

# Americans Abroad: A Global Diaspora?

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The low-level, constant harassment against our own diaspora is crazy, sad, and destructive.

—Andy Sundberg, founder of American Citizens Abroad

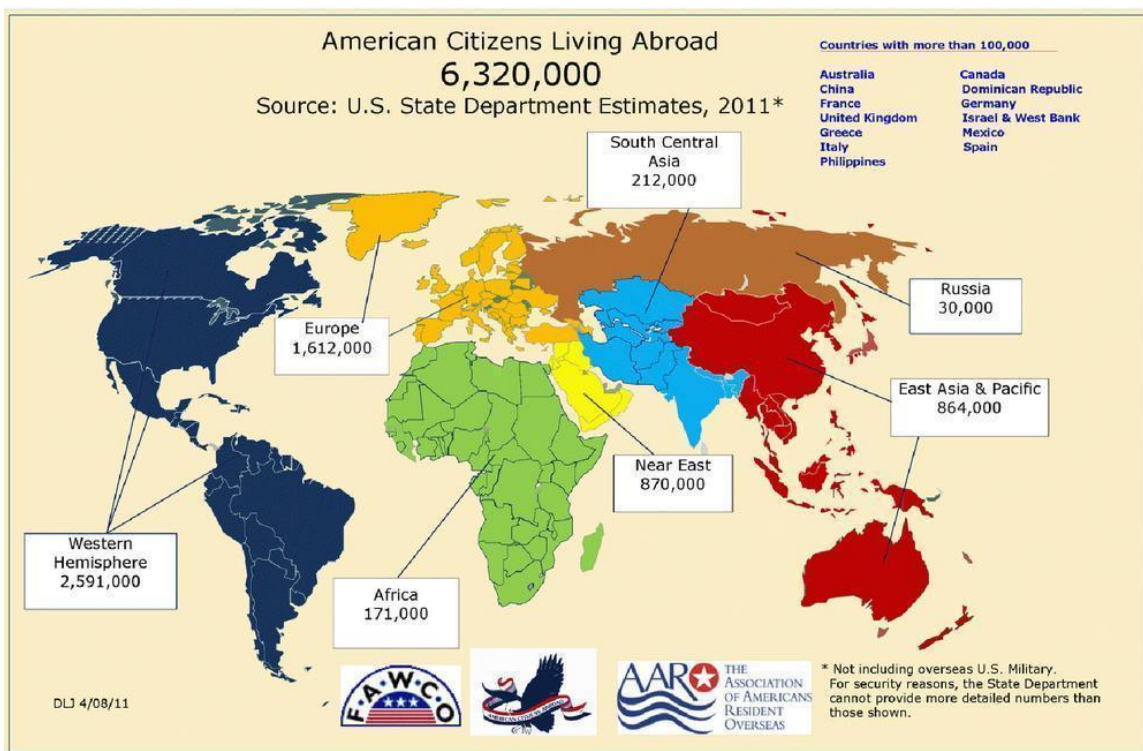
To mount a defence of an orthodox definition of “diaspora,” which orthodoxy in any case has been shown to be dubious, is akin to commanding the waves no longer to break on the shore.

—Robin Cohen, sociologist

In April 2011, an energetic cadre of US citizens converged on the nation’s capital with the goals of lobbying representatives, strategizing with fellow constituents, and exercising their rights as members of a democratic state. Nothing appeared to distinguish this group from other concerned citizens negotiating the corridors of Capitol Hill. Yet these Americans had traveled thousands of miles, across international borders from their residences in France, Mexico, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, and elsewhere to exercise citizenship in a country where they possess formal membership but do not reside and, in some cases, had not resided for decades. This DC gathering, known as Overseas Americans Week (OAW), has been occurring annually since 2002 and is but one indicator of the multiple and varied forms of attachment these migrants maintain to their US homeland. The population of Americans living around the world defies precise enumeration but is estimated at anywhere between five and seven million (see Figure 1). Although official estimates of the size of this emigrant population vary, sources generally agree on the rank order of settlement sites, with Mexico, Canada, and the UK representing the top

three respectively.<sup>1</sup> These American emigrants, like so many others, participate in a range of associations designed to link them with their homeland and with their compatriots scattered across the globe, as well as to preserve and promote the culture, history, and values of their country of origin. During OAW 2011, one American woman who had been living in Holland for over thirty years said to me, almost defiantly, “You can’t take the country out of us.” Writing eighteen years earlier, sociologist Arnold Dashefsky made the same observation: “Apparently, you can take an American out of America, but you cannot take America out of an American.”<sup>2</sup>

**FIGURE 1. American Citizens Living Abroad**



Source: American Citizens Abroad, accessed December 17, 2012, <http://americansabroad.org/files/6013/3589/8124/citizmap.jpg>.

Globalization has dramatically increased both the mobility and interconnectedness of humankind and inspired a rich body of scholarship on the topics of diaspora, plural citizenships, transnationalism, and the ambiguous future of the nation-state.<sup>3</sup> A wealth of case studies provide empirical grounding for these analyses, ranging from the ancient Greeks, Armenians, and Jews to Dominicans, Haitians, and Mexicans.<sup>4</sup> Largely missing, however, is an awareness of or interest in

the sizeable and growing population of native-born US citizens also scattered around the globe.<sup>5</sup> Yet these migrants, like others, are practicing forms of political and cultural belonging that transcend the boundaries of the nation-state. This article explores the relevance of the literature on diaspora to the underexamined case of emigration from the US and the transnational attachments and practices of Americans living outside their country of birth. What follows is an exploration into whether the label “diaspora” can be applied to Americans and, if so, what the implications—both practical and analytical—are of doing so. Incorporating Americans abroad into a framework heavily influenced by themes of dispossession is counterintuitive, as is applying the label “diaspora” to a relatively privileged group of migrants more likely to be referred to as “expats.” The argument here is that (1) the lens of diaspora can bring needed focus to an American emigrant population whose size and transnational engagement are increasing; and (2) the underexamined case of Americans abroad can enhance existing scholarship on contemporary configurations of cultural and political belonging in an era of heightened globalization.

### **Americans Abroad**

As a “settler society,” the US has long been implicated in a number of diasporic realities. European colonialism in North America initiated the forced dispersion of indigenous peoples, and the subsequent formation and westward expansion of the US intensified the continental scattering of Native Americans. The populating of the US by immigrants also resulted in a nation comprised of multiple diasporas. For over two hundred years, millions of immigrants have been arriving voluntarily from around the world and maintaining ties to their homelands. The US plays host to large and mobilized diasporas originating from Armenia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Mexico, and Syria, to name only a few. Other “migrants,” most notably African slaves, arrived in the US against their will and grew to comprise a diaspora scattered widely across oceans and continents. *Immigration, settlement, and assimilation* are central themes in the American narrative, but equally prevalent in the country’s history, albeit less celebrated, are *emigration, mobility, and the maintenance of transnational ties*.

When George Washington became the first US President on April 30, 1789, among those celebrating his inauguration was a “colony” of Americans living in France.<sup>6</sup> Two hundred and nineteen years later when Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th US President, poignant images of Americans around the world celebrating his victory circulated widely on the web.<sup>7</sup> Since the founding of the republic, Americans of various backgrounds have emigrated. Like other groups, their motivations, destinations, and experiences vary widely. “Founding fathers” like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson resided for extended periods in Europe to pursue diplomatic aims. Both men sought to promote the interests of their country and their compatriots abroad—regularly hosting Americans living in Europe for

dinners and Fourth of July celebrations and, in Franklin's case, printing a daily newspaper in French and English for the benefit of Americans living in Paris.<sup>8</sup> A hundred years later, at the end of the American Civil War, thousands of Confederates left the US—the largest numbers settling in Mexico and Brazil. These migrants continued (in some cases for generations) to identify with the culture, history, and language of the Southern United States. In the Brazilian town of Americana, residents with surnames such as Butler, Jackson, and Stonewall still “make pecan pies, hold debutante balls, and sing Southern hymns in their Protestant church.”<sup>9</sup>

