Advance Diaspora Diplomacy in a Networked World

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Abstract: The role of diaspora networks in international affairs and in economic development is now well established. What is new is the increasing proliferation of national strategies to harness them actively for public and economic diplomacy. This paper addresses the rise of Australia's only formal, global diaspora network: Advance – Australia's Global community which has acted self-consciously to become an instrument of public diplomacy. Emerging from a small base in New York, Advance sought to 'open doors' for Australians in the world's biggest market. Cultivating a strong membership base of professionals and well connected individuals, Advance developed its public diplomacy potential by building partnerships with state governments, Australian universities and some federal government agencies. As an elite organisation of high profile Australians overseas in science, the arts, commerce and public administration, Advance has developed into a global organisation communicating with both Australian national audiences and foreign constituencies to develop network centrality in specific industries and professional communities.

Keywords: diaspora; diplomacy; discourse; network centrality; consulates

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1. Introduction

With the publication of *Diaspora: The World Wide Web of Australians* Australia's government and private sector institutions were encouraged to "capitalise on the networks, talent and goodwill to further the national interest" (Fullilove and Flutter, 2004). The authors called this large community of Australians living abroad, at that time, 1 million in number, "a market, a constituency, a sales force and an ambassadorial corps". They described this community as "well educated, well connected and well disposed to this country" and that efforts should be made to "engage the diaspora in our national life and create a global community of Australians" (Fullilove and Flutter, 2004: 1).

The idea of the potential of diaspora networks as an extension of a countries' hard (economic) and soft (cultural) power is now a common-place. Diasporas have played a role as an extension of national prestige (or decline) for centuries. What is new is the increasing proliferation of national strategies to harness them actively for public and economic diplomacy (Melissen, 2011). Much consideration has been given to the economic productivity of migrants as well as the role of remittances (Brinkerhoff, 2006). However, this paper is more concerned with a particular category of diaspora; that is, professional communities in public diplomacy, acting either consciously and deliberately through involvement in non-governmental organisations with a public diplomacy orientation, or tacitly through their professional networks.

The role of networks as a tool of diplomacy has also been highlighted in the international relations literature in recent years. In particular, former Director of Policy Planning for the US Department of State, Anne Marie Slaughter advised the US administration to pursue a "grand strategy of network centrality" (2012). She argued that the most important shift for America:

"... is not the rise of China and the realignment of power in the international system, but rather the ubiquity and density of global networks. ... States certainly continue to exist and to play essential roles in the international

system. However,... they now act side by side with many types of social actors
    who are able to come together and act independently on the world stage."
Notwithstanding the Trump Administration's different approach to diplomacy, in Slaughter's
analysis diplomatic strategists must instead look at all of the actors states need to work
with: corporations, non-governmental organisations (NGO's), universities, movements, "as
participants in an ever-shifting landscape of networks" (2012: 45).

Networks are increasingly relevant because of the underlying shifts in the global economy
which sees trade relationships, information and services as larger contributors to economic
growth and might. In this network context, diaspora play a role, even if an indirect one, in
the national interests of their home state. Yet, crafting a network-based strategy of public
diplomacy requires regarding networks, and the relationships and potential influence they
offer, in a qualitatively different light from traditional approaches of one-way
communication to diaspora audiences.

In networks, where diplomacy and international policy-making processes are regarded as a
'game of skill' and not simply a game of power determined by size, power and geographic
location, leveraging of Australian diaspora networks potentially represents a route for
Australian policymakers to 'punch above their weight' (Beeson and Higgott, 2014). This
paper considers diaspora diplomacy as a modality of public diplomacy, an additional means
of illuminating a nation's soft power (Nye, 2004) where a "state's ability to position itself as
close to the center of critical networks as possible and to mobilize, orchestrate and create
networks will prove a vital source of power" (Slaughter, 2012:) in an age which increasingly
values information and services (Baldwin, 2016).

In considering these public diplomacy themes, this paper concentrates on the rise of
Australia's only formal, global diaspora network: Advance – Australia's Global Community
(previously called, Advance - Global Australian Professionals). The paper seeks to put the
history of Advance in an international context in the strengthening of diaspora
consciousness in recent years, and the formalisation of diaspora networks, that has been
occurring world-wide. Finally, through the lens of Advance's evolution as a self-conscious

instrument of public diplomacy, highlights continuing policy challenges in leveraging the Australian diaspora for the national interest.

