India, Taiwan, Israel, and more recently Armenia.

Fox (2005) and Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul (2008) provide useful overviews of the implications of large scale migration for traditional models of citizenship. The concept of citizenship, of course, has a long and fraught history. In Marshallian (1950) terms, citizenship refers to a person's legal status and associated rights and obligations which include civil (legal protection, guarantee of freedoms, security), political (voting and political participation), and social (social security, education, housing, and health services) spheres, and to these we add economic rights and obligations (work and taxation). Two concepts would seem particularly important today: post-national citizenship, dual or multiple citizenship, and flexible citizenship. Postnational citizenship (also referred to as Cosmopolitan Citizenship) refers to the growing importance of supra-national institutions (for example, the United Nations or the EU) in the making and defending of citizen rights. With the rise to prominence of global governance, citizen rights accrue to persons and not to residents of particular territories. Dual or multi-citizenship (also referred to as Transnational Citizenship) refers to the ascription of various kinds of citizenship to migrants in both the source country and one or more destination country. In the past decade, there has been a proliferation of countries who are now prepared to offer citizenship to migrants without requiring them to renounce or annul their citizenship status in their countries of origin (see Macklin and Crépeau 2010 for a review of global practice) Diaspora strategies concern themselves with forms of citizenship bestowed by source countries on émigrés, forms of citizenship bestowed by source countries on migrants to their own jurisdiction, and the forms of citizenship bestowed by destination countries on other nations' diaspora.

In terms of their design, diaspora strategies can take one of two forms, proximate or fundamental. Proximate strategies emerge from existing schemes and policies that together constitute *de rigor* a diaspora strategy, whereas fundamental strategies are conceived from their inception as being part of a formalized diaspora strategy. *Proximate strategies* develop with respect to a particular problem or challenge, for instance attracting foreign direct investment, or promoting cultural identities, or clarifying migrant voting rights. Whilst it is relatively easy to identify branches of state which deal with immigration, it is more difficult to establish who governs over matters of emigration and subsequent liaison with emigrants. Cognate state departments and administrative units such as Departments of Foreign Affairs, Departments of Home Affairs, Departments of Heritage and Culture, and Enterprise and Development Agencies, devise and implement solutions to these problems normally in an ad hoc and isolated way. Gamlen (2008) develops the useful notion of the ‘emigrant state’ to capture the totality of the work these range of state actors perform. *Fundamental strategies* emerge when particular states decide it is necessary to, on the one hand, secure an overview of the range of actual public, private, and voluntary diasporic ties (to map the existing range of proximate strategies) and, on the other, to articulate and enact a preferred orientation as to how these ties might best be developed. The idea of fundamental strategies, it should be noted, does not necessarily demand the development of a coherent and formalised top down, bureaucratically regulated, centralized and managerialist, blueprint for a diaspora strategy. But it does imply a strategic understanding of the full extent of the emigrant state and the ways in which the emigrant state might be better deployed.

Government interventions in homeland engagements with diasporic populations, can take one of five forms: absent, custodian, midwife, husbandry, and demiurge. With respect to proximate strategies these labels assume the following meanings:

Absent - the state leaves the formation of links between the homeland and the diaspora to the market or to autonomous social, cultural and political movements, with the diaspora often self-organizing its engagement with its homeland

Custodian - the state nurtures, protects, regulates, and polices new and emerging diasporic connections

Midwifery - the state identifies potential engagements, champions/leaders and mobilizes and cultivates them but leaves ownership of initiatives in the hands of the diaspora

Husbandry - the state works with and re-energizes existing diaspora organisations and networks

Demiurge - the state directly creates and runs diasporic initiatives and networks, perhaps with the intention of letting the market assume responsibility at a later date.

With respect to fundamental strategies, we use these same categories to denote the degree to which state surveillance of its own structures and programmes results in more or less infrastructural innovation, institutional invention and fresh administrative architecture.

Absent – The state maps the its various proximate strategies and promotes joined up thinking but leaves each state department and administrative unit to its own devices.

Custodian – The state provides protection for new proximate strategies proposed by its various state departments and administrative units and policies and regulates these infant strategies.

Midwifery – The state encourages and induces its various state departments and administrative units to bring forth particular proximate strategies.

Husbandry – The state teaches, cultivates, nurtures, and reenergizes state departments and administrative units who are already pursuing particular proximate strategies.

Demiurge – The state embarks on a formal strategy of actively governing over its emigrant state, dedicating whole ministries, sections of state departments, or special purpose administrative units to the task of developing and implementing coherent diaspora strategies.

3. Armenia and its Diaspora: New life for an old relationship

Armenia, or Armenistan, became subsumed as a province within the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the sixteenth century. It remained under the command of the Ottoman Empire for three centuries, but became divided in 1828/29 following the Russian-Turkish War when Eastern Armenia was lost to the Russian Empire. Western Armenia remained under Ottoman rule until the Ottoman Empire itself dissolved following the First World War. Between 1918 and 1922 the first Armenian Republic was established, but this was to suffer an almost immediate collapse and under Bolshevik pressure Armenia became subsumed within the emerging Soviet Union. Under Stalin, the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was established but on only one sixth of the territory of the historical Armenia, with the city of Yerevan becoming the national and spiritual capital of the region. The ASSR was to last until 1992 when the collapse of the Soviet Union led to the establishment of the Republic of Armenia. Today, the Republic of Armenia exists as a relatively small, post-socialist, land-locked country (29,800 km²) in the Caucasus region or Eurasia (Georgia to the north, Azerbaijan to the east, Iran and the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakchivan to the south, Turkey to the west) with a population of c.3.24m people (RA National Statistical Service 2010¹).

Whilst emigration from Armenia has been a constant feature of its history, the main waves of large-scale, systematic emigration were 1894-1896, 1915-22, and 1988 to the present. The first two waves are related with conflicts with the Ottoman Empire and the desire for independence from Turkish rule, the associated genocides and flight (Melkonian, no date). The latter wave started with a mass exodus from persecution of almost 400,000 Armenians living in Azerbaijan between 1988-1991, independence from the Soviet Empire and the resulting economic collapse, and political instability and ethnic tensions in the wider Caucasus region. Importantly, all three waves of emigration consisted largely of political or economic exile rather than being a purely personal, strategic life course decision. The consequence is a sizeable diaspora of some six million plus located in five predominant geographic locations – former Soviet states (e.g., Russia 2,250,000; Georgia 460,000; Ukraine, 150,000); North America predominately concentrated in the United States (1,400,000); Europe, with by far the largest

¹ <http://news.am/en/news/8735.html>

concentration in France (450,000); the Middle East (with large groupings in Lebanon, 234,000 and Syria, 150,000); and South America with a large group in Argentina (130,000) (see Appendix 2 for a fuller list).

