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The Stronger Azerbaijani Diaspora in Foreign Policy of Azerbaijan

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Abstract

The role of diaspora communities in promoting the interests of their homeland abroad and shaping its foreign policy is vital. Having been an integral part of the international system, which encompasses the complex web of political, economic, social, and cultural interactions among states, it is also crucial for Azerbaijan to have an effective diaspora community that represents its interests abroad. This Capstone project aims at analyzing the challenges of strengthening the Azerbaijani diaspora. The project has revealed that the country's diaspora community is fairly new and small. The study proposes policy options for each of these challenges encountered by the diaspora community of our homeland – organization of lobbying activities, establishment of financial funds, and unification of diaspora members. The proposed policy options are evaluated against the five main criteria: effectiveness, equity, feasibility, and flexibility. Along with the combination of primary and secondary data sources, semi-structured interviews with relevant experts have been conducted. The project reveals that in order to tackle the respective issues successfully, there should be a reliable financial mechanism and unification among the Azerbaijani diaspora communities.

Keywords: diaspora, foreign policy, remittance, lobbying, unification

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List of Abbreviations

AIR - Center of Analysis of International Relations

ANCA - Armenian National Committee of America

ASA - Azerbaijani Society of America

IOM – International Organization for Migration

MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Diaspora communities have been existing for many decades, however, only recently they have gained significant attention in the international arena. The fact is that with the rapid changes around us, we are also changing. Hence, as a result of global migration patterns, people are dispersed across the globe in greater numbers. Consequently, “the increase in the scale of migration and the simultaneous desire of immigrants to unite leads to a continuous increase in the number of diasporas in the world” (Garayeva, 2022, p. 140). Today, many countries, including Azerbaijan, have diaspora communities that play an important role development of their homeland, both politically and economically. Thus, it is a priority of the Azerbaijani government to develop relationships among world Azerbaijanis and to support the formation of diaspora communities abroad. While the strong Azerbaijani diaspora as an independent actor may actively promote the interests of Azerbaijan in world politics, today this diaspora community has a number of drawbacks that will be analyzed and addressed in this capstone project.

As a prelude to the examination and analysis of the problem, it is worthwhile to define diaspora as the main concept of this capstone project. To begin with, diaspora, one of the most debated terms today, is a word of Greek origin that literally means "getting scattered" and refers to the dispersal of people from their homelands. Furthermore, “while historically the term was used to refer to the forced migration of Jews from the land of Israel, over time, the meaning of the concept has changed significantly, and it began to be applied to other religious and ethnic groups living in a new area of their settlement in the position of a national-cultural minority” (Garayeva, 2022, p. 140). In this sense, Safran (2004) describes diaspora as follows: “being in a diaspora implies a tension between being in one place physically-the place where one lives and works-and thinking regularly of another place far away” (p. 12). Another famous definition belongs to Gatzó (2015): “diaspora denotes: 1) geographically dispersed macro communities of migratory origin 2) which have integrated into the

society surrounding them, but have not fully assimilated, and 3) which have symbolic or objective relations with kin communities living in other areas” (p. 168). Diaspora members see their homeland through a different lens than those who live inside their native country, since “people living in homeland and diaspora groups have perceived their homeland from distinctive perspectives because they have passed different historical phases in different territories” (Demmers, 2002, pp. 94-95).

There have been many migration waves that developed into today’s diasporas, each taking place at a different moment in time and for a different reason. Throughout history, people around the world have migrated for a variety of reasons, and even more, it is the emergence of the emigration process that has led to the creation of diaspora groups. Consequently, “at various times, there was migration also from Azerbaijan to many countries of the world. Socio-political events in the world at the beginning of the twentieth century also affected Azerbaijan, the fall of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1920 provoked a massive wave of emigration from the country, as a result of which many people left their homeland. Moreover, the economic crisis at the end of the 80s of the XX century complicated the financial situation of scientists, which led to the emigration of the Azerbaijani people abroad” (Aghamaliyeva, 2023, p. 15). Hence, as far back as the early 1990s the term “diaspora” has been widely and regularly used in Azerbaijan by officials, scholars, political analysts, sociologists, historians, journalists, and ordinary citizens (Rumyansev, 2010). Officially, “the Azerbaijani diaspora embraces all ethnic Azerbaijanis living outside the “historic homeland” (Rumyansev, 2012, p. 1). The Azerbaijani people’s centuries-old migration patterns have gained more relevance in recent years. To be precise, “official data says there are 50 million Azeris in the world and 10 million are part of the Azeri diaspora. The remaining 40 million live in their ‘historical homeland’ in Azerbaijan, in Iran, in Russia, and in Georgia” (Rumyansev, 2012, p. 1). According to Garayeva (2022), “today, the Azerbaijani diaspora is not just compatriots who, for one reason or another, found themselves and live abroad, it is a powerful social and political force capable of doing a lot in their places of residence”

(p. 139).

Besides, while talking about “powerful” diaspora and, it is necessary to define what is meant by the “power” of a diaspora community. Being positioned in such advantageous ways gives them political power” (Adamson, 2016, p. 291); 4) *political engagement*: if diaspora groups can mobilize enough support from their host countries, they can be quite effective at advocating the political change in their countries of origin; 6) *cultural preservation*: by preserving and celebrating cultural traditions and holidays, diaspora members can maintain the sense of connection both to the homeland and to the past. Overall, a strong diaspora community is one that is able to use its unique strengths and connections to create opportunities and overcome challenges encountered by their homeland.

Though a few decades ago, diasporas were little discussed, today, “diaspora politics – forms of political engagement that link constituencies in one country with a real or imagined ‘homeland’ somewhere else – are omnipresent, part and parcel of everyday politics around the world” (Adamson, 2016, p. 291). Diasporas are playing an ever-growing role in the international system in several ways. First, diaspora communities can serve as unofficial ambassadors who promote cultural exchange and build bridges between their countries of origin and residence, thus, developing relations between the two countries. Second, diaspora communities may invest in their country of origin, either through remittances or by starting businesses in the host states. Consequently, “by treating remittances as a form of foreign aid, states can channel transnational financial flows in ways that enhance their status as significant players in the arena of international economic development” (Adamson, 2016, p. 291). Moreover, by acting as mediators or supporting peacebuilding efforts, diasporas may play a role in resolving conflicts in their country of origin. Hence, the stronger the diaspora community, the more positive impact it has on the foreign policy of its homeland. From this point of view, a strong diaspora can be a powerful force for positive change, both for the communities where they are located and for their home countries. A look back at the Azerbaijani diaspora makes it evident that “the Azerbaijani

diaspora is not as organized as its other counterparts for several reasons, such as a shorter history, Azerbaijanis who departed from the North and the South. There have been serious problems with Southern Azerbaijanis in terms of national consciousness. Besides, since the Azerbaijani society does not make efforts for common national interests, the Azerbaijani diaspora has not remained as effective and strong as it could be. In fact, the rich Caspian hydrocarbon resources provide significant opportunities for (oil) lobbying in different parts of the world for the interests of Azerbaijan. If this potential is exploited, the Azerbaijani lobby can become much stronger than it is now. This requires serious efforts” (Uslu, & Kocaman, 2013, p. 49). To summarize, it is necessary for Azerbaijani migrants to overcome existing challenges and become much stronger in making the voice of Azerbaijan to be heard in their countries of residence.

1.1 Methodology

The methodology part of the capstone project describes research methods used for the collection, analysis, and development of the data that is necessary to satisfy the research objectives and address the research question. This project applies both primary and secondary data as the main sources of the data collection process. The relevance of **primary data** lies in the fact that it helps to gather information directly from first-hand sources by applying such methods as surveys, interviews, or experiments. For the purpose of obtaining a clear understanding of the current challenges and problems faced by the Azerbaijani diaspora, there have been semi-structured interviews with certain experts in this field. In addition to allowing interviewers to have a direct relationship with interviewees, personal interviews are also an efficient way of eliminating non-response rates (Wilson, 2014). All interviewees were asked the following set of questions:

1. What is the role of diaspora in shaping the foreign policy of the home country?
2. How can the main issues with identification, assimilation, and integration that the

Azerbaijani diaspora deals with be solved?

3. How much are the activities of the Azerbaijani diaspora abroad impacted by economic difficulties, such as obtaining work or making a contribution to the economy of the home country?

4. Why the Azerbaijani diaspora is not as wealthy as its other counterparts, for example, the Armenian diaspora?

5. Which successful strategies and case studies from other diaspora communities could be used to strengthen the Azerbaijani diaspora?

6. What should the Azerbaijanis living abroad do in order to promote the political interests of their home country?

The first interview was held with an expert from the Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center) who is also an adjunct lecturer at ADA University. The interview was held through the digital platform, and the interviewee answered all the questions addressed to him. Moreover, since the expert studied and spent several years in Germany, he contributed to our project with some extra information regarding his observations of relations among the Azerbaijanis living in Germany. The other respondent was the representative of the Azerbaijani diaspora in Switzerland. The same issues were raised during the interview to obtain necessary data. Later on, the third meeting was held with a seasoned diplomat, policy planner, strategic analyst, political adviser, and speechwriting & communications specialist. Due to the information gained from the respondents through the interviews, it has become possible to have a better understanding of the current position of the Azerbaijani diaspora.