Authors, artists, and musicians have also figured prominently in the population of Americans abroad.<sup>10</sup> Painter Mary Cassatt left Philadelphia to settle in Paris in the early 1870s and rarely returned to the US. Yet she was known to regularly remind her French friends, “I am an American—definitely and frankly an American.”<sup>11</sup> Perhaps most well known are Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, and other members of the “Lost Generation” who lived in Europe after World War I.<sup>12</sup> Stein's famous claim that “America is my country and Paris is my hometown” offers an early illustration of American transnational belonging.<sup>13</sup>

This trend of Americans emigrating for a mix of political, cultural, and increasingly economic reasons has continued to the present day.<sup>14</sup> During the Cold War, a number of Americans left the country for Europe and Latin America to escape the political and cultural oppression of an anticommunist movement in the US.<sup>15</sup> An estimated fifty thousand draft-age Americans migrated to Canada during the late 1960s and 1970s in protest of the Vietnam War.<sup>16</sup> Hundreds more have joined them in recent years in response to the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—some also alleging dissatisfaction with the policies of George W. Bush and cultural and political discrimination against gays and lesbians in the US.<sup>17</sup> Artists continued to be well represented among the American emigrant population (members of the Beat Generation famously sought cultural liberation in Mexico and other parts of Latin America), as have young people seeking adventure abroad or, as is increasingly the case, economic opportunities that elude them at home.<sup>18</sup> Coinciding with the intensification of contemporary globalization, a growing number of US citizens are moving abroad for employment, love and marriage,<sup>19</sup> and, with the “coming of age” of the Baby Boomer generation, retirement.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout this history of US emigration, Americans, like most migrants, have founded organizations, associations, schools, and clubs to ease their settlement in new lands, promote the culture and ideals of their homeland, and defend their interests as citizens straddled between two lands. Even among Americans whose departure from the US has been motivated by cultural or political disenchantment, the tendency to commune with fellow Americans abroad and to maintain ties to the country they left is widespread. Hundreds of associations exist around the world to serve the interests of Americans abroad. The American Legion, chartered in 1919 for the purposes of “advocating patriotism and honor” and “promoting a strong national security,” is well known for its work in the US. Less well known is that in

addition to each of the fifty states, the Legion maintains departments in France, Mexico, the Philippines, and smaller posts in eleven more countries around the world. Mexico is home to eight active American Legion posts serving hundreds of the estimated more than one million US citizens residing south of the border.<sup>21</sup> The Daughters and the Sons of the American Revolution also maintain chapters in Mexico and other countries around the world. Founded in 1890 and 1889 respectively, both organizations dedicate themselves to “promoting patriotism, preserving American history,” and “expand[ing] the meaning of patriotism, respect for . . . national symbols, [and] the value of American citizenship.”<sup>22</sup> As a testament to the territorial and cultural fluidity of the American nation, in 2003, the SAR chapter in Mexico passed a resolution recognizing as “American Patriots” descendants of New Spain, whose ancestors fought alongside the colonists during the American Revolution.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to organizations founded in the US and extending their work abroad for the benefit of American emigrants, many other groups have formed outside of the US by and for the growing population of Americans worldwide. The Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO), founded in 1973 and headquartered in Paris, defines itself as a “non-partisan service organization representing the interests of more than 6.32 million U.S. citizens living and working abroad. Its mission is to ensure that Americans resident overseas are guaranteed the same rights and privileges as their counterparts in the U.S.”<sup>24</sup> American Citizens Abroad (ACA), founded in 1978 and billing itself as “the voice of Americans overseas,” maintains its headquarters in Geneva and has more than sixty active “country contacts” representing ACA throughout the world.<sup>25</sup> The Association of American Clubs represents over forty member organizations throughout the world that, like the American Society of Sydney, describe their mission in terms of “celebrat[ing] American culture from afar.”<sup>26</sup> Hundreds of very active American Women’s Clubs exist globally for the purposes of uniting and serving American women living outside of the US and are linked internationally through the Federation of American Women’s Clubs Overseas (FAWCO).<sup>27</sup> Finally, both of the major political parties in the US have active and growing global branches. Democrats Abroad, formed in 1964, maintains committees throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas and describes itself as “the official Democratic Party organization for the millions of Americans living outside the United States.”<sup>28</sup> Republicans Abroad, founded in 1978, is now a “worldwide organization, with over 50 chapters,” whose primary mission is “to integrate Americans, especially those who adhere to the principles of the Republican Party, into the election process.”<sup>29</sup>

Some of these groups describe themselves as primarily social clubs, others more as advocacy organizations, but in every case what unites the participants is their identity as American and their interests in and attachments to the US. The socializing that takes place typically revolves around celebrating US holidays and customs. Fourth of July parties and Thanksgiving dinners are especially popular, but these American emigrants also commemorate national tragedies, honor fallen US

leaders, and raise money for compatriots in the homeland during national tragedies like Hurricane Katrina.<sup>30</sup> Advocacy focuses on particular issues American citizens confront due to their residence outside of the US—whether in the realms of banking, access to Medicare, the transmission of citizenship to children born abroad, voting, or taxes.<sup>31</sup> In addition to their coordinated efforts during the annual Overseas Americans Week in Washington, these groups have succeeded in establishing a Congressional Caucus on Americans Abroad, a bipartisan group dedicated to addressing “the concerns of several million US citizens living outside the United States.”<sup>32</sup> The Democrats Abroad and Republicans Abroad have both reported increased involvement on the part of their constituents in countries around the world, particularly in the wake of the very close US presidential elections of 2000 when the role of overseas ballots captured unprecedented national and international attention.<sup>33</sup> In 2008, the Democrats Abroad instituted the first-ever “global primary” to allow US Democrats worldwide to help choose the party’s presidential nominee.<sup>34</sup>

In spite of these many efforts, the US government’s attitude toward its citizens abroad has tended toward disinterest or, from the perspective of many emigrants, neglect. Individuals who are active in the various organizations above express frustration with the US government, not only in terms of issues like taxation (which is based on US citizenship rather than residency as is this case in most other countries) and obstacles to voting from abroad, but also in terms of what they generally experience as a deaf ear when it comes their concerns. Andy Sundberg, founder of ACA, has lamented, “Most other countries put a premium on encouraging their citizens to live and work abroad. They see it as an asset rather than a liability.”<sup>35</sup> One indicator of neglect lies in US government agencies’ lack of reliable data on the numbers of American abroad. No US government agency reports on emigrants. In 1957, the Immigration and Naturalization Services discontinued its collection of emigration data. In 2004, the US Census Bureau issued a report concluding that it was not cost effective to count Americans abroad.<sup>36</sup> The US State Department maintains records of US citizens living abroad who register, *voluntarily*, with a local US consulate, but growing national security concerns have made the State Department reluctant to release such information. The last time they did so with specific country-level data was in 1999 (see Table 1).

The frustrations these emigrants share bear little resemblance to the tales of hardship familiar among immigrants from developing countries struggling to adapt in “settlement” countries such as the US, Canada, and those in Western Europe. Still, like many dispersed populations, Americans abroad clearly have deep attachments, cultural and otherwise, to the land of their birth.<sup>37</sup> When asked about his sense of “belonging,” one American living in Mexico remarked that although he lives abroad and travels frequently, he always feels American: “Look, I am Jewish. I have this argument a lot with friends about Israel. Of course I belong to Israel. But if there was ever a conflict, I am American first and foremost.”<sup>38</sup> Another American, born in the US but living in Switzerland for decades and very active in one of the organizations

for Americans abroad, said this, with emotion, when I probed the persistence and passion behind his attachment to the US: “It’s my heritage.”<sup>39</sup> Finally, an American woman living in Canada for twenty years said this when asked about her continued commitment to voting in US elections: “that just affirms my connection to the US. . . . You get more involved [with the American political process] the longer you stay [in Canada], as you realize that no, I am not Canadian. We care about what happens in the US.”<sup>40</sup>

**TABLE 1. United States Citizens Living Abroad, 1999**

**Region**

Americas	2,113,295	51.00%
Europe	1,169,438	28.00%
Asia	517,800	12.00%
Middle East	295,645	7.00%
Africa	67,632	2.00%
TOTAL	4,163,810	100.00%

**Country (Top ten)**

Mexico	1,036,300	24.89%
Canada	687,700	16.52%
United Kingdom	224,000	5.38%
Germany	210,880	5.06%
Israel	184,195	4.42%
Italy	168,967	4.06%
Philippines	105,000	2.52%
Australia	102,800	2.47%
France	101,750	2.44%
Spain	94,513	2.27%

Source: Jason P. Schachter, “Estimation of Emigration from the United States Using International Data Sources,” United Nations Secretariat, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, November 2006, p. 15, table 1, <http://unstats.un.org/UNSD/demographic/meetings/egm/migrationegm06/DOC%2019%20ILO.pdf>.