A secondary lens of analytical scrutiny that we adopt is 'discourse institutionalism' (Schmidt, 2008) which offers insight to the dynamics of public diplomacy. The approach focuses on the discursive and professional interactions of (in our case) diasporic and diplomatic actors taking into consideration who spoke to whom where, when and why in the process of generating policy ideas and practices in a 'coordinative discourse' of policy construction on the one hand, or in articulating them in a 'communicative' discourse of public deliberation and legitimization on the other. This approach also allows us to reveal the "selective incorporation of overseas populations into the orbit of the sending state" (Dickinson, 2015, 80). Advance allows the Australian government to engage with professional groups overseas who help broadcast policies, *inter alia* on science and innovation, the cultural industries, sport, finance or trade.

2. A brief history of Advance

There have been, we argue, five stages to the evolution of Advance as a public diplomacy asset. Firstly, the pre-establishment phase, when the organisation was still called "Young Australian Professionals in America" (YAPA) and was focused on recruiting young professional members living principally in New York. The second phase was when YAPA became "Advance - Australian Professionals in America", seeking to activate Australians across the US and when the organisation became more conscious of the role its membership could play opening doors for other Australians in the US, the world's biggest market.

The third phase is more conscious development of its public diplomacy potential with the development of partnerships for state governments, Australian universities and some federal government agencies. Fourth, the evolution to Advance - Global Australian Professionals capitalising internationally on the public diplomacy capacities of industry and sector leaders from Australia and especially the potential benefit of connecting such talent

back to Australia through initiatives like the Advance 100 Summit at the Sydney Opera House in 2006.

The fifth phase commenced in the period after the Summit when the federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade concluded a formal funding relationship with Advance which is ongoing. This funding has included deliverables such as the Asia 50 Summit in Shanghai in 2008, an Australian Women's Summit in Sydney in 2009 and other events in the Asian region and online activities. Advance today maintains its focus on being an extension of Australia's footprint overseas as "Advance – Australia's Global Community" and is actively involved in initiatives that assist home-grown Australian start-up talent make their way in places such as Silicon Valley.

Advance was founded in 2002 as the "Young Australian Professionals Association" in partnership with Ken Allen, then Australian Consul General of New York. Ken Allen arrived in New York with a 40 year career in global banking in London, New York, and Washington DC (the World Bank). Working in the Australian banking and finance system as it became open to international competition in the 1980's and 1990's, Allen had extensive dealing with New York operations in that capacity. In taking on the role of Consul General, Allen had the expectation of undertaking genuine business development and economic diplomacy for Australia in areas as diverse as financial services, wine, fashion, manufacturing, IT services, entertainment, media and technology. His intention was to encourage all of the various Australian representative agencies then in the Australian consulate -- Austrade, Invest Australia and the public diplomacy and cultural activities of the Consulate -- to pull together in promoting Australia's economic interest. However, there was only a small team available to him within the Consulate to pursue the range of tasks and the scale of the promotional enterprise – the entire North-East of the USA.

Allen was well aware of the wide-range of Australian success stories in New York and sought to leverage this talent pool. His own network of Australians in Wall Street was significant, and the next generation of professionals were arriving in New York in larger numbers as New York increasingly replacing London and the "right of passage" for outbound Australians

with global aspiration. Large numbers of Australian finance, IT, marketing and media professionals were making New York their home as they pursued careers.

Another catalyst for the formation of a formal network of professionals was the tragedy of September 11. This event occurred shortly after Allen's arrival in New York and it sent shockwaves through the Australian community, as it did all New York resident communities. Many Australian professionals – senior and emerging – who at that point had little time for 'expatriate' activities, became known to each other and the idea for YAPA was born. The formation of YAPA represented the convergence of demographic factors, Australian professionals choosing New York over other capitals, the tragedy of 9/11 and a creative senior banker seeking a larger talent pool with which to promote Australia's economic interest.

When YAPA was founded, New York already had Australian expatriate organisations. There was the venerable Australian American Association (AAA), founded by Keith Murdoch[4], a political correspondent, in the wake of World War 2. This group was focused on creating scholarship funds to enable talented young Australian scholars to study in the US (It now has a two way programme). There was also Australian Women in New York (AWNY) which was strong and popular, particularly with women with children. However, the interests, career ambitions and event line up capable of interesting the large number of Australians in New York who wanted a richer experience than a generic Australian connection, was largely unmet.