Along with primary data, **secondary data** is also applied as a source of reliable information. The relevance of the secondary data for this project consists of the fact that taking into account time and resource limitations, secondary data helps to get access to information that is easily available at traditional and digital libraries. In terms of secondary data, there are applied such

sources as books, academic journals, and newspapers, websites, government records. In addition, some limitations, such as the lack of existing secondary data and previous research on the topic were experienced during the process of collecting necessary data and information.

The project is divided into five different chapters that thoroughly analyze the policy problem. In the first chapter, which is an introduction, general information about the topic is presented, followed by a part on methodology and a roadmap outlining the entire policy paper. A detailed description of the problem and its specific causes is provided in the second chapter. The third chapter provides policy options to the problem. In the fourth one, policy alternatives are evaluated, and in the final one, some policy recommendations along with concluding remarks are outlined.

CHAPTER 2. PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

The Azerbaijani diaspora is a key asset for Azerbaijan's foreign policy initiatives, contributing to the country's success in advancing its interests and establishing relationships with other countries around the world. Compatriots who migrate to other countries, either voluntarily or forcibly, for various socio-political, socio-economic, and other issues, protect and promote their national and cultural heritage, maintain regular ties to their historical motherland, and identify as Azerbaijanis because of their shared language, religion, and moral and cultural values make up the Azerbaijani Diaspora. Considering these points, this chapter argues that the Azerbaijani diaspora is impacted by various variables, including social and historical migration, economic factors, and a lack of a well-coordinated structure. Each issue regarding the flourishing of the Azerbaijani diaspora is examined and evaluated separately in the following paragraphs.

2.1. Relatively young Azerbaijani diaspora

Compared to other diasporas, such as the Armenian diaspora or the Jewish diaspora, one of the factors affecting the power of the Azerbaijani diaspora is its recent formation. The history of the Azerbaijani diaspora's formation, growth, and development are all closely related to the country's past immigration patterns. Around 50 million Azerbaijanis reside in 70 countries around the world, involving the Republic of Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan.az). Significant ethno-demographic shifts that occurred throughout time in Azerbaijan and the surrounding region had an effect on the Azerbaijani people's process of movement, and the national communities of our people were established in many counties. From this point of view, it is possible to conditionally divide the formation process of the diaspora into the following stages:

- 1) The time frame starting with Russia's invasion of Azerbaijan and lasting roughly until 1918;
- 2) The Soviet regime was founded and political emigration increased between 1920 and the 1930s;
- 3) Settlement of Azerbaijanis captured in the Second World War in those places;
- 4) From 1945 to 1991, Azerbaijanis migrated to the Soviet republics as a result of socioeconomic and administrative-structure reasons;
- 5) Due to socio political and economic causes, Azerbaijanis migrated to abroad during the country's independence.

The post-World War II era is when the first structured national communities overseas began to emerge. The initial move toward organizing the Azerbaijani Diaspora was taken in February 1949, when M. A. Rasulzadeh founded the Association of Azerbaijani Culture in Turkey. A particularly significant organization in the Azerbaijani Diaspora is the Azerbaijani-American Society, created in 1956. Particularly following the tragic events of January 20, 1990, the emerging Diaspora bodies had

begun to work. The Ojag Cultural Center, which was established in 1988, is currently a part of the All-Russian Congress of Azerbaijanis, the sole organization representing the Azerbaijani Diaspora in Russia.

There are diaspora groups among the Azerbaijani communities that arose in the former USSR, and they were founded in Baltic countries in the 1980s: the "Society of Lithuanian Azerbaijanis (Lithuania), the "Azeri Society (Latvia), and the "Ojaq" community (Estonia). Azerbaijanis in Riga have had access to Sunday schools since 1992, where they learn about the language, culture, and history of their own country. In 1990, the Azerbaijan Cultural Society was founded in Vienna, Austria. A worldwide congress of Azerbaijani societies was organized in 1990 at the Istanbul Ataturk Cultural Center.

In 1991, former president Heydar Aliyev declared December 31 to be the Solidarity Day of World Azerbaijanis, emphasizing the significance of forging international Azerbaijanis' solidarity. According to a decree issued by Heydar Aliyev, the First Congress of World Azerbaijanis was convened in Baku on November 9 and 10, 2001. The decision was made to hold it every three years. The State Committee for Work with Azerbaijanis Abroad emerged from a decree signed by Heydar Aliyev, former President of the Azerbaijan Republic, on July 5, 2002. Additionally, on the basis of the State Committee for Work with Azerbaijanis Living Abroad, the State Committee for Work with Diaspora was founded by President Ilham Aliyev of the Azerbaijan Republic's Decree No. 54 dated November 19, 2008 (azerbaijans.com).

The history of the diaspora's formation, growth, and development are all closely related to the country's past immigration patterns. The Jewish diaspora, the Armenian diaspora, the Chinese diaspora, etc. are only a few examples of countries whose diasporas are seen as being old and powerful and have a considerable cultural and economic influence in their host country. For instance, the

success of the Armenian diaspora can be traced to a number of factors, including a centuries-old migration history, a strong sense of community, a commitment to cultural preservation, strong political advocacy for the advancement of Armenian interests, and economic prosperity. From this point of view, successful diaspora histories of neighboring countries have been contrasted in an effort to strengthen the Azerbaijani diaspora in the example of the Armenian diaspora in the part studied below.

The Armenian church gained prominence in the existence of the Armenian diaspora after the acceptance of Christianity by Armenians in 301 AD. In addition to being a significant figure for the diaspora, it still directs and guides them constantly. Armenians had lived as a diaspora in prosperous Christian countries ever since the Byzantine era when they were dispersed to the surrounding areas. The Armenian diaspora, which was mostly concentrated in Byzantium, was distinct from those in other regions in terms of both quantity and location (Aliyev, 2001).

The Armenian diaspora moved to Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon in the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, where they set up residence. Moldova and Hungary are home to sizable populations of Armenian migrants. Armenian diaspora began to establish in these regions and started to mingle with the local populace as the emigration of Armenians to Russia, Crimea, Central Asia, and Asia Minor grew to start in the early 15th century. Beginning in the early 18th century, Armenians were formally granted asylum in Russia (Aliyev, 2001).

Armenian mass migration to America increased significantly starting at the turn of the 19th century. The Armenians established numerous schools, libraries, religious and cultural organizations, and Armenian language and history departments in universities throughout this country by making use of the favorable conditions provided for them by American missionaries. By 1920 only, more than 100,000 Armenians had come to the country from various parts of the world, mingled with locals in places like California, Massachusetts, Boston, New York, etc., and settled themselves in urban areas.

In recent years, there have been roughly 1 million Armenians living in America. (Aliyev, 2001). The American Armenian diaspora is very politically engaged. A large percentage of American Armenians are Republican Party supporters and members. This becomes more apparent during the elections.

When analyzing the South Caucasus countries' diaspora histories, it might be interesting to take a look through the Georgian diaspora. Like in many other post-Soviet regions, Georgia experienced difficult economic and political changes in the 1990s as a result of the fall of the USSR in 1991. These transitions had an impact on the volume and type of emigration from Georgia, causing significant movement of Georgian citizens, primarily to the Russian Federation and other nearby countries. As migration to the Russian Federation became more challenging and disagreements between Georgia and the Russian Federation increased in the 2000s, the destinations of migrants diversified. From roughly 1400 people in 2000 to 12300 in 2010 and more than 30000 in 2019, Georgia's lawful annual migration to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries has surged. More than 8000 Georgian nationals migrated to Turkey in 2019 and over 7000 to Germany, which were the two countries in the OECD region that drew the highest flows of Georgians. Poland (4 200), Greece (3 000), and the United States (1 500) were the next three major OECD destinations for citizens of Georgia (“A Review of Georgian Emigrants”, 2022).

To promote diaspora involvement and investment in the country's growth, the Georgian government has launched a number of programs. The main effort that the Georgian government made was to establish the State Ministry for Diaspora Issues in 2008. Within that year, the Parliamentary Committee on Diaspora and Caucasus Issues began to focus on the concerns of Georgian countrymen living abroad. The Law of Georgia on Compatriots Residing Abroad and Diaspora Organizations was adopted in 2011 as a consequence of the collaboration of these two organizations (Chelidze, 2013).

In comparison with the Armenian diaspora, the 19th century can be marked as the beginning

of the Azerbaijani diaspora's history. Following the infamous Gulistan (October 12, 1813) and Turkmenchay (February 10, 1828) agreements, hundreds of Azerbaijanis who disapproved of Tsarist Russia's rule of Azerbaijan fled to foreign countries in the first half of this century. Up to 2-3 million, people from Northern Azerbaijan and Dagestan moved primarily to Iran and the Ottoman Empire between the 1950s and the 1970s (Babanli, 2016).

