

Emerging Diasporas: Exploring Mobilization Outside the Homeland

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An enormous number of people are leaving their homelands around the world today. This has happened several times in the past, but migration has spiked in recent years. These population movements can have significant effects on both the host country (where emigrants or refugees settle), as well as politics back in the homeland. Why do some groups mobilize, and in what ways, after they leave their homelands? In this article, we examine a number of factors that may impact when emigrated groups mobilize after they move. We develop a new dataset on potential diasporas in the United States to evaluate a series of hypotheses; including those about motivations for mobilization such as identity maintenance, the objective plight of co-ethnics in the homeland, and group capacity to mobilize. We find some merit in the identity preservation argument and a strong effect of geographic concentration of the diaspora segment. Surprisingly, diaspora mobilization does not appear to be strongly related to conflict in the homeland among these groups.

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Lord Acton once famously declared “exile is the nursery of nationality,” asserting that moving away from one’s homeland would lead people to mobilize politically around a national or ethnic identity.¹ There are several spectacular examples of this, such as the Jewish, Greek, and Armenian groups that became highly politically active outside their putative homelands. Yet, many other groups leave their homeland only to assimilate into the dominant society of their adoptive country. Even among groups that retain their identity once settled in their host state, there is variation in the strength and orientation of mobilization—some groups form cultural associations while others engage in overt political action surrounding their identity.

This article explores the determinants of mobilization for potential diasporas whose members immigrated to the United States. By comparing groups that vary in how they mobilize post-immigration, we work to identify factors that explain variation in cultural and political activism. In contrast to conventional wisdom, we find the plight of the kin population back in the homeland is not strongly related to diaspora mobilization. Instead, we find support for arguments focusing on the imperatives of identity preservation and on group capacity to mobilize.

Although there is a growing awareness among scholars that migration and diasporic communities have an important impact on inter-state and sub-state conflict (Greenhill, 2010; Rügger, 2019; Fisk 2019), not all immigrant communities try to influence politics in their homelands, nor do all of them mobilize around diasporic identities (Adamson, 2006; Chaudhary, 2018). Why do some groups mobilize around their homeland identity after they emigrate, while others do not? Why do some groups engage in direct lobbying in support of foreign policy related to their homeland, while others do not?

¹ Cited in Shain (2007).

Most of the early literature on conflict and diaspora mobilization consisted of small-N research or idiographic case studies of highly mobilized groups, such as the impact of Jewish Americans on the Palestinian conflict or Armenian Americans on the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. In the past several years, scholarship has shifted towards a more comparative approach (Marinova, 2017; Koinova, 2018a; Mavroudi, 2018) with some use of survey and large-N quantitative analysis (Hall, 2016; Gamlen et al., 2019; Ragazzi, 2014). There has been a recognition of the need to acknowledge the specific contexts in which mobilization occurs, considering factors such as intersectionality (Koinova, 2016; Kadhum, 2019) and the socio-spatial context in which diasporic activists operate and to which they have linkages (Koinova, 2017). Nevertheless, selection bias in favor of mobilized communities and a dearth of large-scale quantitative analyses have stymied our understanding of why some immigrant groups mobilize around a diaspora identity, whereas others fail to do so (c.f. Koinova, 2018b; Waldinger, 2015; King & Melvin, 2000).

To identify the conditions associated with diaspora mobilization, we undertake a large-N quantitative evaluation of emigrated groups in the United States.² Building on existing theories of diaspora mobilization, we test a series of hypotheses about which of these group will mobilize around their émigré identity, and of those who mobilized, which of these will actively lobby the host state about homeland politics. Much of the existing work on transnational ethnic linkages is focused on regional triadic configurations where ethnic groups have a contiguous or neighboring lobby actor that intervenes on their behalf (Jenne, 2007; Cederman et al., 2009). Transnational linkages in these triadic configurations are geographically short, connecting groups that are territorially contiguous to their homelands. By contrast, transnational linkages that connect groups to homelands across

² The United States provides a good testing ground, with a great deal of in-migration and a relatively open political system.

considerable geographical space (and sometimes across time) have received comparatively less treatment in the literature.³

We consider three hypothesized drivers of diaspora mobilization in this article: identity preservation needs of the emigrated group; the urge to rescue kin in the homeland, and the mobilization capacity of potential diasporas. Understanding when and how groups mobilize into thriving diasporas helps us to better understand the nature of the relationship between diasporas, their host states, and their homelands.

Diasporas

There has been much debate over what a diaspora is and what it is not (Butler, 2001; Grossman, 2019). Scholars have quarreled over whether to use a positivist or constructivist lens to conceive of diasporas, with the latter leading to a continuation of what Brubaker (2005) critiqued as “let-a-thousand-diasporas bloom” approach (Grossman, 2019). Our focus here is on the factors that drive groups of emigres to mobilize to the extent they could be considered a diaspora. As such we define diaspora as an ethno-nationalist community whose members identify with an external homeland territory or country.

We align our definition with Grossman’s (2019: 1267) approach where factors are a “transnational community whose members (or their ancestors) emigrated or were dispersed from their original homeland but remain oriented to it and preserve a group identity.” Ethnicity serves as a natural indicator of common origin from a homeland. While the focus on ethnicity as a core component of diasporic identity has not gone uncontested (Anthias, 1998), ethno-nationalist communities are a significant focus of case studies on diasporas. We additionally consider that

³ An exception is Sheffer (1986). See Haney & Vanderbush (1999) and Rubenzer (2008).

perceived ties to a group's homeland are a central defining trait of a diaspora, and it is what distinguishes diasporas from ethnic groups (such as Hispanic Americans) that do not identify primarily on the basis of homeland ties.