For this group of migrants, as with others, globalization provides an increasingly important backdrop for understanding international migration and the maintenance of cross-border ties. Global capitalism has given rise to conditions that “pull” Americans to other locales and “push” them to leave the US. Job opportunities have opened in some parts of the world and closed in others.<sup>41</sup> US baby boomers poised to retire face dwindling pensions, insecure real estate investments, and increasing health-care costs. Finding themselves priced out of many US locales, they are pursuing retirement bargains throughout Latin America and elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, communication and information technologies encourage migration by facilitating the maintenance of sociocultural, political, and economic ties with the US homeland and the formation of networks among conationals residing abroad. Facebook, Meetup.com, Yahoo! Groups, blogs, and countless websites provide useful media for disseminating knowledge and facilitating networks. US citizens abroad emphasize the significance of the internet and global media to their migration decision-making—in terms of the easy availability of information as well as the related ability to maintain close ties with family, friends, financial investments, politics, and popular culture in their homeland.<sup>43</sup>

Relative to the voluminous literature on international migration and immigration to the US, American emigration has captured minimal attention. Several reasons likely contribute to this oversight. American identity is steeped in myths of exceptionalism. The “shining city upon a hill” is a destination that migrants seek, not one that they choose to leave. Americans who do move abroad are rarely perceived as immigrants or treated as such by scholars, politicians, or the media—owing largely to their class, cultural, political, and racial positioning in the global hierarchy of peoples and states. This population’s relative privilege renders Americans unfamiliar subjects for the study of migration and diaspora. But failing to incorporate native-born US citizens more fully into the study of global mobilities and transnational identities hampers both the understanding of potentially significant social and political phenomena and the development of the concepts and framework employed to make sense of those phenomena. The next section reviews seminal work on the meaning of term “diaspora” and assesses its applicability to the case of Americans abroad.

### **An American Diaspora?**

The term “diaspora” appears only rarely in association with US citizens abroad. In this article’s epigraph, the founder of ACA used the term while complaining about the US government’s treatment of the overseas American community. *Harvard Business Review*’s technology forecaster, Paul Saffo, describes “A Looming American Diaspora” of young, talented US knowledge workers seeking opportunities overseas.<sup>44</sup> Andrew Sullivan discusses how the US government’s “sub-human” treatment of gays and lesbians is “forcing more and more able, qualified, productive



and talented citizens into a diaspora to protect their families.”<sup>45</sup> In the conclusion to his book, *Leaving America*, John Wennersten refers to American expatriates as “The Tribal Diaspora”<sup>46</sup>; and the Overseas Vote Foundation recently published a brief essay by Judith Murray entitled “The American Diaspora.”<sup>47</sup> These references might be read as contributing to the “genuine inflation” of the term “diaspora,”<sup>48</sup> but they also suggest a need for reexamining existing frameworks used to study mobility and identity in a global world.

Originating from ancient Greek, the word “diaspora” means “to sow over” or “to scatter widely.”<sup>49</sup> Historically associated with the Jewish people, use of the word “diaspora” has undergone massive expansion—quantitatively and qualitatively. Today, the term’s inflation is the single point on which scholars of diaspora most widely agree. Less agreement exists regarding how (or whether) to distinguish this form of mobility and belonging from other categories of dispersed populations: expatriates, exiles, refugees, immigrants, and minority ethnic communities.<sup>50</sup> Existing scholarship provides valuable insight into the utility of the concept, traits that might be used to define and delimit diasporas and diasporic activity, and qualifiers such as “quasi-diaspora,” “semi-diaspora,” and “diasporic,” intended to sharpen the precision of the term.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, a review of this literature supports three basic observations: (1) no firm agreement has been reached as to what precisely distinguishes diaspora from other forms of dispersion, or what and who properly qualifies as a diaspora; (2) interest in and usage of the term “diaspora” (albeit typically loose and imprecise) persists; (3) the case of Americans is absent from this scholarly literature on diaspora.

The most likely explanation for why the concept of diaspora has rarely been extended to US citizens abroad lies in the term’s lengthy association with coercion and trauma. Yet scholars of diaspora agree, explicitly and implicitly, that forced dispersal and suffering are not the *sine qua non* of diaspora. William Safran acknowledges that “it is possible for a diaspora not to be involuntary [and] not to be the consequence of collective trauma.”<sup>52</sup> Dominique Schnapper reaches a similar conclusion: “It seems to me useless . . . to make distinctions based on whether the dispersion was provoked by political persecution, economic misery, or a project of colonization, commerce, or culture.”<sup>53</sup> Coercion and trauma continue to figure prominently in discussions of diaspora but never as *sufficient* conditions for diaspora status, and often not even as *necessary* ones. Analysts who generate lists of defining attributes tend to share James Clifford’s view that, “whatever the working list of diasporic features, no society can be expected to qualify on all counts.”<sup>54</sup>

Robin Cohen has gone perhaps the furthest in detaching the concept of diaspora from its ties to what he labels “the victim tradition.” He does this, first, by reminding us that for the Greeks, from whom the word comes, diaspora did not refer to collective trauma but had an essentially “positive” connotation focused on expansion for the purposes of conquest, colonization, and migration. Second, he reinterprets the history of the Jewish diaspora to reveal a diversity of experiences

not adequately captured by the notion of “victim diaspora.” From here, Cohen proposes a typology of diaspora that includes victim diasporas (characterized by traumatic dispersal, e.g., Jews, Africans, and Armenians); labor diasporas (characterized by dispersal in pursuit of employment, e.g., Indians); imperial diasporas (characterized by overseas expansion and settlement for the purposes of colonization, e.g., the British); trade diasporas (characterized by networks of proactive merchants buying and selling goods over long distances, e.g., Chinese); and cultural diasporas (exemplified by hybridized cultures of Caribbean peoples). Cohen is careful to clarify that offering an overarching theory of diaspora is not his goal, and something he judges to be impossible. Rather he aims to consider all credible meanings of the term and offer a taxonomy to assist in evaluating the current and future implications of global diasporas.<sup>55</sup>

Other scholars’ conceptualizations of diaspora are more restrictive. Schnapper acknowledges the increasingly expansive use of the term diaspora but maintains that “nevertheless, one would hardly use it to analyze phenomena as quantitatively and politically considerable as the dispersion of Europeans founding their colonial empires . . . the migration of workers from the poor countries of the south to the rich countries of Europe . . . the departure of political exiles like the Poles of the 19th century. One would hardly speak of a ‘Spanish diaspora,’ a ‘British diaspora,’ or an ‘Italian diaspora.’”<sup>56</sup> Although she is correct that the variation among these groups and experiences is considerable, she does not clarify how or why size matters to the definition of diaspora, or which specific political conditions support the designation of diaspora and which do not. Ultimately, Schnapper concludes that, to render the concept of diaspora operative, “we must reserve it for populations that maintain institutionalized ties, whether objective or symbolic, beyond the borders of nation-states” (251). The emphasis on the maintenance and institutionalization of ties delimits the reach of the term diaspora, but not in a way that excludes Americans abroad.

Safran is also troubled by the loose and overly inclusive use of the term diaspora. Like Schnapper, he sorts through examples of groups to whom the label can properly apply. West Indian blacks who settled in Britain or the US, he argues, constitute a “genuine diaspora” in that “they regard Jamaica as their homeland, are imbued with its culture, and have ongoing connections with it.”<sup>57</sup> He makes a similar case for Portuguese immigrants in France “who continue to return to Portugal to vote” (263). On the other hand, Polish Americans and Italian Americans are not diasporas, according to Safran, if they “no longer speak Polish or Italian, no longer attend a homeland-oriented church, have no clear idea of the homeland’s past, and retain no more than predilection for the cuisine of their ethnicity, a predilection often shared by people who do not belong to their ethnic group” (262).

