

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA**

**THE IMPACT OF DIASPORA AND DUAL CITIZENSHIP POLICY ON THE  
STATECRAFT PROCESS IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

**A MASTER'S ESSAY SUBMITTED TO  
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## **List of Abbreviations**

AAA	- Armenian Assembly of America
ADL	- Armenian Democratic-Liberal Party
AGBU	- Armenian General Benevolent Union
AIPRG	- Armenian International Policy Research Group
ANCA	- Armenian National Committee of America
ANCA-WR	- Armenian National Committee of America Western Region
ARF	- The Armenian Revolutionary Federation
AUA	- American University of Armenia
AYF	- Armenian Youth Federation
BIRD	- Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation
EU	- European Union
FDI	- Foreign Direct Investment
GNP	-Gross National Product
ICT	-Information Communication Technology
MFA	- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	- Non Governmental Organization
ROA	- Republic of Armenia
US	- United States
USA	- United States of America

## **Abstract**

My interest predates the economic, political and cultural importance of Armenian Diaspora and the influence of such Diaspora on the statecraft process of the Republic of Armenia after independence.

Since Diaspora communities are linked to their homeland and continue to be engaged with their fates and futures, they persist for long stretches of time. In addition, it is obvious nowadays that no one can ignore those entities and their various roles.

Initially my attention was drawn to this phenomenon after the national referendum on constitutional amendments of November 25, 2005 and further amendments on February 6, 2007 on the law of citizenship that abandoned the limitation on the Dual Citizenship.

My acquaintance with the relationship between Armenia and its Diaspora became more intimate when I, as a Diaspora member residing in Armenia, participated to the third Armenia-Diaspora Conference on September 18-20, 2006. This conference mainly focused on how the Diaspora-homeland relations have evolved; the application of culture and identity to Armenian Diaspora and to Armenia; what direction can be given to future cultural and socio-economic relations between homeland and Diaspora; political opportunities for Diaspora as non-state actors and experiences of emigration and repatriation.

I was also inspired with the Armenian International Policy Research Group International Conference entitled “Dual Citizenship: Alternative Arrangements, Economic Implications and Social Dimensions” held on June 17-18 in Yerevan, Armenia. This conference gathered the issues relevant for Dual Citizenship, including its impact on Armenia and Diaspora.

This paper examines the role and the contributions of Armenian Diaspora on the economic, political and socio-cultural life of Armenia. It examines the impact of Diaspora

and Dual Citizenship policy on the statecraft process in the Republic of Armenia after independence.

The paper offers a new approach to debate on dual citizenship within the context of Armenian's unique status as a relatively small state with a large and influential Diaspora. It examines how adaptation of Dual Citizenship will enhance the impact of the contribution.

## **Introduction**

The Armenian Diaspora is a product of Armenian history. Gevorkyan (2006) from Department of Economics, New School for Social Research; mentions that a large portion of ethnic Armenians, naturalized or born citizens of other countries, lives abroad and has strong sentimental values as well as established organizational foundations like religious and political party that support their ties with Armenia (Gevorkyan 2006).

Governments in various states offer dual citizenship with the aim of clarifying economic, political and cultural connections with their Diaspora communities. Armenia as a relatively new state faces an issue. Armenia is a former Soviet republic, isolated by the Caucasus Mountains, Turkey and Azerbaijan with limited natural resources and human capital potential. On early 1990's the Armenian Genocide scattered survivors all over the world. On the other hand, Armenia since the independence in 1991, dealt with devastating impacts of the 1988 earthquake, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict suffered a high amount of immigrants in the last sixteen years. According to the chart of Diaspora Populations per Republic of Armenia calculated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are more Armenians in the Diaspora than in Armenia - approximately three million in Armenia, and more than six million all over the world, as many as twice the amount of ethnic Armenians live outside the borders of Armenian state. The Armenian Diaspora is a large and influential force. It is wealthy and patriotic, willing and powerful resource for economic assistance. Moreover, it is the best source for political and cultural enrichment issues. Therefore, we have to consider the vital issue of Dual Citizenship. The potential benefit lies in the fact that dual citizens would provide immeasurable value to the labor market through their skills and civic experience from abroad.

Many in the Armenian Diaspora have strong desire to fully participate in the life of their historical homeland. Taken the economic, political and social potentials of the



multifaceted Diaspora applied efficiently and consistently can bring dramatic changes and help the Armenia's economy development that will transfer the society in the stable growth and prosperity direction (Gevorkyan 2006). This is the case why Armenia needs to focus on integrating Diasporans.

Some of the most important factors that determine the need for dual citizenship in Armenia are: Active Diaspora; continuous population outflow during 1990's and the economic growth (Gevorkyan 2006).

The national referendum on constitutional amendments of November 27, 2005 in Armenia and further amendments on February 6, 2007 on the law of citizenship abandoned the limitations. This lifted the legal ban on individuals holding dual-citizenship or for those planning on obtaining a second citizenship. Dual citizenship is without no doubt a step to further the path of development in Armenia.

According to Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), Dual Citizenship has to be aimed at addressing historical injustice, by providing Armenians around the world with a formal link to the country of their ancestors, and creating opportunities for repatriation and, through that, enhancing Armenia's economic potential and national security.

Moreover, Dual Citizenship in Armenia would help to bring new values of civic engagement and facilitate the transformation of state-civil society relations in Armenia.

It is in the best economic and national security interests of Armenian to engage Diasporan Armenians and former citizens of Armenia in Armenia's development. According to the proposal made for the Dual Citizenship Arrangement for the Armenian Diaspora in the Armenian International Policy Research Group International Conference entitled "Dual Citizenship: Alternative Arrangements, Economic Implications and Social Dimensions" held on June 17-18 in Yerevan, Armenia; this will facilitate Armenia's integration into the world economy, have a direct impact on the economy of Armenia through having both supply and

demand effects; assist Armenia in having good relations and also political influence on countries with large Diasporan populations; and strengthen the civil liberties and democratic processes taking place in Armenia.

Dual Citizenship offers a mechanism for Diasporan Armenians (old and new) to engage actively in Armenia without forcing them to forfeit citizenship arrangements they may have in other countries. What I mainly focus in my paper is Dual Citizenship legislation and regulations that will specially target Diasporan Armenians and Armenians from Armenia who naturalized elsewhere and were required by the existing Armenian legislation to renounce their Armenian citizenship.

Therefore the main focus of my thesis is on:

- 1) Diasporan Armenians;
- 2) Former citizens of Armenia who since independence in 1991 relinquished their Armenian citizenship upon naturalizing elsewhere as required by the Armenian Constitution;
- 3) Citizens of Armenia that choose to naturalize in another country in the future.

One of the main features of Dual Citizenship is the right to hold this status based on heritage, which does not necessarily require an individual's immediate parents to carry Armenian citizenship, but instead requires proof of Armenian heritage. The same approach is applied in Israel, Greece, Ireland, and Germany. It mainly aims at addressing historical injustice which resulted in dramatic loss of lives and territories, and was the main factor behind the creation of the Armenian Diaspora and providing Armenians around the world with a formal link to the country of their ancestors.

Comparing the ten years Special Residency Status, according to the proposal made for the Dual Citizenship Arrangement for the Armenian Diaspora in the Armenian International Policy Research Group International Conference, Dual Citizens have the right of unlimited

residency and unrestricted employment in Armenia. It is also transferable. This will facilitate the attachment to Armenia and somehow will equate the rights of Dual Citizens with those full-fledged citizens of Armenia. Therefore, this will strengthen the economic, cultural and political ties with Armenia (AIPRG 2006).

Dr. Anna Ohanian, Professor of Political Science Department at Stonehill College, Massachusetts, USA who participated in this conference stressed that Dual Citizenship can also assist the state in the provision of public goods and social services. Dual Citizenship arrangement can provide a formal link to Diaspora community to Armenia and thereby offset the retrenching welfare state.

Many nations consider the expatriate communities as a source of investment, entrepreneurial initiatives, and markets for home companies and even political representation abroad. It is on such grounds that they have granted them dual citizenship suggest A. Ohanian. She asserts that Diasporatic engagements in home countries have ranged from state and nation building processes to promoting foreign investment and supporting self-determination movements. Dual Citizenship is viewed as an instrument that can strengthen the statehood in a global context (Ohanian 2006).

### **Defining Diaspora**

Defining Diaspora is one of the features of the thesis. There is a need to identify the members of Diaspora in order to come up with the approaches that would promote and support their engagement.

The notion of Diaspora is a highly complex concept. For the purpose of discovering how Diaspora has contributed to Armenian statecraft process from the economic, political and cultural aspect there is a need to define whom we name as Diaspora.

Below, I bring several definitions of Diaspora that includes Armenians.

William Safran, Professor emeritus of Political Science at University of Colorado at Boulder, applies this concept to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics:

- 1) They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “center” to two or more “peripheral,” or foreign, regions;
- 2) They retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland-its physical location, history, and achievements;
- 3) They believe that they are not fully accepted by their host society and therefore partly feel alienated and insulted from it
- 4) They regard their ancestral homeland as their true ideal home and as the place to which they of their descendants would eventually return- when conditions are appropriate;
- 5) They believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity;
- 6) They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship (Astourian 2004).

Walker Connor’s, Visiting Professor of Political Science at Middlebury College, broad definition of Diaspora in his book “Ethnonationalism” (1994) is a good starting point to suggest that a Diaspora is the very segment of a people living outside the homeland in two or more countries that has developed institutions that demarcate it from the host society and connect it in cultural, psychological, political, or economic terms with an existing or envisioned homeland and with other such kindred communities outside that homeland.

As a result of a growing awareness of what has been called globalization, many scholars shifted their focus on the concept of Diaspora from a phenomenon bounded by the borders of nation-states to transnational ones (Astourian 2004).

In the journal “Diaspora”, a journal of transnational studies, Khachig Tölölyan, Professor of English Literature at Wesleyan University, in his background paper states that the use of Diaspora provisionally is to indicate our belief that the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meaning with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guestworker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community. He stresses that this is the vocabulary of transnationalism.

Defining Diaspora in a scientific way could become problematic. Due to the transnational relationships that Diaspora maintain, the only way diasporas can be defined is thorough self-identification and the definition of Diaspora would have to go beyond borders, nations-states and passports and could only be ascribed by members’ own self-identification of belonging to a particular Diaspora.

Armenian former Foreign Minister, Vartan Oskanian in Diaspora Conference 2006, held in Toronto, Canada, explained that the Armenian Diaspora itself is older and larger than the ‘homeland’, with the three sources of identity: the host country in which it lives; the homeland it represents, even though it may not be the country of birth; and the country of origin which offered refugees between the homeland and hostland.