The objective of the occupation, which was based on the colonial strategy of tsarism-inspired Russianization and Christianization of the lands, was to establish its own ethnic-political basis. Tsarism, therefore, began shifting Armenians, Russians, and Germans to move to North Azerbaijan in large numbers from the initial times of occupation. During that time, a sizable number of Azerbaijanis left their native country due to racial discrimination and national moral tyranny. It is well known that population migration persisted throughout the early 20th century. Residents of the Arab-Baloghlan village in the Javad district of Baku province moved to the Ottoman Empire's territory in 1901 and settled there after abandoning their hometown (Babanli, 2016).

The movement of Azerbaijanis abroad grew around the start of the 20th century. Tsarist Russia's anti-Islamic and anti-Turkish policies in the Caucasus were designed to undermine the Azerbaijani population's dominant position in the area. Azerbaijanis were compelled to flee their ancestral lands as a result of intentional killings, genocide, and ethnic cleansing campaigns carried out by Armenians in 1905–1906 and 1918 (Babanli, 2016).

The Azerbaijan People's Republic was founded in 1918, which considerably reduced the amount of immigration; nevertheless, after the People's Republic was overthrown in 1920, its supporters and founders came under intense Bolshevik pressure and persecution. They had to abandon their homeland. It is no surprise that this time period is remembered as a time of widespread Azerbaijani migration. We faced additional persecution and exiles as Azerbaijanis under the Soviet dictatorship in the 1920s and 1930s. On the one hand, the Soviet leadership instructed the deportation

of thousands of our southern citizens from Soviet Azerbaijan to Iran and Central Asia. On the other hand, thousands of our compatriots were banished from the Azerbaijan SSR to Central Asia and Kazakhstan (Babanli, 2016).

The subsequent, more catastrophic phase of the deportation policy was the Second World War. Ahsiga (Masheti) Turks were deported from Georgian SSR territory to Central Asia in 1944, along with 3140 Azerbaijanis and Kurds from Tbilisi, making it one of the tragedy's most terrible phases. The following phase of the establishment of the Azerbaijani diaspora can be defined by the emergence of communities made up of Azerbaijanis who were captured by the Germans during World War II and were unable to return home out of fear of being executed by the Soviet punishment apparatus. The majority of them settled in places like Turkey, Germany, France, the United States, and others.

After the war, inter-republican integration activities in the Soviet Union were strengthened, and a large number of Azerbaijani youth moved here to work and attend school in ally republics including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. In particular, Heydar Aliyev's initiative (the first political leader of the Republic of Azerbaijan (1969-1982)) of sending Azerbaijani youths to study in the USSR strengthened the intellectuals of the Azerbaijani diaspora in allied republics. Most of them went back to Azerbaijan, but some of them stayed in the cities where they had studied.

The Azerbaijani diaspora is widespread, with sizable populations in numerous regions. The following countries have significant Azerbaijani diasporas:

Iran: Following the fall of the Safavid dynasty and the subsequent rise of the Qajar dynasty in Iran in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, there was a sizable influx of Azerbaijanis into Iran. This was caused by a combination of factors, including the Qajar dynasty's Azerbaijani ancestry and close ties to Azerbaijan, political unrest in Azerbaijan, and economic prospects in Iran. Azerbaijanis migrated to Iran in many waves over the course of the 20th century. One of the most notable was the

migration that took place when the Soviet Union was founded in 1922, which led to the Soviet Union's incorporation of Iran's Azerbaijani area. Following the Iranian Revolution in 1979, a sizable influx of Azerbaijanis who were against the new Iranian government left Iran and moved to Azerbaijan or other parts of the world. Nevertheless, a sizable population of Azerbaijanis also stayed in Iran and have continued to play a significant part in the political and cultural landscape of the country (Shaffer, 2019).

Russia: One of the places where the Azerbaijani diaspora resides and has a significant influence in both the socio-cultural and economic-political arenas is the Russian Federation. Conventionally, the emigration processes that characterize the movement to Russia can be split into four periods:

- I. From 1828 to 1918: During this time, several well-known Azerbaijanis who belonged to the imperial elite as intellectuals made significant contributions to Russian science.
- II. 1920–1960: After the APC was overthrown, members of the Bolshevik-leaning working class in Azerbaijan started to migrate to Russia. Some of our countrymen married Russian ladies and lived in Russia during the Second World War and in the years that followed.
- III. 1960-1980s: Socioeconomic factors contributed to the migration during this time period. Our countrymen relocated there to work on projects that included oil field exploration, the development of new cities, and construction and improvement projects in various regions of Russia. Also, since 1970, Azerbaijanis who traveled to Russia for research and education but never came back have been a representative of the diaspora's intellectual side.
- IV. After 1991, the migration phenomenon persisted and has been primarily motivated by socioeconomic factors (Rizvan, 2002)

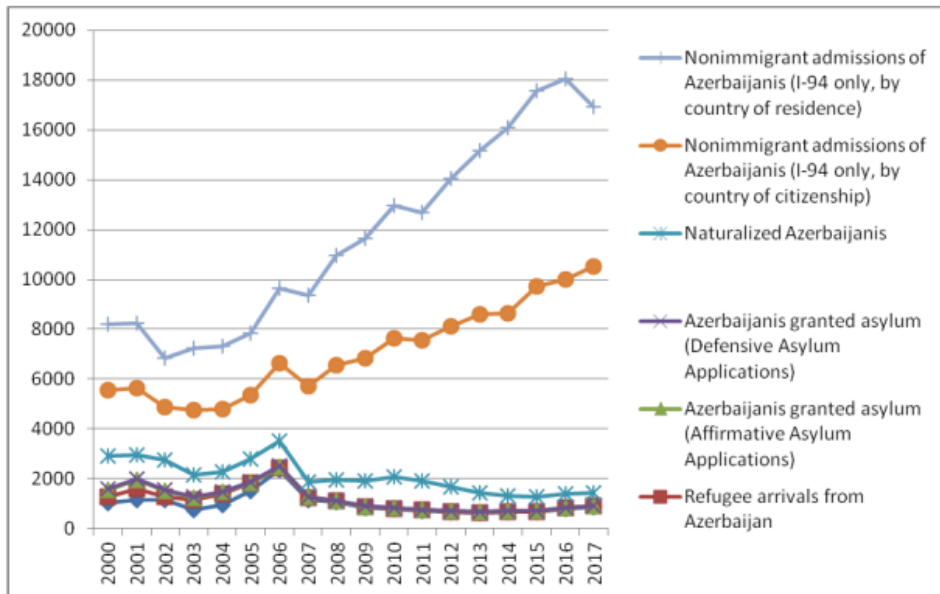
Turkiye: Azerbaijani compatriots left their native land and migrated to countries all over the world as a result of the political unrest that began with the wars between Iran and Russia and the Ottoman

Empire and Russia and persisted into the Soviet times. Turkiye is one of the notable settlement destinations for Azerbaijanis because Turkish people have a strong sense of connection to it as their country of origin. After significant historical touchstones such as Turkish–Russian War (1877-1878), the 1905 Revolution in Russia, attacks by Armenians in Azerbaijani settlements in modern-day Armenia between 1918 and 1920, WWI, the Bolshevik Revolution, Soviet period and WWII, Azerbaijani people were compelled to flee to Turkey (Shenturk, 2013)

United States: The American Azerbaijani Diaspora's founding specifications date from the twentieth century. Azerbaijanis moved to the United States in four stages: The first period began in 1920, following the collapse of the People's Republic of Azerbaijan, and involved the migration of rich groups, rebellious politicians, and intellectuals. The second stage began in the years 1940–1950 and was moved on by Azerbaijani troops who were captured during the Second World War and decided to reside permanently in the United States. The next period includes the 1950–1960 Azerbaijani migrant wave from Iran to America. The last stage resulted from Azerbaijanis who resisted the Iranian dictatorship and migration of Azerbaijanis to the United States during the fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which lasted from 1970 to 1990.

The graph below demonstrates that between 2000 and 2017, as indicated by DHS data, there were fewer immigrants from Azerbaijan entering the country. Also, we see a significant increase in the migratory movement (Afandiyev, 2021)

Figure 1. Azerbaijanis in the U.S.



Source: United States. Department of Homeland Security.

These are only a few samples of countries where there are considerable Azerbaijani diasporas. Other states with massive populations of Azerbaijanis consist of Georgia, Ukraine, Germany, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Belarus, and Israel.

It can be concluded that the Azerbaijani diaspora is relatively new and it is in the stage of internal consolidation, and at the same time, the members of our diaspora are adapting and integrating into the diaspora community.