Ultimately, Safran acknowledges that the question of how or whether an immigrant group constitutes a diaspora is unsettled, but that the following seem to be obvious preconditions: the creation and maintenance of adequate diasporic

institutions; a sufficient number of members; and charismatic cultural leaders or ethnic entrepreneurs committed to the group's collective identity (284–85). His definition also remains vague in terms of what constitutes “adequate” institutions or “sufficient” numbers or “charisma.” Nor do the criteria offered to distinguish among groups render US citizens abroad ineligible for diaspora status. Americans, like Jamaicans, regard the US as their homeland, are imbued with its culture, and remain connected to it. Like the Portuguese in France, they continue to vote in US elections. Americans abroad continue to speak English, attend homeland-oriented churches, and retain a predilection for their country's cuisine.<sup>58</sup>

Also concerned about the widespread appropriation of the term diaspora, Clifford nevertheless acknowledges that, in the current age, “most communities have diasporic dimensions” and that, ultimately, it is not possible to define diaspora sharply, “either by recourse to essential features or to privative oppositions.”<sup>59</sup> Particularly significant in the case of Americans abroad is Clifford's argument for the need to better understand class differences among diasporic populations. On the one hand, he maintains that Aihwa Ong's example of the Chinese investor “based” in San Francisco who proclaims, “I can live anywhere in the world, but it must be near an airport” overstretches the concept of diaspora. However, Clifford continues, “to the extent that the investor identifies and is identified as Chinese, maintaining significant connections elsewhere, the term is appropriate” (312).

More recent analyses, focused less on defining diaspora and more on assessing their implications, offer these straightforward definitions: “A diaspora is a self-identified ethnic group, with a specific place of origin, which has been globally dispersed through voluntary or forced migration”<sup>60</sup>; or “an ethno-national diaspora is a social-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regards themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries. Members of such entities maintain regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as their homelands and with individuals and groups of the same background residing in other host countries.”<sup>61</sup>

Table 2 compiles the attributes of diaspora as proposed by three different sources. All six of the attributes posited by Safran apply to US citizens living abroad, with some minor qualifications. The wording “have been dispersed” in his first attribute implies that the dispersal may not have been voluntary, though Safran does not state this qualification explicitly, nor, as noted above, does he insist on it in his analysis. With regard to Safran's third condition for diaspora status, Americans abroad tend to remain partly separate from their host societies, though this segregation is typically the result of choice or a perception of difference than actual experiences of exclusion. Safran's fourth attribute applies in that US emigrants often idealize their homeland, but the question of return is a matter of choice and convenience, as was the decision to depart, and viewed not so much in structural terms as in individual ones.<sup>62</sup>

**TABLE 2. Common Features of a Diaspora**

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**Safran (1991)**

1. They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from an original “centre” to two or more foreign regions;
  2. they retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland including its location, history and achievements;
  3. they believe they are not – and perhaps can never be – fully accepted in their host societies and so remain partly separate;
  4. their ancestral home is idealized and it is thought that, when conditions are favourable, either they, or their descendants should return;
  5. they believe all members of the diaspora should be committed to the maintenance or restoration of the of the original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and
  6. they continue in various ways to relate to that homeland and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are in an important way defined by the existence of such a relationship.
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**Cohen (1997)**

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
2. alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;
3. a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements;
4. an idealization of the putative ancestral homeland and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;
5. the development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;
6. a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;
7. a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;
8. a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and
9. the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.

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### **Sahoo and Maharaj (2007)**

1. Ethnic consciousness
  2. Active associative life
  3. Contacts with the land of origin in various forms, real or imaginary
  4. Relations with other groups of the same ethnic origin spread over the world
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Cohen's list of attributes fits Americans abroad as well, with some of the same caveats noted with regard to Safran's attributes. Dispersal of Americans outside the US has rarely been traumatic, although possible exceptions might include Cold War exiles, war resisters, and racial and sexual minorities. Regarding the second condition, the ambitions of these migrants are not conventionally "colonial," although similarities with the colonial experience do exist, particularly among Americans who have migrated to less developed countries.<sup>63</sup> The ability to return home (attribute number three) is a readily available option for most US citizens. The relationship with the host society is seldom one of assimilation, nor is it "troubled" to the extent implied by Cohen's seventh condition. Each of the four qualities put forth by Sahoo and Maharaj apply to the case of US citizens residing abroad.

Assessment of the applicability of the concept of diaspora to Americans abroad must also acknowledge that the form and nature of any given diaspora can, and will, vary internally and across time. Safran acknowledges that among ethnic minorities who live outside their homeland, some may manifest diasporic identities while others do not.<sup>64</sup> Schnapper notes that any one diaspora can exhibit simultaneously different motivations and characteristics (escaping persecution and pursuing economic gain).<sup>65</sup> And Vertovec maintains that "we should resist assumptions that views and experiences are shared within a dispersed population despite their common identification."<sup>66</sup> In other words, the attitudes and behaviors of the swelling ranks of US retirees scattered throughout Latin America are likely to differ from those of the post-World War I "Lost Generation" of Americans living in Europe or the Americans who left for Canada during the Vietnam War era. And there are certainly individual Americans who have left the US and maintain few if any attachments, material or symbolic, to their homeland. Like other cases, this one also confronts challenges related to measurement. Are children who acquire their US citizenship through birth to American parents living abroad to be considered members of the American diaspora? Are immigrants to the US who naturalize but then return to their original homeland part of the American diaspora? This variation in the population, and puzzles related to who properly belongs, neither distinguishes

the American case from others, nor disqualifies Americans abroad from diaspora status.

At first glance, the term diaspora seems an unlikely fit for Americans abroad. The migration in question is voluntary. The migrants tend to be privileged compared to others and to many of the host societies where they settle. Their homeland is politically, economically, and culturally powerful compared to other countries in the international system, including many that are receiving its emigrants. As a result, rarely are their experiences of movement or settlement characterized in terms of coercion, loss, or longing. Also confounding the notion of “American diaspora” is the invocation of “ethnicity” in some definitions of the term. As a settler society founded on the narrative of the melting pot and principles of civic nationalism, the US tolerates ethnic subgroups but explicitly rejects defining “American” identity in ethnic terms. To refer to shared ethnicity as a factor that unites Americans abroad is counterintuitive. Yet scholars have convincingly demonstrated that ethnicity is not a primordial trait but a social and political construction; and international migration is a central context for and factor in that construction.<sup>67</sup> Wennersten alludes to the constructed character of ethnicity when he writes that, although few Americans would consider themselves members of a “tribe,” they are “nonetheless a singular breed” who “think differently and act differently from the members of other tribes” and who “have difficulty getting America out of their heads.”<sup>68</sup>

Despite peculiarities in the American case, the behaviors of this population resemble in many ways those of groups whose stories dominate the literature on diaspora. A persuasive claim can certainly be made for extending the label “diaspora” to US citizens abroad, but fit alone is not sufficient justification for applying the term. Ultimately, the utility of interrogating the meaning of any conceptual frame and its applicability to any case is to further understanding of the phenomena in question. The next section provides an overview of the potential practical and analytical insights to be gleaned from examining Americans abroad through the lens of diaspora.