In this article, we begin with all significant immigrant communities in the United States to explore why some engage in more or less diasporic mobilization. These groups come from countries that they may or may not perceive as their homeland. This includes both groups without states that claim a homeland (such as the Catalans in Spain) and groups that are associated with homelands where their co-ethnics make up the ethnic majority of such states (such as the Spanish in Spain).

We examine two conceptualizations of mobilization. First, mobilization is defined as collective action by group members related to the homeland identity and is generally understood as the collective participation of a group in organizations centered around the group's cultural identity or homeland politics. Second, diasporic organizations in the host country can engage in overt lobbying of the host government connected to this identity. Lobbying the host state is defined as intentional campaigns by representatives of the group to change the host state's policy toward the group's homeland.

Mobilization around Homeland Identity

The existing literature provides three broad explanations for variation in political identity and mobilization. These include 1) motives for the group to engage in identity preservation, 2) perceived or actual threats to the group's kin in the homeland state, and 3) the group's relative capacity for diaspora mobilization. Broadly speaking, we expect the greatest explanatory purchase to be offered by *domestic* factors related to both the group and its relationship with the host society and/or government. This expectation is largely driven by prior work (c.f. Saideman & Ayres, 2008), which

has found domestic political factors such as internal bargaining leverage and political competition matter more than distant dynamics in mobilizing groups.

Identity preservation

A significant benefit of mobilization for a diaspora relates to “identity preservation” (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Shain, 2007). The benefits of mobilization differ for the kin abroad versus kin in the homeland, and their interests are not perfectly aligned. For homeland kin, identity-based mobilization is predominantly a strategy for attaining material benefits through concrete policy change where they live, such as affirmative action or economic reparations, protection from discrimination, or education or language rights. For the emigrated group, however, the benefits of mobilization are different. Because their members no longer reside in the homeland (or perhaps never did), they are unlikely to benefit materially from policy changes ` confer practical advantages upon kin in the homeland. If members of the diaspora have immediate ties to their homeland kin, the benefits of such policies are more directly felt (such as close relatives benefiting directly). However, if they have been gone for a long time, its members are unlikely to have more than virtual ties to the individuals who live there.

As their ties to the homeland become increasingly ephemeral, emigrated groups must work to actively maintain their identity, as opposed to fully assimilating into their host state’s dominant identity. While individuals who have left the homeland may have little to no direct connection to it, they can receive a psychic benefit of participation in the collective identity. Numerous case studies have examined the techniques individual diasporas use to transmit identities (c.f. Graf, 2018; Lauer, 2015), including the utilization of online communications to traverse across borders (c.f. Westbrook & Saad, 2017).

Factors shaping the strength of motivation to retain the homeland identity should affect the extent to which we see mobilization of diasporas. Several hypotheses emerge from this discussion. First, we expect emigrated groups created by non-violent, agent-centered processes will be mostly forward-looking and perceive fewer common interests with kin left in the homeland. Redclift (2017) notes the importance of preserving shared trauma to bind a diaspora together and maintain a common identity. Grievances may also solidify the centrality of that identity. By contrast, groups that left voluntarily, migrating in search of economic opportunities, may see their links to their homeland as less essential. They are more likely to be forward-looking, reducing the utility of identity preservation through mobilization.

Thus, voluntary migration is likely to reduce the chance of diasporic mobilization. The corollary is that groups created by forced migration are *more* likely to forge a common identity based on this experience and to be retrospective about their loss. Koinova (2016: 501) argues “traumatic contentious issue[s]”, such as the massacre of Bosniaks in the UN enclave of Srebrenica, embed in the relationship between homeland and diaspora, and sustain mobilization in a way not experienced by diasporas without a unifying grievance.⁴

To illustrate, Bamyeh (2007: 92) describes the psychology of Palestinians in the diaspora as being deeply moved by the sense that exile was temporary and that accepting the permanence of diaspora would be accepting injustice. These factors, he argues, motivate the Palestinian diaspora to mobilize in order to rectify the wrongs done to them.

H1: Groups that experienced involuntary migration are more likely to mobilize than those that experienced voluntary migration.

⁴ People have heterogenous experiences within groups. Future work could address differences across waves of migration.

The length of time that has lapsed since the group's exodus should also affect the strength of identity, though there are two competing possibilities. Ties with homeland kin may weaken over time, as those directly connected with the homeland are replaced by newer generations that have no personal experience with the homeland. Butler (2001) asserts recently emigrated groups identify more strongly with their homelands, which should increase mobilization. In contrast, Redclift (2017) notes the passing of generations can lead to a shift in diasporic identities. She highlights the role of older Biharis (North Indians who migrated to pre-independence Bangladesh) in the United Kingdom retaining a "Bihari" identity, while younger generations refer to themselves as Pakistani. However, it may be perceived ties with the homeland strengthen over time, as more established communities tend to have more resources and greater capacity for mobilization (Esman, 1986) and new generations can retain their identity with new variations (Blachnicka-Ciacek, 2018).

Though one of the first groups to immigrate to America, Irish-Americans have nonetheless mobilized into a formidable force for Irish causes. Not least of which was the role the community played in first supporting the IRA during 'the Troubles' through NORAID and the Irish National Caucus, and then lobbying the Clinton administration to prioritize a peace negotiations in Northern Ireland through Americans for a New Irish Agenda (Cochrane, 2007).

H2a: The *longer* the time since emigration, the more likely the group is to mobilize.

In contrast, the Somali case shows the reverse effect. Somalia experienced an exodus after the Siad Barre regime was ousted in 1991 and subsequent civil war. Somalis living abroad in 2015 numbered two million, compared to Somalia's internal population of 10.8 million (Connor & Krogstad, 2016). Somalis have mobilized as an effective force to assist in

reconstruction and relief efforts in their home country. Somalis abroad have utilized private media channels to raise emergency aid in instances of drought and violence, invested in small and medium sized enterprises to help in economic recovery, and founded NGOs to sustain local development institutions in villages across the country (Sheikh & Healy, 2009).