The YAPA enticement, as promoted by Ken Allen to this younger professional audience in New York, was "mentors, jobs and deals". YAPA was able to build a large network not so much by bringing Australians together around being Australian, but with a focus on their industry and sector interests. Committees were formed to launch and galvanise these industry specific interests via 'Vertical' networks as they were called. These Vertical networks were fashioned around: (i) banking and finance (and later vii. Women on Wall Street was also created), (ii) public interest (NGO's UN etc); (iii) property; (iv) life sciences

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[4] Keith Murdoch was the father of Rupert Murdoch, the current CEO and Chairman of News Corp.

and biotechnology; (v) media and creative industries, and (vi) ICT. Volunteer committees facilitated by one paid staff member and a number of interns produced events that drew the leading figures in that community in New York . For example, James Gorman in banking, the Director of the Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory in Life Sciences, and also Bob Isherwood, then Global Creative Director of Saatchi & Saatchi in Media and Creative Industries.

There was an element of "crowd-sourcing" to all of this activity. In its first formal year of operation Advance had more than 50 events and involved thousands of Australians in New York. One event was paid by a $25,000 a year investment by each of Anthony Pratt, Lachlan Murdoch and Peter Lowy[5]. The rest of the work was done by committee members of the Vertical committees and a number of interns. Most events were sponsor or user-pays. YAPA's rent was provided gratis inside the office of the Australian Consulate in New York for two years.

The attraction to members was the opportunity to network with people in their industry or professional domain, and potentially to participate in an informal mentoring programme. From a public diplomacy point of view, while the Consul General saw the exercise as holding potential corollary benefits in being a ready-made "rolodex" of access for the broader economic diplomacy task, YAPA, at this stage, did not envisage itself as an instrument of public diplomacy.

The second phase of the history of Advance is marked by the change of name of the organisation to Advance - Young Australian Professionals in America. This occurred on March 12, 2004 and was heralded by an event with James Wolfensohn, former World Bank President, achieving a life-long dream of performing the cello at the Lincoln Centre and making a powerful speech about philanthropy, the role it plays in US life and the richness of the philanthropic life especially for an expatriate (Overington, 2004).

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[5] Pratt is an Australian businessman and billionaire and Executive Chairman of Visy Industries and Pratt Industries United States, the world's largest privately owned packaging and paper company. Lachlan Keith Murdoch is an American businessman and mass media heir to Rupert Murdoch. He is the executive chairman of Nova Entertainment, executive co-chairman of News Corp and 21st Century Fox. Peter Lowy is joint Co-Chief Executive Officer of Westfield Corporation, one of the world's leading shopping centre companies.

The change of name signalled a number of developments in Advance's journey towards becoming an instrument of public diplomacy. Firstly, it was no longer a New York centric network, but embraced the opportunity to be a resource firstly for Australian professionals but increasingly as a market-entry resource for Australians entering the broader US market. The use of a member data-base to engineer these kinds of introductions became part of what Advance sought to offer the various agencies of the Australian Federal and State governments. In addition, this was the phase in which the "ambassador-at-large" thinking developed in the organisation's self-identity.

The publication and dissemination of the report by the Committee for Economic Development, *Australia's Diaspora: Its, Size, Nature and Policy Implications* in 2003 was another turning point in Advance's orientation towards public diplomacy and conceiving of itself as an ambassadorial corps. The fact that there were 1 million Australians overseas and that the US based professionals were just one group in this diaspora had a strong impact on the organisation's leadership (Hugo, Rudd and Harris 2003). The Consul General hosted one of the authors, Graeme Hugo to speak about the report to a packed audience at the Consulate. This was a turning point for many professional Australians' who had emigrated to New York to thinking of them-selves as still being a part of Australia's national endeavour.

The CEDA Report also reinforced the themes that were emerging in Advance Board who were examining the work of TIE – The Indus Entrepreneur – an expatriate organisation active in Silicon Valley (and also now Australia, Cheng 2016), and the New Zealand equivalent, a partnership between a philanthropist and the NZ Government in founding Kea.org. Observing the activities of other nations' and their efforts to formalise their diaspora networks and expatriate organisations strengthened the public diplomacy thinking on the Advance Board. Around this time, the Singaporean government sent a delegation to study the operation of Advance. In their inimitable, whole of government way, the Singaporean response was to resource a new government agency, Contact Singapore, and provide it with a large injection of funding (reported to be $15m over five years) to focus on talent recruitment and engagement of Singaporeans with a focus on New York, Boston and London.