## **Implications and Insights**

### *Practical/Political Implications*

Agreeing that diasporas (owing largely to globalization) are increasing in size, number, and relevance, scholars have tended to turn their attention to the question of impact. This turn heeds the advice of luminaries like Tölölyan and Clifford to focus on that which diaspora defines itself against: the nation-state.<sup>69</sup> How, in other words, do diasporas challenge the integrity of nation-states, and what are the economic, political, and cultural implications of diaspora for homelands, host countries, and migrant populations themselves? In an essay entitled “Diasporas Good? Diasporas Bad?” Vertovec outlines the parameters of this discussion. Assessments of the

“goodness” or “badness” of diasporas obviously vary depending on the conditions (economic, political, cultural) and the perspective (migrants, host society, homeland, and subgroups of each) in question.<sup>70</sup> Recently, for example, diasporas have been applauded for their potential to contribute to economic development in the migrants’ homelands via remittances and other forms of investment.<sup>71</sup> Assessments of the political and cultural implications of diasporic belonging have tended to be more mixed. From the perspective of homelands, diasporas can be perceived as helping to further foreign policy goals or, alternatively, as fueling disloyal constituencies whose continued involvement with their country of birth constitutes unwelcome meddling from abroad. Mexico, historically, has offered examples of both views.<sup>72</sup> From the perspective of settlement countries that receive large numbers of immigrants, such as the US, attitudes toward diasporic activity and identification vary, but host societies and governments often perceive diasporas as threatening—politically and culturally. Political scientists Samuel Huntington’s and Stanley Renshon’s quasi-scholarly accounts of “the challenges to America’s national identity” and “the 50% American,” respectively, reflect well the public hostility in the US toward immigrants’ dual allegiances (Mexicans’ in particular) and what Vertovec characterized as “diasporaphobia.”<sup>73</sup> Notably, however, diasporic groups whose political agendas sync with US foreign policy goals (Cubans, for example) tend to receive a warmer welcome.<sup>74</sup>

Much remains to be learned about US citizens as migrants. As with all cases of dispersed populations, the impact of Americans abroad—whether on the homeland, country of settlement, or the migrants themselves—varies by context. Factors to be considered include the specific countries and governments involved, the relationships between them, and the motivations for migration. To the extent that the economic impact of Americans abroad is a consideration, it is so primarily for the countries of settlement, and specifically those countries whose level of economic development is such that they are simultaneously in need of, and potentially vulnerable to, the economic investment of immigrants from the US (e.g., Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua). In the case of Mexico, home to the world’s largest population of American emigrants, the host government and society recognize potential benefits in the form of capital infusion and job creation that accompany a growing population of US immigrants, but they also express concerns about rising real estate prices, the loss of valuable property, and wages that do not keep pace with rising prices.<sup>75</sup>

The potential political and cultural implications of an American diaspora have not generated much interest on the part of either the settlement countries or the US homeland, but legitimate concerns arguably exist for the receiving countries, the sending country, and the migrants themselves. Where Americans’ economic investments travel, so too do their political interests and cultural influences. This situation is not unique to US emigrants, but their relative privilege, and that of their homeland, increases its significance. As noted above, some aspects of the American

settlement abroad (particularly in locales in Central and South America) are reminiscent of the colonialism of an earlier epoch. Despite, for example, explicit prohibitions in Mexico against foreigners' involvement in domestic politics, US citizens residing in Mexican towns regularly involve themselves in local issues, including development, environmental sustainability, historical preservation, policies related to pets, and cultural traditions such as running of bulls. They also alter the cultural landscape, linguistically and otherwise, and in some cases explicitly promote "American" cultural values that they deem superior to Mexican ones.<sup>76</sup> Regarding the response of the host societies to American migrants, there is of yet no evidence of anything approaching "diasporaphobia," but the space for such a response is, in some countries, arguably limited by imbalances in power and wealth.

As noted, the US is seemingly disinterested in its diaspora when compared to many sending states. It rarely reaches out to Americans abroad for assistance with lobbying or diplomacy efforts, and emigrants active in the diaspora remark that it is they who initiate and maintain the ties to their homeland. Still, like so many other immigrant groups, US citizens are practicing what David Fitzgerald has called (with reference to Mexican migrants) "extra-territorial citizenship." They are living in countries where many do not claim citizenship and claiming citizenship in a country in which they do not live.<sup>77</sup> These extra-territorial citizens, whose numbers and transnational engagement are increasing, pose challenges for the US in the realms of citizenship, voting, campaign finance, taxation, government entitlements, and national security. The US is one of few countries that does not restrict voting from abroad on the basis of the length of time outside the country, and, for many of the groups discussed above, improving and increasing extra-territorial voting has been a central goal. Political parties and candidates are increasingly recognizing the untapped potential of the American diaspora;<sup>78</sup> and the Federal Election Commission reports a substantial and growing number of political donations coming from abroad.<sup>79</sup> Taxation is a point of contention as Americans abroad complain that by levying taxes on the basis of citizenship as opposed to residency, the US is burdening its citizens abroad and hampering economic activity that could benefit the country as a whole. The post-9/11 national security context has further complicated transnational life as banking from abroad and other cross-border financial transactions are now more stringently regulated.<sup>80</sup> Finally, some Americans are lobbying for the extension of Medicare payments abroad, maintaining that they paid into the system throughout their lives and continue to pay US taxes but are unable to access the benefits to which they are entitled.<sup>81</sup>

In this case, as with all others, globalization has altered the context in which citizens and states engage each other, but they certainly continue to engage each other. Although the US is clearly implicated in diasporic phenomena (and not solely that of its immigrants), public officials, policy makers, the media, and scholars have been relatively slow to address the related issues and implications. Compared to heated and pervasive debates about the proper role of immigrants in the American



national community, discussion about the proper role of emigrants pales. Recognizing the diasporic dimensions of a globally dispersed American population, and labeling it as such, can help focus attention on developments described above and provide an established framework for analyzing them. Relying on more familiar labels, such as “expat,” perpetuates the political and analytical invisibility of this group of migrants and the global networks they establish. Moreover, not only can the diaspora frame illuminate significant issues related to a population of American emigrants that is growing in size and cross-border engagement, but the case study can also contribute to more general analyses of diasporic belonging in a global era.

### *Analytical Implications*

Scholars have called for more focus on the variations in power and privilege among transnational migrants and the states they transcend<sup>82</sup>; and taxonomies, like Cohen’s, explicitly acknowledge that diasporic experiences range from coercive and traumatic dispersion to voluntary, imperial wanderings. Yet, although Cohen’s distinctions “take into account the diversity of diasporic experience,” as Roza Tsagarousianou argues, “they do not really take on broad late modern transnational mobility.”<sup>83</sup> Tsagarousianou offers this assessment of Cohen’s and others’ analyses as a way to reevaluate recent debate on diasporas in light of the contemporary global context. Specifically, she advocates a conceptualization of globalization that is less about rapid traversing of long distances and more about intense and constant transnational interaction—globalization not as dispersion but as connectivity. She also calls for moving beyond assumptions of diasporas as “given communities,” territorially extended intact, to acknowledge the central role of cultural invention and reinvention. Finally, she cautions against the “ideal” type, “check-list,” or “typology” approaches to diaspora, all of which obscure the dynamic and fluid character of diasporas and the transnational contexts in which they exist (105). As scholars embrace the fluid nature of diasporic belonging, the critical case of Americans abroad can contribute significantly to theory-building efforts. The American diaspora is unique in several respects—most notably in terms of the relative privilege of the migrants and the homeland from which they hail, but also in terms of the history and national identity of the US as a country that receives and integrates diasporas, rather than spawning them.<sup>84</sup> Both characteristics, however, offer insights into the study of contemporary diasporic activities and attachments and the nature of American identity and belonging in a global age.

Themes of marginalization have pervaded the scholarship on diaspora and transnational migration and shaped the explanations for what motivates transnational ties and assessments of their implications. The term diaspora’s ties to trauma and coercion have loosened, but scholars persist in emphasizing hardship. Describing the ways in which diaspora is constituted, Clifford writes, “Experiences of loss, marginality, and exile . . . are often reinforced by systematic exploitation and

blocked advancement.”<sup>85</sup> Shuval cautions that diaspora is not always “forced exile,” but what she allows instead is that “some people may opt for migration as a result of political domination and repression, economic inequality, powerlessness or minority status.”<sup>86</sup> Transnationalism, with few exceptions, has been similarly conceptualized as the purview of the disadvantaged and a site of potential resistance against the hegemony of global capitalism and racial discrimination.<sup>87</sup> What follows from these pervasive assumptions about power imbalance are explanations that attribute the rise and persistence of transnationalism to proactive sending states seeking economic and political gain via their diasporas, and to migrants who sustain ties with their homelands in an effort to combat experiences of dispossession and marginalization.<sup>88</sup> Meanwhile, assessments of the impact of cross-border belonging typically deem it benign (if not positive) and compatible with (if not conducive to) cultural and political integration.<sup>89</sup>

Assumptions, such as migrants tending to move from poorer countries to richer ones, receiving states more powerfully positioned in the world economy than sending states, and migrant groups typically marginalized in their “host” societies, dominate current analyses. The case of Americans abroad challenges many of these assumptions and may challenge the subsequent conclusions as well. Like other groups, American migrants celebrate the holidays, consume the foodstuffs, and speak the language of their homeland, while residing in a new land. They vote in US elections and raise money for and meet with US politicians without leaving their residences abroad. They participate in a range of organizations designed to serve and mobilize the interests of Americans abroad and to connect them to their homeland while simultaneously easing their transition to a new land. But they do so not in response to a US government that is actively courting their attachments to the homeland; nor do they do so in reaction to experiences of domination and repression. Cohen’s observation is indeed correct that “globalization has enhanced the practical, economic and affective roles of diasporas, showing them to be particularly adaptive forms of social organization.”<sup>90</sup> Such adaptation is not, however, the sole purview of the marginalized.