Here it is important to mention that among all above definitions of Diaspora – regarded as Old Diaspora- we have to consider that in the early 1990 because of economic and humanitarian crises in Armenia and partly unemployment, almost one million Armenians have left the country since independence and have joined the established network-communities in the Diaspora across the world, particularly in Russia, Europe and the United States. They are named New Diaspora.

In my thesis, thereby, what I mean by Diaspora includes both old and new Diasporas.

## **Methodology**

As the main methods for conducting this research, comparative and policy analysis are used in this essay. Books, articles, newspaper archives, Internet information, and historical records were the main sources for observation and analysis. News monitoring has been conducted. A review of the articles, Diaspora-Armenian and Dual Citizenship conference articles, interviews and important discussions published in press and the Internet articles as well as models of several countries with classical Diaspora like Israel, Ireland, India and China have been completed to understand the role of Diaspora and Dual Citizenship policy on the statecraft process. In-depth interviews have also been conducted and notes following the conversations taken. They were further analyzed and the data have been studied and theories related to the research found.

The preliminary step was to collect the relevant literature on the topic. During the second step the research questions have been developed and analyzed. During the third step personal in-depth interviews have been conducted with the Government of the Republic of Armenia, Diaspora structure, and prominent representatives of Diaspora living in Armenia, as well as active individuals of several political parties in Armenia.

In particular, for the purposes of this study Diaspora Armenians residing both abroad and in Armenia or visiting Armenia for various reasons were contacted to get the data on relations between homeland and Diaspora as well as dual citizenship policy. For the same purpose the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Yerevan Office of the Armenian Assembly of America, Office of the Hay Dat (Armenian Cause), the Diaspora Armenian professors at the American University of Armenia and abroad were contacted successfully.

Several political parties were also contacted successfully for the information about the programs they have for Diaspora Armenia relations and Dual Citizenship policy. A

questionnaire<sup>1</sup> was developed in order to collect data via personal in-depth interviews with Diaspora structure and prominent representatives of Diaspora, several Armenian officials and several major political parties in Armenia in charge of Armenia-Diaspora relations and Dual Citizenship policy. The officials and political parties were selected purposefully.<sup>2</sup> A snowballing technique was used to find a sample of 25 interviewees.

Consequently, there is a need to attest the following hypotheses and research questions in order to understand and study attitudes toward the impact of Diaspora and Dual Citizenship on the statecraft process in the Republic of Armenia.

Hypothesis: Republic of Armenia has been advanced significantly due to contribution of Diaspora factor and adaptation of Dual Citizenship is called to further enhance that impact.

RQ1: What is the impact of Diaspora on the socio-economic life of the Republic of Armenia and how will the Dual Citizenship further develop this impact?

RQ2: What is the impact of Diaspora on the political life of the Republic of Armenia and how will Dual Citizenship influence on this impact?

RQ3: What is the impact of integrating Diaspora Armenians into the cultural fabric of Armenia and how will Dual Citizenship promote this impact?

RQ4: What is the rationale behind a Dual Citizenship arrangement for the Republic of Armenia?

RQ5: What is the impact of Armenia on Diaspora and how will Dual Citizenship influence on this impact?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the interview questions in Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> See the list of interviewees in Appendix B.

<sup>3</sup> This research question needs general overview and further consideration, since Diaspora cannot survive without Armenia contribution.

## **The Review of Literature**

For the sake of brief introduction some of the sources are referred below while reviewing the literature related to the topic.

On June 17-18, 2006, the Armenian International Policy Research Group (AIPRG) held an international conference entitled “Dual Citizenship: Alternative Arrangements, Economic Implications, and Social Dimension.” The conference also covered the legal aspects, economic and political aspects as well as international experience with dual citizenship and the regulation of Diaspora-homeland relationships. The ideas of related expertise and the researches done by them helped me a lot in order to achieve a greater understanding of the development issues related to Armenia and the Diaspora.

Among the participants Andrew Kzirian, ANCA-WR (Western Region) Executive Director, in his article “Dual Citizenship for the Republic of Armenia: Posing questions of law and circumstance” stresses that “... the Armenian Diaspora, as compared to Armenia itself, is a large and influential force that spans the entire globe. A considerable portion of the Diaspora is both wealthy and patriotic, serving as a dependable, willing and powerful resource for economic assistance and political issues. Kzirian mentions that according to Tigran Sarkisian, former head of the Central Bank of Armenia, the Diaspora’s contribution to the economy amounts to as much as \$400 million per year into charities, projects and even directly family members (Kzirian 2006).

Kzirian continues that “...There is no question that Armenia could benefit greatly from considerable injection of trained and professional individuals. Potential benefits lie in the fact that, once drawn into the economic and political life of the country, dual citizens would provide immeasurable value to the labor market through their skills and civic experiences from abroad” (Kzirian 2006).



Alexander Gevorkyan, emphasizes on the issue that “...for Armenia-a small country with a large Diaspora network- to integrate into the international community on social-economic and political levels, developing a pragmatic approach and setting up an effective Dual Citizenship institution is natural” (Gevorkyan 2006).

He mentions that “...Dual citizenship is certainly not a panacea for all Armenian troubles; however, it may be a step further on the path of development. In Armenian context, dual citizenship is bound to have strong implications on the idea of repatriation and return to Armenia of its main natural resource-its people that embody its much needed human capital. Adopting a law on dual citizenship would in effect be the required first step on the path of achieving Armenia’s long-run prosperity and growth as well as the “oneness” of all Armenians” (Gevorkyan 2006).

In his paper Gevorkyan discusses the Armenian Diaspora, their contributions and potentials; and also the main factors that determine the urgency of the concept of the dual citizenship in Armenia.

Another participant Dr. Anna Ohanyan, states that “...Dual citizenship measure can facilitate the creation of associations of Diaspora-based individuals, which could also give access to the policy-making processes at the local levels of government. Finding ways of integrating such associations to the local levels of government would facilitate community development and connect the civic engagement at the local levels.”

Stephan Astourian, Executive Director of the Armenian Studies Program at University of California, Berkeley; in “State, Homeland, and Diaspora: The Armenian and Azerbaijani case,” puts forward various definitions of “Diaspora”, well defines the Armenian Diaspora, the relationships between state, homeland, and Armenian Diaspora where he mentions that “...even though the origins of the modern Armenian Diaspora go back to the end of nineteenth century, it is after the Armenian genocide of 1915 that the size of the

preexisting communities increased as a results of the influx survivors. He supports the definition of Professor Khachig Tölölyan, the editor of the “Diaspora” journal of transnational studies that has stated the following:

“We use “Diaspora” provisionally to indicate our belief that the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now share meaning with a large semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community. This is the vocabulary of transnationalism”.

In “Diaspora” journal, Tölölyan in the background paper “The Armenian Diaspora as a transnational actor and as a potential contributor to conflict resolution” refers to ethnically conscious Armenians as “Diasporics” and distinguishes them from “ethnics” and those who are assimilated in all but name. According to this definition, a “Diasporic” is a dedicated Armenian who maintains ties with counterparts in other parts of the world and with the homeland. Diasporics share the “ruling assumptions” that (a) despite all its faults and whatever its borders, the Republic of Armenia must survive and (b) that the Diaspora must help Armenia to survive.

In this paper Tölölyan illustrates the demography, diversity and the conditions enabling coordinated action of Armenian Diaspora. He stresses the role of Diaspora elites who are able to cooperate with each other, or with the homeland government, as for example in creating the Hayastan All Armenian Fund in 1992.

Professor Tölölyan states that “...the first feature that unifies Diaspora and homeland relations is the nearly unanimous response of the Diaspora to the unexpected “shock of statehood” experienced in the period 1988-1991. The second of these unifying factors is the memory of the genocide committed by Ottoman Turkey during World War I. The third belief shared by the vast majority of Armenians in both Diaspora and the Republic of Armenia is that they share a National Identity” (Tölölyan 2006).

Tölölyan deeply defines the Armenian Diaspora's involvement in conflict resolution. He mentions that "...the Armenian Diaspora has contributed a great deal in order to sustain Armenia during the difficult transitional and confrontational period of the past sixteen years. The extent of the support can not be assessed precisely, but there is no doubt that it has been considerable" (Tölölyan 2006).

Regarding the impact of Diaspora on the economy of Armenia, I have used several sources among which the following books and materials:

Yevgeny Kuznetsov, the editor of Diaspora Networks and the International Migration of Skills, in the book "Caucasian Tiger" with the other coauthors well defines the role of Diaspora, and small and medium enterprises of the Diaspora. They illustrate the models of contribution from different countries and give recommendation how to proceed in order to make a Diaspora a source of expertise and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). It is mentioned that "...Armenia's huge asset is its entrepreneurial and very successful Diaspora. It has already contributed enormously to the country's well-being through lobbying in its respective countries for foreign aid, promoting foreign investment in Armenia from firms in its countries of residence, supplying humanitarian assistance, building transport infrastructure, transferring know-how, and providing valuable commercial contacts" (The Caucasian Tiger 2007).

Kuznetsov's definition on the role of the Diaspora in the emergence of the several Information Technology industries deserves an emphasis. He brings the example of the most successful Diasporas in knowledge-intensive sectors like the Indian Diaspora, South Africa and Mexico and the opportunities for the Diaspora to contribute. He also compares them with the Armenia's case. It is mentioned that "...Diasporas have played important roles in the economic and social change of their countries." The three phases in this process are:

- 1) Sending remittances to families in the homeland;
- 2) Long-term investment in the home country if conditions permit;

- 3) Charitable giving, done largely through nongovernmental organizations” (Kuznetsov 2006).

In the “Diaspora-Homeland Issue Paper, Armenia 2020,” Dr. Tom Samuelian, Dean of the Law Department at the American University of Armenia (AUA), explores the four key issues which are:

- 1) The current status: the role of the Armenian Diaspora today;
  - 2) Major driving forces influencing the role of the Armenian Diaspora and their relative importance;
  - 3) Major factors influencing the attitudes and the relations between the Armenian Diaspora and Armenian Government;
  - 4) Possible scenarios for development of the role of the Diaspora in Armenia.
- (Samuelian 2003).

Professor Terrence Lyons, Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution at George Mason University, in the “Globalization, Diasporas, and Conflict” describes the impact of the Diasporas on the homeland during the conflict:

“...Diasporans that have their origins in conflict and violent, forced dispersal often create transnational political networks to mobilize those outside of the homeland around issues relating to the conflict back home. Transnational political practices vary and range from providing funds for political parties, lobbying on behalf of a movement or government in the host country and in international organizations, participating in the activities of international advocacy networks of NGOs, to support for military movements through recruitment and supplying arms” (Lyons 2004).