Following the demise of the first Armenian Republic in 1922, leadership within the diaspora became organised around two camps; the conservative bourgeoisie who retained their status and wealth and the Dashnaks who were the militant intellectuals, urban workers, and peasant soldiers. The Dashnaks dominated the politics of the elected government in the first republic and were to emerge as the most potent voice in the diaspora. From abroad, the Dashnaks asserted their sole legitimacy to represent the Armenian nation and retained a parliament in exile. The Dashnaks rejected the Soviet Armenian regime and Moscow's dominance over Armenian matters. Through time however they came to appreciate the might of the Soviet Military and viewed the ASSR as an immovable object in the short term. Political ambitions mutated into cultural ambitions and the preservation of Armenian identity across the diaspora through the organised commemoration of the Turkish genocide, came to provide the Dashnaks with their central *raison d'être*. By the late 1970s, Soviet recognition of the Armenian genocide and an easing of the Dashnak's anti-soviet stance resulted in a thawing of relations between the ASSR and the Armenian diaspora (Shain and Barth 2003).

Armenia struggled with the transition from a socialist satellite state to an independent republic after independence in 1992 for a number of reasons including the legacy of a devastating earthquake in 1988 that destroyed infrastructure, housing and industry; a loss of Soviet subsidies and markets; and a war with Azerbaijan that led to a rail and air blockade by Azerbaijan and Turkey (the borders with both countries remain closed) (Gevorkyan and Grigorian 2003, Gelbard et al. 2005). The result was high unemployment, emigration of skilled labour (c.800,000 emigrated between 1991 and 2002), a shrinking tax base, the sharpest decline in GDP among the former Soviet republics (GDP in 1993 was 47% of the 1990 level), hyperinflation (11,000% annually in 1993), and large internal and external expenditure arrears (Gelbard et al. 2005, Gevorkyan et al. 2008, Hergnyan and Makaryan 2006). Since 1999, however, Armenia

has experienced rapid economic development and year-on-year GDP growth due to institutional reform, local stabilisation measures, liberalization of prices and trade, and the interventions of global agencies such as the IMF, World Bank, and United Nations. (PEI 2009). And whilst the current global economic crises has taken its toll on the Armenian economy as everywhere else Armenia has crafted a powerful and strategic series of anti-crises policies and actions.

Undoubtedly the Armenia diaspora has contributed to Armenia's capacity to forge a post Soviet trajectory, but the relationship is one that has had to be worked on. In the years following independence, in many ways it was been an overly strong sense of diasporic nationalism and not a disengaged diaspora, and a weak state apparatus and lack of institutional capacity in Armenia, which has presented both the diaspora and the Armenian authorities with the greatest challenge (Shain and Barth 2003). The first post independence Armenian President Ter-Petrossian provoked the ire of the Dashnaks by adopting a strategic and pragmatic relationship with both Turkey and Azerbaijan. Petrossian recognised the resources of the diaspora to be a vast asset but considered its brand of ideological foreign policy to be a liability. The election of President Kocharyan in 1998 announced a new departure. Kocharyan adopted a foreign policy which was more nationalistic and in tune with the aspirations of the diaspora. In return he sought and secured support from the diaspora. Walking the tightrope between securing domestic autonomy and sourcing overseas assistance proved to be a challenge but one which bore fruit. More recently President Sargsyan, who was elected in 2008, has continued to court the diaspora aggressively and in his programme for government published in 2007 gave a commitment to prioritise the development and implementation of a conceptual framework' for Armenia diaspora relations, a comprehensive 'consolidation of diaspora policies' and the establishment of a 'dedicated diaspora agency'.

Armenia's new ambition to rationalise, restructure, consolidate, and strategise its relationship with its diaspora is currently at an embryonic stage. Institutions, programmes, and initiatives are only being imagined, debated, and piloted currently. It is difficult then to know what structures, programmes and policies will eventually be

implemented and which will be successful. We offer here then only some broad and general and provisional commentary on four key aspects the strategy which we consider to be especially key: a) the new institutional framework which is being created to oversee the strategy, b) the desire to build an Armenian World, c) the ambition to develop a pan-Armenia business network to improve global competitiveness, and d) the challenges Armenia faces in extending citizenship to its overseas affiliates. Our summary of each is schematic and is design to provoke some questions which we introduce at the end of each discussion. We then conclude with an outline of what we consider to be Armenia's top five priorities moving forward.

4. Commentary on Four Dimensions of the Emerging Strategy

Institutional Engagement and Capacity in Armenia

A key weakness of the Armenian state in the years immediately following independence from the Soviet Union was the lack of capacity within the state apparatus. Accordingly, across the past decade there has emerged a concerted effort to build the Armenian state and undoubtedly the institutional capacity of the current state apparatus represents a momentous improvement on what the country inherited from the Soviet period. But the work of building the Armenian state is clearly ongoing. According to the Global Competitiveness Index 2010/11 (Davos 2010) the Armenian state is ranked as the 98th most competitive place to do business (out of 133 countries) and has failed to improve on its 97th ranking in 2008/9 and 2009/10. In the same survey, the contribution of the institutions of the Armenian state to the country's competitiveness was also ranked 97th in the world, with the sub categories of intellectual property protection (107th), diversion of public funds (103rd), irregular payments and bribes (104th), judicial independence (118th), Efficiency of legal framework in settling disputes (104th), efficiency of legal framework in challenging regulations (103rd), reliability of police services (112th), ethical behavior of firms (118th), strength of auditing and reporting standards (101st), efficacy of corporate boards (130th), and protection of minority shareholders' interests (131st) all performing particularly poorly. Meanwhile 'corruption' was cited as the single biggest deterrent to

international investors. Indicators such as these led in March 2010 to RA Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan to concede:

'We must admit that Armenia faces a number of problems and we must be outspoken about them if we are to attract investments. If we fail to expose them by ourselves they will never find a solution. This is the RA President's principal approach and he is implementing it in practice targeting negative phenomena and a number of problems which exist in good number, beginning with corruption and ending with bribery. For the sake of objectivity, it should be noted that these evils are not only inherent in Armenia. They affect many underdeveloped countries in transition. After the Soviet period our system of total governance collapsed in a flash and we had to decide upon the course to take in the wake. The model we have chosen is that of the liberal economy, a model implying free elections, economic liberalisation development of organised market economy, and the creation of corresponding political sub structures. However, it soon turned out that we had not inherited the needed know how, expertise, and sub structures from the Soviet Socialist system. This situation was aggravated by the war, blockade, and economic collapse which led to the exodus of tens of thousands of talented people in search of employment in the US, Europe and Russia. Fortunately we have established a strong statehood now allowing us to see and decode pressing tasks. (RAPM Tigran Sargsyan March 2010)

The limits of Armenia's weak institutional capacity is especially evident when one considers the capacity of the Armenian state to engage, lever, and harness diasporic resources and expertise (Sherinian 2005). Indeed, what humanitarian and infrastructural support the disenfranchised diaspora has provided in the past has often been used counter-productively by an inexperienced and a times malignant Armenian state. According to Freikmann (2006), the Armenian case provides lessons both for willing diaspora groups (that they should seek suitable institutional forms before engaging and investing) and home states (that without proper institutional frameworks much effort can be dissipated without effective results). Part of the challenge of developing a diaspora strategy then has been the creation of institutional capacity and structures within Armenia capable of extending existing

partnerships and establishing new relationships with the diaspora. Initially this engagement was largely the preserve of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, to an extent, the Ministry for Economy. More recently in 2008 a new Ministry of Diaspora was established. This Ministry represents a dramatic development in state building in the sphere of diaspora engagement; a significant ramping up of what Armenia is capable of doing with its diaspora. This new Ministry is tasked with all aspects of Armenia's interactions with its diaspora including, repatriation and pilgrimage, the preservation of Armenian identity, the creation of a Pan-Armenian information field, supporting the formation of Pan-Armenian coordination body, which will set priorities for Armenia-Diaspora collaboration, creating conditions for diaspora participation in strengthening Armenian statehood, protecting rights and freedoms of all Armenians, drafting legislation on status of diaspora and dual citizenship, developing a strategic plan for cultural development of diaspora, preparing a strategic plan to improve information exchange, combating Anti-Armenian propaganda, support self-organization of diaspora, studying Armenian assets in diaspora, and contributing to the preparation of textbooks for students and teachers.