H2b: The *shorter* the time since emigration, the more likely the group is to mobilize.

The logic of identity preservation also suggests immigrant groups that are less distinct from the majority society of the host country should be more likely to mobilize, because doing so helps them to maintain a distinctive community. Groups that share much in common with their host society will feel that their identity is at risk. By contrast, groups that are highly distinct from the prevailing racial, religious, linguistic and other traits of the host country will not have to engage in such efforts to prevent assimilation. Whether and how to maintain these identities can be contentious. Previous work has detailed instances of intra-diasporic tensions when one part of the group feels a core factor to its identity comes under threat. Some Sri Lankan Tamils in the United Kingdom distinguish their identity based on their suffering during the Sri Lankan Civil War, while others (from India and other non-Sri Lankan Tamils) do not center on this (Jones, 2014).

A comparison of the Irish and Chinese diasporas in the US is illustrative. While Americans of Chinese descent are racially, linguistically, and religiously distinct from the majority of Americans, many have opted to ally with other Asian diasporas to form an Asian-American identity (Kibria, 1997). In contrast, though aspects of Irish religion, language, and culture are ubiquitous in American life, cultural and political organizations

dedicated to maintaining Irish America's culture and ties to the motherland have remained strong.

H3: Groups with identities similar to the host countries (race, language, religion) are more likely to mobilize than groups dissimilar to the host state.

Threats to homeland kin

Another set of arguments focus on objective threats facing people remaining in the homeland. Events in the homeland, especially the plight of their kin still residing there, can create incentives for mobilization. When the kin in the homeland are believed to be in danger, this may heighten incentives for mobilization around a shared identity, causing members of the community to organize in an effort to call attention to the plight of their homeland kin.

The status of the homeland kin may influence the diaspora's mobilization in several ways. If the homeland kin are in jeopardy, there is a ready-made and emotionally charged focal point for mobilization of the emigrated group.⁵ Civil war can intensify concerns for individuals or the kin group at large, increasing motivation to mobilize on their behalf. This can be seen in the mobilization of the Croatian diaspora in the United States during the 1990-91 Serbo-Croatian war, as ethnic Croatians mobilized to assist their kin (Hockenos, 2003). Similarly, the 1998-2000 war with Ethiopia served to unite the Eritreans abroad (Bernal, 2014). Emotionally charged messages of support for the Eritrean military coincided with a tripling in remittances sent home. People from around the world have joined in a social media campaign to tweet pleas for of Uyghur, Kazakh, and

⁵ Shain (2002) suggests peace maybe be perceived as a threat to the diasporic identity.

other Muslim minorities from Chinese political re-education camps targeting and creating an online archive of victim testimonies using the hashtag ‘#MeTooUyghur’ (Ramzy, 2019).

H4: Groups are more likely to mobilize if their kin in the homeland face serious risks to their identities and/or their lives.

Capacity

A third set of arguments focuses on capacity to mobilize around diasporic identities. The capacity to mobilize is crucial to successful collective action—an insight from the now voluminous social movements literature. Social movements are unlikely to occur or succeed in the absence of sufficient mobilizational resources (finance, social capital, leadership, networks, and institutions), framing (narratives to mobilize), and political opportunity structures (a political environment that permits the emergence of collective action) (McAdam et al., 2001; Tarrow, 2005).

We focus on a key characteristic of emigrated groups that should influence their ability to mobilize: geographic concentration (Toft, 2002, Horowitz, 1985). This is not to say that other factors are unimportant. Yet, our exploration of diasporas in the United States holds the political opportunity structure relatively constant across groups, at least in terms of the openness of the democratic system, although some variation exists based on trends of xenophobia emerging out of specific eras such as the War on Terror and the Cold War.⁶

Patterns of settlement vary once emigrated groups reach a host state. Groups that are geographically concentrated should find it easier to mobilize than those that are dispersed. Work in the field of ethnic conflict has demonstrated concentrated groups tend to mobilize

⁶ Liberal society permits associations to operate freely and lobby related to foreign policy (Fair, 2005).

more effectively than dispersed groups for a variety of reasons (Gurr, 2000; Toft, 2002). Concentrated groups will face lower barriers to organizing, as people will be in closer contact, likely have access to similar resources, and face similar challenges within their local environments. Depending on the host state's electoral rules, geographically concentrated groups may also have more political power as their votes often matter more if concentrated, so the probability of successfully influencing policy may encourage mobilization.⁷

For instance, the concentration of Cuban Americans in southern Florida not only allowed the diaspora lobbyists like the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) to curry-favor with politicians running in districts in which Cubans make up a powerful voting block, but also allowed the CANF agents to rally the community from a centralized location with localized references (Pérez, 2014).

H5: Geographically concentrated groups are more likely to mobilize around a diasporic identity than geographically dispersed groups.

While we endeavor to evaluate these hypotheses in a cross-national study of group mobilization, we recognized that mobilization is not a one-time event; diasporas have a “lifecycle,” they mobilize or de-mobilize as new factors come into play (Baser, 2014; Redclift, 2017). At times, mobilization can occur due to factors exogenous to the diaspora itself. Literature on activism makes clear the role interested parties can play on mobilizing transnational movements (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). In the case of diasporas, these actors can be political movements and leaders from the host

⁷ Highly concentrated groups may cohere into a single large organization, but many concentrated groups are characterized by organizational fragmentation (Cunningham, 2014).

state (Vanderbush, 2009; Marinova, 2017), the homeland (Koinova & Tsourapas, 2018; Wayland, 2004), or international civil society (Markarian, 2005; Betts & Jones, 2016).