In addition to insights to be gained from greater focus on privilege, this case and Cohen’s insight about adaptation also point to the potentially perpetual nature of diasporic belonging. Tölölyan’s earlier caution against the premature eulogizing of the nation-state relates directly to the future of diaspora. Just as globalization has reconfigured the nation-state but not superseded it, diaspora challenges the nation-state while attesting to its continued, albeit altered, significance. Moreover, if the US, as a real and symbolic refuge for global diasporas, produces its own, then diaspora is conceptually delinked from its association with ethnicity in any primordial understanding of that term; and we are reminded that identities of all sorts are social constructions, shaped by the conditions of any historical moment and amenable to perpetual reshaping.

## Conclusion

In 1996, Tölölyan, cautioned that diaspora “is in danger of becoming a promiscuously capacious category.”<sup>91</sup> In the sixteen years since then, the use (and what critics might label “abuse”) of the term has only intensified. In 2005, Rogers Brubaker noted that while the term “diaspora” appeared only about 13 times a year in the late 1980s, in 2001 alone, it appeared 130 times.<sup>92</sup> By the year 2010, that number had risen to 1,882.<sup>93</sup> This ever-burgeoning scholarship on diaspora is providing fresh insights into familiar cases as well as introducing new cases and alternative foci, but what has not ensued is the “stringency of definition” that Tölölyan requested. Extending the label of diaspora to Americans abroad does not solve this issue, but it can move the conversation forward in useful directions.

Returning to the guiding question, “What is to be gained and lost by applying the term ‘diaspora’ to US citizens abroad?” one obvious risk in extending further the notion of diaspora is that the concept becomes meaningless. As Brubaker argues, “If everyone is diasporic, then no one is distinctively so. . . . The universalization of diaspora, paradoxically, means the disappearance of diaspora.”<sup>94</sup> Of additional concern in this case is the appropriation of a term associated with hardship to discuss the experiences and actions of a group whose level of comfort sets them apart from the large majority of the world’s migrants and recognized diasporas. These concerns are legitimate, but the assumption made here is that the diaspora genie is out of the bottle. As Cohen suggests in the epigraph, it is neither feasible nor advisable to defend an orthodox definition of diaspora. The degree of “stretching” has already been such that the inclusion of a counterintuitive case offers as much possibility for conceptual enhancement as it does dilution. From this perspective, as important as acknowledging what might be lost by extending the label “diaspora” to Americans abroad, is consideration of what stands to be gained.

The global dispersion and transnationalism of US citizens show no signs of abating. Experts predict that a “silver tsunami” will carry ten thousand aging Americans per day into Social Security eligibility over the next two decades; and these “baby boomers” are being increasingly lured across the US border to Mexico and other locales by promises of “La Vida Cheapo.”<sup>95</sup> Other Americans are cashing in on their European ancestry as a means to pursue dual citizenships and expanded opportunities in Europe.<sup>96</sup> Meanwhile, globalization in its economic, political, cultural, and technological dimensions will continue simultaneously to compel the worldwide dispersion of Americans and facilitate their cross-border engagements. The executive director of ACA, Marylouise Serrato, notes that in light of growing concerns about overseas banking and taxation, her organization’s membership has expanded by twenty-five percent in recent years.<sup>97</sup> Leaders of Democrats Abroad and Republicans Abroad made similar observations based on the increased political engagement of Americans abroad during the past two US presidential elections.<sup>98</sup>

Scholarship on American emigration and transnationalism is arguably in its adolescence and exciting prospects for future research abound. Analysts will benefit from examining more fully the implications of an American diaspora for US policies related to voting, taxation, citizenship, Medicare, banking, and national security. Similarly, the impact on settlement societies of this relatively privileged diaspora hailing from a particularly powerful homeland warrants careful investigation. Theorists can also use this case to deepen interrogations of the meaning and practice of citizen democracy in a global era, and the contemporary nature of American identity and belonging. Finally, incorporating a counterintuitive case can assist scholars working in the fields of diaspora studies and transnationalism in sharpening their analytical frameworks. What is already evident, however, is that Americans are, and always have been, implicated in diaspora, global migration, and transnationalism in more complex and expansive ways than has generally been acknowledged.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Christophe Dumont and Georges Lemaître, “Counting Immigrants and Expatriates in OECD Countries: A New Perspective,” *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, no. 25 (2005), doi: 10.1787/521408252125.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Dashefsky, Jan DeAmicis, Bernard Lazerwitz, and Ephraim Tabory, *Americans Abroad: A Comparative Study of Emigrants from the United States* (New York: Plenum Press, 1992), v.

<sup>3</sup> See Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, eds., *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010); Ajaya Kumar Sahoo and Brij Maharaj, eds., *Sociology of Diaspora: A Reader*, vol. 1 (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2007); and Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> See Kim Knott and Seán McLoughlin, eds., *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities* (London: Zed Books, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> For notable exceptions see analyses of Americans’ transnationalism in Canada by Susan W. Hardwick, “Fuzzy Transnationals? American Settlement, Identity, and Belonging in Canada,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no.1 (2010): 86–103; Kim Matthews and Vic Satzewich, “The Invisible Transnationals? Americans in Canada,” in *Transnational Identities and Practices in Canada*, ed. Vic Satzewich and Lloyd Wong (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 164–78; Stephen P. Banks, “Identity Narratives by American and Canadian Retirees in Mexico,” *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* 19, no. 4 (2004): 361–81; Omar Lizárraga Morales, “The US Citizens Retirement Migration to Los Cabos, Mexico,” in “Special Issue on Lifestyle Migration,” *Recreation and Society in Africa, Asia and Latin America* 1, no. 1 (2010): 75–92; and David

Truly, "International Retirement Migration and Tourism along the Lake Chapala Riviera: Developing a Matrix of Retirement Migration Behaviour," *Tourism Geographies* 4, no. 3 (2002): 261–81.

<sup>6</sup> Ishbel Ross, *The Expatriates* (New York: Crowell, 1970), 28.

<sup>7</sup> See "US Election Night as Seen from Abroad: 20+ Expat Cities Pictures," *ExpatriateFinder Blog*, November 5, 2008, <http://blog.expatriatefinder.com/2008/11/us-election-night-as-seen-from-abroad-20-expat-cities-pictures-americans-overseas-expatriates-and-locals-follow-the-results-on-different-time-zones/>.

<sup>8</sup> Ross, *Expatriates*, 10.

<sup>9</sup> John R. Wennersten, *Leaving America: The New Expatriate Generation* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 35. See also George D. Harmon, "Confederate Migration to Mexico," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 17, no. 4 (1937): 458–87; and Eugene C. Harter, *The Lost Colony of the Confederacy* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985).

<sup>10</sup> See David McCullough, *The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Ross, *Expatriates*, 166.

<sup>12</sup> See Harold T. McCarthy, *The Expatriate Perspective: American Novelists and the Idea of America* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1974); and Ross, *Expatriates*.

<sup>13</sup> Gertrude Stein, *Gertrude Stein's America*, ed. Gilbert A. Harrison (Washington, DC: Robert B. Luce, 1965), 63.

<sup>14</sup> See Dashefsky et al., *Americans Abroad*; and Wennersten, *Leaving America*.