The models of other countries could serve as an experience for Armenia.

Gabriel Sheffer, Professor of Political Science at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in his book “Diaspora Politics” stresses that his first detailed studies of homeland-Diaspora relations is focused on fund-raising by Jewish Diaspora communities and the transfer of funds to the homeland. “This has always been a very sensitive issue for all sides involved in

any homeland-Diaspora situation.” It turns out that raising donations, transferring remittances to homelands, and making investments in homelands constitute highly intricate systems, usually involving many actors who often have divergent interests. At the core of each of these systems is a triangular relationship-among the Diaspora communities, the homeland, and the host countries.

Sheffer mentions that:

“...An ethno-national Diaspora is a social-political formation. Based on aggregate decisions to settle permanently in host countries, but to maintain a common identity, diasporans identity as such, showing solidarity with their group and their entire nation, and they organize and are active in the cultural, social, economic, and political spheres. Among their various activities, members of such diasporas establish trans-state networks that reflect complex relationships among the diasporas, their host countries, their homelands and international actors” (Sheffer 2003).

According to Yakobson, A., and Rubinstein A. (2005), authors of “Democratic Norms, Diasporas, and Israel’s Law of Return”, many modern nation-states maintain warm connections with their national Diasporas. Moreover, the trend in modern democratic-liberal thinking is to encourage and legitimize connections of this sort. Of course, no state, as they mention for the Jewish case can “demand” loyalty and identification from citizens of another country. However, Jews around the world freely express broad affinity and support toward Israel. Jewish history and the culture of Jewish solidarity combine with the sense that Israel is in peril to give enormous strength to this bond (Yakobson & Rubinstein 2005).

“The energy, the people of Armenia fund and other Armenian institutions - they’ve been very generous (in) helping Armenia to grow and develop, and that’s tremendously helped Armenia’s economic development.”

Vartan Oskanian

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs

Statement made at the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, November 2005

### **Economic Contribution**

Human capital plays an integral role in the modern theory of economic growth. Gevorkyan (2006) states that in Armenian context, human capital comes not just in the form of able-bodied, educated and large labor force, but in the form of specific project investment, i.e. that venture capital follows people in this case (Gevorkyan 2006).

Diasporas’ economic potential to support both families through remittances and political initiatives with direct monetary funding has been well researched. In Diaspora conference (Canada, 2006) Carlo Dade of the Canadian Foundation for the Americas delineated three ways in which Diasporas contribute to the economies of their homelands. As he stated in the conference: First, Diasporas fuel foreign direct investment (FDI), an example being China in the 1990’s where roughly %60 of the FDI flowed from Diaspora. The second role Diasporas play is through trade. Cross-cultural exchange has played a crucial role in human history and the development of international trade in general. Finally Diaspora remittances, the transaction of funds from Diaspora to homeland households, are used to invest in human capital such as education, housing, and health (Diaspora conference 2006).

Armenia with limited natural resources since independence in 1991 has dealt with devastating impacts of the 1988 earthquake; the Nagorno Karabagh conflict; experienced effects of shock therapy economic policies in transition from the socialist economy to capitalism and also operates under the conditions of blockade by turkey and Azerbaijan. The early 1990 were the years of economic and humanitarian crises in Armenia. As a

consequence of the socio-economic disruptions of the early 1990s, and partly due to difficulties finding jobs, almost one million Armenians have left the country since independence and have joined the established network-communities in the Diaspora across the world (Gevorkyan and Grigorian 2003).

Other, though related, reasons for low investment and business formation rates according to Grigorian (2006) included all the usual impediments faced in transition economies, as well as uncertainties related to regional instability, isolation from large export markets, and the small size of the domestic economy. An important and, as yet, under-exploited asset is the large Diaspora of ethnic Armenians around the world. Given reasonable chance of positive results and availability of appropriate vehicles for involvement, it seems certain that many Diaspora Armenians would become more involved in Armenia for volunteer activities to advance social and cultural causes, as well as for business ventures and investments to bring about economic growth and development (Gevorkyan and Grigorian 2003). Public- Private Partnership could be important in exploiting opportunities, such as realizing greater involvement by the Diaspora.

Armenia's huge asset which is its highly entrepreneurial and very successful Diaspora has already contributed enormously to the country well-being through promoting foreign investment in Armenia from firms in its countries of residence, supplying humanitarian assistance, building transport infrastructure, transferring know how, and providing valuable commercial contacts. Among the many important business projects we can name the entry of the HSBC Bank, the management of the Yerevan Airport, and the development of the ICT sector (The Caucasian Tiger 2006).

The Armenian Diaspora is massive: more than one million Armenians live in the United States, and at least another million in Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and another one and half million Russian Armenians could be counted as well (The Caucasian

Tiger 2006). This Diaspora is famously successful both economically and professionally according to the authors of *Caucasian Tiger*. In addition to this, a considerable portion of the Diaspora is patriotic, willing and powerful resource for economic assistance and political issues mentions Kzirian in the AIPRG conference in 2006.

Many in the Armenian Diaspora have strong desire to fully participate in the life of their historical homeland. Taken the economic potentials of the multifaceted Diaspora applied efficiently and consistently can bring dramatic changes and help to the Armenia's economy development that will transfer the society in the stable growth and prosperity direction (Gevorkyan 2006). One of the vital components of stable economic development as states Gevorkyan (2006) is a consistent flow of investment funds into real activity and technical innovation.

The fiscal and monetary policies initiated in the mid 1990s conditioned by financial inflows of remittances from Armenians living abroad and few large infrastructure projects funded by Diasporan organizations contributed to the current conditions of economic growth (Gevorkyan 2006).

As Tölölyan, editor of *Diaspora Journal of Transnational Studies*, mentions the Armenian Diaspora has contributed a great deal in order to sustain Armenia during the difficult transitional and confrontational period of the past sixteen years. The extent of the support can not be assessed precisely, but there is no doubt that it has been considerable. In 1999, Hratch Tchilingirian, Associate Director of Eurasia Programme in the Judge Business School of University of Cambridge in the first Armenia-Diaspora conference offered a detailed report in which he estimated that the 14 organizations he had surveyed provided over \$630,000,000 in in-kind goods and cash funds between 1998 and 1999. This estimate of donations must be expanded by considering investments in business and real-estate and many more charitable contributions made since 1999. Tölölyan continues that individual donors



have given as much as 150,000,000 like Kirk Kerkorian, Armenian-American billionaire who established Lincy Foundation charity, or have invested as much as 50,000,000 like Cafesjian Family Foundation established by Gerard Cafesjian, a distinguished entrepreneur and philanthropist. By now, the sum the Diaspora has invested or donated to Armenian approaches \$1.5 billion when considering real estate purchase. This calculation does not involve remittances from migrant workers in Russia (around 72% of the total) and elsewhere. Their value according to estimates of Armenia's national bank as reported by Agency France Press on August 2006 has been estimated at \$940,000,000 in 2005, around 15% of the GNP.

Kzirian (2006) mentions that in an interview with Tigran Sarkisian, former head of the Central Bank of ROA in December 2002 he commented that the Diaspora contribution to the economy amounts to as much as \$400 million per year into charities, projects and even directly to family members. According to Sarkisian, Kerk Kerkorian's US-based Lincy Foundation pumped in approximately \$55 million in 2002 to assist with general urban building and growth and continued earthquake restoration (it allocated \$60 million for three new infrastructure projects selected by the Government of Armenia on July, 2006)

One of the major organizations is Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, along with its nineteen worldwide affiliates. It was established in the early 1990s to assist the development of the Republic of Armenia by uniting the resources of Armenian communities around the world. The endeavor was based on the idea of "national giving" - Armenians around the world would collectively extend financial help to their newly independent ancestral homeland to rebuild the shattered infrastructure and ensure the survival and prosperity of Armenia. After the decade of combined efforts, Armenia Fund has become a premier fundraising organization that rallies the resources of the entire Diaspora and directs them to Armenia and Karabagh for humanitarian relief and infrastructure development. Armenia Fund and its affiliates have been able to raise over \$120 million over the last decade. Continuing on this

trend, the global family of Armenia Fund successfully raise over \$11.5 million during its Telethon 2004 in November. The funds raised more than doubled 2003's total breaking an all-time fundraising record in the Armenian Diaspora. Each Armenian takes part in the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund by voluntary contributions made according to his capabilities.

The Armenia Fund Rural Development Program is aimed at revitalizing Armenia's border villages by ensuring that all villages have necessary infrastructure and by integrating each village into the economy of the country. Program aims at augmenting government programs and maximizing existing input by local and international organizations in the focus sphere. Armenia Fund sees the solution to the problem in promoting short and long term economic activity in the rural areas. The program will renovate and install necessary infrastructure including the building of new village schools, drinking water systems, and agricultural development programs for village farmers, as well as healthcare facilities across the rural regions. The social infrastructure will be an equal priority so as it can meet basic social service needs (school, health and information). Rural Development Program's partners in implementing the Program are: Diaspora Armenians including: Individual sponsors (40 and more), Groups or families, International organizations and Individual countries.

On November 22, 2007, Armenians across the world were united under one mission: to help rebuild Armenia's impoverished rural regions. It was Armenia Fund's 10th International Telethon \$15.2 million pledged, helps further Armenia Fund's nation building initiatives. Proceeds from Telethon 2007 will benefit Armenia Fund's new beneficiary project – the Village Development Program. This multi-level regional development plan will help revitalize Armenia's rural villages. Among the critical infrastructure development plans the Tavush Region, located in northeastern Armenia, will be the first to benefit from this large scale program. Armenia Fund will coordinate its work with the U.S. Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation, the United Nations Development Programme, and the

World Bank. Additionally, Armenia Fund will carry out regional development projects in the Martuni Region of Nagorno-Karabakh ([http://www.armeniasfund.org/telethon/telethon-2007/telethon\\_2007.php](http://www.armeniasfund.org/telethon/telethon-2007/telethon_2007.php)).

Dr. Samuelian, Dean, AUA Law Department, in his research “Diaspora-Homeland Issue Paper” (Armenia Survey 2020, 2003), states the five basic Diasporan cash flows to Armenia:

- Direct investment;
- Indirect investment;
- Directing third-party contracts to Armenia;
- Remittances-charity;
- Consumption.