2.2. Potential Financial Challenges of the Azerbaijani Diaspora

Members of the diaspora make large financial contributions to their home countries in a number of ways. Remittances, or money transfers, are the most well-known and widely used method of meeting the needs of families and communities. Diaspora relationships are another important source of assistance. For example, it helps governments to raise the funds they require in the aftermath of disasters without having to borrow from expensive lenders. Furthermore, immigrants boost productivity and economic growth in their home countries by creating new jobs and attracting foreign

direct investment.

In several nations, monthly cash transfers, or remittances, have played a significant role in alleviating the burdens of contemporary poverty, supporting families in meeting medical and educational needs, and even stimulating local consumer markets. The disparity in remittance distribution by receiving countries is attributable to the diversity of diasporas and migration. Remittances remain the primary source of household expenditures in some small economies, however, they are less important in other small economies. Remittances are "not benevolence but obligation," as one respondent put it, for many expatriate communities. The ability to debate and negotiate what societal changes may be necessary, as well as what other forms of support may be offered to achieve this, is constrained by the need to care for family and friends. Delivering remittances "may also preserve the present systems" since they don't deal with structures.

One of the main social functions of the diaspora is economic integration. Economic integration – in particular, large diasporas can build an economic network that plays a significant role in the economy of the country in which they are located (IOM, 2013) This network helps to organize the economic integration of other diaspora representatives moving to the area in a more convenient way. The social function of economic integration through diaspora networks may have a substantial impact on the economic growth of both the nation of origin and the host country where the diaspora is headquartered. When a substantial diaspora group moves to a foreign country, they typically establish a network of commercial resources and relationships that may be used to help in the economic integration of other community members coming nearby.

All international organizations that deal with issues of immigration, labor mobility, and transcontinental disputes now often discuss the economics of diaspora. The Azerbaijani government values their contribution to the development of business relationships, the establishment of trustworthy relationships between people, the promotion of entrepreneurship, the dissemination of

new knowledge, and the growth of trade and foreign direct investment in the nation. China, Korea, and India are just a few examples of how economically revolutionary diaspora contributions may be (Khan, 2020). It was emphasized that comprehensive policies are needed to create an environment that facilitates the mobilization of diaspora resources (knowledge, money, entrepreneurship, and business relationships). The Azerbaijani government has a well-structured framework in place to assess the genuine socioeconomic and geopolitical potential of its diasporas. Due to the active role of Azerbaijani diaspora communities in Washington, London, Paris, Brussels, and many other important capitals around the world, Armenia was not able to tarnish the soft image of Azerbaijan (Khan, 2020). However, it is also worth mentioning the fact that compared to the Azerbaijani diaspora communities, Armenians have much more established generations as well as existing support structure to help newcomers. For example, there was a whole bunch of Armenians who could help and support an unskilled Armenian who migrated to Germany in 1995. Unfortunately, Azerbaijanis do not have the same support structure; maybe they have a little support from Turks, but it is not enough to lobby or to send remittances to their homeland (from personal communication with a seasoned diplomat, policy planner, strategic analyst, political adviser, and speechwriting & communications specialist, 28 April, 2023). Being one of the most important diasporas due to its size and activities, the Azerbaijani community has a substantial impact on Russian Federation territory and the USA.

Russia: It is worth noting that a significant proportion of Azerbaijanis living abroad are members of the Russian diaspora. There are several Azerbaijani diasporas in Russian Federation territory, formed as a result of successive migratory waves. Besides the oil discovery in Siberia in the 1950s and 1960s that caused the demand for Azerbaijani specialists, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, and the economic crisis in Georgia caused the exodus from Azerbaijan. Many Azerbaijanis migrated to Russia from Armenia between 1988 and 1990 (Laman Garayeva, 2022). The country's economic issues brought on by the collapse of the USSR and the breaking of economic ties occurred

at the same time as the third wave of Azerbaijani migration to Russia. Due to the population's falling standard of living, workers from the Republic of Azerbaijan have landed in the territory of the Russian Federation (Shiriyev, 2019). Remittances from the diaspora provide a considerable source of income for millions of Azerbaijanis. This was especially true in the 1990s, when the country had minimal financial resources and hadn't yet realized the benefits of the large oil profits that began to build after 2005, however, in comparison to other post-Soviet countries, Azerbaijan is substantially less reliant on remittances (Shiriyev, 2019).

United States: People migrate to the United States from their native country to enhance their lives by obtaining a new career, improving their income, and finding a comfortable place to retire. But, like in any other country, life in the United States has benefits and downsides that you should be aware of before deciding whether to immigrate or continue living there. Objective factors like English language competency, educational history, chosen occupation, financial capabilities, and low-cost legalization options are used to define the difficulties of immigrating to the United States for a specific person. Beginning a new life as an immigrant is obviously difficult; there is a lot to learn from the start, and there are individuals who will support and aid you. When migrating to a new country, culture shock is almost always present. Meanwhile, immigration impacts people differently; for some, it's relatively straightforward and joyous, while for others, it's a lifetime of sadness. Numerous real-life narratives of immigrants' arrival in the United States may be found in a range of popular media, but in academic study, these subjects are usually studied in relation to the adaptation problems experienced by varied immigrant ethnic groups in the United States. Because there are few academic studies on the difficulties of adapting Azerbaijanis to living conditions in the United States, we included questions on problems that Azerbaijani immigrants had after migrating to the United States in our research (Afandiyev, CCIS, 2021).

According to data from the World Bank and the Central Bank of Azerbaijan (Khudiyev, IOM Azerbaijan, 2022), the total amount of remittances paid to Azerbaijan in 2020 was more than 3% of GDP. Despite its tiny size, the overall amount was more than \$1 billion USD, which is a significant figure. Furthermore, Azerbaijan is home to tens of thousands of migrants who send large sums of money back to their home countries.

1. According to World Bank figures, Azerbaijan has received more than \$1 billion in remittances in 2020. Despite the fact that the report does not specify the source of these remittances, it is likely that a sizable portion originated from Azerbaijanis living abroad, as well as, the cost of living in Azerbaijan is lower than that of Central Asia and Europe combined. Yet, the cost of living varies drastically depending on the country (Khudiyev, IOM Azerbaijan, 2022).
2. According to a poll done by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Azerbaijanis who live and work abroad face difficulties finding jobs due to linguistic barriers and a lack of respect for their credentials. Another conclusion of the study was the preponderance of low-skilled, low-paying jobs among Azerbaijanis working abroad.
3. Azerbaijanis living abroad have difficulty obtaining credit or loans due to the lack of credit history in their host country. This may make it tough to start or expand a business.
4. Depending on the specific restrictions in place, Azerbaijanis living and working abroad may have difficulty receiving social security payments or pension plans from both their home country and their host country.
5. Discrimination: Azerbaijanis may face bias in various countries, limiting their access to jobs, educational opportunities, and other economic opportunities.
6. Access to networks and resources may be limited: Azerbaijanis may not have as much access to networks and resources as other diaspora communities, which may limit their ability to

engage in commercial operations or make investments in projects that support Azerbaijan's progress (Gevorkyan, 2022).

With over 2.5 million members worldwide, the Azerbaijani diaspora is a substantial population, but it is sometimes perceived as being less economically engaged than some other diaspora communities. This might be caused by a number of economic variables, such as restricted access to financial resources and networks, ignorance about available job prospects in Azerbaijan, cultural preferences for particular occupations, and political unpredictability. In order to fully realize the diaspora's potential as an economic and cultural force, it may be necessary to address these issues and encourage increased involvement and commitment among the community. Furthermore, the economic network of a diaspora population may have a broader impact on the host nation's economy. For example, the diaspora might serve as a link between the commercial sectors of their home country and the one in which they are presently residing, encouraging international trade and investment. The diaspora may also provide expertise, experience, and business links to the host country's economic success. Finally, the potential of diaspora networks to encourage economic integration may be a significant engine of growth for both the home nation's economy and the actual diaspora population. By combining their resources and experience, diaspora communities may greatly contribute to stimulating entrepreneurship, enabling cross-border trade and investment, and boosting economic growth and development. The large number of Azerbaijanis who have immigrated overseas (1.1 million) shows that there is still opportunity for future growth of transnational economic and social links, which may be beneficial to Azerbaijan's economic recovery and stabilization in the coming years. Remittances to Azerbaijan peaked in 2012 before plummeting drastically in 2015 and 2016, owing in part to the Manat's devaluation against the US dollar. Remittance outflows peaked in 2012 and have since exceeded inflows (Hosner, Guluzade, & Wagner, 2018).