<sup>15</sup> See Rebecca M. Schreiber, *Cold War Exiles in Mexico: U.S. Dissidents and the Culture of Critical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> See John Hagan, *Northern Passage: American Vietnam War Resisters in Canada* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> See Maggie Gilmour, "We Won't Go Back," *Toronto Life*, July 2009, <http://www.torontolife.com/features/we-wont-go-back/>; and Audrey Kobayashi and Brian Ray, "Placing American Emigration to Canada in Context," *Migration Information Source*, January 2005, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/display.cfm?ID=279>.

<sup>18</sup> See Gary Belsky and Leslie Alderman, "Escape from America," *Money* 23, no. 7 (1994): 60–69; Ada W. Finifter, "American Emigration," *Society* 13 (1976): 30–36; and Jay Tolson, "A Growing Trend of Leaving America," *U.S. News and World Report*, July 28, 2008, <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2008/07/28/a-growing-trend-of-leaving-america>.

<sup>19</sup> See Wennersten, *Leaving America*; Tolson, “Growing Trend of Leaving America”; and American Citizens Abroad, *So Far and Yet So Near: Stories of Americans Abroad* (Geneva, CH: American Citizens Abroad, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> See Sheila Croucher, *The Other Side of the Fence: American Migrants in Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009); Migration Policy Institute, *America’s Emigrants: US Retirement Migration to Mexico and Panama* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2006), [http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/americas\\_emigrants.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/americas_emigrants.pdf); and Morales, “US Citizens Retirement Migration.”

<sup>21</sup> “About,” American Legion, accessed April 21, 2011, <http://www.legion.org/about>.

<sup>22</sup> DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution), accessed April 20, 2011, <http://www.dar.org/>; and NSSAR (National Society, Sons of the American Revolution), accessed April 20, 2011, <http://www.sar.org/>.

<sup>23</sup> NSSAR (National Society, Sons of the American Revolution), “New Spain Eligibility Guidelines,” Mexico Society, 2003, accessed July 11, 2007, <http://www.sar.org/mxssar/mxssar-e.htm>.

<sup>24</sup> AARO (Association of Americans Resident Overseas), accessed November 20, 2012, <http://www.aaro.org/>.

<sup>25</sup> ACA (American Citizens Abroad), accessed November 20, 2012, <http://americansabroad.org/>.

<sup>26</sup> “The American Society of Sydney,” Association of American Clubs, accessed November 20, 2012, <http://www.associationofamericanclubs.com/american-society-of-sydney.html>.

<sup>27</sup> FAWCO (Federation of American Women’s Clubs Overseas), accessed April 21, 2011, <http://www.fawco.org/>.

<sup>28</sup> “About Us,” Democrats Abroad, accessed April 20, 2011, <http://www.democratsabroad.org/about>.

<sup>29</sup> “The History,” Republicans Abroad, accessed April 20, 2011, <http://republicansabroad.org/history.php>.

<sup>30</sup> See American Citizens Abroad, *ACA News Update*, no. 194 (2011), <http://americansabroad.org/files/5113/3458/8065/nu194.pdf>; and Croucher, *Other Side of the Fence*, 125–26.

<sup>31</sup> The Overseas Americans Week website posted position papers on these issues. See “Position Papers for Overseas Americans Week 2011,” Overseas Americans Week, accessed May 3, 2011, <http://www.overseasamericansweek.com/pospaper.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> “Americans Abroad Caucus,” ACA, accessed November 20, 2012, <http://americansabroad.org/issues/representation/americans-abroad-caucus/>. See also

“Americans Abroad Caucus,” AARO, accessed November 20, 2012, <http://www.aaro.org/lobbying/americans-abroad-caucus>.

<sup>33</sup> See Taylor E. Dark III, “Americans Abroad: The Challenge of a Globalized Electorate,” *Political Science and Politics* 36, no. 4 (2003): 733–40, available through the American Political Science Association (APSA) website at <http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/AmericansAbroad-Dark.pdf>; and Matthews and Satzewich, “Invisible Transnationals?”

<sup>34</sup> See Sheila Croucher, “Migrants of Privilege: The Political Transnationalism of Americans in Mexico,” *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 16, no. 4 (2009): 463–91.

<sup>35</sup> “The American Diaspora,” *Esquire*, September 26, 2008, <http://www.esquire.com/features/american-diaspora-1008>.

<sup>36</sup> US Government Accountability Office, *2010 Census: Counting Americans Overseas as Part of the Decennial Census Would Not Be Cost-Effective; Report to the Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and the Census, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives* (Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office, 2004).

<sup>37</sup> See American Citizens Abroad, *So Far and Yet So Near*; Dashefsky et al., *Americans Abroad*; Hardwick, “Fuzzy Transnationals?”; and Matthews and Satzewich, “Invisible Transnationals?”

<sup>38</sup> Croucher, *Other Side of the Fence*, 146.

<sup>39</sup> Author interview with attendee at 2011 Overseas Americans Week, Washington, DC, April 12, 2011.

<sup>40</sup> Matthews and Satzewich, “Invisible Transnationals?” 176.

<sup>41</sup> See Paul Saffo, “A Looming American Diaspora,” *Harvard Business Review* (2009), <http://hbr.org/web/2009/hbr-list/looming-american-diaspora>; and Jonathan V. Beaverstock, Ben Derudder, James Faulconbridge, and Frank Witlox, eds., *International Business Travel in the Global Economy* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010).

<sup>42</sup> See Morales, “US Citizens Retirement Migration”; and Cindy Perman, “The Best Places to Retire Outside the U.S.,” *CNBC*, February 3, 2011, [http://www.cnbc.com/id/41407154/The\\_Best\\_Places\\_To\\_Retire\\_Outside\\_the\\_US](http://www.cnbc.com/id/41407154/The_Best_Places_To_Retire_Outside_the_US).

<sup>43</sup> See Croucher, *Other Side of the Fence*, 2, 85–91; Matthews and Satzewich, “Invisible Transnationals?” 167, 176; and Migration Policy Institute, *America’s Emigrants*, 2, 53, 56, 63.

<sup>44</sup> Saffo, “Looming American Diaspora.”

- <sup>45</sup> Andrew Sullivan, "The New American Diaspora," *Atlantic*, September 22, 2009, <http://www.theatlantic.com/daily-dish/archive/2009/09/the-new-american-diaspora/196238/>.
- <sup>46</sup> Wennersten, *Leaving America*, 145.
- <sup>47</sup> Judith Murray, "The American Diaspora," *OVF Research Newsletter* 2, no. 4 (2010): 1–4, [https://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/files/OVF\\_NL\\_July-Aug2010.pdf](https://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/files/OVF_NL_July-Aug2010.pdf).
- <sup>48</sup> Dominique Schnapper, "From the Nation-State to the Transnational World: On the Meaning and Usefulness of Diaspora as a Concept," trans. Denise L. Davis, *Diaspora* 8, no. 3 (1999): 225.
- <sup>49</sup> See Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), ix; and Steven Vertovec, "Diasporas Good? Diasporas Bad?" *Metropolis World Bulletin* 6 (2006): 5.
- <sup>50</sup> See Khachig Tölölyan, "Rethinking *Diaspora(s)*: Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment," *Diaspora* 5, no. 1 (1996): 3–36; and Khachig Tölölyan, "The Nation-State and Its Others: In Lieu of a Preface," *Diaspora* 1, no. 1 (1991): 3–7.
- <sup>51</sup> See James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994): 302–38; Cohen, *Global Diasporas*; Sahoo and Maharaj, *Sociology of Diaspora*; William Safran, "Comparing Diasporas: A Review Essay," *Diaspora* 8, no. 3 (1999): 255–91; Schnapper, "From the Nation-State"; Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Judith T. Shuval, "Diaspora Migration: Definitional Ambiguities and a Theoretical Paradigm," in Sahoo and Maharaj, *Sociology of Diaspora*, 28–42; and Tölölyan, "Nation-State and Its Others."
- <sup>52</sup> Safran, "Comparing Diasporas," 260, emphasis original.
- <sup>53</sup> Schnapper, "From the Nation-State," 250.
- <sup>54</sup> Clifford, "Diasporas," 306.
- <sup>55</sup> Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, ix–xx.
- <sup>56</sup> Schnapper, "From the Nation-State," 227.
- <sup>57</sup> Safran, "Comparing Diasporas," 262.
- <sup>58</sup> See American Citizens Abroad, *So Far and Yet So Near*; Banks, "Identity Narratives," 363, 366; Erik Cohen, "Expatriate Communities," *Current Sociology* 24, no. 3 (1977): 28–29, 32, 37, 47; Croucher, *Other Side of the Fence*; and Dashefsky et al., *Americans Abroad*.
- <sup>59</sup> Clifford, "Diasporas," 310.
- <sup>60</sup> Vertovec, "Diasporas Good?" 5.