The Ministry for diaspora is complemented by a number of other important new semi-state agencies. With respect to the business and economic sector, these include:

The National Competitiveness Foundation (<http://www.cf.am/>), a NGO formed through a partnership between the Armenian government and private sector representatives from the diaspora (mainly the United States, Russia, the European Union and the Middle East). The aim of the NCF is to help create national competitiveness in key areas of economic activity, including health care, tourism, education, where there is the potential for Armenia to gain a competitive advantage within the region. It seeks to do this by garnering and mobilizing strategic investments of capital and skilled resources in collaboration with the diaspora.

Enterprise Incubator Foundation (<http://www.eif-it.com/>), a joint initiative of the World Bank and the Armenian government that seeks to assist the Armenian information technology sector by providing business, training and facility services. Like Enterprise Ireland, EIF seeks to improve the competitiveness of Armenian enterprises by building links with the diaspora with respect to capacity building, knowledge and experience, attracting venture capital, inward investment and collaborative business partnerships, and creating and entering export markets. It has overseas offices in Canada and Austria.

The Union of Information Technology Enterprises (<http://www.uite.org/>), a NGO representing companies working in Armenia. Its aim is to support ICT industries and improve their international competitiveness by providing value-added services including networking, advocacy, business and educational services. Many of the ICT companies in Armenia are foreign owned with diaspora connections and UITE seeks to use this diaspora expertise with respect to capacity building, mentoring, developing overseas sales networks, and project matchmaking.

Diaspora and Nation Building

The Armenian-ness of the Armenia diaspora is open to two contradictory assertions. Firstly, the Armenian diaspora consists of a complex composite of different migrant streams who left Armenia at different periods of time and under different circumstances to journey to different parts of the world where they encountered different social, cultural, economic, and political barriers and opportunities (Oussatcheva 2009, Bjorklun 2003). It is not wise then to think of the Armenian diaspora as coherent and monolithic in any real sense (Samuelian et al. 2003, Minoian and Frienkman 2006). Secondly, the Armenian diaspora is nationalistic and patriotic and, in contrast to other more subdued diaspora where memories are not so virulent or trenchant and where historical amnesia is more pronounced, the Armenian diaspora perhaps does not need a significant programme or series of interventions to keep it energised. There is a certain truth in both assertions

and the key point is that Armenia's trauma history is what allows a variety of different communities to imagine themselves as constituent parts of a single nation.

Armenia's history of trauma, wrought by centuries of foreign domination and natural disasters undoubtedly has underpinned the strength of Armenian mindedness in the Armenian diaspora. In the past 120 years alone, Armenia has fallen prey to such adversities and trials of national character as the 1895 massacre of 200,000 Armenians in Anatolia in Ottoman Turkey, the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians and deportations from central and eastern Anatolia from 1915 to 1918, the criminal arson attack on Christian neighbourhoods in the coastal city of Smyrna and subsequent deportation of Christians, Stalinist terror and the forced migration of dissidents to Siberia in the 1920s and 1930s, the disastrous 1988 earthquake, the economic blockade of the country from 1988, the pogroms in Baku in 1989, the deportation of Armenians from Azerbaijan in 1988 and consequent refugee problem, the 1988 to 1993 war with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabagh, and the chaotic Soviet withdrawal in 1992.

The more important cultural and political movements who sought to commemorate and preserve Armenian collective memory of trauma and victimhood are The Armenian Apostolic Holy Church, the Armenian Revolutionary Alliance ("Dashnaktsutyun"), the "Ramkavar Azatakan" (Liberal) Party, the Social democratic "Hunchakyan" Party (SDHP), and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU). Principally these organisations work at the local neighbourhood and city scale, although they are often tied into larger regional and global structures. They work together to bind a strong Armenian identity due to the injustice of their own or their descendents flight and the need to support each other as they established themselves in host countries. This binding consists on the one hand of strong familial and social relations (e.g., high rates of intra-community marriage) and, on the other, of an assemblage of various kinds of organisations and networks relating to cultural identity and heritage, religion, politics and business operating at local, regional and global scales. For example, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (<http://www.agbu.org/>), which seeks to preserve and promote Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs,

consists of 71 chapters (many of which include schools) in 22 countries, and publishes 13 publications in six languages. Similarly, the Armenian Relief Society (<http://ars1910.org/>) has 15,000 members, with offices in 26 countries.

Other pan-diaspora organizations include:

- Cultural/heritage groups and compatriot unions such as Nor Serund, Hamaskayin (with chapters in 10 countries, <http://www.hamazkayin.com/>), Tekeyan Unions (with centres, schools and media production in 17 countries, <http://www.tekeyanusca.org/>);
- Youth and sports groups such as Armenian Youth Federation (<http://www.ayf.org/>), the Armenian General Athletic Union (Homenetmen; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homenetmen>), Armenian Athletic Association (Homenmen; <http://www.homenmen.org>); and the Pan-Armenian games (held every two years <http://www.panarmeniangames.am/>).
- Volunteering organizations such as the Armenian Volunteer Corps (<http://www.armenianvolunteer.org/>) that provide diaspora members the opportunity to serve in Armenia, Land and Culture Organization (<http://www.lcousa.org/>), and the Habitat for Humanity Armenia (<http://www.habitat.am/>).
- Political parties such as Social Democratic Hunchak Party (SDHK; <http://www.hunchak.org>), the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF; <http://www.arf.am/English/>), Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (<http://www.ramgavarparty.org/>);
- Business groups such as Armenian 2020 (www.armenia2020.org), Armenian American Chamber of Commerce USA (<http://www.armenianchamber.com/>), Armenian Development Agency (<http://www.businessarmenia.com>), AGBU

Young Professionals which has groups in 22 locations around the world (<http://www.agbu.org/yp/>) and Armtech (<http://www.armtechcongress.com/>). In addition there have been events such as the Diaspora-Armenia Economic Conference.

- Education and policy groups such as the Armenian International Policy Research Group (<http://www.aiprg.net>) which acts as an academic bridge between diasporan and native Armenian scholars, with a particular emphasis on Armenia's economic development and the culture of Armenian academia.
- Humanitarian organizations such as The Fund for Armenian Relief which had invested over \$200m up to 2003 (<http://www.farusa.org/>), The Hayastan All-Armenian Fund which has 17 local committees (which in turn have local sub-committees) in 15 countries and has spent over \$200m up to 2009 on various humanitarian projects in Armenia (<http://www.himnadram.org/>), the United Armenian Fund which is a coalition of seven leading Armenian-American charitable and religious organizations: the Armenian Assembly of America, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian Missionary Association of America, the Armenian Relief Society, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, The Lincy Foundation, and the Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, that between between 1989 and 2009 has invested \$558 million in Armenia.