Jumping ahead of this timeline, the CEDA Report was followed a decade later by the ACOLA (Australian Council of Learned Academies) research project on 'Securing Australia's Future'. This project ran from 2012-16, reporting to the Chief Scientist in Australia. This project generated a number of reports on diaspora communities within Australia, especially the Indian and Chinese diaspora in Australia, and their operations overseas (see Cheng, 2016; as well as Rizvi, Louie and Evans, 2016). In light of the on-going stream research, reports and advocacy, Australian governments, federal and state, awakened to the potential utility of Australians overseas, and of diaspora associations as a means not to assert hegemony over populations beyond their sovereign jurisdictions, rather to facilitate economic imperatives.

The third phase of Advance's evolution toward a public diplomacy focus was the development of direct partnerships with Australian state governments and universities. The New York hub was servicing these new arrangements as well as meeting requests of other communities in the US to build Advance Chapters. Within two years of the establishment of the original New York Chapter with its 7 industry verticals, there were also an additional group of city-based Chapters including Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Washington DC. All of these chapters were launched by the end of 2004 by volunteers with support from the New York office.

This saw the extension of the funding model of Advance, from Patrons and event sponsors, to fee-for-service packages to build State based, and university centric alumni networks and ambassadorial councils to guide their alumni engagement and donor acquisition strategies in the US market. Advance was able to fund several additional staff through this period and to introduce new online technologies (content management system) and to direct more time in producing online content to drive the acquisition of new members in each of the industry verticals, for each of the new US chapters, and for Australian state government and university audiences.

The fourth phase of Advance's evolution was when it decided to become Advance - Global Australian Professionals and move beyond the US and into first the UK and Europe and then increasingly Asia. The demand from London, which is home to Australia's largest expatriate community, was very strong. For Advance this was a critical time as founding figure, Ken

Allen had finished his term and returned to Australia; there were strong entreaties for Advance to fold into the AAA. Becoming a global network took Advance into a different category and diluted the argument for a merger because the AAA's charter is bilateral, not global. In March of 2006, Advance was launched in London with a major event addressed by the then High Commissioner Richard Alston.

The global professionals phase was further reinforced by the hosting, in December 2006 of Australia's first diaspora summit, the Advance 100 Summit. It was convened around an invitation to recognise 100 of the leading Australians overseas holding influential positions in corporations and institutions around the world. Advance presented the Summit as an opportunity to engage an important national asset and to formalise the relationship between the country and the leading members of its diaspora. The objective of the Summit was an exercise in communicative discourse:

> "to engage Australia's most influential citizens abroad in Australia's economic, social and cultural development to advance the national interest. It will be an opportunity to showcase Australia's achievements in the last decade and for connections to be made between Australian peers from around the world".

This Summit was Advance's first significant exercise of public diplomacy with the Australian domestic public rather than the diaspora.

John Howard, Advance's first Prime Ministerial Patron was quoted on the invitation: "It is important for our country to maintain a live and active connection with talented Australians abroad and to draw on their skills and experience to promote the national interest. Advance has created a powerful network of eminent and emerging Australians in many fields of enterprise". All Australian Prime Minister's have since been patron: Tony Abbott, referred to members of Advance as "the unofficial ambassadors of our country".[6] Malcolm Turnball (2016) has said that the "strides that Advance has made are extraordinary" in harnessing the diaspora, "this smart grid of human capital".

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[6] Tony Abbott: http://advance.org/patrons-ambassadors/#sthash.CBR4V8Iy.dpuf

The fifth phase of Advance's evolution as an Australian public diplomacy partner has been the emergence of a formal contractual relationship with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), to continue to develop the global network of Australians and to convene high-profile events including the Asia 50 Summit in Shanghai and the Women's Summit at the Sydney Opera House. This partnership also required Advance to increase its presence in Asia and to widen its remit to include the recruitment and engagement of another strategic cohort, Australia's global alumni or those international citizens who studied in Australia or at an Australian institution.

With each phase Advance has strengthened its global reach and public diplomacy presence connecting and mobilising influential networks of Australias' diaspora and alumni. Today it describes itself as "a non-profit built on a public-private partnership model with a community of 25,000 members that spans over 90 countries... (and) has outposts in New York, San Francisco, Hong Kong, France and London. Working with the Australian government and the private sector, it aims to "turn the one million Australians abroad into a powerful knowledge network and resource" (Advance 2016). With each phase Advance was able to consolidate top-rung political patronage and engagement across the Australian public service.