<sup>61</sup> Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*, 9–10.

<sup>62</sup> See Cohen, “Expatriate Communities,” 53; Croucher, *Other Side of the Fence*, 52–58; Migration Policy Institute, *America’s Emigrants*; Morales, “US Citizens Retirement Migration,” 94–96; and Truly, “International Retirement Migration,” 274.

<sup>63</sup> See Banks, “Identity Narratives,” 374, 376; Cohen, “Expatriate Communities,” 5–10, 20, 71; Croucher, *Other Side of the Fence*, 150–74; and Morales, “US Citizens Retirement Migration,” 104–5.

<sup>64</sup> Safran, “Comparing Diasporas,” 258.

<sup>65</sup> Schnapper, “From the Nation-State,” 250.

<sup>66</sup> Steven Vertovec, “The Political Importance of Diasporas,” *Migration Information Source*, June 2005, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=313>.

<sup>67</sup> See Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2007).

<sup>68</sup> Wennersten, *Leaving America*, 145.

<sup>69</sup> See Tölölyan, “Rethinking *Diaspora(s)*”; Tölölyan, “Nation-State and Its Others; and Clifford, “Diasporas.”

<sup>70</sup> Vertovec, “Diasporas Good?”

<sup>71</sup> See Kathleen Newland with Erin Patrick, *Beyond Remittances: The Role of Diaspora in Poverty Reduction in Their Countries of Origin; A Scoping Study by the Migration Policy Institute for the Department of International Development* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2004), [http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Beyond\\_Remittances\\_0704.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Beyond_Remittances_0704.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> See Yossi Shain, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad: Diasporas in the U.S. and Their Homelands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>73</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004); Stanley A. Renshon, *The 50% American: Immigration and National Identity in an Age of Terror* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005); and Vertovec, “Diasporas Good?” 8.

<sup>74</sup> See Sheila L. Croucher, “The Success of the Cuban Success Story: Ethnicity, Power, and Politics,” *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 2, no. 4 (1996): 351–84.

<sup>75</sup> See Croucher, *Other Side of the Fence*, 183–96; Migration Policy Institute, *America’s Emigrants*, 32, 45–46, 51–52; Morales, “US Citizens Retirement Migration,” 96, 103–7; and Eve Bantman-Masum, “‘You Need to Come Here . . . to See What Living Is Really About’: Staging North American Expatriation in Merida (Mexico),” *Miranda*, no. 5 (2011),

[http://www.miranda-ejournal.eu/sdx2/miranda/article.xsp?numero=5&id\\_article=Article\\_05-1471](http://www.miranda-ejournal.eu/sdx2/miranda/article.xsp?numero=5&id_article=Article_05-1471).

<sup>76</sup> See Croucher, *Other Side of the Fence*, 150–83; Banks, “Identity Narratives,” 374–77; and Truly, “International Retirement Migration,” 273, 278.

<sup>77</sup> David Fitzgerald, *Negotiating Extra-territorial Citizenship: Mexican Migration and the Transnational Politics of Community*, Monograph Series 2 (La Jolla: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California, San Diego, 2000), 10.

<sup>78</sup> See Murray, “American Diaspora,” 1; Dark III, “Americans Abroad,” 733, 738; and Croucher, “Migrants of Privilege,” 472–75.

<sup>79</sup> Sheila Krumholz, “Recommendations of the Center for Responsive Politics for Improved Management of Federal Election Commission Data and Disclosure,” Federal Election Commission, submitted February 18, 2009, <http://www.fec.gov/law/policy/enforcement/2009/comments/crppcomment.pdf>.

<sup>80</sup> For a variety of regularly updated reports on policy issues of concern to Americans abroad, including banking, taxation, and citizenship, see ACA (American Citizens Abroad), accessed November 20, 2012, <http://americansabroad.org/>.

<sup>81</sup> See David C. Warner, *Getting What You Paid For: Extending Medicare to Eligible Beneficiaries in Mexico*, U.S.–Mexican Policy Report No. 10 (Austin: Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin, 1999).

<sup>82</sup> See Clifford, “Diasporas,” 302, 310; Peggy Levitt, “Transnational Migration: Taking Stock and Future Directions,” *Global Networks* 1, no. 3 (2001): 211; Peggy Levitt and B. Nadya Jaworsky, “Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007): 133; and Roger Waldinger and David Fitzgerald, “Transnationalism in Question,” *American Journal of Sociology* 109, no. 5 (2004): 1179, 1185.

<sup>83</sup> Roza Tsagarousianou, “Reevaluating ‘Diaspora’: Connectivity, Communication and Imagination in a Globalised World,” in Sahoo and Maharaj, *Sociology of Diaspora*, 105.

<sup>84</sup> Diasporic analysis has been applied to other relatively privileged groups such as Australians and New Zealanders. See, for example, Graeme Hugo, “An Australian Diaspora?” *International Migration* 44, no. 1 (2006): 105–33. In neither case, however, is the country, culture, or expatriate population characterized by the same degree of global hegemony as is true of the American case. Nor is either country so deeply wedded to the founding myths of immigration and assimilation.

<sup>85</sup> Clifford, “Diasporas,” 312.

<sup>86</sup> Shuval, “Diaspora Migration,” 33.

<sup>87</sup> See Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach, 1994); Alejandro Portes, Luis E. Guarnizo, and Patricia Landolt, "The Study of Transnationalism: Pitfalls and Promise of an Emergent Research Field," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999): 217–37; and Eva Østergaard-Nielsen, "The Politics of Migrants' Transnational Political Practices," *International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 767.

<sup>88</sup> See Caroline B. Brettell, "Introduction: Global Spaces/Local Places: Transnationalism, Diaspora, and the Meaning of Home," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 13, no. 3 (2006): 327–34; Clifford, "Diasporas"; José Itzigsohn, "Immigration and the Boundaries of Citizenship: The Institutions of Immigrants' Political Transnationalism," *International Migration Review* 34, no. 4 (2000): 1126–54; and Levitt, "Transnational Migration."

<sup>89</sup> See Christian Joppke and Ewa Morawska, *Toward Assimilation and Citizenship: Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Levitt, "Transnational Migration"; Portes et al., "Study of Transnationalism"; and Michael Peter Smith and Matt Bakker, *Citizenship across Borders: The Political Transnationalism of El Migrante* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

<sup>90</sup> Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 176.

<sup>91</sup> Tölölyan, "Rethinking *Diaspora(s)*," 8.

<sup>92</sup> Rogers Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 1.

<sup>93</sup> See ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, accessed February 28, 2011, <http://search.proquest.com/>.

<sup>94</sup> Brubaker, "'Diaspora' Diaspora," 3.

<sup>95</sup> Mark Lassiter, "Nation's First Baby Boomer Files for Social Security Retirement Benefits—Online!" Social Security Administration, October 15, 2007, <http://www.ssa.gov/pressoffice/pr/babyboomerfiles-pr.htm>; and Barry Golson, "La Vida Cheapo," *AARP Magazine*, March–April 2004.

<sup>96</sup> Andrew Abramson, "With U.S. in Slump, Dual Citizenship in EU Countries Attracts Americans," *Palm Beach Post*, June 8, 2008, 1A.

<sup>97</sup> Marylouise Serrato, interview by author during 2011 Overseas Americans Week, Washington, DC, April 12, 2011.

<sup>98</sup> See Croucher, "Migrants of Privilege," 464, 475; Dark III, "Americans Abroad," 738; and Matthews and Satzewich, "Invisible Transnationals?" 173–77.

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