2.3. Lack of unity and coordination among the Azerbaijani diaspora communities

Azerbaijanis residing abroad are heterogeneous, due to their diversity and lack of consensus on many issues they are unable to unite, organize, and act as a single force. It was observed the division of Azerbaijanis residing in the EU and the USA at the Congress of World Azerbaijanis held twice. In the first congress, the dispute occurred over the presence of the Iranian flag in the hall, and in the second congress, it was the result of a confrontation (Aliyev, 2001)

Collaboration between organizations and the State of Azerbaijan is hampered by the diversity and fragmentation of Azerbaijani diaspora organizations in other states. The communities of Azerbaijanis living abroad are diverse, consisting of people from various socioeconomic classes, geographic locations, and cultural origins. They also may have members who have various worldviews and priorities. It may be difficult to develop a unified vision or agenda for the community due to disagreements and divisions caused by this lack of homogeneity. For instance, there may be disagreements among diaspora members on the value of maintaining Azerbaijani cultural traditions or the most effective strategies for advancing the needs of the locality. Taking these into account there are some factors that can be divided into specific categories:

Regional factors - A complex topic with roots in Azerbaijan's politics and history is the separation of southern and northern Azerbaijanis living abroad. Northern Azerbaijanis are those who reside in the Republic of Azerbaijan, whereas southern Azerbaijanis are ethnic Azerbaijanis who reside in Iran's northwestern region. These two groups frequently disagree with one another due to political, cultural, and historical grievances. The historical division of Azerbaijan into two areas is one aspect that causes this distinction. Azerbaijan was split into two different nations after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917: Iranian Azerbaijan (now part of Iran) and the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic (currently the Republic of Azerbaijan). Northern and southern Azerbaijanis now have clear political, economic, and cultural disparities as a result of this separation. In the diaspora, the division

between southern and northern Azerbaijanis can be seen in the formation of separate organizations and events. Although some concentrate on serving southern Azerbaijanis, some groups concentrate particularly on people in the north. This separation could make it challenging to create a cohesive Azerbaijani diaspora group and could result in rivalry for funding and attention (Pashayeva, 2009).

The lack of organization - Several diaspora communities, especially the Azerbaijani diaspora, struggle with the fragmentation of leadership and guidance within their communities. In this way, one of the things that makes the Azerbaijani diaspora weak is its lack of organization. Since many diasporas are distributed throughout various zones, it is difficult to develop robust community organizations and infrastructure. The diaspora's inability to organize itself may also hinder its capacity to advance its objectives and encourage a wider knowledge of Azerbaijani history and culture. It might be difficult to coordinate lobbying activities or to create cultural events and programs that advance wider knowledge and appreciation without robust community organizations and infrastructure. There are many elements that contribute to this classification:

Lack of consensus on leadership: Due to the diversity of the Azerbaijani diaspora, people may have different opinions regarding who ought to serve as its leader or mentor (instead of serving the common interests, they look for personal interests and are more prone to be leaders of that community). It might be challenging to create a cohesive community in the absence of a clear leadership consensus.

Political differences: The Azerbaijani diaspora may become divided as a result of political disagreements. While some members might be in favor of the Azerbaijani government's policies, others may be critical of its policies. During one of the conducted interviews, the respondent shared his personal observations about the relationships among Azerbaijanis living in Germany. He stressed the fact that different diaspora groups celebrate Nowruz Holiday in the same regions without informing each other. When he found out the reason it was related to their government or opposition-

oriented position (from personal communication with an expert from the AIR Center and adjunct lecturer at ADA University, 31 March, 2023). These disparities may make it challenging to put out a united face and may cause community disintegration.

Competition for resources: There may be competition among community members for financing and resources because the Azerbaijani diaspora is very new and lacks institutional support. This rivalry may result in the creation of competing organizations and further splits within the area.

Integration-Several factors can make it difficult for Azerbaijanis living overseas to integrate into the diaspora, including:

Cultural differences: Due to cultural differences, Azerbaijanis may also have trouble integrating into the diaspora. It can take time for Azerbaijanis to understand and fit into the culture of their new community because every culture has its own distinctive rules and behaviors.

Discrimination and prejudice: Azerbaijanis may find it challenging to properly adapt to the diaspora due to discrimination and prejudice. Azerbaijanis may experience exclusion, marginalization, and limited possibilities as a result of negative perceptions and biases.

Lack of political activity: The Azerbaijani diaspora is frequently split along ethnic and political lines, with various groups maintaining opposing political priorities. This might make it challenging to establish a cohesive political movement or to obtain support for particular political objectives. According to the interview with a representative of the United Ukrainian-Azerbaijani diaspora, even though Azerbaijanis have lived and worked in Ukraine for many years, they feel a deep loyalty to their nation of origin and believe that they live here temporarily and will eventually return to their homeland (Scribbr, 2015). In this sense, our countrymen who reside abroad lack the initiative to actively engage in the socio-political life of the countries in which they reside.

Assimilation: The Azerbaijani people, like many other ethnic and cultural groups, may experience assimilation difficulties when residing in a new and diverse cultural setting. Assimilation

is the process of adjusting to and integrating into a society's dominant culture, which may entail alterations to one's language, values, beliefs, and behavior (Pedraza, 1999). Language is one of the biggest obstacles to assimilation for Azerbaijanis living abroad. Although Azerbaijani is the primary language of many Azerbaijanis, it may not be frequently used or understood in their new community. This can make it difficult for Azerbaijanis to communicate and integrate, and it might be necessary for them to learn a new language in order to fully engage with their new community. Assimilation may also be hampered by cultural differences. The values, beliefs, and practices of Azerbaijanis may differ from those of their new society, which can cause miscommunication and make social interactions challenging. Differences in religious beliefs or social customs can also make assimilation difficult and necessitate that Azerbaijanis modify their actions and customs to fit in with their new society. Finally, assimilation can also be hampered by a person's strong desire to hold onto their cultural history and identity. It's possible that Azerbaijanis will desire to uphold their traditional beliefs and rituals, which may clash with the prevailing culture of their new setting. Due to this, they may experience conflict and have trouble juggling their two cultural identities.

To summarize, this chapter has examined and concluded that its recent formation, economic issues, lack of unity, and coordination among the Azerbaijani diaspora communities are the factors that affected the constitution of a powerful Azerbaijani diaspora. The challenges mentioned are going to be suggested in the following chapter through the analysis of several potential policy alternatives for each cause.

CHAPTER 3. POLICY ALTERNATIVES

As was stated in the prior chapter, there are various issues faced by today's Azerbaijani diaspora. Having examined each of such challenges, this chapter will present different policy options

that have been developed by taking into account best practices, real-world examples, and cases in the growth of a powerful diaspora. In light of this, it will be argued that the challenges of developing the Azerbaijani diaspora can be solved by strengthening lobbying activities as well as available financial mechanism, and expanding the scope of associative encouragement initiatives.

3.1. Strengthening lobbying activities

Since one of the issues identified in the previous chapter is the just-emerging Azerbaijani diaspora compared to other countries with a rich diaspora history, Azerbaijan needs to strengthen lobbying activities in leading countries. The concept of lobbying refers to the purposeful influence of organized interests on state bodies and individual officials. In other words, lobbying is not only the protection of the social, political, and economic interests of this or that group, but it is also a mechanism and concept that makes the formal government settle with the actual government (Wike, 1956).

The growth of the Azerbaijani diaspora can be significantly influenced by well-organized lobbying efforts, particularly regarding political representation, cultural awareness, and economic prospects. Additionally, lobbying can be utilized to advocate for the rights and interests of the Azerbaijani diaspora and raise awareness of issues that affect them. This may ultimately play a role in the flourishing of the Azerbaijani diaspora by fostering deeper linkages between the diaspora and other collaborative environments. There are many ways to do this, including direct lobbying, grassroots activism, coalition building, and public relations.

Lobbying is the concept of a working mechanism that makes the representatives of the government do practical work in addition to being defenders of the social, economic, and political interests of society. First, efficient mechanisms require a powerful lobby with a well-organized and

well-funded organizational structure. Having a crystal-clear mission statement, a capable leadership group and efficient communication routes are all examples of this. Lobbying organizations and lobbyists operating in the world today use different strategies; one is based on the national or ethnic interests of their country, and the other is based on their economic or political interests.

Brussels is considered to be the center of lobbying institutions that are very widespread in Europe, where the representative offices of the world's most influential organizations operate. The center of lobbying is the capital city of Washington. Today, lobbying activity, which is an important branch of the US political system, is carried out in various forms in other areas along with legislative, executive, and judicial power. The largest and most politicized lobbying organization in the United States belongs to the Jewish community. The Israel lobby in the United States, using mass propaganda, takes first place. The leading US TV channels NBS and SBS, the prominent newspapers The New York Times and Washington Post, and many other publications are under the control of the Israel lobby. Likewise, the Azerbaijani diaspora can lobby through media influence. The success of lobbying operations can be impacted by the capacity to influence media narratives and manage information flow. In order to encourage positive coverage and halt unfavorable articles, Azerbaijan's lobby groups may get involved in press relations and publicity initiatives and build strong bonds with journalists or news agencies.

The Armenian Lobby is another of the most effective ethnic lobbies in the United States. The passage of the 907th amendment to the "Freedom Support Act" in 1992 (Bayramova, 2011) and Joe Biden's recognition of the events of 1915 as "genocide" (Liptak, 2021) are the clearest indications of the Armenian lobby's effect on US politics.