A more recent development is the use of the Internet to form new kinds of Armenian networks to the global diaspora including:

- Social networking sites such as <http://www.inchkachka.com/>, <http://armeniansocial.net/home.php>, <http://www.armenianinternational.com/index.php>, <http://www.armeniansingles.com/>, <http://www.armroom.com/>

- News, information and directory services such as <http://www.armenialinks.com/>,
<http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/>, <http://www.armenianow.com/>,
<http://www.panarmenian.net/>, <http://www.armeniapedia.org/>,
<http://history.armenianhouse.org/>

The building of the Armenian nation as a global tribe has emerged as central to the work of the new Ministry for diaspora. Indeed arguably to date it has been the cultural fortification of Armenian-ness that has been the primary objective of the new Ministry. Arguably to its credit, there does not seem to have been a masterplan guiding the Ministry's choice of programmes. And the Ministry has been keen to help support the self-organization of the diaspora and to avoid crowding into space which the diaspora already occupies and services itself. To gain some insights into its work it is worth noting that the chief projects it pursued in 2010 were:

- Development and implementation of the “Ari Tun” program (periodic visits of Diaspora Armenian youth to Armenia)
- Development and implementation of the “One Nation, One Culture” Pan-Armenian Cultural Festival
- Organizing professional forums and scientific conferences
- Coordination and organizing of the contest for “Best Armenian School” at the annual pan-Armenian award ceremony “[f]or notable contribution to preservation of the Armenian identity”
- Organizing and conducting the “Our Greats” program of events to pay homage to notable Diaspora Armenians
- Implementation of the Year of the Mother Language
- Organizing to provide public educational institutions and community organizations of the Diaspora with educational, children's, fictional and scientific literature and RA emblems

- Implementation of efforts aimed at expanding the network of one-day schools, the “Sister Schools” program
- Organizing efforts aimed at broadening educational opportunities for Diaspora Armenians studying at RA universities and intermediate vocational institutions
- “Establishment of an Alley of Armenian Benefactors” program
- Organizing the “Armenia-Diaspora” theme-based video-conferences and teleconferences
- Promotion of uniting the nation and repatriation

Armenia’s new interest in building the Armenian nation in collaboration with its diaspora has resulted in the creation of the concept of the ‘Armenian World’. This concept is both innovative and bold. Rather than conceiving of Armenia as a small landlocked nation in the interior of the Caucasus, Armenia is now being imagined and invented as a globally networked nation which surpasses the boundaries of the state of Armenia itself. The Armenian World represents something of a global tribe bound together by the ‘wisdom of an old nation, wisdom which is fit for purpose for the twenty first century’. Speaking about the impact of the economic crises on Armenian to groupings within the Armenian diaspora in Moscow in February 2009, RA prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan sought to explain how the Armenian World and the Armenian state were essential to each other’s existence:

No Armenia exists beyond the Armenian World and the Armenian World is impossible without Armenia. Armenians all over the world will display the highest degree of national self organisation, demonstrate their attitude for prompt responses to new realities. The crises is an opportunity for going back to our origins. The crises is an opportunity for getting rid of past prejudices and past mistakes. The crises is an opportunity to show the entire world that the wisdom of the old nation is a reality. (RA prime Minister

Tigran Sargsyan Moscow Feb 2009)

The process of (re)inventing the concept of the Armenian World is clearly a complex one which is looking both backwards to Armenia's past and forwards to Armenia's future. Armenia is keen to build the narratives of the Armenian World with due reverence for its history of trauma, but also with respect to the nation's potential role in the twentieth first century. Quite how to craft these narratives remains open to debate. We encountered three ideas in our time in Armenia, which are mentioned here only for illustrative purposes:

- Armenia's history as a centre of civilization and technology. The Book of Genesis states Noah's Ark was washed ashore on the summit of Mount Ararat and this historical claim has given birth to the concept of Armenia as a cradle of civilisation and a centre of knowledge and technology. It was here that the alphabet was invented, the spice trade between East and West was opened up, and the printing press was devised. There is perhaps a new national identity to be built around the notion of Armenia as a technological hub for the Caucasus
- Armenia's geographical location places it at the centre of many of the fault lines around which global geopolitics is presently structured. Armenia has succeeded in creating good relations with the US and the Soviet Union, with European and Asian partners, and between the Christian West and the Muslim world. Armenia can represent itself as a skillful political and cultural broker in the twenty first century.
- Whilst sharing a common anchor around their Armenian-ness, there are some fairly strong divisions between diaspora members, with some groups being bounded with respect to religion, language, and political opinion/party. Time and again the diversity of the diaspora was insisted upon, but then glossed over. At least for some there is an appetite to conduct research (focus groups were mentioned) to better understand the concepts of Armenian-ness which will appeal to different audiences and which are more attuned to their aspirations.

Diaspora, development, and global competitiveness

Armenia remains a relatively poor country with a high unemployment/underemployment rate (an average of 31.4% for the 2002-2006 period) and a persistently high poverty levels (c. 26.5% of total population was classified as poor at the end of 2006) (Gevorkyan et al., 2008). On the whole diaspora members are economically better off than those living in Armenia and in some cases the standard of living is substantially higher. For example, it is estimated that the average salary of diaspora members in Los Angeles is 15 times that in Armenia (Minoian and Frienkman 2006). In addition, some diaspora members have been successful entrepreneurs, others hold prominent positions in a number of successful multinational and domestic companies, and a high proportion have been educated to third (degree) and fourth level (MSc and PhD). Not unsurprisingly, since independence, both the Armenia government and its people, and the diaspora itself, have recognised that the diaspora represents a significant potential resource of capital, resources, capacity-building and access to markets to Armenia (Gevorkyan and Grigorian 2003, Gelbard et al., 2005, Hergnyan and Makaryan 2006; Minoian and Frienkman 2006). The potency of this resource has been revealed through a number of initiatives and measures:

Fostering return migration and harnessing volunteers for development: Initiatives have included the Ministry of Diaspora 2009 ‘Come Home’ programme targeted at generating periodic visits of expatriate Armenian youth to Armenia; the ‘Armenian Volunteers Corps’ (AVC) which was created in 2000; Armenia’s participation in the UNDP ‘Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals’ (TOKTEN) programme; Armenia’s involvement in the ILO project ‘Towards sustainable partnerships for the effective governance of labour migration in the Russian federation, the Caucasus and Central Asia’ 2007-2010 and; the joint RA and British Council Programme, ‘Support to migration policy development and relevant capacity’.

Philanthropy/Aid: For example, over fifty diaspora organizations donated humanitarian aid in the decade after the 1988 earthquake, with 14 of those organizations providing over \$630m (Tchilingirian 1999). Substantial foreign aid has been garnered through the

lobbying of diaspora groups in the United States, France, Russia, Canada and elsewhere. For example, in 2001, the United States provided Armenia with c.\$110m through various assistance programs (the second highest rate per capita) (Gevorkyan and Grigorian 2003).