As a "community of global Australians who are able to make a difference for Australians, Australian companies and Australia around the globe" has strived for an economic advantage. Advance seeks to operates through:

> "the exchange of knowledge, connections and ideas to: Inspire and empower other global Australians to succeed in the world; Build entrepreneurial Australian companies globally; Grow global career opportunities for global Australians and create opportunities to be a 'brain resource' for Australia".

Advance now hosts the annual "Advance Global Australian Awards" celebrating the achievement of high profile Australians overseas in the frontiers of science, the arts, commerce and public administration. At the 2016 awards, Prime Minister Turnball endorsed such aspirations arguing that for Australia to prosper, the critical need was "to promote innovation and science" which is to be achieved by being "more open, more global, more

connected". Accordingly, the discussion now turns to the network dimensions of public diplomacy in general, and that of Advance in particular.

3. Advancing Networks of Public Diplomacy

Traditional understandings of public diplomacy centre around "influencing government- to- government relations in a given area of foreign affairs by engagement with citizens and groups whose opinions, values, activities and interests may help sway another government's position (Pamment, 2013: 1). However, not only is the term polysemous but the practice is in constant evolution. Alongside information and transportation technologies that have allowed ease of international communications between individuals and communities, a radical re-orientation of public diplomacy is in play. It is increasingly less so a tool of state, monopolised by diplomats and Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs), and more so shared with panoply of non-state actors with their own agendas about international cooperation. Advance has sought this public diplomacy role through the networks it has cultivated and its own network mode of operation as a 'bottom-up' parallel to the state directed strategies of traditional diplomacy.

In the global 'landscape of networks', Slaughter argues that the role of the diplomat and the strategist is not only to help situate a state as a 'hub' of state actors within critical regional and global networks but also to muster, coordinate and galvanize networks in order to achieve 'centrality'. In the case of her nation-state:

"The United States should thus strive to be the most central node – the supernode – in the networks that are most important to advancing its interests and that are most connected to other networks. Such positioning does not mean that the United States should be a part of every network that other countries, even important countries, create and participate in. Nor does it mean that the United States should necessarily be the central actor in network actions; leading in networks often requires connecting disparate actors with resources and creating the conditions and coalitions for others to act. The biggest challenge in implementing a grand strategy of network centrality is choosing which networks to be part of, knowing how to advance U.S. interests

within them and developing the capacity to create and foster networks that can develop and implement innovative solutions to global problems without direct U.S. participation" (2012: 46).

Rather than 'grand strategy' or aspirations to become a 'super node', the notion of 'middle power leadership' and the idea of being a 'top 20 power' (or at least 'player') is more often encountered in the Australian foreign policy lexicon. "At its most basic, middle power theory... provides an alternative analytical way of framing of international politics, viewed through the lenses of secondary, as opposed to the primary players" (Beeson and Higgott, 2014: 220). This paper does not have word space to address the realist or other critiques of middle power theory and practice suffice to say that realists tend to view middle power innovation in international policy in building coalitions, as entirely dependent on great power willingness. Nonetheless, Australia has achieved some enviable middle power successes with its inclusion in the G20 and its seat on the UN Security Council (Bryne, 2011) or what could also be interpreted, in Slaughter's language, as a search for 'network centrality'.

Middle power theory remains a statist view of world affairs. By contrast, public diplomacy represents a further analytical step away from both primary and secondary *official* players in international politics by moving towards peripheral *non-state* players. There are, consequently, considerable dangers of over-stating influence of the public diplomacy of diaspora networks. Nor is it a foregone conclusion that MFAs in general can effectively leverage such networks or wish to do so.

Notwithstanding the political patronage outlined in the previous section, DFATs *Public Diplomacy Strategy 2014-16* does not mention Advance, and gives cursory attention to diaspora communities in terms of specific objectives. Instead, diaspora communities are signified as an "audience" (reflective of the traditional understandings of one-way, top-down public diplomacy). That is, DFATs public diplomacy goals and objectives are pursued through "approaches that engage audiences on contemporary Australia and which facilitate networks, collaboration and connections between people and institutions" (2014: 3). In this formulation, Advance is one such 'audience'. The strategy constitutes "diasporic overseas

populations as self-governing good partners and loyal extra-territorial members" (Dickinson, 2015: 80).

Arguing that diplomatic strategists "should analyze states as the principal hubs of intersecting regional and global networks", Slaughter's position on network centrality is about the US *state* achieving such centrality. While, diaspora communities and expatriate organisations could be utilised to promote concerns of state, they also pursue other interests. For instance, what has variously been described as 'scientific and technological diasporas' or 'diaspora knowledge networks' are usually driven more by the pursuit of scientific inquiry, knowledge creation and epistemic protocols that transcend narrow state interests (Meyer and Wattiaux, 2006).