A strong lobby also needs the community's and its members' support on a grassroots level. Our compatriots who immigrated abroad in different periods of history are now people with high prestige

and financial resources in the country where they live. Those people are represented in all spheres of society (in socio-cultural life, scientific and educational centers, the economic-political arena, military groups, and other fields) with their specialties, arts and professions, and practical work. This potential can be used to promote Azerbaijan, mobilize supporters to contact their elected officials, participate in demonstrations and rallies, and engage with the media to raise awareness of the lobby's agenda.

A competent lobby must have authority within the political system, including solid connections to legislators and decision-makers. The main goal here is to win the right to vote in the ruling circles. In other words, it is to achieve the approval of any issue raised by the public or the state. Through lobbying efforts, campaign donations, and other political actions, this can be accomplished.

A dominant lobby can use the backing of other groups and organizations to further its objectives. This entails establishing tactical partnerships with other lobbies, neighborhood associations, and companies that support their goals. Looking at the world's experience, we can observe that the Armenian lobby continues to work with its long-standing allies. The Greek lobby in particular has been one of the Armenian lobby's most vital supporters. Due to the different religious backgrounds of their respective Orthodox Churches, the Greek and Armenian-American lobbies are united. Their shared concern is rooted in the long-standing and intense emotional phobias of Turkey (Merdan, 2020). Additionally, the Armenian lobby has been quite active in forming alliances with several human rights organizations. To give an example, the Armenian National Committee collaborates with non-Armenian organizations to identify and prevent genocide and violations of human rights, such as when it works with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other organizations to raise awareness of the Darfur crisis. Focusing on Darfur and other comparable problems may improve the Armenian National Committee's potential to establish itself as a respectable authority on genocide and human rights. (like the so-called Armenian genocide). This

shows that the Armenian lobby was successful in choosing a very wise coalition partner to enhance public perception of it as one of the most respectable lobbies in the country (Merdan, 2020). From this point of view, cooperating with Jewish, Turkish, and other diasporas and lobbies and their organizations based on mutual interests, gathering experience using their positive experience in the field of diaspora building, and realizing the set goals can greatly contribute to the formation of a strong Azerbaijani diaspora in leading countries.

Overall, a well-organized and well-funded organizational structure, media influence, political power, grassroots support, skill and knowledge, and strategic alliances are all necessary components of a successful lobby. A lobby can effectively represent its interests and accomplish its objectives within the political system by fostering these factors.

3.2 Strengthening available financial mechanism

Money buys influence, and the role of money in diaspora communities is undeniable. Since financial resources are a necessary factor in maintaining the economic stability of both the host country and the home country, remittances, which are the funds sent by migrants to their home country, are an essential aspect of the diaspora's overall prosperity. It shouldn't come as a surprise that political effects in countries with significant remittances are not insignificant. Hence, “in countries such as Mexico, or India, the lucre of remittances has led politicians to switch positions vis-à-vis their diaspora from benign neglect to active courtship [...] Cuba draws remittances from its US-based diaspora while North Koreans earn remittances mostly from pachinko parlors run by Koreans living in Japan” (Kapur, 2003, p. 21). Other than these, “the Jewish diaspora invests about \$0.5 billion annually in Israel’s economy, a significant part of which goes into knowledge-based industry. Much like Armenia, Israel is a small country with limited natural resources and surrounded by enemies, yet

it has achieved remarkable economic and technological development, which among other things to a substantial extent is driven by the mentioned investments” (Vavyan, 2015, para. 2).

Taking a comparative look at the Azerbaijani and the Armenian diasporas, it can be observed that despite the fact that Armenia is a relatively small, poor nation, blocked on two of its four borders, its diaspora community is one of the successful and wealthy ones in the world. The rich Armenian diaspora, which is not in solidarity with the Armenian state, is made up of individuals who have achieved significant success in their respective fields, have built successful companies, amassed significant wealth, and have become prominent community leaders who spend millions of dollars annually to influence world politics and support their homeland. In this sense, Armenians outside of Armenia are usually very successful, and the Armenian diaspora in the United States and France are strong as they have the means to contribute generously to strengthen the ties. To that effect, there are generations of immigrants since World War I and the 1915 Genocide have formed communities with schools, churches, and activism to advance the interests of Armenia.

However, “despite the fact that there are more than 700.000 Azerbaijanis living only in the US, majority of Azerbaijanis in America is working in the banking sector, factories, and trade areas. A minority of them are working in politics and local government areas, especially universities. Although there are many institutions related to Azerbaijan in the US, they do not have a significant influence. These associations which do not collaborate with each other, mainly carry a symbolic value. Hence, unfortunately, the Azerbaijani diaspora in the US remained ineffective and weak” (Uslu & Kocaman, 2013, p. 46).

Since financial support is one of the problems faced by the Azerbaijani diaspora, there is a need to strengthen available financial mechanism to support our political communities abroad and to strengthen the Azerbaijani diaspora. From this point of view, it should be noted that Azerbaijan

possesses the hydrocarbon riches of the Caspian region. Hence, “the rich Caspian hydrocarbon resources provide significant opportunities for (oil) lobbying in the US for the interests of Azerbaijan. If this potential is exploited, the Azerbaijani lobby in the US can become stronger than the Armenian one. Although this requires serious efforts, due to this policy, the government of Azerbaijan would have better results in world politics” (Uslu & Kocaman, 2013, p. 49)

Further, there is a view that diaspora organizations should be financially supported by the state only. For sure, there must be state support, but it is not the right approach to impose all issues only on the state. If we wait for the state funding of all diaspora organizations, or if we do not change the idea that "this is exactly what it should be", then there will be no organizations that can stand independently, we will simply create conditions for the emergence of new institutions and organizations that expect funding from the state. If a diaspora community lacks stable financial resources, then it will be unable to function effectively in the host country. The support of the state is directly related to its international authority and the level of its relations in specific countries where the diaspora operates. If the state is strong and the relations of the diaspora with the country in which it operates are normal, this is political and psychological support for both the organization and the Azerbaijanis living in that country. Of course, the state should support organizations and certain projects, and there has always been such support. Thus, there is the Fund for Support to Azerbaijani Diaspora which is created under the State Committee on Affairs with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Among the main missions of the Fund is “to support the activity of Azerbaijani diaspora organizations, to strengthen their material and technical base, to develop and promote in the world our national and cultural values, to strengthen the social protection of Azerbaijanis living abroad and to provide targeted state support in this area (<https://diaspora.foundation/#>). At the same time, in many countries, there are organizations that work very successfully with the support of their members. For example, Armenians have created financial funds, where Armenian citizens and Armenian diaspora

members regularly transfer money to support the political interests of Armenia abroad (Liftiyeva, 2019).

In addition, during his speech at the Congress of Turkish and Azerbaijani NGOs, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan noted that if once the Turks migrated to foreign countries for employment purposes, today the Turks living abroad are providing local nations with job opportunities (Gasimov, 2009). From an economic viewpoint, the members of the Azerbaijani diaspora should also strengthen in this way and support the political activities of their homeland abroad. Today, the Armenian diaspora is already helping its state, and the financial flow comes from them. Therefore, it is necessary to put an end to the fact that our diaspora expects financial assistance from Azerbaijan. At the same time, one of the main directions of the Charter of World Azerbaijanis adopted a few years ago, is that efforts should be made to establish relations between our compatriots working in the same field of activity in the countries where our compatriots are massively settled. Hence, there are associations of Azerbaijani businessmen and scientists, and cultural figures that are created for this end, and the unification of Azerbaijani businessmen living abroad into a single organization can also contribute to the economic strengthening of the Azerbaijani diaspora. This policy will be effective because the whole burden of financing our diaspora communities abroad will not be solely on the government of Azerbaijan.

Overall, the role of money in diaspora communities is multifaceted, with remittances, investment, and trade all playing important roles in maintaining economic stability and promoting cultural exchange between the host country and the home country.

3.3. Expanding the scope of associative encouragement initiatives

As was already touched on in the problem description, it has been determined that one of the current challenges within the Azerbaijani diaspora is related to unity and coordination issues. To resolve these obstacles within the unity and solidarity process, the suggested solution would be to expand the scope of associative encouragement initiatives.

Firstly, there is a need for a well-equipped and developed organizational structure with strong leadership that is best suited to promote unity and cooperation among members of the Azerbaijani diaspora, depending on the specific needs and goals of the community. This can be advocating for the rights of Azerbaijanis, assisting cultural missions, or encouraging economic growth. Referring to world practice, Armenia has the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), the grassroots advocacy group that defends the rights of Armenian Americans in political, social, and economic spheres. The promotion of the Armenian Genocide's recognition, support for U.S. aid to Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, aiding Armenia's democratic transition, and fostering closer ties between the United States and Armenia are only a few of the major subjects that the ANCA works on (anca.org).