According to this survey, one of the most-effective and high impact investments Diasporans should consider is funding other Diasporans to live and work in Armenia, whether as volunteers, students, tourists, repatriates or retirees, as an efficient way of bringing skills with a built in multiplier effect on the economy, implicitly transferring not only wealth, but also technical know how and globally competitive attitudes to Armenia.

A new trend emerging today, as Dr. Samuelian also emphasizes in his interview, is a move from commercial investment to consumption. Diasporan part-time living in Armenia as a substantial growth in the tourism and education sectors is increasing. As Armenia produces more goods that are attractive to Diasporans, this market according to Dr. Samuelian will respond by substituting Armenia-origin goods and services. The ethnic and nostalgic factors of Armenian branded goods and services including spirits, cheese, food, music, etc. are finding a strong new market among the new Diaspora from Armenia.

Beilock, Grigorian, Reinertson (2006), from University of Florida and International Monetary Fund, stress mainly the following point that Public- Private Partnership can

advance the economic, cultural, or social causes of private groups involved in the process. The latter may range from religious organizations to those focused on health or social issues to labor unions and business associations. These groups then can, in practice, help the government understand their needs. Moreover, they could also communicate rationales behind government policies to their groups. It is for these reasons that governments have incentives to encourage formation of, and support for, these organizations. Without it, advocacy is adversarial. Beilock, Grigorian, Reinertson (2006) bring an example which is streamlining customs procedures. Creating and strengthening of groups such as the Association of Armenian Freight Forwarders can simplify the government's task in determining which services are needed from customs, and assessing user acceptance/rating of its performance (Beilock, Grigorian, Reinertson 2006).

Kuznetsov (2006) mentions the recent attempts by several Mexican state governments to promote more productive use of remittances that have led to interesting new forms of public-private collaboration for developing small-scale infrastructure and firms allowed to import materials duty-free if output is exported in migrants hometowns mostly rural and low income communities, through programs and projects partially financed with remittances (Kuznetsov 2006, p. 99).

One of the major factors to facilitate the private sector playing a crucial role for research and knowledge-based development is the ethnic Diaspora connection, which transfers technical know-how and financing, mostly in private sector. According to Fukuda-Parr (2002), Director of Human Development Report, remittances to developing countries from workers residing abroad is US \$60 billion, surpassing all foreign aid, which now amounts to about \$53 billion. The Israeli Diaspora in America, for instance, has been an active catalyst in developing high-value industry and the country's capacity through various means (Fukuda-Parr 2002). In the research field, cooperation between the United States and

Israel is supported by the Binational Science Foundation, which has an endowment of US \$100 million; the US-Israel Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation (BIRD Foundation); and the US-Israel Science and Technology Foundation, which disburses grants jointly financed by the US and Israeli Governments. As states Fukuda-Parr (2002) all these entities have as their goal the building of research and commercialization partnerships with private corporations in order to make the fruits of research available to the public.

He also brings the example of the Chinese Diaspora well known for contributing to the impressive technological development in Asia Pacific countries. Members of the Society of Chinese Bioscientists in America, for instance, have been active in enhancing the health science research capacity, and are attracting great interest from both the public and private sectors of Asia Pacific countries. They cooperate actively in terms of developing technological excellence as well as in setting up systems for professional operation of the peer review system for research, which has been actively debated and modeled on the US system through the Diaspora connection, and which helps the positive progress of research capacity (Fukuda-Parr 2002).

These entrepreneurs have brought together capital, knowledge of global information technology supply and demand resources, and the trust that generated employment in developing countries in order to create opportunities for trained knowledge workers (Fukuda-Parr 2002).

There is an impression that Diaspora potential has not been fully employed in Armenia. One of the causes is the gap between the Diaspora's developmental assistance, private transfers, and remittances, and the Diaspora's foreign direct investment in Armenia (The Caucasian Tiger 2006).

Kuznetsov (2006) also highlights the imbalance between the successful efforts and the lack of Diaspora contributions to the development agenda in the form of foreign direct

investment, business partnerships, and advisory services to local business, and participation in the local debate on improving the investment climate. He argues that such an imbalance has been detrimental to both quality and sustainability of Armenian growth and that Diaspora assistance has been suboptimal in terms of job creation, poverty reduction, and a decline in emigration (Kuznetsov 2006, p.130).

In order to have the Diaspora play a larger role in business development, several areas have to be addressed according to the authors of the *Caucasian Tiger*: severance costs; contract enforcement; stability of economic policies; and reform of the tax and customs administrations. Countries that have succeeded in attracting investment from their emigrants indicate a strong and direct relationship between the business climate and the number of firms established with foreign participation.

A Public- Private Partnership could be designed to institutionalize a Diaspora-Armenia link with the aim of capitalizing on the full potential of the Diaspora. To be effective, the proposed Diaspora Agency will have to have a status of a Ministry, have wide executive powers and legislative rights. To benefit from partnership with the private sector (in this case Diaspora private and public groups and individuals), the Ministry could have to have joint Diaspora and local (state-appointed) management. Its performance should be measured against the scale and the scope of Diaspora-led projects initiated with direct involvement of the Agency.

## **Economic Contribution and Dual Citizenship**

Supporters of the dual citizenship claim the Armenian Diaspora as the primary source for substantial and project-oriented investment, contributing to sustained growth and economic development (Gevorkyan 2006). Therefore, well defined dual citizenship policy becomes increasingly acute, as a necessary condition for the educated, entrepreneurial and affluent Armenian Diaspora to establish and maintain closer links with the homeland. According to Kzirian (2006), Diaspora has a serious willingness to return and utilize those entrepreneurial and business developments skills on a larger scale.

Kzirian continues that this statement does not intend to belittle the contributions of Diaspora Armenians currently in Armenia doing business under the “special residency status” offered by the Armenian government. Furthermore, he stresses that financially speaking, Australian citizens lobbied for Dual Citizenship so they would not have to pay the “stiff state tax” imposed on foreigners who work in the United States. This is an example of how Armenians could come to Armenia, retain their Dual Citizenship as to both countries as mentions Kzirian (2006) and circumvent the financial constraints that some countries tend to levy on foreigners. He adds that, potential benefit lies in the fact that, once drawn into the economic and political life of the country, dual citizens provide immeasurable value to the labor market through their skills and civic experiences from abroad.

Dual citizenship will enable Armenia to capitalize on the financial, organizational, skill-based and knowledge based resources which the Diasporic communities should offer. Due to neo-liberal policy of Armenia state, it will enhance the contribution of Diaspora in economy and will promote foreign direct investment.

Beilock, Grigorian, Reinertson (2006) stress mainly the point that with a dynamic and goal-oriented management, the Diaspora Agency institution will be able to identify and address main barriers to Diaspora involvement in Armenia and lay ground for more

productive cooperation. The recent abolition of the ban on the Dual Citizenship in Armenia gives additional incentive to form the Agency as it allow for more active engagement of the Diaspora in Armenia. A successful example of a Diaspora agency is Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs (Beilock, Grigorian, Reinertson 2006).



“The fact that Armenia marked an international presence much before Georgia and Azerbaijan is because of Diaspora”.  
Dr. Khatchig DerGhoukassian

### **Socio-Political Contribution of Armenian Diaspora to Homeland**

Gabriel Sheffer (2003), states that the political and cultural exchanges between Diasporas and homeland at the various levels of politics are carried out through trans-state political systems that will exist alongside international inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), regional trading blocs, regional defense organizations, and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). Therefore, Diaspora organizations, their modes of operation, the trans-state networks they establish and operate, and the roles they play in domestic, regional, and international affairs are being viewed as precursors to future developments that will significantly change international and domestic politics (Sheffer 2003, p. 27).

Poretz states that many sending nations consider their expatriate communities as a source of investments, entrepreneurial initiatives, and markets for home companies and even political representation abroad. It is hard to deny the tremendous significance of Diasporic resources which many countries including Armenia enjoy. Shain and Sherman (2001), Professors of Political Science at Yale University, assert that Diasporic engagements in home countries have ranged from state and nation building processes to promoting foreign direct investment and supporting self-determination movements.

Armenian Diaspora contribution involves both short term projects aimed at addressing humanitarian crises like earthquake, collapse of health and social services in early years of independence and long term problems in the last several years ranging from ecological disasters caused by the over logging of forests to supply substitutes for fuel cut off by the Azerbaijan blockade, to issues having to do with fiscal and electoral corruption and lack of rule of law (Tölölyan 2006).

According to T. Lyons (2004), Diaspora that has its origins in conflict and violent, forced dispersal often create transnational political networks to mobilize those outside of the homeland around issues relating to the conflict back home. Transnational political practices vary and range from providing funds for political parties, lobbying on behalf of a movement or government in the host country and in international organizations, participating in the activities of international advocacy networks of NGOs, to support for military movements through recruitment and supplying arms (Lyons 2004).

It is important to remember what Gabriel Sheffer (2003) states about Diaspora politics. He stresses that the involvement of Diasporas in all political arenas and the complex patterns of loyalties that they show do not mean that all Diasporas pose threats to hosts or homelands. He continues that when weighing such dangers against their positive contributions that latter win out (Sheffer 2003, p. 245).

The involvement of the Diaspora in Armenia's life so far as mentioned Dr. Ayvazyan (2006), Director of “Ararat” Center for Strategic Research, in the third Armenia- Diaspora forum has proceeded in the following ways:

- 1) assistance programs;
- 2) lobbying (mainly in the US and recently in the European Union);
- 3) political patronage for certain political groups in Armenia.

Dr. Ayvazyan (2005) views the qualitative improvement of Armenia-Diaspora relations as a major way for addressing the current challenges of the Armenian nation, including the perspectives for the settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, the problem of Javakhk and the demographic and social-economic situation in Armenia. He stresses on the two main challenges in Preservation of Land and Demographic growth as two fundamental realistic all-Armenian national objectives for a mid and long term period (Ayvazyan 2005).

One of the most important organizations of the Armenian Diaspora is the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) or Dashnaktsutyun. Founded as a revolutionary political party in 1890 in the Diaspora community of Tbilisi, Georgia; it remained the leading political organization of the Diaspora from 1921 to 1988, and it has also been a political party in Armenia since 1991. Tölölyan (2006) states that the importance of ARF is due to a mixture of the following factors: The lobbying role of its Diasporic component, its organizational discipline and coherence, the passionate commitment of its membership to a national ideology, its strong role in the administration of the Diasporic wing of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and its alliance with the current ruling coalition in Armenia, with deputies and ministers in Armenia's government.

ARF sustains a successful lobbying arm, the Armenian National Committee, in Washington, D.C., and has recently launched a new one in Brussels to lobby the European Union. The Armenian National Committee of America is the largest and most influential Armenian American grassroots political organization. Working in coordination with a network of offices, chapters, and supporters throughout the United States and affiliated organizations around the world, the ANCA actively advances the concerns of the Armenian American community on a broad range of issues ([www.anca.org](http://www.anca.org)).