Remittances: In 2003, the official level of remittances was US\$289m which constituted 10.3% of GDP, 32.7% of exports of goods and services, 58% of the trade deficit, and 22% of the average household income (Roberts and Banaian 2004, Gevorkyan et al., 2008). Remittances have continued to grow, with the Armenia's Central Bank (CBA) and the World Bank, estimating remittances for 2008 to be worth approximately \$1.1 billion (Gevorkyan et al., 2008). In the present global economic downturn remittances fell to US\$769 in 2009, but have recovered to U\$824 million in 2011, roughly 9% of GDP (World Bank 2011).

Foreign Direct Investment: Between 2000 and 2007 the volume of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Armenia was US \$2.9 billion US (27.2% of GDP). As of January 1, 2008 3,698 enterprises were established in Armenia with the participation of foreign capital, with almost 70% of foreign investors in Armenia being of Armenian origin, or people of other nationalities that have business relations with Armenians. The main investing nations are Russia, the USA, Iran, France, Syria and Lebanon. The Armenian diaspora, in particular, has played a significant role in the fields of construction, financial services, information technologies, jewellery and diamond cutting, tourism and hotels, health care services, processing of agricultural produce and food production, light industry, retail and wholesale trade, recreation and entertainment, industrial manufacturing, machine-tool building, passenger transportation, publishing and printing services, legal and consulting services (Hergnyan and Makaryan 2006).

Recently the National Competitiveness Foundation (NCF) has proposed the establishment of a new pan-Armenian Business Network. This idea is still at an embryonic stage. Two types of networks were discussed at our meetings.

A **pan-Armenian network** focused, in the first instance, *on a small number of sectors in*

specific geographic regions that can be scaled up (open membership)

An **elite network** focused, in the first instance, on providing high level advice, mentoring, capacity building, investment, and venture capital to selected Armenian firms (invited membership)

We were asked to provide some reflections.

It is clear from our initial mapping exercise that there are already a number of diaspora orientated business organizations/networks such as Armenian 2020, the Armenian American Chamber of Commerce USA, Armenian Development Agency, AGBU Young Professionals, Armtech, the National Competitiveness Foundation, the Enterprise Incubator Foundation, and the Union of Information Technology Enterprises. And yet, it is clear from our discussions with members of these organizations that they represent a small fraction of the potential business engagement that could be developed between Armenia and its diaspora. There is room to do more. There are many examples around the world of diasporic business networks that Armenia might look to for inspiration if it is to go down this line, including GlobalScot (Scotland), ChileGlobal (Chile), Kea New Zealand (New Zealand), Advance (Australia), Irish Technology Leadership Group (Ireland), the 60 plus territory localized, but independent, networks supported by Enterprise Ireland (Ireland), and The Indus Entrepreneurs (India). Taking seriously interest in the establishment of either/both a pan-Armenian and/or an elite network we consider the networks by New Zealand and Scotland as interesting point of departure.

KEA New Zealand is single, pan-global networks with site-specific chapters and sector-focused sub-networks. Kea is a quasi-autonomous NGO organization that seeks to build broad, global networks of professional people living overseas. Established in 2001, as of 2011, KEA New Zealand (<http://www.keanewzealand.com/>) had 25,000 subscribers in over 174 countries, 14 international chapters in 8 countries, and employed four fulltime regional managers to conduct its operations in different parts of the world. Its mission is to ‘connect New Zealand with its large global talent community’ and to ‘contribute to the

growth, development, and future prosperity of New Zealand by sharing knowledge, contacts and opportunities' with its diaspora. In 2007, KEA New Zealand launched 'World Class New Zealand' that aims to identify world class role models with key business and enterprise skills, to facilitate contact between these role models and New Zealand businesses, and to build new international networks and partnerships. In addition, it seeks to access and share knowledge with these individuals through World Class New Zealand Summits – essentially high level think tank meetings – held in different countries around the world and designed to contribute to domestic and diaspora policy development. Initially established by two individuals with private funding is now funded through a mix of state grants, private sector donations and membership fees.

A critical part of Scotland's Global Connections Strategy, GlobalScot is an elite, global business network composed of invited, high achieving members of the Scottish diaspora (almost 50% of GlobalScot members operate at company Chairman, CEO or President level) established and managed by Scottish Enterprise (<http://www.globalscot.com/>). GlobalScot currently has over 600 member in Europe, Middle East and Africa (221), USA (212), Asia (104), and Scotland (80). These members have experience in the following sectors: Digital Markets and Enabling Technologies (81), Life Sciences (99), Business Services (87), Financial Services (78), Energy (67), Food and Drink (22), Government (10), and Tourism (12). The scheme works by partnering GlobalScot members with Scottish companies, with the former providing mentoring, advice, contacts and so on to the latter in order to help them expand their business globally. A more recent development has been the Saltire Foundation that enables selected, young business people to undertake placements in GlobalScot companies as a way of kick-starting or advancing their business careers.

The New Zealand/Australian and Scottish models provide workable templates for initiating and growing successful business networks. But how might Armenia begin this process? In order to examine the viability of such networks two pilot projects might be undertaken that focus on a couple of specific sectors and locations where there is a high degree of confidence that establishing networks is liable to succeed. These pilot projects

will provide valuable knowledge and experience about how to build networks in the Armenian instance, and if successful will sell the concept to a broader constituency (success breeds success). The following sectors where there has already been some interest and where there are specific potential outcomes which are desired might be a good point of departure:

Financial services – would link together bankers, venture capitalists, accountants, and other financial specialists to consider and facilitate remittance transfers, state bonds, Pan-Armenian bank

Tourism – would link together travel specialists to consider and encourage diaspora tourism, including volunteering, mentoring and educating roles and discovering investment opportunities

Health – would link together health professionals to consider health service delivery, health research in specific areas, capacity and skills transfer

Education – would link together academics, researchers, consultants to consider educational knowledge transfer, capacity building, increased competitiveness

Technology – would link together IT specialists and engineers to consider tech transfer to the region, inward investment, venture capital, capacity building, mentoring, project matchmaking, sales network with the aim of making Armenian a tech hub for the region

Rather than try and set up these sub-networks as fully fledged global networks, we suggest following the New Zealand and Scottish models of growing these geographically by concentrating on certain key locations in the first instance, putting in place local infrastructure that can help to grow and facilitate the network by making sure that events occur that galvanise members (nobody wants to belong to a network that is dormant). Key sites for the first wave of regional offices might be Los Angeles, Moscow and Paris.