Significant amounts of membership and involvement (especially politically) in community associations and events are frequently indicative of a strong and united diaspora. When citizens participate actively in communal activities, it indicates a strong sense of shared identity and purpose. The younger generations in the Azerbaijani diaspora are tremendously participative and devoted to their State and homeland. They are a dominant force in the diaspora due to their adaptability, interactional language abilities, and continual communication State Committee on Diaspora Work (“New Diaspora Strategy to Meet Modern Requirements”, 2020). In general, young people who are inclined to study, who leave the country for education, and who do not return for any reason should

be investigated. Work should also be done to ensure that they can study in universities without difficulty, receive social welfare, and primarily learn the language of the country where they reside. In the second step, these young individuals and other politically engaged citizens should be chosen and given support so that they can be represented in political parties and organizations, local media, non-governmental organizations, and elected bodies in their respective countries. At the same time, efforts should be made to boost the political engagement of our fellow citizens in their home nations, since this will open up the potential for future election-related influence. One or two of our young people must be present in the offices where ambassadors and consuls are invited, and they must be included in the investigations of our embassies where they study or live. This is crucial because it helps them develop early communication and official behavior skills with diplomats and politicians. Another concern is the passive propagandizing that is done through them, for instance, by using our youth to organize excursions for foreign students interested in Azerbaijan in their educational institutions. As a follow-up to these efforts, we will organize our supporters who are actively involved in the political parties of the nations in which they reside, draw on their experience, create direct contact between these supporters and the embassies, ensure that they comment on news stories about Azerbaijan that are published in the international press, and make them speak for Azerbaijan in the international media. To ensure the development of relationships, it is vital to transform them into personalities that can respond to inquiries, take part in discussions and political and cultural events, and participate in debates.

High levels of philanthropy and support services can also serve as a sign of diaspora solidarity. Working together for charity projects and enhancing community welfare shows a strong sense of shared duty and dedication to shared values among diaspora members. It can support the diaspora community's short- and long-term needs by providing financial aid, healthcare, education, and other support services. These services may be especially crucial for individuals who have low incomes, are

at risk, or are marginalized. These services can assist in creating connections between various diaspora segments and promote greater involvement in the social and political life of their communities by offering chances to volunteer, donate, and take part in community activities.

The subject of preserving the Azerbaijani language, national identity, and culture is crucial for the Azerbaijani Diaspora in today's globalized world. Heydar Aliyev, the former leader of Azerbaijan, described the aims of the Azerbaijani state's policy in the speech he delivered to the First Congress of World Azerbaijanis on November 9, 2001: Azerbaijanism is the central concept of the democratic Azerbaijani Republic. We must cultivate Azerbaijanism, and every Azerbaijani should be honored for his sense of national identity ([Azerbaijani Multiculturalism](#)). Taking this into account, it takes a variety of initiatives to maintain Azerbaijani culture among the diaspora, including *language preservation*: promoting the usage and preservation of the Azerbaijani language through community gatherings, cultural activities, and language training; *Cultural holidays*: maintaining cultural traditions and fostering a sense of community among the diaspora can be accomplished through the planning of cultural events and festivities, including music and dance performances, traditional holiday celebrations, and cuisine festivals; *promotion of art, music, film, and literature*: for diaspora voices to be heard and for their experiences to be conveyed, music and movies can offer a platform. Additionally, cultural exchanges, readings, and exhibitions can all advance understanding and contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage. *Engagement with the homeland*: maintaining a link to Azerbaijani culture and customs can be achieved by encouraging diaspora residents to interact with their home country through visits, educational initiatives, and cultural exchange programs.

Overall, by following news outlets and social media channels, Azerbaijanis living abroad should stay informed about current events in their home country. This will help them understand the political landscape and the issues that affect their homeland. Moreover, they may engage with

policymakers in their host countries and support political organizations that align with their home country's political interests. This may include donating to political campaigns or volunteering to help various political organizations spread their message (from personal communication with the representative of the Azerbaijani diaspora in Switzerland, May 4, 2023). The discussed policy options will each be assessed using five criteria in the subsequent chapter to determine which is the most appropriate alternative.

CHAPTER 4. EVALUATION OF POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The proposed policy solutions will be reviewed and evaluated against five essential criteria in this chapter: effectiveness, efficiency, equity, feasibility, and flexibility. This review will allow for an examination of the benefits and drawbacks of each policy option, with the goal of determining the best alternative based on these criteria. The goal of this assessment is to help identify the best policy option by taking into account its strengths and limitations.

4.1. Strengthening lobbying activities

Using lobbying effectively allows nations to advance their own interests and influence the decision-making of other nations. As a developing nation with an expanding economy and a strategic geopolitical location, Azerbaijan may profit from stepping up its lobbying efforts in powerful nations through direct lobbying, grassroots activism, coalition building, and public relations. Identifying important issues and target nations Azerbaijan should decide which nations it needs to lobby on behalf of and identify the major problems that are pertinent to its interests. Azerbaijan may prioritize promoting its energy resources, political stability, and territorial integrity in Europe, as well as in the

South Caucasus area. Moreover, one of the top priorities in stepping up lobbying activities must be establishing relationships with important stakeholders: By forming strategic alliances with other lobbies, neighborhood groups, and industries that share their objectives, Azerbaijan may expand its lobbying efforts. It expressly advises collaborating with Jewish, Turkish, and other diasporas and lobbies, as well as their organizations, based on shared objectives, and learning from their successes in the diaspora building sector. The statement is effective in emphasizing the significance of establishing strategic alliances with different parties and organizations to further the goals of Azerbaijan's lobbying operations. It recognizes the potential advantages of drawing on the successes of other diasporas and advocacy groups in order to create a powerful Azerbaijani diaspora in powerful nations. Secondly, this policy of enhancing lobbying activities will offer fewer specific instructions on how to create these alliances in terms of efficiency, but it suggests a pragmatic strategy of drawing on the successes of other diasporas and lobbies to forge a potent Azerbaijani diaspora such as lobbies of Armenia and Israel in the United States. The statement raises no issues about fairness because it highlights the need for transparent and ethical lobbying activities that do not infringe on the rights of others. The accessibility of resources is a crucial consideration in terms of feasibility. To effectively advance its interests through lobbying efforts, Azerbaijan must conduct a thorough assessment of its financial capabilities to determine its capacity to finance the hiring of lobbyists, support advocacy campaigns, and attend relevant meetings and conferences. This policy option is quite feasible because Azerbaijan has resources coming from oil and gas revenues to establish successful lobbies (Ibadoghlu, 2020). Flexibility is essential in the context of lobbying since political concerns and objectives can move quickly, and a lobbying technique that worked in the past may not work in the present or future. Last but not least, this approach is very flexible owing to the high likelihood of a changing political environment in the target nations, and Azerbaijan must be prepared to change its lobbying activities

appropriately. This may need a reevaluation of its lobbying campaign's aims and objectives, as well as the adoption of new strategies and methods to better line with the changing political landscape.

4.2. Expanding the scope of associative encouragement initiatives

Expanding the breadth of associative encouraging activities might be a beneficial technique for strengthening unity and cooperation within the expatriate community, according to effectiveness criteria. Cultural events, sports tournaments, educational programs, and corporate networking events are examples of associative encouragement projects. These projects have the potential to bring people together, facilitate social interaction, and foster a sense of belonging among community members. When deciding whether or not to broaden the scope of associative encouragement initiatives, it is critical to consider several factors, including the degree of community involvement, the variety of activities provided, the effect on community development, and the sustainability of the initiatives. The programs must be accessible, inclusive, and relevant to the needs and interests of the diaspora communities. This policy choice is very effective because it has been tested by the Armenian diaspora in the United States via the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), a grassroots advocacy organization that protects the civil and human rights of Armenian Americans. Secondly, extending the breadth of associative encouraging activities would be an efficient manner for the Azerbaijani government and diaspora to strengthen diaspora unity and cooperation. The effectiveness of this strategy, however, will depend on a number of variables, including the ability and willingness of diaspora members to participate in such initiatives, the level of support and resources offered by the Azerbaijani government, and the degree to which these initiatives are tailored to meet the unique needs and aspirations of the diaspora community. In terms of equity standards, philanthropy, and support services must be accessible and available to all members of the diaspora community. This comprises

those who are disadvantaged or marginalized because of variables such as poverty, education, race, gender, or ethnicity. Philanthropy and support services must be structured to meet the needs of all people in the community while avoiding any type of prejudice or bias. Making ensuring that the community is involved in charity activity planning and implementation is essential. This might encourage involvement, ownership, and ownership of the activities by the community. Additionally, it can assist in ensuring that the services offered are pertinent and sensitive to the desires and needs of the community at large. This policy option is quite feasible, however recognizing that associative promotion measures alone might not be adequate to address all problems with unity and cooperation among the Azerbaijani diaspora. It may be necessary to employ other tactics to effectively address additional elements, such as cultural, linguistic, and religious differences, which can further contribute to these difficulties.