The Armenian National Committee-Political Action Committee (ANCPAC, a non-partisan organization) has played a proud, historic and unprecedented role in elevating the level of political participation of Armenian American voters. The ANCPAC educates Members of Congress on issues of concern to Armenian American voters; from the Armenian Genocide, to the benefits of enhancing America's economic alliance with Armenia and the right to self-determination for the people of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh ([www.ancpac.org](http://www.ancpac.org)).

ANCA-WR (Western Region) Executive Director Andrew Kzirian in his talk to the Pasadena AYF on 2007, while discussing contemporary issues emphasized on dual citizenship in Armenia and how Armenian Diaspora youth can contribute to the Armenian Cause. He added that it is a hallmark of organization's purpose – which is to make sure that tomorrow's leaders are prepared today.

Another significant actor in the Diaspora has been the Armenian Assembly of America, founded in the 1970s by an unusual coalition of long-settled Armenian Americans and recently-arrived Armenian immigrants to USA from the Middle-East. The impact in both Armenia and the Diaspora through the influence on US policy is widespread. The lobbying office in Washington represents some important segments of communal opinion in the US mentions Tölölyan (2006).

In the interview with Arpi Vardanian (2007), Armenian regional director of the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA), she emphasized several successful past and ongoing achievements of the Armenian Assembly of America among which are:

- Advocacy for Armenia (ROA) and Nagorno Karabakh, mobilizing thousands of volunteers in USA.
- Secure passage of numerous relevant pieces of US legislation including trade, blockade, transportation, Genocide recognition, assistance (humanitarian, development, military), and more.
- Instrumental in securing U.S. humanitarian and development assistance to Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh (early \$1.6 billion since 1988) through which hundreds of programs were implemented, thousands of Armenians were empowered, and the live of millions improved.
- Increased nationwide and international awareness of the Armenian Genocide etc.

- Fought for removal of the inclusion of Armenian nationals on the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service's Special Registration List (2002-2003).
- Joint Armenians worldwide in advocating protection of Shikahogh Nature Reserve in Armenia (2005).

The lobbies operated by the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian National Committee persuaded the US government to send significant non-military assistance valuing \$80-105 million per year in the 1990s, \$60-75 million since 2001 to Armenia mentions Tölölyan (2006).

One example of political contribution that Tölölyan (2006) states is the Armenian Assembly of America. It is well funded by a small group of wealthy contributors who assembled around Hrair Hovnanian, Chairman of Board of Trustees of the AAA, and were guided by skillful political operators such as Ross Vartian, Executive Director of the US-Armenia Public Affaris Committee, and Van Krikorian, Former Chairman of the Board of the AAA, became the primary architect of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, signed into law of October 24, 1992, as Public Law 102-551. It placed restrictions on the kinds and amounts of aid the US could extend to Azerbaijan as long as it continued to blockade Armenia. Its impact was considerable, in that it boosted morale in Armenia and indicated to Azerbaijan that even with its ally, Turkey, a NATO member, it could not bypass the Diaspora and successfully isolate Armenia politically from the US and the West (Tölölyan 2006).

The more formal participation of Diaspora representatives in the life of Armenia since independence has been limited mentions Gevorkyan (2006). The following are the most prominent individuals:

Vardan Oskanyan, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, was born in the Armenian Diaspora in Syria. Oskanyan was educated in the Armenian schools of Aleppo and received an M.A. in Law and Diplomacy from Fletcher. His fields of concentration were International

Monetary Theory and Policy, and Diplomatic History and Foreign Policies. Oskanyan represents Armenia in the Nagorno Karabakh peace negotiations, as he has done from the first days of the negotiations process.

Raffi Hovannisian, the first Minister of ROA Foreign Affairs of ROA. He moved to Armenia from the USA in the early 1990s. While serving in the first Armenian government, he retained his American citizenship (Renshon 2000). He lives in Armenia and remains politically active. He presently leads the Heritage (Zharangutiun) party which holds 7 seats in the Armenian parliament. He holds the view that the Republic of Armenia has both a moral obligation and a tactical interest in aligning its views and policy regarding genocide more closely with that of the Diaspora.

Gerard Libaridian, Senior Advisor to the former President of ROA, Levon Ter-Petrossian and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1993-94). He currently teaches at the University of Michigan. He believes that Diaspora's vociferous and influential organizations could encourage a more rational, flexible and less maximalist solution to the Nagorno Karabagh conflict.

Vahram Nercissiantz, the former Chief Economic Advisor to the President of Armenia, has held this position since 1998. He is also the Vice Chairman of Armenia's Economic Coordination Council and was Armenia's Governor of the World Bank. Before that he had a rich 30-year career at the World Bank itself, working in many regions and serving as the Bank's first Country Manager in Yerevan ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)).

### **How will Dual Citizenship Influence on the Socio-Political Impact?**

According to Yakobson and Rubinstein (2005), many modern nation-states maintain warm connections with their national Diasporas. Moreover, the trend in modern democratic-liberal thinking is to encourage and legitimize connections of this sort. Of course, no state, as they mention for the Jewish case can “demand” loyalty and identification from citizens of another country. But Jews around the world freely express broad affinity and support toward Israel. Jewish history and the culture of Jewish solidarity combine with the sense that Israel is in peril to give enormous strength to this bond (Yakobson and Rubinstein 2005).

So it is, indeed, with the Irish. The identification and support of the Irish American community played and, in some ways, continue to play a key role in political developments on the island of Eire. Other examples abound. Greek Americans, through the exercise of their legitimate democratic rights as American citizens, support the Greek position on Cyprus, including extensive lobbying in Congress on behalf of support for the position of the Greek Cypriots. Americans of Palestinian and Arab origin now act on behalf of the Palestinian side in the conflict with Israel (Shain 1994).

The Diaspora as mentions Tölölyan (2006) is able to help individuals and organizations in Armenia to increase democratic rights and freedom and push for reforms that will extend the benefits of Armenia’s economic development.

The critics of the Dual Citizenship are concerned about the state sovereignty, non-intervention and the monopoly of public loyalty by the state. Martin and Aleinikoff (2002), Institute of International Economic Law, argue that “through thoughtful management governments can address the concerns that typically feed resistance, including fears that dual citizens will shop for justice, vote or hold elected office in two nations and thus divide their loyalties between their original and adopted countries.”

The issues of political economy, i.e. the notorious core controversies of taxation, military service and elections, are recognized as important but are not the governing determinants in the overall concept of dual citizenship (Hammar 1985). According to his research, people usually vote, pay taxes and serve in military in the countries of their habitual residence. Therefore, Gevorkyan (2006) emphasizes that such considerations certainly with preceding attention from the authorities become part of everyday life for a dual national and are worked out on the basis of their relevance.

It is important to mention the following facts expressed by Gevorkyan (2006):

- 1) Not all of the Diaspora Armenians are interested in taking part in Armenian politics.
- 2) Even if there are a few people who would go into public service, given the reality and history of the Armenian politics in the Diaspora, these individuals will be primarily be guided by their respective parties' or interest groups' considerations in the decision making process.

The other political impact of Dual Citizenship if it is managed effectively, according to Dr. Ohanyan (2006), Professor of Political Science at Stonehill College, can be used as an instrument to harness the developmental dimension of the Armenian statehood. She stresses that Dual Citizenship will necessitate a major restructuring of governmental institutions and policy initiatives in various issue areas that ranges from a creation of new governmental institutions to modifying the existing ones (Ohanyan 2006).

In her interview Dr. Ohanyan (2007) stated that the first aspect of the state-society relationship that will be most directly affected is the enrichment of the political culture. Dual citizenship will make the opportunity of involvement of individuals with different types of political socialization into the political forums within Armenia. The political cultures of United States and Russia that constitute the largest immigrant sites will quite likely be brought into Armenian context as mentions Dr. Ohanyan (2006).



The second aspect, according to Dr. Ohanyan (2006), is that Dual Citizenship will assist the state in the provision of public goods and social levels. It can provide a formal link to Diaspora community to Armenia and thereby offset the retrenching welfare state (Ohanyan 2006).

She comes to the conclusion that creating a Dual Citizenship law with a specific objective of dense network mechanism will enhance the developmental potential of Diaspora-Armenia relationships. It will enable a greater inclusion of old and new Diaspora into the policy-making forums. The development of networks should be applied at the level of civil society in Armenia, within Diaspora, and within the Armenian public institutions (Ohanyan 2003).

Dr. Ohanyan (2006) states and also emphasized in her interview that Dual Citizenship will activate the following network development:

- 1) Public- private partnerships: this entails bringing the public institutions, the private sector within and outside Armenia and the civil society organizations together. The Dual citizenship will enable the state to be a partner to some of the ongoing social development projects of Diaspora communities in Armenia.
- 2) 2) Public Administration Reform and Decentralization: By institutionalizing and formalizing Diaspora links to rural areas the Armenian state would be outsourcing some of its governance functions to Diaspora groups.
- 3) 3) Associational democracy: Dual citizenship measures can facilitate the creation of associations (forums for active citizenship) of Diaspora based individuals, which could also give them access to the policy –making processes at the local levels of government.

In the third Armenia- Diaspora forum Dr. Ayvazyan stressed that it would be useful to consider establishing Diaspora structures, whose only task will be providing possible

assistance to those who return to homeland. These newly established structures should be independent from the other Diasporan structures and the Armenian state. He further emphasized that the correct organization of Armenia-Diaspora cooperation envisages serious changes in the ideological and organizational life of the Armenian world including repatriation and legislative field based on the idea of the Armenians' unification in Armenia sooner or later.

The results of several interviews done with the leaders of ARF party on October 2007<sup>4</sup> including Giro Manoyan, Head of the Hay Dat (Armenian Cause) Office of ARF Director of the International Secretariat of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Bureau in Yerevan, Shahan Kandaharian, the Editor-in-Chief of Azdak Beirut-based newspaper, Hrair Karapetyan, Head of the ARF faction and Dr. Khatchig DerGhoukassian also emphasized that Dual Citizenship will enhance political integration between Armenia and Diaspora; and will have impact on the first and foremost Diaspora political contribution to the Armenian Question which is the recognition and reparation of Genocide. It will strengthen the Armenian political, cultural and economic lobbying for the sake of RA consolidation, fair regulation of Nagorno-Karabakh issue and defense of Javakhk Armenians rights.