Exogenous factors can also inhibit the mobilization of a diaspora. Chaudhary and Moss (2019) suggest many works overlook constraints on participation in homeland politics. Moss (2019) argues that the needs of the homeland rebel groups and the diaspora's resources conditioned diaspora attempts to aid homeland kin during the Arab Spring. Koinova (2017) advocates focusing on the sociospatial positionality of diaspora political agents within a multinational environment as a factor in diaspora mobilization.

A limitation of our approach and new data is that we have not identified 'entrepreneurs' who may contribute to or inhibit mobilization. Identifying the effect of exogenous forces, and empowered community actors behind diaspora organizations would be a worthwhile extension.⁸ Given our limitations, we assume each potential diaspora exists in an orbit of actors seeking opportunities to encourage or discourage mobilization. We seek to identify factors which predispose individuals to conceive of themselves as members of a diaspora, providing a fertile ground for these actors, and as such, advance the conversation on the unique social and political pressures which these communities face.

Quantitative analysis

We have created a new dataset on the mobilization behavior and characteristics of emigrated groups in the United States from 1980 to 2010. We focus on groups that have immigrated to the United States for two reasons. First, there has been a great deal of immigration to the United States,

⁸ See ERC Project "Diasporas and Contested Sovereignty" (Koinova & Karabegović, 2019).

which allows us to examine a large number of cases. Second, there is significant variation in the extent to which these groups have mobilized around their cultural identity and homeland politics.

One of the major challenges in creating a dataset of diaspora mobilization is identifying which groups should be included in the data. That is, who are the potential diasporas? To study diaspora mobilization, we must recognize that these political dynamics, and our understanding of them, are to some degree endogenous. Take a hypothetical example of the extreme case of non-mobilization. A group emigrates from their homeland, and on arrival, all members separate and assimilate with no further contact. This group would not be identified as a potential candidate for further mobilization into a diaspora, and thus we would not include it in our study because we no longer identify these people as an emigrated group with kinship ties.

To deal with this challenge, we set our selection criteria to include groups that immigrated to the U.S. from an identifiable homeland, but that are not necessarily mobilizing on behalf of their kin in that homeland. In doing so, we began our data collection with a list of all ethnic groups that in the world developed by James Fearon and David Laitin (Fearon, 2003).

Based on the initial list, we identify the following: 1) whether there was evidence that a specific ethnic group had kin that immigrated to the United States, 2) whether that segment of the group has maintained their distinct ethnic identification, and 3) whether and how that emigrated group has mobilized after emigration. We amalgamated groups if they self-identified with a broader identity post-emigration. For example, several groups from Pakistan see themselves as Pakistani-Americans while others categorize themselves by sub-national identities, such as Baloch. The former are coded in the dataset as Pakistani-Americans and the latter are coded as Balochi-Americans, leading to two separate groups based on their self-identification. The unit of analysis is the emigrated group-year with the number of groups in the United States ranging from 221 to 250 in

a given year over the study period. We employ this 31-year time frame as a sample of convenience. Data is likely to be available for the past few decades (as opposed to much further back in time).

Coders utilized the *Encyclopedia of Diasporas* (Ember et al., 2004), *Encyclopedia of the World's Minorities* (Skutsch, 2005), as well as online resources such as the CIA World Factbook and the World Culture Encyclopedia to identify immigration patterns and continued group identification. In cases in which an ethnic group immigrated to the United States (and maintained identification as such) we record a population estimates using the U.S. Census records.

Measuring Mobilization

Previous scholars have identified multiple ways in which diasporas can be thought to have “mobilized,” providing several opportunities with which to measure mobilization quantitatively. Diaspora claims have been made through host-state channels, transnational channels, or a combination of the two (Koinova, 2014) and these efforts vary in their intensity over time (Koinova 2016). Single case studies provide examples of how Irish (Cochrane, 2007) and Cuban (Pérez ,2014) diasporas directly lobbied the U.S. government to adopt certain foreign policy stances pertaining to the home-state, while the Ethiopian diaspora used transnational ties to wade directly into home-state politics (Lyons, 2014).

To capture the type and degree of diasporic mobilization, we code three variables for each group in the dataset: the degree of cultural mobilization, the degree of political mobilization around homeland politics, and whether the group engages in lobbying the host-state related to homeland politics. Our primary interest is in explaining which groups will mobilize around a diasporic identity, when this will focus on homeland politics, and whether political mobilization extends to lobbying for host state intervention in the group’s homeland.

Cultural mobilization involves engaging members of the group to build and maintain identification with co-ethnic kin from the same homeland. Such activities can include celebration of holidays associated with the homeland, the organization of educational exchanges or tourism to the homeland, or participation in homeland-themed social functions. Wilcock (2018) notes preservation of cultural commonalities is a necessity in maintaining a mobilized diasporic identity. This “cultural” measure excludes political campaigns related to homeland politics. It is difficult to measure such activities reliably over all groups in the dataset, so we have chosen to use an indirect proxy—the number of cultural organizations devoted to group in the United States each year. *Cultural organizations* is an ordinal variable that captures the approximate number of cultural organizations associated with the group in a year.⁹

0 = no cultural organizations

1 = 1-24 cultural organizations

2 = 25-50 cultural organizations

3 = 51 or more cultural organizations.

In about 36% of group-year observations, the group has no cultural organizations. There were 1 – 24 organizations in about 37% of observations; about 8% of observations have 25 – 50 cultural organizations, while about 19% have over 50 cultural organizations. Nearly half (43% of the groups) experience some change in these values over the sample time period.