Similarly, corporate interests do not necessarily coincide with state interests. Some elements of the business community may well eschew state guided networking in the form of economic or public diplomacy as an unnecessary intrusion in business affairs. Yet, on the other hand, diaspora networks can have, as Prime Minister Turnball opined in the case of Advance, "enormous value for our innovators and entrepreneurs by matching local businesses with international advisers, customers and investors"[7]. A good example is Elevate 61, an Advance programme sponsored and co-delivered in partnership with KPMG to 'fast track Australian entrepreneurs' through exchange programmes. In this programme, start-ups learn from some of Australia's best business minds on how to overcome cultural nuances, tackle complex business challenges in foreign contexts, and transform into a globally sustainable company.[8]

A more prosaic administrative concern relates to the capacity of MFAs in general, and DFAT in particular, to plan, resource and implement network centrality strategies. Constructing network strategies in conjunction with non-state actors entails a wider ambit of professional and political skills, plus commitment of time and resources, than diplomacy has traditionally

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[7] Malcolm Turnball, Remarks at the 2016 Advance Global Australian Awards Ceremony, 21st October 2016, Sydney: https://www.pm.gov.au/media/2016-10-21/remarks-2016-advance-global-australian-awards-ceremony.

[8] Elevate 61 https://home.kpmg.com/au/en/home/services/innovate/elevate61.html

called upon. The capacity and willingness of diplomats and other officials to function as 'network orchestrators' cannot be taken for granted. Nor can 'audiences' (and in our case, the diverse membership base of Advance) be assumed to be empty cyphers imbibing Australian foreign policy priorities or that they be willing followers in diplomatic enterprises.

Nevertheless, the Australian Government is acting both deliberately and inadvertently through this organization. The deliberate approach is connected more explicitly to foreign policy objectives to "use ... diaspora communities and expatriate networks ... to strengthen relations and reinforce messages" (DFAT, 2014: 6). Advance is an excellent vehicle for this kind of credible and effective 'image cultivation' Byrne (2011, 19) that Australian public diplomacy aims to pursue.

The inadvertent features recognise "diplomacy conducted indirectly" by organisations like Advance. The myriad of network connections made by Advance members are well beyond the policy direction or steering capacities by government, but can nonetheless have positive externalities for the national interest or for nation branding. This particularly so in the case of Australia which lacks an equivalent agency such as the British Council or Goethe Institute found in European countries.

Advance has worked in collaboration with the federal Department of Innovation, Industry and Science, in addition to DFAT, other federal government agencies such as   Austrade, as well as Australian State government bodies. For Australian government actors, Advance has become a reliable and trusted partner. Importantly, it is also an elite body of 'high achieving Australians'. This is not to dispute the open membership of the organisation. Nevertheless, the corporate, social and professional elites associated with this body – heavily represented on it Global Advisory Board – and the organisational orientation towards high profile activities and events, make Advance a partner of choice compared to a grass-roots organisation or more amateur civil society groupings. In other words, Advance itself has achieved high network centrality within the Australian diaspora.

The National Innovation and Science Agenda – NISA – launched by the Federal Government in December 2015, has propelled wider government interest in leveraging the diaspora "to

boost innovation and transform the economy" (Zaharov-Reutt, 2015).   The then Minister for Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Christopher Pyne also referenced Advance as part of the nation's innovation response:

> "This will feature five new landing pads in global innovation hot spots to support Australians travelling to these locations to start a new business. … Organisations like Advance are already doing great work in linking together Australians living overseas and this will complement and work with those efforts." (Pyne, 2015)

Even so, NISA stops short of developing an ambition to pursue science and innovation diplomacy ambition within the wider ambit of public diplomacy. This provides opportunity for bodies like Advance to take the initiative with regard to the science and innovation variant of public diplomacy.

In its indirect or inadvertent public diplomacy guise, Advance has built its centrality through its high level messaging of Australian achievements through awards, network events and summits. Adopting a discourse institutionalism approach (Schmidt, 2008), this approach can be categorised as a 'communicative discourse' which is distinct from the 'coordinative discourse' of traditional official diplomacy.