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<sup>4</sup> See the list of interviewees in Appendix B

“One nation, One culture, One homeland.”

### **Cultural Contribution of Armenian Diaspora to Homeland**

The Armenian Diaspora is made up of a string of communities scattered throughout the world. These communities are subject to the cultural, linguistic, as well as social and political influences of their host societies and certainly owe genuine loyalty to their countries of residence as stated Dr. R. Panossian, Director of Policy Programmes and Planning at Rights and Democracy at Montreal, in the first Armenia-Diaspora conference (1999). The ultimate purpose for the Armenian Diaspora according to Panossian has been perpetuating its identity.

National identity is a particular form of political identification. Taking identities seriously means deep investigation into history and culture (Suny 2000 pp.2-3). Suny, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, stresses in another article that members of a nation reach full freedom and fulfillment of their essence by developing their national identity and culture, and their identity with the nation is superior to all other forms of identity -- class, gender, individual, familial, tribal, regional, imperial, dynastic, religious, racial, or state patriotic. All of them share common origins, historical (with a past that includes numerous polities, dynasties, and continuous institutions like the national church, Armenians enjoy a rich repertoire of symbols, legends, and historical accounts with which to construct a modern national consciousness), experiences, interests, and culture, which may include language and religion, and have an equal share in the nation. Suny continues that the discourse of the nation acknowledges that each nation is unique, with its own separate past, present, and destiny (R.G.Suny 2001, P.12).

According to R. Panossian by 1988 Armenians had a clearly articulated and strong sense of national identity which was expressed through culture, historiography, architecture, demographic trends and other seemingly benign forms ( Panossian, p.227). Those who were

ethnically Armenians regardless of the place of living belonged to the nation. It was blood based definition as states Panossian, partially based on linguistic, religious characteristics and powerful territorial claims over Nagorno-Karabakh, Javakhk, Nakhichevan and Western Armenia (Panossian,p227).

Pnina Werbner (1998), Professor of Social Research Department at Keele University, argues that diasporas as transnational social formations challenge the hegemony and boundedness of the nation-state and of any pure imaginaries of nationhood. As such Diaspora are both ideologically and materially involved and implicated in the nationalist projects of their lands, in which case they can be described as mobilized transnational actors. (Armine Ishkanian 2005, p 114).

The Genocide had a profound impact on Armenian national identity. R. G. Suny (2001) mentions that the Armenian Genocide of 1915, in many ways is one of the most potent sources of twentieth century “Armenianness” that appears to be a dominant feature in Armenian Diaspora communities (especially in old Diaspora ) (Suny 2001).

A. Ishkanian (2005) points out that maintaining the Armenian language, religion, and traditions had become sacred objectives in these communities. She continues that members of the various Diaspora communities speak different dialects of Armenian and possess different ideas about Armenianness ( hayootyoon ) and the homeland (hayrenik). In spite of these differences, non-assimilated Armenians continue to identify themselves as “Armenian” (Hai), consider themselves part of the Armenian nation (Azg), and believe that they share a common origin and history (Armine Ishkanian 2005, p 117).

R. G. Suny (2001) argues that national identities are saturated with emotions that have been created through teaching, repetition, and daily reproduction until they become common sense (Suny 2001, p.39). Tölölyan (2001) states that it was not enough to claim that one was Armenian, it was necessary to act as one, which meant one had to accept certain

responsibilities and duties for the nation and Armenian Cause (Hai Dat). One of such leading Diaspora organization is the Zoryan Institute, established in 1982, which has made a major contribution for genocide recognition through its scholarly publications, teaching programs and conferences (Tölölyan 2001).

Professor Tölölyan (2001) in “Elites and Institutions in the Armenian Transnation” states that considering the importance that some of the major Diasporic institutions attach to cultural production and performance, it is no coincidence that most major political and philanthropic organizations support in-house organizations for literature, theater, dance, and music, as well as for sport and social assistance. The leaders of such organization simultaneously hold middle- or high-level positions in parent organizations and are often cultural producers in their own right—journalists, most commonly, but also poets and writers of prose (K. Tölölyan 2001, p. 23).

According to Lyons (2004) several cultural figures of exile including authors, filmmakers, and musicians frequently are based abroad and their framing of issues relating to identity, memory, and conflict resonate powerfully back home. This Diaspora groups often control major media outlets both in host-lands and homeland to recruit new constituencies and contributors to their discursive practices, and to adapt and sustain shared transnational agendas.

“Azkabahbanoum”, literally nation-preservation, has been a key slogan for Armenian Diaspora. This is articulated in slogans such as “one people, one nation”, or “one nation, one culture, one homeland.” A few organizations functioned transnationally, to the degree that finances and technology permitted: chiefly the Church, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktzutiun (ARF), the Armenian Democratic-Liberal Party (ADL), and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU). The journals they supported sustained a

literature that was multi-communal and multi-local, though some communities did not produce but only consumed such works emphasizes Tölölyan (Tölölyan 2001, p.23).

He emphasizes that the cultural production in the contemporary Armenian Diaspora results in the following cultural artifacts:

- 1) Literary works with an explicitly articulated and theorized aesthetic, both in Armenian and in certain dominant languages;
- 2) Sophisticated intellectual and crude polemical discourse;
- 3) Scholarly discourse in Armenian and different languages;
- 4) The production of images in photography, painting, church decoration, and videography and film, often with religious and especially national themes, iconic images, and motifs;
- 5) The composition and performance of Armenian or Armenian-inflected music that combines lyrics, melodies, and instruments drawn from homeland and old Diasporic traditions with styles ranging from French cabaret singing to jazz and rock and on to Russian and Middle Eastern idioms (Tölölyan 2001, p.24).

Here it is worth to remember the Armenian-French Chanson, songwriter and actor Charles Aznavour(ian), one of the most well-known singers in the world. Since the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, Aznavour has been helping the country through his charity, Aznavour for Armenia. Together with his brother in-law and co-author Georges Garvarentz he wrote the song "Pour toi Armenie", which topped the charts for 13 weeks. Atom Egoyan, Canadian-Armenian film maker who has directed a dozen full-length feature films, several television episodes, and a few shorter pieces. His film *Ararat* (2002) also generated some publicity for Egoyan, as it was one of the major motion pictures to deal directly with the Armenian Genocide. *Ararat* later won the Best Picture prize at the Genie Awards, which has honored

Egoyan several times in the past, and the Golden Apricot at the Yerevan International Film Festival.

Also Duduk the 3000 year old Armenian national instrument has a direct impact on the Armenian identity. It is performed by Djivan Gasparyan an Armenian musician famous world wide for his mastery of the duduk in movies like “Gladiator” and "The Da Vinci Code.”, occasionally sponsored by AGBU.

Tölölyan (2001) continues that in addition to these dominant modes of cultural production, which have large constituencies, there are others, ranging from folk dance to the digital, that, again, are variously residual or emerging in different communities. The Diaspora according to R. Panossian (1999) can proudly boast of very many preeminent figures in all fields of the cultural realm, many of whom have attained international fame.

Also the emergence of the new media according to Sheffer (2003) both influence the nature of and facilitate the establishment of Diasporas and their trans-state networks. Those networks help to maintain contacts with homelands and other relevant actors (Sheffer 2003, p.243).

It is important to mention what increasingly influence the Armenian Diaspora is the Worldwide Web. The existence of cyberculture on the Web, which distributes information and facilitates debate about both homeland and Diaspora, has contributed to the ongoing reshaping of transnational Armenian discourse. The major Armenian Web site–cum–listserv in English, [Groong@usc.edu](mailto:Groong@usc.edu), has become very important source of information and a shaper of informed opinion not only in the United States but also globally (Tölölyan 2001, p.24).

The Armenian digital library of classical literature is one of the most valuable cultural contributions done by the generous sponsorship of Ms. Alice Ohanasian, donor. The American University of Armenia Digital Library Project, carried out by a group of scientists from the Matenadaran and the National Academy of Sciences, has developed an electronic

version of classical Armenian literature aiming to support Armenological works, to promote quality research, as well as to increase the accessibility throughout the world (Balian, Hovhannisyan, and Ordian 2001).

Another vital element of shared Armenian identity is the Armenian Apostolic Church which remains an important pan-Armenian organization that has functioned in that capacity throughout the millennial history of the Diaspora's existence. The exceptional mission of the Holy Apostolic Armenian Church has deep impact on the spiritual life of the Armenian people, their national cultural development and preservation of their national identity. Therefore, as Dr. Vigen Gourian (1993), Orthodox commentator and Theologian, mentions religion is a significant factor in the nationalism. He points out that in November of 1989 the Catholics of All Armenians Vazken I of the See of Holy Etchmiadzin addressed the delegates of the newly formed Armenian National Movement making this claim:

...The national identity of the Armenian nation, the national ethos of the Armenian nation, [and] the national ideology of the Armenian people has been forged here at Holy Etchmiadzin, especially, in the fourth and fifth centuries.

According to L. Abrahamian (1998), language is another symbol through which forms of national identity are articulated especially for those who know other, foreign languages.

Dr. Armen Ayvazyan confirms the above statement by adding that there is no Armenian culture without the Armenian language. Along with the statehood and the territory under its control, the language is the foundation and paramount means of preserving the Armenian ethnicity. The fact that many of our compatriots, especially in Diaspora can feel and consider themselves Armenian without knowing the Armenian language, is possible only thanks to the people of Armenia who still speak, write and create in Armenian.

Among the major transnational organizations is the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), founded on April 15, 1906, in Cairo, Egypt, to contribute to the spiritual and cultural development of the Armenian people. The AGBU activities aimed at national



preservation became the biggest and most influential Diaspora-Armenian organization in the world.

Today, AGBU has chapters in 80 cities of 22 countries of the world, with 22,000 members, 120 branches, 27 cultural centers spread worldwide in USA, Europe, Near East, South America, Australia. AGBU has 20 schools (6600 students) and finances more than 16 educational establishments. In Paris and New York the AGBU has two libraries.

In 1990 AGBU opened a representation in Yerevan, and carries out projects aimed and contributing to the development of the country.

Hereby it is worth to mention only several of cultural contributions of AGBU to Armenia:

- AGBU offers a wide variety of opportunities for Armenian Diaspora youth to travel to Armenia in summer for a memorable experience of cultural enrichment, service and travel as well as professional and personal growth.
- Recognizing the importance of the performing arts in Armenia, AGBU has since 1992 subsidized the 110-member Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra. Annual grants are allocated for weekly concerts, new instruments, administration, salary, international guest artists and special festivals. The Philharmonic has toured Europe, America, Russia and the Middle East and produced over fifty CD recordings.
- With a strong belief in faith, AGBU's partnership with the Holy See of Etchmiadzin ensures that our common heritage survives for future generations. AGBU donors have funded the construction of the Outside Altar and Clergy Housing at the Holy See of Etchmiadzin, St. Sarkis and Holy Trinity Churches in Yerevan, St. Hagop Church in Gyumri and St. Gregory of Narek in Vanadzor...AGBU donors provided substantial funding during the five-year construction of the largest Armenian church in the world, St. Gregory.