We code *homeland organizations* an ordinal variable that captures the number of organizations that focus explicitly on homeland politics, following the same scale as the cultural organizations measure. The cultural and homeland organization variable codings were mutually exclusive. If an organization worked on both cultural and political goals related to the homeland, we coded

⁹ We initially coded the number of organizations, but found the data falling into these four groups and were uncertain about the relevance of counting every single organization.

according to the dominant focus of the organization. We find that fewer groups are engaged in homeland rather than cultural diasporic mobilization. There were no homeland organizations in about 61% of group-year observations. About 35% of observations have 1 – 24 organizations, about 1% have 25 – 50, and 3% are coded as having greater than 50 organizations. Figure 1 shows the distribution of values on both these measures of mobilization. About 38% of observations had both cultural and political organizations.

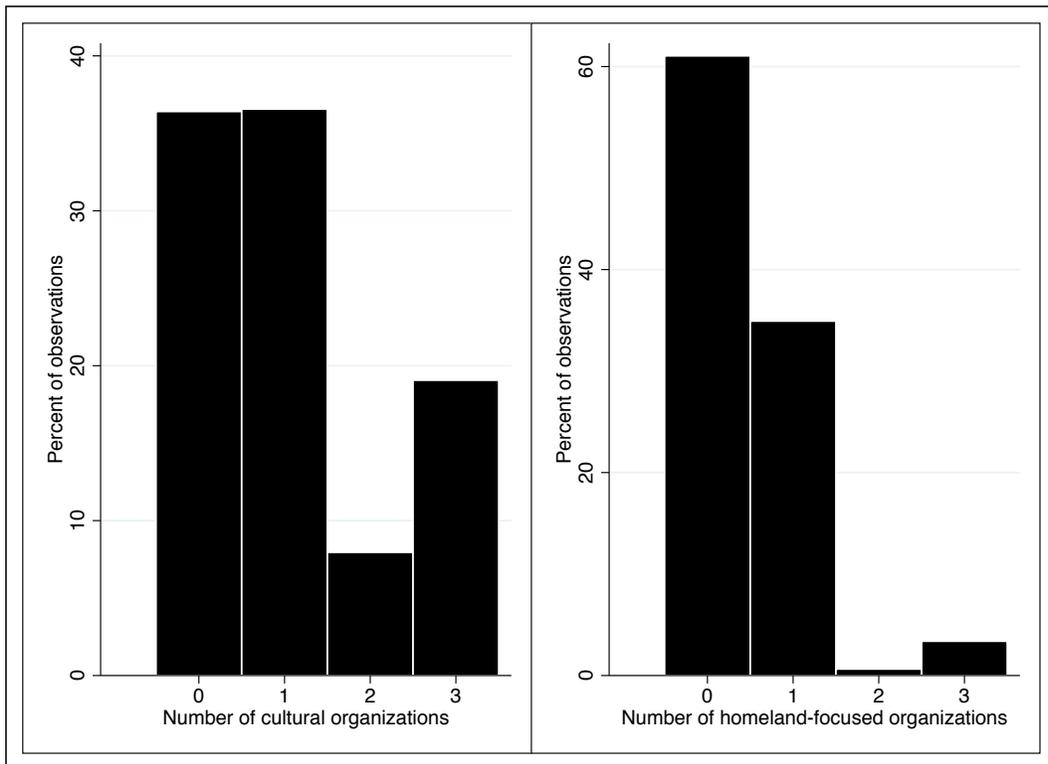


Figure 1. Distribution of cultural and homeland organizations data

To estimate the number of cultural and political organizations, coders utilized the same resources used to establish presence and maintained identity in the United States, as well as general internet searches to identify potential organizations of interest. The organizations' websites and

media articles concerning them were then examined to determine the nature and activities of the organization, and well as the years in which they were active.¹⁰

One concern for this coding strategy is that the number of organizations may be a proxy for the size of the diaspora itself. In other words, larger groups will naturally display higher degrees of mobilization through the operation of more cultural and political organizations, whereas smaller groups will be unable to muster the numbers to operate similar numbers of organizations.¹¹ We confirm in our data that mobilization is not always reflective of size. Between 1980 and 1989, for example, we code between 25 – 50 organizations (both cultural and homeland) for Ghanaians, although the group consisted of a population of only 6775 individuals in the United States. Meanwhile, in that same period, the Dutch community in the United States organized between 1 and 24 cultural and homeland-oriented organizations although they have a relatively large segment population (about 6,304,500 based on U.S. census).¹²

Of course, quantity need not reflect quality. Our data cannot indicate the success these organizations achieve. Nor can it measure the extent of activity of the organizations, which would require access to materials not publicly available, such as membership numbers, event attendance, etc. The data begins to answer the call for a greater understanding of the forces impacting diaspora mobilization, across geographic and cultural environments.

We additionally code original data on *diasporic lobbying*, which is a more direct measure of group engagement in efforts to influence the policy of host governments. This is a dichotomous

¹⁰ This may miss organizations with a smaller online footprint, thus our use of broader categories of the code the number of organizations is useful in minimizing the harm imprecision could have on our findings.

¹¹ While we argue the number of organizations are a proxy for mobilization, it is possible these numbers reflect greater political or cultural fragmentation.