With respect to building a new Armenian business network we feel it is important to learn from, rather than simply copy existing models. Our analyses of international best practice in this field suggests that networks should be:

- Well defined in terms of their target membership, their role, and their outcomes. Networks have to be engagement/service focused and provide real and regular benefits to members for them to remain part of the network.
- Underpinned with well defined structures, programmes and technologies (including access to seed funding, research and secretarial services, project management, government and VIPs, PR, event organisation, newsletter production, etc.) that can deliver the intended aims
- Managed with clear, transparent and inclusive governance and driven by strong, entrepreneurial leadership.
- Given the appropriate resourcing and staffing of programmes to ensure that have the opportunity to succeed and have well developed financial models. While networks need to be subsidized by state in the first instance, membership fees, sponsorship/donations, and advertising revenue all provide potential sources of sustainable revenue. KEA, for example, have four levels: individual standard, individual premium, corporate, corporate premium.
- Measured and evaluated in ways that do not deflect or curtail network activity. Given the investment required to create diaspora networks there is often a strong desire to measure the return on investment. We would caution against measures that have very narrowly delineated targets and associated tangible metrics for measuring progress and success, and also short term measurement frameworks, as the programme quickly becomes focused on meeting targets and not realising the original ambition. As diaspora networks are long term projects with many

intangible benefits we suggest the use of a mix of tangible and intangible measures, such as the quality and strength of the network, feedback from clients, and number of quotations and contracts.

Building new models of citizenship

Under the Soviet Union, residents of each separate Soviet Republics were entitled to citizenship of the wider Union State. On gaining independence a key task for new the Armenian state was to clarify who within the former Soviet Armenia and who within the various Soviet Republics might be afforded Armenian citizenship. The outcome was predicated upon the assumption that those who were to be allowed to hold citizenship of the new RA could not at the same time hold citizenship of other states. Dual citizenship was to be rendered unlawful. Citizenship was given to former citizens of Soviet Armenia who resided in the territory of the Republic of Armenia and who had no other citizenship claims or rights in other countries, individuals who permanently resided in the RA and who did not have citizenship of another state, and former citizens of the Soviet Union who resided outside the RA in other Soviet Republics, who had Armenian heritage, and who were not citizens of another state (ILO 2010). Through a somewhat and necessarily confusing process, and across a decade or more, membership of the new Armenian polity settled down and it was possible to begin the task of more rigorously policing the boundaries of citizenship.

For many within the Armenian diaspora who held citizenship in the states in which they were living and who were therefore disqualified for applying for Armenian citizenship, the lack of availability of dual citizenship was a disappointment. Citizenship status provided a means of lubricating their social, cultural, political and economic interactions with the homeland and was a psychologically important statement of belonging. To be deprived of the right to be legal members of the new Armenia was to be disenfranchised. Of course it remained possible for the diaspora to visit and live in Armenia. Moreover, foreigners of Armenian origin who reside in Armenian still had equal rights and freedoms to RA citizens. But there were some important exceptions:

- They did not have the right to own land
- They could not enter Armenia without a visa
- They could not vote in elections or themselves be elected nor can they participate in referendum.
- They could not enter public service
- They could not establish or join political parties

Unlike other foreigners living in Armenia nevertheless diasporic members with Armenian heritage were given some special compensations; they could apply for special temporary and permanent residence permits which allowed them to live in Armenia for up to ten years, to travel in and out of the country without a visa, and to exercise ownership of land. They could also apply for Armenian citizenship through a simplified and accelerated procedure (ILO 2010)

But in November 2005 a constitutional amendment was passed by referendum, lifting the constitutional ban on dual-citizenship from Armenian law. This was followed in 2008 with the introduction of a law ('On Citizenship') legalizing a citizen's right to be a citizen both of the Republic of Armenia and another state. A normal requirement for citizenship is that the applicant be over 18 years old (of course children and grandchildren of such applicants can be included in applications), be able-bodied, has permanently resided in Armenia for three years, can communicate in the Armenian language, and is familiar with the RA constitution. Those applying for dual citizenship who have Armenian origin are now excused the residency and language requirements. It is a legal requirement that all Armenians who hold both Armenian citizenship and citizenship of another state inform the Armenian government of their dual status (ILO 2010)

At the time of the passing of the law in 2008, The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) were the most vociferous advocates within the diaspora backing the extension of citizenship to diasporic communities. They argued that it was impossible to seek to harness the resources, expertise, loyalty and lobbying capacity of overseas Armenians if such Armenians were at the same time considered to be somehow less

Armenian than Armenians who live in the homeland. Among those who remained fearful of the implications of the extension of citizenship rights to the diaspora are the leadership of the Armenian Pan-National Movement (HHSh), the Party of former President Ter-Petrosian. For the HHSh, dual citizenship is potentially both ‘extremely dangerous’ and fraught with ‘numerous risks’. Critics of dual citizenship fret about the potential consequences of widening membership of Armenia for political sovereignty, the threats to national security it presents, its capacity to undermine the National Military Service obligations required of all citizens, the challenges of deciding who qualifies for the title of Armenian ethnicity, and the extent to which dual citizenship must be reciprocal with equal and symmetrical opportunities being provided by bilateral partners (Antaramian 2006).

The model chosen allows for some differentiation in the citizenship rights and obligations bestowed on individuals with dual citizenship and those who live permanently in the Republic of Armenia. Dual Citizens hold the same rights as Armenian citizens with some note-able exceptions:

- Dual citizens cannot be elected President or Deputy of the National Assembly, cannot be a member of the Constitutional Court nor serve as the Ombudsman of the RA or Mayor of Yerevan, cannot hold a position in the National Security Bodies, and cannot hold high ranking positions in the Police.
- Dual citizens are not automatically exempt from mandatory military duty but can be excused if they have served a satisfactory military training in other States.
- Dual Citizens who are registered in accordance with the electoral code in the RA are entitled to vote in all elections, but must physically be in Armenia on polling day to cast their vote.

The Armenian Ministry has placed the operation of its dual citizens legislation under continuous scrutiny. Both opponents and advocates continue to debate whether the benefits of extending citizenship might come with some unforeseen costs which are intolerable (see the debate on Dual Citizenship for the Armenian Diaspora in the Special

Double issue of *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* March 2008). Balancing the desire to involve the diaspora as much as possible in Armenian affairs, whilst at the same time preserving the territorial sovereignty and integrity of the democratic system within Armenia itself, presents the key challenge. In November 2010 The University of Southern California's (USC) Institute of Armenian Studies held a symposium titled 'The Armenian Diaspora: Elective Leadership and Worldwide Structure'. The objective was to identify strategies to promote Armenian unity and to establish a democratically elected Armenian diaspora parliament. The obstacles to the creation of such a parliament are substantial and its mode of operation remained undetermined. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Armenian diaspora is keen to further assert its authority and rights to speak on behalf of the Armenian World. It is here that the project of building the Armenian nation as the Armenian World and building the Armenian state through the introduction of dual citizenship comes into sharp contradiction. Whether dual citizenship should be further extended to avoid the potential multiplication of Armenian elected fora is an open question.

5. Conclusions: Priorities for Armenia

Armenia is rapidly emerging as a leading pioneer of diaspora strategies. Based upon the concepts introduced in our opening section, we consider Armenia to have a muscular or demiurge fundamental diaspora strategy coordinated and overseen by a dedicated and pioneering Ministry for Diaspora. In this way it is both contributing too and benefiting from debate on international best practice in the sphere of diaspora policy. In this paper we have examined the progress Armenia is making in four key areas: the building of institutional capacity to engage the diaspora; the forging of a new deterritorialised concept of the Armenian nation the Armenian World; the fortification of the role of the diaspora in the development of Armenia; and finally, the innovation of new concepts of citizenship. We conclude by offering some preliminary reflections on each and identifying what we see as the top five priorities for Armenia moving forward.