- AGBU and the Holy See of Etchmiadzin joined forces in February 1993 to administer three Children's Centers in Yerevan. With overcrowded schools and shortened class hours, the Centers provide history, language, art, music, dance, crafts, and gymnastic programs. All three centers include a chapel, weekly church services and Bible studies.
- In 2004 AGBU opened an office in Stepanakert to administer the projects carried out in Karabakh, including the newly-established Karabakh Chamber Orchestra, construction of a building for war veterans and widows, as well as the reconstruction of Stepanakert School #7
- American University of Armenia (AUA) with its Master's degree programs and alumni of over 1500.

Another foundation which is important to mention here is the Tufenkian Foundation Armenia Program, initiated in 1998, that has led its efforts to foster a just, democratic and Christian Armenia, carried out more than 50 projects in various fields. Interview was done, with Tufenkian Armenia office in October, 2007. The projects are mainly directed at preparing youth for the future, assisting the vulnerable, spiritual and national values and defending basic rights and safety as the following:

- Zankagadun NGO: seeks train and educate individuals in order to strengthen them and their family. It focused on Armenia's most vulnerable social strata and in assisting those in extreme poverty. The program also features a social services section which enables individuals to find work and guide them to make proper decisions.
- Manana NGO: deals with children and provides comprehensive education to gifting youth not only in the visual arts, media, and creative writing but also in analytical thinking and self-motivation fields.

- “Zinvori Mayr” (Soldier’s Mother) local NGO: helps children of fallen or disabled soldiers from the Karabagh with providing decent higher education.
- VEM Radio- Gandzasar Theological Center: the mission is to promote positive change through a proper appreciation of spiritual and national values, and seeks to foster an improved moral environment for Armenians throughout the country and internationally. It offers varied programming aimed at integrating Armenian spiritual art with larger currents in international culture.

The mutually beneficial cultural relations will be succeeded by considering cultural activities and institutions in Armenia and the Diaspora and cultural needs of both sides. Panossian (1999) mentions that the paralyzing factor in Armenia has been the lack of adequate financial means to sustain and support, or reinvigorate the cultural mechanisms and institutions as well as to enable the intelligentsia to function normally. He mentions that the introduction of the very best elements and aspects of Western accomplishments into public life in Armenia would be an advantageous and stimulating factor.

### **How Will Dual Citizenship Influence on the Cultural Impact**

Dr. Ayvazyan in “Fundamentals of Armenian Identity” emphasizes the point that without Armenia, the Armenian Diaspora cannot represent a nation, especially a viable entity ensuring national preservation and reproduction of Armenian race preservation and development of the Armenian language and culture. He continues that during the last decades the inevitable acculturation and assimilation processes in Diaspora have sharply accelerated to an unprecedented level. In particular, as a result of emigration, every year the ranks of the Armenian communities are thinning out in the Middle East, where until recently the percentage of mixed marriages were extremely low, and the Armenian schools and other community structures functioned effectively. In 20-30 years from now there will remain at best tiny islands of the once flourishing communities of Lebanon, Iran and Syria, similar to what has already happened to the Armenians of Iraq. As for the Armenians living in Russia and the developed West, they are subject to even faster acculturation and assimilation.

According to Panossian’s statement in the first Armenia-Diaspora conference (1999), one of the important tasks before both Armenia and the Dispersion is to pave the way for a better understanding and acquaintance of one another. He mainly stresses on the very reality that stereotypes, prejudice, an unfounded sense of superiority, cultural and otherwise, ideology and politics, misconceptions, and a host of other factors have created a lingering atmosphere of ignorance, confusion and distrust that must be diffused and dispelled.

Panossian (1999) suggests that Armenia would offer its tradition, experience and expertise in Armenian culture. Organizing local programs, joint programs and ventures in classical, Eastern and Western Armenian, history and civilization would help to record and study the lingering remnants of Western Armenian cultures as recalled by survivors like dialects, folklore, etc. and to write histories of particular communities and organizations.

He concludes that the enormous task of fostering meaningful and practical cultural relations between the two entities cannot be handled by the government, or by organizations of the Diaspora, or by some proposed super-structures. Neither the government nor any other organization should encumber this effort with bureaucratic procedures and pre-determined programs. This would be best achieved by delegating responsibility and by engaging not only organizations but also the vast number of unaffiliated or independent individuals. This approach would increase accountability and efficiency, widen the scope and number of participants, and dispel stereotypes through direct relations (Panossian,1999).

Dr. Khatchig DerGhoukassian<sup>5</sup> in his interview (2007) stressed the point that language is the strongest factor of integration between Diaspora and Armenia. Yet, language is another “problematique” in Diaspora-homeland relations at least in two senses: first the difference of Eastern and Western Armenian, and second the dispute about the classical or Apeghian orthography.

Studying Israeli model of Dual Citizenship proves the statement of Litan (2002) that the Israeli policy of providing new arrivals with systematic language training before they are expected to take a job has been a powerful melding force that has helped to preserve social cohesion (Litan 2002, p.127).

He continues that knowing at the outset that its immigrants will become citizens gives Israel greater incentives to integrate individuals and their families into the cultural milieu and language of the country. (Litan2002, p.127).

The results of interviews (2007) done with the major Armenia political parties<sup>6</sup> showed that they unanimously agree on the point that the Dual Citizenship will result the following points:

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<sup>5</sup> See the list of interviewees in Appendix B

<sup>6</sup> See the list of interviewees in Appendix B

- Effective implication of Diaspora potential for preservation of spiritual-cultural values.
- Develop and execute a complex program of Diaspora migration to Armenia.
- Status of Western Armenian.
- Enable the development of Armenology teaching program, which will be applicable in all Armenian educational institutions and schools and expand the amount of Diaspora-Armenian teachers training and Diaspora Armenians admittance to the Armenian educational institutions.
- Create incentives for unification of Armenian language spelling (Eastern and Western).

## **Rationale Behind a Dual Citizenship Arrangement For RA**

Dual or multiple citizenship at its most basic level, involves the simultaneous holding of more than one citizenship or nationality. That is, according to Renshon (2000), Coordinator of Interdisciplinary Program in the Psychology of Social and Political Behavior at Yale University, a person can have each, or many, of the rights and responsibilities that adhere to a citizen in all of the several countries in which he or she is a citizen, regardless of length of time or actual residence in a country, geographical proximity, or the nature of his or her economic, cultural, or political ties (Renshon 2000, p.2).

He points out that citizenship is a political term. It draws its importance from political, economic, and social rights and obligations that adhere to a person by virtue of having been born into, or having become a recognized or certified member of, a state (Renshon 2000, p.3).

It is obvious that economic globalization, rapid developments in communications and travel, and vastly increased personal mobility are impacting on notions of national identity and citizenship worldwide.

Cristina Escobar in her “Dual Citizenship and Political Participation” (2006) states that because of general phenomenon of globalization and migration, an increasing number of Latin American countries have recently ruled in favor of allowing their nationals to naturalize abroad without losing their citizen status. She points out that some see Dual Citizenship as a vehicle of further integration and further advocates the transnational perspective on migration that argues even though migrants cross international borders, settle, and establish relations in a new state, they do not necessarily lose their social and political connections with their home country but instead maintain ongoing social connections with the polity from which they originated (Escobar 2006, pp.113-124).

The Declaration of Independence adopted by the Supreme Council of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1990 states that “Armenians of the Diaspora have the right of citizenship of Armenia” (Declaration of Independence 1990, Article IV).

The 1995 Constitution explicitly banned dual citizenship. The first president of Republic of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosian personally excluded dual citizenship from the constitution justifying that dual citizenship would badly hit the Armenian armed forces which are manned on a conscription basis (ARF NEWS, April 20, 1998). However, the real reason according to A. Astourian (2005) was to secure the monopoly of the indigenous “nouveaux riches” on the Armenian economy, the political system and the media. He continues that these policies were to undermine potential support from Diaspora that among many Diaspora viewed as detrimental to the future of the Armenian people (Astourian 2005, p. 95).

The national referendum on constitutional amendments of November 27, 2005 in Armenia abandoned the ban on Dual Citizenship. According to this law a person has the right to simultaneously be a citizen both of the Republic of Armenia and another state (Antaramian 2006, p. 1).

Given the uniquely situated and small nation and the influential Diaspora, there is a need to carefully balance these two spheres. It would be in Armenia’s best interest to optimize improvement that according to Kzirian (2006) come only through increased economic and political Diaspora support and its socio-cultural enrichment. He continues that dual citizens would provide immeasurable value to the labor market through their skills and civic experiences from abroad and it would benefit Armenia’s position in the global economy (Kzirian 2006, p.17).

Armenia is one of the few countries in the world where the residents in the country are outnumbered by members of Diaspora. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vartan Oskanian, in the Armenian International Policy Research conference on Dual Citizenship on June, 2006, in



Yerevan, emphasized on the point that Dual Citizenship may be viewed as a mechanism for addressing Armenia's growing demographic imbalance. Feelings of belonging, exclusiveness, solidarity and sacrifice can also be of extreme importance to encourage civic virtue and the responsible exercise of rights and freedoms (Rubio-Marin 2000, p.99).

For example states like Mexico and Ireland as mentions Kzirian (2006) may allow some type of voting from abroad, direct representation of expatriates and extraordinary Diaspora visas (Kzirian 2006, p.14).

One of the special types of Dual Citizenship arrangements proposed in the Armenian International Policy Research conference on Dual Citizenship June 2006, in Yerevan Armenia was Affiliate Citizenship<sup>7</sup>status that is not a full-fledged citizenship<sup>8</sup>. It is expected co-exist with other laws and regulations governing citizenship issues in Armenia.

The main focus of Dual Citizenship would be:

1. Diasporan Armenians;
2. Former citizens of Armenia who since independence in 1991 relinquished their Armenian citizenship upon naturalizing elsewhere (as required by the Armenian Constitution); and
3. Citizens of Armenia that choose to naturalize in another country in the future.