¹² Correlation between group population and cultural organizations and homeland organizations is 0.18 and 0.34, respectively.

indicator that is coded 1 if organizations representing the group lobby the U.S. government; and 0 otherwise. In addition to the websites of diasporic organizations and media reports concerning them, the Center for Responsive Politics and the Sunlight Foundation's Foreign Lobbying Influence Tracker were used to obtain records of financial contributions by organizations to elected officials. Organizations were coded as having lobbied regardless of the agency, office, or department of the government which their initiatives targeted.¹³

It should also be noted that although political and lobbying organization share a high degree of overlap, the two are not synonymous. Diasporic organizations focused on homeland politics may attempt to wield influence on their host state, but do not uniformly do so. Lyons (2014) notes that prior to the 2005 election, the Ethiopian Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) maintained a transnational infrastructure. CUD supporters in the diaspora mobilized to fundraise, developed political proposals, and designated party leaders, while those based in Ethiopia focused on running elections and mobilizing voters. The diaspora leadership felt, at that time, its efforts were better served influencing homeland politics directly rather than lobbying the U.S. government.

In contrast, when the Clinton administration initially opposed the expansion of NATO, the Polish American Congress (PAC) called on its members to barrage the White House with letters and phone calls expressing concern, and to call their senators to support the NATO Participation Act which would provide military equipment to Poland and its neighbors. In addition, leaders of the PAC met in private with senators, the Deputy National Security Advisor, and Ambassador Madeline Albright, to aggressively make their case for expanding NATO (Pienkos, 1995).

Lobbying is the least frequent form of mobilization across our three indicators, occurring in about 17% of group-year observations. About 31% of groups engage in lobbying at some point

¹³ See opensecrets.org and sunlightfoundation.com.

from 1980 to 2010. We also find that there has been a steady increase in the number of groups that lobby the United States over time since the 1990s (Online Appendix 14).

There are overtime changes in each of these mobilization indicators within specific groups in our sample. More than 25% of groups show some change in homeland-focused mobilization, and 44% of groups do with respect to cultural mobilization. Over 20% of groups show some change in direct lobbying behavior over time.

Measuring Independent Variables

Voluntary emigration (H1) is an ordinal variable that is coded 0 if the migration was largely compelled by violence and repression, 1 if the migration was a mix of compelled and voluntary migration, and 2 if migration was largely by choice. In the majority of observations (about 68%), migration was voluntary. It is compelled in about 15% of observations, and there is a mix of compelled and voluntary migration in the remaining 17% of observations. Importantly, this variable is not static, and can change year to year as circumstances shift in the homeland.

Age (H2a and H2b) is a variable constructed by subtracting the year the group first began to arrive in significant numbers from the year of observation, so that the older the group, the larger the value for that observation. We utilize the date of the first major wave of emigration, although a number of groups in the United States are made up of a series of successive waves of migration.¹⁴ The majority of groups arrived after the 1800s, with a peak in the early 1900s.

To capture the similarity or dissimilarity of the group to the host state population (identity preservation arguments (H3)), we constructed three variables related to race, religion, and language

¹⁴ Online Appendix 15 shows the spread of dates for first arrival.

that capture differences from a primarily Caucasian, Judeo-Christian, English speaking majority in the U.S.:

- *Racial dissimilarity* is coded 1 if members of the group are people of color (i.e. not Caucasian).
- *Religious dissimilarity* is coded 1 if the group's dominant religion is not Judeo-Christian.
- *Language family dissimilarity* is an ordinal variable with values ranging from 1 to 5, with one being the most similar to English and five being most dissimilar.¹⁵

Approximately 70% of groups are racially dissimilar from the U.S. majority society, and 45% are religiously dissimilar. The majority of groups are linguistically dissimilar (with 65% having a score of 5). Only 5% of groups are very linguistically similar to the United States.

We measure *conflict in the homeland* (H4) with an indicator of whether there is active conflict (with at least 25 battle-deaths) in one or more of the group's counties of origin, based on the Uppsala Conflict Database (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2005). There is conflict in the homeland in about 30% of observations. This varies over time, with a peak of 33 homeland conflicts in 1991.

We use a measure of geographical concentration as a rough proxy for this capacity (H5). *Concentration* is coded as 0 if the population is not concentrated in one state in the United States, 1 if a plurality of the group is in one state, and 2 if the majority of the group is in one state. The group is considered dispersed (such as Greek-Americans) in about 23% of observations, somewhat concentrated (such as French Canadians) in about 58% and highly concentrated (such as Cuban-Americans) in 19% of observations. We focus on concentration because this is relatively easy to capture with available demographic data, as opposed to something like group financial capabilities.

¹⁵ See www.ethnologue.com

What Drives Diaspora Mobilization?

We employ three sets of multivariate analysis. The first two specifications examine the determinants of cultural mobilization and homeland mobilization, respectively. The final model isolates the drivers of diasporic lobbying looking at only those groups that some number of organizations mobilized around the homeland.

Table 1 presents the results of our analyses of cultural and homeland mobilization. Columns 1 and 3 include only variable specifically to test the presented hypotheses. We use ordinal logistic regression because our mobilization indicators range from zero to four, indicating increasing number of organizations. We cluster standard errors on the group. Columns 2 and 4 add two additional controls – whether the group has a right of return in a homeland and whether the group comes from multiple states. We added the right of return variable because groups that have a choice to go back home might behave differently than those that do not. The control for groups emigrating from multiple states addresses the issue that a groups whose members have ties to different homelands may be internally divided over diasporic mobilization leading to more organizations.