4.3. Strengthening available financial mechanism

One of the proposed solutions is the formation of groups comprised of Azerbaijani scientists, businesspeople, and cultural leaders with the goal of improving the economic position of the Azerbaijani diaspora, as well as the formation of a unified organization for Azerbaijani businesspeople living abroad. More precisely, merchants, scientists, and cultural luminaries from Azerbaijan frequently will join groups in order to leverage their expertise, networks, and resources to further the economic and cultural interests of the Azerbaijani diaspora. These groups can provide a venue for members to communicate ideas, collaborate on activities, and promote legislation that benefits the community.

Firstly, regarding the effectiveness criteria, bringing together Azerbaijani businesspeople who live abroad into a unified group can also help to boost the diaspora's economic impact. By pooling their resources and skills, these businessmen may identify and invest in promising business

opportunities, negotiate better deals, and overcome hurdles to enter new sectors. It is worth noting that there are various organizations in the United States and other countries with ties to Azerbaijan, these organizations are of poor quality and function only as symbols. The Azerbaijan Society of America (ASA), which is concerned with promoting Azerbaijan with economic activities, strives to effectively express Azerbaijan's economic, and cultural features to both the general public and American governmental institutions. Furthermore, a cohesive group can speak more forcefully on behalf of the Azerbaijani diaspora's interests when interacting with authorities, businesses, and other stakeholders. Secondly, based on the second criterion, this policy option may be considered possibly efficient. By concentrating on economic development, these organizations may be able to help establish new business possibilities and raise investment in Azerbaijani communities across the world, potentially leading to economic growth and a better quality of life for diaspora members. However, the ability of these groups to organize, collaborate effectively, and maintain a clear vision and strategy for achieving their goals would ultimately determine their success. Furthermore, the establishment of a unified organization for Azerbaijani businesspeople living abroad could help to streamline efforts and maximize impact, but this would necessitate extensive coordination and resource allocation. Thirdly, the proposed method is feasible in that it includes bringing together individuals who have similar backgrounds and passions. These associations and organizations can provide a forum for participants to exchange thoughts and work together on projects that support the economic and cultural interests of the Azerbaijani diaspora. Fourth, the involvement of the state and organizations, which are made up of Azerbaijanis residing abroad, satisfies the equity condition. The government, diaspora communities, and organizations will put their collaborative efforts to provide financial support to the Azerbaijani diaspora, as it is critical to strengthen financial mechanism that can sustain our political communities abroad and fortify the Azerbaijani diaspora. This will happen through the rich Caspian hydrocarbon resources in Azerbaijan. In terms of a final criterion, lobbying and investing in

hydrocarbons might be beneficial in the short term, however it isn't too much flexible, a more adaptable approach is required for long-term support of the Azerbaijani diaspora. A more appropriate strategy would be to make investments in the growth of the Azerbaijani diaspora groups, including aiding their business and educational endeavors, fostering social and cultural linkages, and encouraging civil society involvement.

Policy Options \ Criteria	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Equity	Feasibility	Flexibility
Strengthening of lobbying activities	+	+	-	+	+
Expanding the scope of associative encouragement initiatives	+	+	+	+	-
Strengthening available financial mechanism	+	+	+	+	-

To sum up, chapter 3 presents three policy choices to address the economic, social, and political issues brought on by the underwhelming activity of the Azerbaijani diaspora abroad. These regulations are as follows: Strengthening of lobbying activities; Expanding the scope of associative

encouragement initiatives; Strengthening available financial mechanism. All proposed policies are later assessed in chapter 4 using five criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, equity, feasibility, and flexibility. In order to increase the potential of the Azerbaijani diaspora to grow, it is ultimately decided that two policy alternatives: Expanding the scope of associative encouragement initiatives and Strengthening available financial mechanism - should be put into action right now. This is due to the fact that each of the two choices may essentially be implemented through robust financial and social processes.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the policy paper is to reveal the challenges faced by the Azerbaijani diaspora in promoting its political interests abroad as well as to propose policy options and assess them against five criteria — effectiveness, efficiency, equity, feasibility, and flexibility. Firstly, the research identified that one of the main difficulties encountered by the Azerbaijani diaspora is that compared to other well-rooted classical diasporas, the Azerbaijani diaspora has a shorter history. Since it takes time to settle socially and economically in a particular country, those diaspora communities that migrated a lot earlier have much more established generations and support structures to promote the political interests of their homeland. Secondly, another challenge hampering the development of the Azerbaijani diaspora is economic factors associated with the absence of a much stronger financial mechanism to support the activities of the members of the Azerbaijani diaspora abroad. The financial support is a very important factor in the development of any diaspora community since it is necessary to have enough funds to advocate the interests of their home country in their country of residence by engaging in different political and civic activities. This can include supporting policies that promote trade and economic development between the two countries, as well as advocating for human rights

and social justice issues in their country of origin. Finally, there are obstacles in terms of lacking unity and coordination among the Azerbaijani diaspora communities. It is an undeniable fact that the unification of diaspora members can be a powerful force in serving the political interests of their country of origin and addressing the challenges faced by their communities. By working together, diaspora members can create a brighter future for themselves, their family, and their homeland.

By referring to the practices of other successful diaspora communities existing in the world, the Capstone project has proposed several policy alternatives that address existing challenges. Firstly, to contribute to the growth of our young diaspora, Azerbaijan can take advantage of its hydrocarbon and oil resources to lobby in the US and Europe for Azerbaijan's interests. Additionally, establishing financial funds can work for eliminating the monetary dependency on the Azerbaijani government solely. Finally, as far as the lack of unification and organization among diaspora members is concerned, it is essential to foster a more consolidated relationship between the world Azerbaijanis. Hence, it will be easier to trace these lines of influence if the latter becomes more united and more organized. Azerbaijanis living outside of their homeland could strengthen this influence by joining together and raising a common voice to advocate the interests of Azerbaijan abroad.

To determine which policy options should be selected to strengthen the Azerbaijani diaspora, all policy alternatives are evaluated according to the above-mentioned five criteria. Following a thorough evaluation of all policy options proposed, two of them are identified as being the most effective ones to address existing problems: stronger financial mechanism and consolidation among diaspora members. Improvements in these directions can even mitigate the challenges and difficulties related to the fact of having a shorter history and a later formation of our diaspora community. Additionally, these policy alternatives satisfy all evaluation criteria, so their implementation can remove the barriers on the way of strengthening the diaspora of Azerbaijanis.

To conclude, world experience shows that the diaspora factor occupies one of the important places in the development of statehood. As the Republic of Azerbaijan is also an integral part of the international community, the diaspora factor is of great importance for the development of our statehood and the growth of Azerbaijan's influence in the world. The experience of a number of states shows that the role of the diaspora is significantly higher for the successful implementation of its foreign policy. The fact that one nation has a strong diaspora in the world is of great importance in making decisions in international organizations in favor of that state, and in establishing better relations with other states which, in turn, provides leverage for the successful shaping of its foreign policy. It is also an undeniable fact that our national leader Heydar Aliyev has done a lot to unite millions of our compatriots living outside Azerbaijan around a common cause and laid the foundation of this union mentioning that “in those days [the 1970s-80s], I wanted to settle Azerbaijanis across the entire Soviet Union” he said. “Not through tragedy, of course, but through other means. This would create a great source of support for Azerbaijan [...] The more Azerbaijanis live in each country, the better it is for us. The only condition is that they don’t forget their nation, their religion, and their motherland” (Rumyantsev, 2017, para. 12).

Recommendations

Taking into account international practice concerning diaspora development, the following recommendations could be implemented jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Azerbaijan and the State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan to deal with the challenges and difficulties encountered by the Azerbaijani diaspora:

1. Building partnerships and networks: diaspora communities can build partnerships and

networks with other communities and organizations that share similar goals and interests. These partnerships can help to create new opportunities for collaboration and growth.

2. Fostering community engagement: diaspora communities should actively encourage community members to participate in community events, and provide opportunities for members to get involved in community projects and initiatives.

3. Encouraging cultural exchange: diaspora communities should promote cultural exchange and encourage members to share their traditions, music, food, and other aspects of their culture in their countries of residence which can help to promote greater understanding and appreciation of the diaspora community and its contributions to society.

Overall, strengthening diaspora communities requires a multifaceted approach that includes partnerships, community engagement, and cultural exchange. By working together and strengthening available financial mechanism for growth and development, diaspora communities can make a significant impact both on their country of origin and their country of residence.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the role of diaspora in shaping the foreign policy of the home country?
2. How can the main issues with identification, assimilation, and integration that the Azerbaijani diaspora deals with be solved?
3. How much are the activities of the Azerbaijani diaspora abroad impacted by economic difficulties, such as obtaining work or making a contribution to the economy of the home country?
4. Why the Azerbaijani diaspora is not as wealthy as its other counterparts, for example, the Armenian diaspora?
5. Which successful strategies and case studies from other diaspora communities could be used to strengthen the Azerbaijani diaspora?
6. What should the Azerbaijanis living abroad do in order to promote the political interests of their home country?