Coordinative discourse refers to the creation, elaboration and justification of policy and programmatic ideas among transnational or national policy communities. It is usually a closed or an elite process. Advance's contribution to coordinative discourses of foreign policy making is negligible. The organisation made a submission and Advance's CEO was a witness to the Senate Inquiry into the Diaspora (Advance, 2004) but was only one voice among many other organisations. Accordingly, Advance is best considered as an unofficial and self-ascribed "ambassador-at-large".   In the traditional government-centric understanding of public diplomacy, Advance would be regarded as a tool of public diplomacy for communication with publics overseas as well as nationally; that is, reinforcing messages or assisting in nation-branding.

Communicative discourse, by contrast, is concerned with the relationship between policy makers and the public (Schmidt, 2008: 310; Douglas and Stone, 2015). This idea connects to

classifications of public diplomacy being on the one hand, informational (with activities such as nation-branding, international broadcasting and campaigns) and on the other, relational and constructing social structure (such as through cultural and educational exchange, leadership visits or networking schemes) (Zaharna cited in Byrne, 2011: 22).

In the discourse institutionalism framework, investment in communicative discourses is usually considered to eventuate only after coordinative policy processes become established. However, the case of Advance indicates a different pattern of causality where Advance's communicative discourse to leverage expatriates into networks was developed first and its successes on this front then led into a partnership with the Australian Government. The organisation is more a proactive broker or NGO entrepreneur in developing its 'ambassador-at-large' role and in forging multiple partnerships inside and outside government. Other partners include Australian firms (such as Macquarie Bank and Commonwealth Serum Laboratories); Australian media (such as *The Australian*, *The Australian Financial Review*, and SBS- the Special Broadcasting Service) and universities which have funded Advance to extend their networking, promotional and professional services to the diaspora as well as to the national communities to which Australians are connected.

Public diplomacy has become "dialogical, collaborative and inclusive" shifting from old fashioned uni-directional 'broadcasting' to audiences to take "advantage of social media to establish two-way engagement with the public" (Pamment, 2013: 3). The relationship of Advance to the federal government is symptomatic of this shift. Rather than a tool or instrument of government, the evolution of Advance indicates that the association has been creative and proactive about its own public diplomacy role. The organisation has benefited in this regard from high level sponsorship and support from Australian business leaders and professional communities. Moreover, the business model of the organisation has allowed Advance to replicate its structure and continue this role in other key global cities and economic centres in North America, Europe and Asia. That is, Advance has first built its own network centrality within Australian diaspora communities and then built centrality with certain Australian government agencies. Whilst this is not a 'grand network strategy',

nonetheless, there are some policy insights for public diplomacy that emerge from Advance's experience.

Consular crowd-source energy

Australia does not punch-above its weight in funding its diplomatic network. For a country of its population size and wealth, Australia has relatively few diplomatic missions. Working with well-connected diaspora organisations enables Australian diplomatic posts to "do more with less". This paper highlights the relevance of modern-day consulates as bodies witht he potential to develop into more than administrative offices for managing extra-territorial populations (see also Dickinson, 2015). By providing seed-funding to selected, senior and capable volunteer committees with the appropriate level of administrative support and facilitation, Consulates General have the potential to effectively crowd-source impressive and creative events and engagement activities led by an organised diaspora community. This is particularly possible in large centres where there is a density and concentration of senior and talented Australians (New York, London, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, Singapore).

The economic impact of high-value talent networks

The value of the diaspora to Australian companies and start-ups has been demonstrated anecdotally time and again. The cadre of successful professionals overseas, punch well above the nation's relative economic weight in terms of the number of Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) and senior executives located in key global sectors and markets. They make a solid case for Australia's education system and professional capabilities in terms hard to replace through other means of communication.

While it is not the role of Australia's DFAT to hold the hand of every start-up that goes to Silicon Valley, keeping the channel of communications open with these talent centres such as this one has numerous benefits. Indeed, this was the idea behind the establishment of 'innovation hot-spots' around the world as part of NISA. These are highly competitive environments. Access to networks is an element in the competitive framework. For Australian companies to succeed, networks need to function well. There are senior Australians in the upper echelons of these environments. Activities like Elevate 61 also leverage these diaspora networks in a strategic and coordinated fashion.

This leverage principle applies to finance, business and especially to science and the arts. It also applies to Australians around the world in public administration. However, it also requires ongoing political investment in deeper networks and collaborating in their extension and maintenance. Australians from Jacques Nasser (former Chief of Ford Motor Company and Chairman of BHP Billiton) to Rodney Brooks (former Head of the famed MIT Media Lab and now Head of global robotics pioneer Rethink Robotics) have been brought into closer connection with Australia through active engagement by Advance that has then introduced these people to the diplomatic community.