Table 1. Ordered logistic regressions on cultural & homeland mobilization, 1980-2010

	(1) Cultural organizations	(2) Cultural organizations	(3) Homeland organizations	(4) Homeland organizations
Voluntary emigration	0.65** (0.30)	0.53 (0.32)	0.60** (0.30)	0.61 (0.32)
Age	0.00*** (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Religious difference	-0.53 (0.34)	-0.65** (0.33)	-0.86** (0.36)	-0.95*** (0.35)
Racial difference	-0.76** (0.35)	-0.74 (0.38)	-0.22 (0.40)	-0.30 (0.46)
Language difference	-0.04 (0.14)	-0.03 (0.14)	-0.13 (0.17)	-0.12 (0.18)
Conflict in homeland (lag)	0.41 (0.30)	0.43 (0.33)	0.42 (0.32)	0.41 (0.37)
Concentrated	0.74*** (0.26)	0.75*** (0.25)	0.44** (0.22)	0.48** (0.23)
Return		0.84 (0.44)		0.41 (0.38)
From multiple states		0.66 (0.42)		0.26 (0.43)
Constant cut1	-0.83 (0.63)	0.04 (0.73)	-0.33 (0.73)	0.06 (0.80)
Constant cut2	1.35** (0.65)	2.26*** (0.76)	2.80*** (0.72)	3.16*** (0.80)
Constant cut3	1.97*** (0.65)	2.90*** (0.74)	2.99*** (0.75)	3.34*** (0.83)
Observations	6,052	5,705	6,028	5,681

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05

The analyses show clear and, in some cases unexpected, variation in determinants of mobilization around culture as opposed to homeland politics.

Identity preservation

We examine five factors related to the identity preservation hypothesis – impetus for migration (voluntary or not), age of the group in the host state, and racial, religious, and linguistic

dissimilarity. Our findings here provide mixed support for identity preservation arguments. Counter to H1, the coefficient on the impetus for migration (voluntary or not) is positive and statistically significant at the 0.05 level for cultural mobilization (model 1) and homeland mobilization (model 3). This suggests groups are more likely to be mobilized at higher levels if their emigration process was voluntary rather than involuntary (or a mix of the two). Holding other variables at their median or mode, the chance of the highest levels of mobilization are about 24% when emigration was voluntary, and about 14% when it was not (model 1). When we account for a right of return (model 2), we find decreased statistical significance for voluntary migration. Our yearly measure of the voluntariness of migration does not account for longer term historical trends that may impact perceptions of the potential diaspora population about their immigration.

In support of H2a, we find that the longer the time since the first wave of migration to the host state (i.e. the longer the group has resided in the U.S.), the more organizations they have related to cultural identity. Groups that are 38 years old (the 1st quartile in our sample) have about a 20% chance of the highest level of cultural mobilization, while those at age 170 (the third quartile) have a 30% chance of that same level of mobilization (model 1). The impact of time increases steadily over the range of ages. This supports the identity preservation logic, groups with the dimmest memories of their homeland are more likely to invest in mobilization efforts aimed to preserve their identity. Yet, this could also indicate that older groups have had time (and opportunity) to develop and to increase their capacity to mobilize.

Three out of four models return a negative and significant coefficient on religious difference. Groups that adhere to religions distinct from Judeo-Christian practice are less likely to mobilize around their identity. Holding other factors at their median or mode, the chance of the highest level of cultural mobilization is about 24% for religiously similar groups, and about 14% for those that are dissimilar (model 2). Religious difference produces a similar negative effect for homeland

mobilization, with a change from a 6% to 3% chance of achieving the highest level of mobilization (model 3). Groups that are similar to the host state population have greater incentives to mobilize around their identity to maintain their distinctiveness. Racial difference reveals a similar pattern for cultural mobilization. Groups that are racially similar have about a 40% chance of achieving the highest level of mobilization, while racially dissimilar groups have about a 23% chance of doing so (model 1).

Homeland Threats

Conflict in the homeland in the previous year returns a positive coefficient in all models, but is not significantly associated with more cultural or homeland organizations at conventional levels, contrary to H4. This null finding does not appear to be related to the time frame of the lagged term. We reproduce these models with 2, 3, 4, and 5 years lags. The coefficients on all these variables remain positive (as expected), but not statistically significant at conventional levels. We also used an alternative measure of conflict intensity (Online Appendix 8) and a measure of onset of conflict in the homeland (Online Appendix 9) and found similar results. Reproducing the analysis with a subsample of groups that experienced homeland conflict at some point in the study yields similar results (Online Appendix 10).

In recent years, there has been much discussion of the need to report null findings (Franco, et al., 2014). In this case, it is especially important to highlight this null finding as it is widely expected that diasporas mobilize as a response to conditions in the homeland. This is not an empirically supported in our sample of diasporas in the United States using the civil war measure. There are several possible explanations for this surprising non-finding. Scholarship on diasporas has established that homeland dynamics impact diaspora mobilization, in the form of ethno-sectarianism (Kadhum, 2019), transnational repression (Moss, 2016), and diaspora engagement policies

(Chaudhary, 2018). Rather than operate in isolation, it is possible that conflict exacerbates the constraints on transnational activist networks. Conflict may alter social and geo-political dynamics which influence the position of diasporas in their host states (Koinova, 2018a) and effect the value of mobilization.

An entrepreneurial role can be played by rebels in linking diaspora activists to homeland combatants in transnationalized civil wars (Adamson, 2013; Zarnett, 2017). However, conditions on the ground can limit the ability of diaspora organizations to support kin, as Wayland (2004) documents in the case the Tamils. Conflict may provide both opportunities for and constraints on political entrepreneurs seeking to tap into and mobilize the diaspora. Our finding suggests future work needs to explore the possibility of countervailing effects and conditional factors mediating the role of homeland conflict on diaspora mobilization. Examining diasporas in a different host state context may also provide insights into the conditions in which homeland conflicts leads to increased mobilization (Koinova, 2018b).