According to the Armenian International Policy Research Group proposal paper (2006) Armenia therefore needs to adopt a status that allows for enough flexibility in dealing with various countries that host Diasporan Armenians. An example of flexibility-related matters is the US, where naturalized citizens are not required to renounce the citizenship of their country of origin, because it would have greatly diminished the numbers eligible to naturalize (International Policy Research Group proposal paper 2006, p4).

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<sup>7</sup> See Dual Citizenship Arrangement for the Armenian Diaspora: A Proposal, Second Draft, June 2006. Armenian International Policy Research Group

<sup>8</sup> See Dual Citizenship Arrangement for the Armenian Diaspora: A Proposal, Second Draft, June 2006. Armenian International Policy Research Group

This status offers a mechanism for Diasporan Armenians both old and new to engage actively in Armenia without forcing them to give up citizenship status they may have in other countries. It differs from the Special Residency Status. The ten year Special Residency Status can be issued both to Diasporan Armenians and to any individual of any ethnic background who is involved in research, cultural, or business activities in Armenia. Dual Citizenship is expected especially to target Diasporan Armenians and Armenians from Armenia who naturalized elsewhere and were required by the existing Armenian legislation to abandon their Armenian citizenship (AIPRG proposal paper 2006, p. 5).

Affiliate citizenship status will have the unlimited residency and unrestricted employment in Armenia; therefore the attachment to Armenia will be easier and individuals would have equal rights compared with citizens of Armenian. Also it is transferable that will create formal ties not only with the current but also with subsequent generations of Diaspora Armenians compared with the ten year Special Residency Status (AIPRG proposal paper 2006, p. 5).

Dual Citizenship rights of voting, tax liability, military obligation and the right to be elected and appointed to civil service positions (and all other standard civic duties that citizens must assume in a democratic republican form of government) and under what conditions are matters of discussion.

There are variations among other countries in which specific citizenship rights are allowed and under what conditions. Some European countries (e.g. Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland) grant foreign citizens voting rights in local and regional elections. Some Latin American countries that permit or encourage their nationals to gain second citizenships in the United States allow those citizens to vote in elections in their country of origin (e.g., Peru, El Salvador, Colombia), some (e.g., Honduras, Brazil, Mexico) do not. (Renshon 2000, p.8).

According to Ohanian (2006), the experience with Dual Citizenship in other countries, as well as the relevant academic literature highlight the need of managing and administering Dual Citizenship in order for the state to capitalize on its promises while minimizing its negative side-effects. Dual Citizenship can be used to improve the developmental dimension of the Armenian statehood. She continues that the experience of other cultures like China shows that foreign direct investment levels potentially can increase, because it will be a strong facilitator of inter-personal networks of Chinese expatriates abroad (Ohanian 2006).

For example, Israel's founders intended the "Law of return" to be a means of strengthening and stabilizing the Jewish state. The influx of human capital and migration helped solidify Israel as a considerable power in the Middle East for its short history (Byrne 2005 pp. 7-8). A similar law could provide enormous benefit to Armenia. Israel's case points to the potential that a small vulnerable country could achieve with strong Diaspora support under the rubric of legitimate citizenship.

The neo-liberal policies of Armenian state as mentions Ohanian (2006) would be strengthened by liberalization of citizenship policies and would help to formalize the transnational linkage. She emphasizes that Dual citizenship would strengthen the institutional positions of the state as it would allow the state to manage the existing transnational relationships between the Armenian society and abroad (Ohanian 2006).

According to Dr. Kotchikian (2006), Assistant Director of International Affaris Program and Instructor of Political Science, Florida State University, on the one hand, those supporting the law put forward arguments that one of the biggest assets that Armenia owns was the large network of Armenian communities dispersed throughout the world and allowing these people to become citizens of Armenia would provide them with a link - emotional or real - to the "homeland" helping in the socioeconomic and political development of the Republic. On the other hand, opponents of the law argued that with the

unorganized and decentralized nature of the Armenian Diasporas, issues such as taxation, participation in elections and military service would prove to be a Gordian Knot and their regulation would certainly prove to be a difficult task for the government of Armenia. Those opposed to the idea cite the dangers of allowing other countries and their citizens to interfere in the political life of Armenia, and to influence the domestic and foreign policy of our country (Kotchikian 2006).

The major findings of interviews (2007) with several political parties as well as ARF leaders<sup>9</sup> emphasized on the point that the move will foster the consolidation of millions ethnic Armenians scattered throughout the world and the utilization of their "potential" for the good of their homeland. Apart from purely financial benefits associated with possible taxation of expatriate citizens, it is first of all a "moral issue."

Thus we conclude that the Dual Citizenship will result the following benefits to Republic of Armenia:

- Strengthen and stabilize the Armenian State prosperity;
- Create opportunities for repatriation, and through that, enhancing Armenia's economic potential and strengthening national security;
- Addressee historical injustice by providing Armenian Diaspora with a formal link to homeland;
- Assist Armenia in having good relations and even political influence in countries with large Diasporan populations;
- Strengthen the institutional position of the state to manage the existing transnational relationships between the Armenian society and abroad;
- Help to preserve the national identity through having formal and more active relations between Armenia and Diaspora;

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<sup>9</sup> See the list of interviewees in Appendix B

- Strengthen the civil liberties and democratic processes taking place in Armenia;  
“Oneness” of all Armenians.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

In order to foster a sense of belonging and civic responsibility amongst people of Armenia and Diaspora, the government would need to implement policies and institutions to support this kind of development. Kzirian (2006) continues that any state seeking to reintegrate members of Diaspora faces remarkably difficult challenges in incorporation of Diasporas as “legitimate” members of the “host” nation. The support of Diaspora by the state and recognition of Diaspora Armenians as an integral and necessary component of Armenia’s future can preserve the national identity of Armenian Diaspora. Diaspora-oriented support agencies, legal protections for overseas citizens and significant outreach to citizens abroad are required (Kzirian 2006).

In the third Armenia-Diaspora forum Ayvazyan (2006) stresses that in order Armenia to have progress, it is a need to enhance their self-organization both in homeland and the Diaspora, as well as between them. He continues Armenia with its problems but also its achievements is the most realistic axis, in many respects - even the only one, around which the Diasporan Armenian life and identity can be built (Ayvazyan 2006).

Ayvazyan mentions that it would be useful to consider establishing also abroad structures, whose only task will be providing possible assistance to those who return to homeland. These newly established structures should be independent from the other Diasporan structures and the Armenian state (Ayvazyan 2006).

To summarize, the correct organization of Armenia-Diaspora cooperation envisages serious changes in the ideological and organizational life of the Armenian world (including Armenia's legislative field) based on the idea of the Armenians' unification in Armenia sooner or later (Kzirian 2006).

- Dual Citizenship is to enhance the relationship between the Armenian state and the Diaspora;

- Dual Citizenship is associated with political, social and economic dimensions of Armenian development.
- If managed effectively it can strengthen the Armenian state-building institutionally, administratively and financially;
- To institutionalize a Diaspora-Armenia link with the aim of capitalizing on the full potential of the Diaspora.
- Armenia-Diaspora relations be reexamined, and recognized in order to meet new, contemporary demands and imperatives; organize more transparent coordination and cooperation between them and identify issues of critical national significance.
- Diaspora Agency will have to have a status of a Ministry, have wide executive powers and legislative rights. With a dynamic and goal-oriented management, the Agency will be able to identify and address main barriers to Diaspora involvement in Armenia and lay ground for more productive cooperation. A successful example is Israel's Ministry of Absorption.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What directions can be given to future socio-cultural relations between Diaspora and homeland after Dual Citizenship?
2. How active has been the Diaspora regarding the cultural contribution to Armenia after the independency?
3. What is the role of language and how is it reflected in the cultural contribution?
4. How the repatriates adopt themselves socially and psychologically to homeland?
5. What is the role of cultural contributions including literature, arts, religion and history?
6. What directions can be made to future economic relations between Diaspora and homeland after Dual Citizenship?
7. How active has been the Diaspora regarding the economical contribution to Armenia since the independence?
8. How active has been the Diaspora regarding the political contribution to Armenia since the independence?
9. What directions can be made to future political relations between Diaspora and homeland after Dual Citizenship?
10. How you define national identity and how it has an impact on the Diaspora and homeland relationships?
11. How Armenian Diaspora will enhance the political integration, civil rights and socio-political participations in Armenia after Dual Citizenship?
12. What would be the political opportunities for Diaspora in the foreign policy of Armenia after the Dual Citizenship?
13. Do you think that political affiliation to any Armenian party among Diasporans will be regarded as a means of political impact in Armenia?



14. What is Armenian Question from Diaspora point of view and how Diaspora contributes to comprehensive response to this?
15. What is the national interest of Armenia and what has been the role of Diaspora in defining Armenia national interest?
16. What are the benefits and shortcomings of having Dual Citizenship for Diasporans?

## Appendix B: List of Interviewees<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Shahan Kandakharyan, the Editor-in-Chief of Azdak Beirut-based newspaper  
Mr. Gevorg Yazichyan, PhD in History  
Mr. Ralph Yirikyan, General Manager, VivaCell Company  
Mr., Arman Kirakossian, Deputy Minister, RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Mr. Jivan Movsesyan, Diaspora Agency, RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Mr. Ara Sanjyan, Director, Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan-Dearborn  
Mrs. Anna Ohanian, PhD. Professor, Political Science Department Stonehill College, Massachusetts, USA  
Mr. Giro Manoyan, Head of the Hay Dat (Armenian Cause) Office of ARF Director of the International Secretariat of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Bureau in Yerevan  
Mr. Asbed Kotchikian, PhD, Assistant Director of International Affaris Program and Instructor of Political Science, Florida State University.  
Ms. Arpi Vardanian , Armenian regional director of the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA)  
Dr. Ayvazyan , Director of “Ararat” Center for Strategic Research  
Dr. Khatchig DerGhoukassian, Ph.D, Universidad de San Andrés  
Mr. Tom Samuelian, PhD, Dean, AUA Law Department  
Mr. Aram Hajian, PhD, Assistant Dean, Assistant Professor, AUA College of Engineering  
Mr. Hrair Karapetyan, Head of the ARF faction  
Mr. Albert Ajemian, member of the ARF Bureau  
Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Syria  
Tufenkian Foundation Armenia Office  
Mr. Ohan Janikian, Egypt  
Ms. Sabrina Avakian, Etopia  
Major Political Parties: Republican party of Armenia, Prosperous Armenia Party, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Country of Law and Heritage parties

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<sup>10</sup> Twenty five in-depth interviews were completed with appropriate persons. Personal in-depth interviews have been conducted with the Government of the Republic of Armenia, Diaspora structure, and prominent representatives of Diaspora living in Armenia, as well as active individuals of several political parties in Armenia.

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