As part of its emergence as an independent post Soviet republic, Armenia has worked to build the institutions and capacities of its state. Whilst it clear that it still has much work to do a much stronger and more competent state exists today than was present in 1991. In the area of diaspora engagement Armenia has been extraordinarily proactive in erecting new institutions and, in particular, is one of the few countries in the world to have a fully autonomous Ministry for Diaspora and Minister of Diaspora. In building institutional capacity to better harness and lever the resources and good will of the remarkably well endowed Armenian diaspora, the Armenian state is emerging as something of a global pioneer and leader in the area of diaspora strategy and a potential exemplar of international best practice. This is not to say that all nations require such a strong institutional form or that a strong institutional form is best suited to the case of Armenia. But it is to note that countries with weak institutional capacities, no least those Transition States left somewhat adrift by the collapse of the Soviet Union, might look to the successes and failures of the Armenian Ministry for Diaspora for insights and inspiration.

We see the concept of the Armenian World as a fascinating and pioneering attempt to recast the Armenian nation as deterritorialised entity. Moreover the assertion that the Armenian nation and the Armenian state are constitutive of other is equally fascinating. Clearly, Armenia's trauma history is what binds the Armenian diaspora together and it would be unwise to found the concept of the Armenian World without due reverence and respect to Armenia's historical woes. But it also true that both Armenia and its diaspora are looking forward to new ways of both imagining the identity of the state for the new century and the meaning of what is being called the Armenian World. We witnessed an appetite to rethink the Armenian brand and to consider anew what kind of cultural building projects might allow Armenia to rethink its national identity and identity as a global. Managing the delicate balance of drawing wisdom from the past and paying homage to forbears on the one hand and crafting an image of a new Armenia on the other is a vital task moving forward.

It is impossible to imagine the development of Armenia in the post Soviet era without considering the economic contributions made by diasporic populations. To date these

contributions have tended to pivot around philanthropy and humanitarian aid, remittances, short term visits, and to a lesser extent foreign direct investment and roots tourism. Alert to growing international recognition of the value of harnessing and leveraging diasporic talent from overseas, The National Competitiveness Foundation has recently mooted the possibility of developing a pan Armenian business network. To date this proposition has generated a lukewarm reaction, both among members of the RA state and members of the diaspora who sit on the Board of the National Competitiveness Council. This may be perhaps because there is a sense that existing organic business networks are performing such a task adequately. In our discussion, impediments were identified as: a) there is a need to brand Armenia first; b) the cost of technology needs to be considered; c) who owns builds and controls the network needs clarification; d) how much time is needed for the network to become operational; e) should the network simply be an e-platform; f) should the network be sector based, geographically based or project based; g) should a pilot not be conducted first. There is a need to map the existing landscape of Armenian business networks and to consider if an important gap exists which requires a new network to be created. In so doing, Armenia has plenty of international case studies from which it might fashion its own network.

More so than other states, Armenia has had to confront the question of who it is extend citizenship rights to. Initially the challenge came from its establishment as an independent Republic – here, untangling the complex rules of citizenship which existed under the Soviet Union, establishing a new constitution and set of rights and obligations, and implementing and operationalising its new model provided the core challenge. From the outset nonetheless the question of extending dual citizenship responsibilities to its diaspora also provided new threats and opportunities. The question of the status which might be accorded to diaspora Armenians has generated ongoing debate since the RA was established in 1991. The Constitution of 1995 explicitly outlawed the idea of dual citizenship. But with the holding of a referendum in 2005 and the passing of new laws on dual citizenship in 2008 Armenia has constructed new and more inclusive citizenship categories. It continues to balance the hopes and the aspirations of the diaspora with

respect to securing citizenship with domestic electoral, security, and military concerns. The work of creating new models of dual citizenship is ongoing.

Based upon these observations we propose the following as the top five priorities for Armenia moving forward:

Priority 1 – Armenia needs to continue to work collaboratively with the diaspora so to harness to the resources, energy and self-organizing capacities of the diaspora. Its new and strong institutions notwithstanding, it must work to find a way to bring its new diaspora planning infrastructure into partnership with the diaspora. Policy Forum Armenia (PFA) which has hosted two conferences thus far in Yerevan (2009) and Washington (2010) provides an important vehicle for dialogue.

Priority 2 – Armenia needs to improve the capacity of its institutions to tackle the institutional barriers which are undermining the competitiveness of the Armenia economy – in this case to remove barriers which continue to undermine diasporic confidence and preparedness to invest time, money, skills, and resources. Moreover, there is a need to assist the Ministry for diaspora to continue to work efficiently and cooperatively with the other parts of the state and other related institutions – in particular with The National Competitiveness Foundation. Therein to consider the utility and necessity of having a number of Enterprise Foundations and organisations geared to improving Armenian competitiveness and to the possibility of collapsing or amalgamating existing institutions into one more effective national body.

Priority 3 – An important priority will be to better define the key narratives which will underpin the imagined community of the ‘Armenian World’ and to produce and circulate these narratives so as to secure maximum ‘buy in’ from the diaspora. What does it mean to say that the wisdom of an old nation can be shown fit for purpose for the challenges of the twenty first century?

Priority 4 – Prior to progressing debate on the virtues of introducing a new diaspora business network Armenia needs to map the full range of existing business networks which connect the diaspora with Armenia and to better understand the work these networks perform. There is a need to establish if there is demand for and a space in the landscape for a new network. If a business network is required, Armenia should learn from the experiences of countries who have built successful networks from scratch.

Priority 5 – Armenia needs to balance the appetite which exists within the diaspora to secure ever more access to public life in Armenia with the preservation of the territorial integrity of the Armenian state. Models of dual citizenship need to be calibrated, innovated, challenged, and refined until such times as a workable and progressive, and equilibrium is reached. In searching for this equilibrium emerging models of dual citizenship in other (in particular, Transition States) should be consulted.

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7. Appendices

Appendix 1: People interviewed

We discussed the Armenian engagement with its diaspora with the following individuals. We are grateful for their time and insights.