Capacity

We find strong support for the effect of capacity on mobilization for cultural and homeland mobilization. The coefficient in all models on geographic concentration are positive and statistically significant. Concentrated groups have a 24% and 6% probability of the highest level of cultural and homeland mobilization, respectively (models 1 and 3). By contrast, dispersed groups have a 13% and 4% probability of the highest level of cultural and homeland mobilization, respectively. This is consistent with general expectations in the scholarship on territory and conflict, which hold that greater geographic concentration helps groups to overcome collective action problems related to mobilization. While geographic concentration has been well established as a factor in mobilization, there remains disagreement about the relative importance of identity (Horowitz, 1985) and

opportunity related to proximity (Weidmann, 2009), and little work addresses the dynamics of organizational fragmentation as it related to geographic concentration. Future work could address additional aspects of capacity – such as financial resources and freedom to organize across different contexts – as well as dynamics related to the multiplicity of organizations in these cases.

Who Lobbies?

We use a bivariate probit model to assess the determinants of mobilization around the homeland and lobbying the host state as linked processes using a bivariate coding whether there were any organizations mobilized around the homeland and whether lobbying occurred. This technique is appropriate when the dependent variable in equation 1 (homeland mobilization) may be an endogenous regressor to the equation 2 dependent variable (lobbying the host state). This allows correlation of unobserved factors that may impact both mobilization (as organizations) and lobbying. Table 2 reports the results of this model with robust standard errors.

Table 2. Bivariate probit on diasporic mobilization and lobbying in the United States, 1980-2010

	(1) Any homeland organizations	(2) Lobby
Voluntary emigration	0.42** (0.21)	0.39 (0.22)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Religious difference	-0.57*** (0.22)	-0.35 (0.24)
Racial difference	-0.20 (0.25)	-0.36 (0.25)
Language difference	-0.07 (0.11)	0.16 (0.11)
Conflict in homeland (lag)	0.19 (0.18)	0.22 (0.21)
Concentrated	0.38*** (0.14)	0.51*** (0.17)

Return	0.18 (0.25)	-0.05 (0.28)
From multiple states	0.19 (0.26)	0.29 (0.26)
Constant	-0.04 (0.51)	-1.78*** (0.61)
Observations	5,635	5,635

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05

Groups that are religiously dissimilar from the host population are less likely to mobilize, and but not necessarily less likely to lobby the state. The single significant effect on lobbying is that of geographic concentration (H5), suggesting capacity to lobby is a central determinant of all forms of political diasporic mobilization. Concentrated groups are about 17% more likely to mobilize around homeland politics and lobby the host state than geographically dispersed groups.¹⁶ The effect of concentration on lobbying warrants additional attention in future research, especially outside the United States, as it is likely influenced by the structure of conventional political participation and access in the host state.

Further Analyses

The time frame of the study includes changes in immigration policy in the United States, particularly after 1986.¹⁷ To address this, we reproduce the analyses in Table 1 with yearly dummies (Online Appendix 1). The results are similar, with some changes in statistical significance (most notably, decreased significance of racial difference). Reproducing the bivariate probit in Table 2 with yearly dummies produces a decrease in the statistical significance of religious similarity but an

¹⁶ We also ran logistic analysis on lobbying (Online Appendix 6), finding a negative effect of racial difference and a positive effect of concentration.

¹⁷ Major changes in immigration in the U.S. occurred in 1874, 1921, 1965, 1986, and 2000. We ran the analyses for Table 1 with a post-1986 dummy (Online Appendix 7).

increase in the significance of racial similarity and conflict in the homeland on lobbying (Online Appendix 2).

There is also variation in who the potential target is that groups want the host state to intercede with (i.e. the state constituting or including the homeland). We run the models in Tables 1 and 2 clustering standard errors on the primary country of origin (Online Appendices 3 and 4). The signs of all coefficients are similar to the models in Tables 1 and 2. This robustness test examines only a limited role that the target of lobbying can play. Further work could address characteristics of these target states might produce different incentives for groups to lobby their host state, such as regime type, relative power, proximity, and alliance relationships.

Conclusion

This article provides one of the first large-n quantitative analyses of the correlates of diasporic mobilization. As such, it provides an opportunity to test differing theories of mobilization, extending beyond the earlier intensive qualitative research on single case studies. Our findings indicate a need to unpack diasporic mobilization to its component parts. One key pattern that emerges is that mobilization can take a variety of forms (cultural versus different forms of homeland focused mobilization), and these different forms of mobilization respond to different influences.

We find some support for the role of identity preservation, but it varies across aspects of identity. Groups that are more similar to the host state population (here, Caucasian and Judeo-Christian) tend to mobilize more. Not every identity matters equivalently, as religion and race are correlated with mobilization, and language difference is not. This is notable, as linguistic identities are among the most powerfully challenged in the United States—there are many incentives and pressures to learn to speak English and only modest ones to maintain homeland languages. By

contrast, one cannot easily change one's racial identity, and religious identification is less challenged in secular American society. One interpretation is that groups who cannot rely on such enduring distinctions as religious and racial identities have to do more to maintain their identities. However, future work could also explore barriers to mobilization that may be more acute for more distinct kin groups, such as open prejudices against some populations.

These analyses also suggest diaspora politics in this context tends to be more inward looking. We find little support for the notion that groups mobilize around diasporic identities primarily in response to conflict in the homeland, suggesting that (for these groups) diasporic mobilization is not primarily driven by the perceived plight of co-ethnic kin in the homeland. This is surprisingly at odds with much qualitative work on diasporas, raising a key question about the conditions under which conflict in the homeland effects diaspora mobilization and what forms this will take.

This study is a step forward in better understanding diaspora mobilization. Until now, the literature has mainly focused on the most active, most visible cases of mobilization. Now we have a better idea of the dynamics that may lead some groups to become vocal diasporas that gain the attention of media outlets, politicians, and political scientists, in contrast to emigrated groups that remain relatively dormant and are hence overlooked.

Replication Data

The dataset, codebook, and do-files for the empirical analysis in this article, along with the online appendix, are available at <https://www.prio.org/jpr/datasets/>. All analyses were conducted using Stata.

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