Diplomacy in expatriate ecologies

The tasks of consular actors navigating between, and differentiating between forms of support and resourcing for, expatriate organisation can cause tensions. When Advance arrived on the US scene, there was a constant complaint from incumbents that it was duplicative and unnecessary; that the needs of the expatriate community were already being met. Whether or not this was true, it resulted in difficulties and pressures being put on diplomatic posts. In light of this, distinctions between different types of expatriate and diaspora networks need to be observed and managed. Public diplomacy is not part of the mandate of all expat bodies. Many are member-only focused organisations. The needs of members versus national interest will be of different relative importance depending on the network, the event, the individual, the project. However, diplomats and consular offices need to consider the extent to which the national interest case is made and is realistic in each case.

The experience of Advance to target the upper-echelon of the diaspora – getting the most talented Australians engaged through Summits, high-profile events and industry specific 'verticals' – was crucial to its long-term success. For example, Australian Women on Wall Street built a powerful network around finance that was very well used by the Australian government's Invest Australia unit. Similarly, the only way Advance successfully reconnected with scientists was through specific science oriented events (also Meyer and Wattiaux, 2006).

Diaspora Reconnections to Australia

Diasporas today are increasingly depicted as 'transnational communities'[9] that maintain regular social and economic links with home communities courtesy of advances in transport and communications, often hold dual citizenship, and also display multiple identities and loyalties. Harnessing the Australian diaspora, diplomatic missions are often alert to the complex characteristics of Australians overseas. This paper is not the place to do this phenomena justice (but see Cheng, 2016). However, part of the equation of diaspora reconnection is the willingness within Australian boards and executive teams to search for Australian talent now working outside of Australia – those who were referred to as "gold-collar professionals" in *Diaspora: The World Wide Web of Australians*.

4. **Conclusion**

This paper has assessed the rise of Australia's only formal, global diaspora network: *Advance – Australia's Global Community* and explored its evolution from member-focused professional network to become recognised as a Australian public diplomacy asset. We have also considered Advance's interactions with the diaspora via the analytic lens of networks to arrive at three network conclusions.

First, the organisation's mode of operation is to operate as, and to gestate networks. Today, Advance is a global network that has evolved and expanded from its initial New York City base to chapters in other US cities and then into Europe and Asia. From its early days, Advance was a distinctive player in its type of network mobilisation – the so-called Verticals – geared around professional groupings or industry sector affiliations among Australian expatriates as the key defining qualities to target. This is public diplomacy but also with strong elements of economic, cultural and science diplomacy. In this regard, Advance's success was to build affinity beyond nationality; that is, economic and professional networks that transcended and became more substantive than a common national denominator.

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[9] A complex body of thinking best depicted in *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs*: http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/wwwroot/gnjournal.htm

Second, Advance was built on the premise of a networked global economy. Network centrality and the ability to leverage relationships across global value chains is a source of economic power. Achieving centrality requires innovations – with network responses like Advance – to help promote or 'fast track' access for Australian businesses and entrepreneurs. When announcing NISA, the federal government sought to capitalise on Advance's capacities with Minister Christopher Pyne (2015) stating that Advance was "doing great work in linking together Australians living overseas" and "Australians travelling to "global innovation hot spots".

Third, Advance's evolution has been symptomatic of the networked nature of new public diplomacy: Advance has institutionalised successfully its brand of communicative policy discourses to (re)connect elements of the Australian diaspora. Distinct from the statist coordinative policy discourse of middle power diplomacy, the public diplomacy of diaspora and expatriate groups is indirect and dialogical and increasingly conducted through networks. Internally, Advance has also needed to develop its own own coordinative discourses as an 'Ambassador-at-large' to bind the many members and diverse public and private partners.

Lastly, while this paper has been modest in focus and necessarily limited to one case study, the experience of Advance holds promise for comparative study of other cognate bodies like Kea.org and TIE and how relations are managed by both official and unofficial actors, separately and in partnership, with the different constituencies inside diaspora communities. The manner in which Advance managed its relations highlights how in practice, the meshing of different objectives takes place: cultural, economic, science and sport diplomacy are all meshed and interwoven with diaspora concerns. Rather than a single rational strategy or policy instrument identified for science diplomacy as distinct from another separate approach for cultural diplomacy, the realities of Advance's network interactions were more entangled and instrumental to take account of shifting policy priorities and patterns of engagement with both the private sector and Australian government agencies.

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