Pegor Papazian, Chief Executive Officer, National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia - pegor.papazian@competearmenia.org

Dr Hranush Hakobyan, Minister of Diaspora – minister@mindiaspora.am

Bagrat Yengibaryan, Director, Enterprise Incubator Foundation (EIF) – info@eif.am
http://www.eif_it.com/

Karen Vardanyan, Executive Director, Union IT Enterprises (UITE), <http://www.uite.org>
info@uite.org

Manuk Herngian, chairman, Economy and Values Research Center - manuk@ev.am

Yeva Hyusyan, Cross-Cutting Program Manager, USAID Armenia – yhyusyan@usaid.gov

Tigran Balayan, Head of Media Relations Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs – t.balayan@mfa.am

Garegin Chugaszyan, IT Foundation and E-Content Association – gareginc@yahoo.com

Noubar Afeyan, CEO, Flagship Ventures

Raffi Festekjian, CEO, Wolters Kluwer, PCi

We presented our initial analysis to the Board of the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia, who permitted us to listen and participate in the discussion following our presentation. The Board included:

Tigran Sargsyan, Prime Minister,
Hranush Hakobyan, Minister for Diaspora
Edward Nalbandyan, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Nerses Yeritsyan, Minister for Economy,
Tigran Davtyan, Minister for Finance,
Vahram Nercissiantz, The Chief Economic Advisor to the President
Artur Javadyan, The Chairperson of the Armenian Central Bank
Noubar Afeyan, CEO, Flagship Ventures

André Andonian, Munich Office Director, McKinsey & Company
Raffi Festekjian, CEO, Wolters Kluwer, PCI
Armen Sargsyan, Founding Director, Eurasia House International
Ruben Vardanyan, CEO, Troika Dialog
Ralph Yirikian, CEO, VivaCell-MTS
Aristomene Varoudakis, Country Manager for Armenia, World Bank

Appendix 2: Distribution of Armenian Diaspora

<i>Country</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Population</i>
Albania	500	Kyrgyzstan	3,285
Argentina	130,000	Latvia	5,000
Austria	3,000	Lithuania	2,500
Australia	35,000	Luxembourg	10
Belarus	25,000	Lebanon	234,000
Belgium	10,000	Mexico	500
Brazil	40,000	Moldova	7,000
Bulgaria	30,000	Monaco	200
Canada	40,615	Netherlands	3,000
Chile	1,000	New Zealand	600
China	16	Norway	1,000
Columbia	250	Philippines	8
Costa Rica	20	Poland	92,000
Cuba	100	Qatar	150
Cyprus	2,740	Romania	3,000
Czech Republic	10,000	Russia	2,250,000
Denmark	3,000	Senegal	15
Dominican Republic	75	Singapore	35
Egypt	6,500	South Africa	200
Estonia	2,000	South Korea	12
Ethiopia	400	Spain	1,000
Finland	1,000	Sudan	1,000
France	450,000	Swaziland	8
Georgia	460,000	Sweden	5,000
Germany	42,000	Switzerland	5,000
Ghana	15	Syria	150,000
Greece	20,000	Tajikistan	6,000
Hungary	15,000	Thailand	1,000
Honduras	900	Turkey	80,000
Hong Kong	16	Turkmenistan	32,000
India	560	UAE	3,000
Indonesia	10	Ukraine	150,000
Iran	100,000	United Kingdom	18,000
Iraq	20,000	United States	1,400,000
Ireland	50	Uruguay	19,000
Israel	3,000	Uzbekistan	70,000
Italy	2,500	Venezuela	2,500
Ivory Coast	20	Vietnam	8
Japan	10	Yugoslavia	10,000
Jordan	51,533	Zambia	8
Kazakhstan	25,000	Zimbabwe	28
Kuwait	5,000	Total	6,092,897

Source: <http://www.armeniadiaspora.com/followup/index.html> (cited in Hergnyan and Makaryan 2006)

Appendix 3. Distribution of Diaspora-connected (DCIR) and Foreign Investors by Countries, 1994-2004

No	Country	DCI	Total number of foreign Investors	% of DCI in total
1	Afghanistan	0	2	0%
2	Argentina	3	3	100%
3	Australia	16	16	100%
4	Austria	6	9	67%
5	Bahamas	2	6	33%
6	Belarus	13	16	81%
7	Belgium	21	24	88%
8	Belize	1	2	50%
9	Brazil	8	8	100%
10	Bulgaria	30	34	88%
11	Canada	50	58	86%
12	China	0	60	0%
13	Cuba	3	3	100%
14	Cyprus	16	56	29%
15	Czech Republic	15	21	71%
16	Denmark	0	1	0%
17	Egypt	5	9	56%
18	Estonia	4	4	100%
19	Ethiopia	1	1	100%
20	France	119	133	89%
21	Great Britain	51	103	50%
22	Georgia	86	110	78%
23	Germany	48	70	69%
24	Greece	24	29	83%
25	Hungary	1	2	50%
26	Iceland	0	2	0%
27	India	5	48	10%
28	Iran	336	846	40%
29	Iraq	9	10	90%
30	Ireland	1	7	14%
31	Israel	17	19	89%
32	Italy	13	45	29%
33	Japan	0	2	0%
34	Jordan	11	11	100%
35	Kazakhstan	13	14	93%
36	Korea, Rep	0	8	0%
37	Kuwait	2	2	100%
38	Kyrgyz Republic	4	4	100%
39	Latvia	15	15	100%
40	Lebanon	91	111	82%
41	Lichtenstein	4	5	80%
42	Lithuania	3	6	50%
43	Luxembourg	4	5	80%
44	Malaysia	0	2	0%
45	Moldova	1	2	50%
46	Monaco	3	3	100%

47	Morocco	0	1	0%
48	Netherlands	24	37	65%
49	Norway	0	1	0%
50	Pakistan	0	9	0%
51	Panama	1	3	33%
52	Poland	9	16	56%
53	Romania	3	3	100%
54	Russia	732	818	89%
55	Seychelles	0	1	0%
56	Singapore	0	1	0%
57	Slovakia	1	5	20%
58	Spain	5	5	100%
59	Sweden	8	9	89%
60	Switzerland	31	42	74%
61	Syria	96	119	81%
62	Tajikistan	0	1	0%
63	Tanzania	0	1	0%
64	Thailand	2	2	100%
65	Turkey	41	72	57%
66	Turkmenistan	4	6	67%
67	UAE	13	19	68%
68	Ukraine	32	35	91%
69	USA	457	517	88%
70	Uzbekistan	9	10	90%
71	Venezuela	1	1	100%
72	Yugoslavia	2	3	67%
Total		2526	3684	69%

Source: Hergnyan, M. and Makaryan, A. (2006) The Role of the Diaspora in Generating Foreign Direct Investment in Armenia. Economy and Values Research Center. <http://www.ev.am/en/researchinsights/Diaspora/>

Appendix 4. Number of Foreign Investors in Armenia

Year	Total	DCC	DCC Share in Total
1994	97	77	79%
1995	263	166	63%
1996	244	163	67%
1997	268	179	67%
1998	239	152	64%
1999	257	156	61%
2000	254	144	57%
2001	225	152	68%
2002	296	210	71%
2003	299	230	77%
2004	368	291	79%
Total	2810	1920	68%

Source: Hergnyan, M. and Makaryan, A. (2006) The Role of the Diaspora in Generating Foreign Direct Investment in Armenia. Economy and Values Research Center.
<http://www.ev.am/en/researchinsights/Diaspora/>

Appendix 5. Number of Companies with Foreign Capital in Armenia

Year	Total	DCIR	DCIR Share in Total
1994	127	102	80%
1995	330	219	66%
1996	326	212	65%
1997	340	224	66%
1998	324	203	63%
1999	344	207	60%
2000	350	198	57%
2001	298	210	70%
2002	393	269	68%
2003	394	303	77%
2004	458	379	83%
Total	3684	2526	69%

Source: Hergnyan, M. and Makaryan, A. (2006) The Role of the Diaspora in Generating Foreign Direct Investment in Armenia. Economy and Values Research Center.
<http://www.ev.am/en/researchinsights/Diaspora/>