

Diasporas and Conflict Societies:  
Conflict Entrepreneurs, Competing Interests, or  
Contributors to Stability and Development?

November 8, 2009

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Paper presented at:  
Global Effects and Local Dynamics of Intrastate Conflicts  
International Workshop sponsored by  
The Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations  
Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
and  
RSAND/GATI Research Group  
The Center for Advanced Study of International Development  
Michigan State University

Jerusalem, Israel  
May 17-19, 2009

Worldwide, conflicts abound<sup>1</sup> and OECD member countries are spending billions of dollars for post-conflict reconstruction and development.<sup>2</sup> These conflicts produce many refugees and are the cause for much migration.<sup>3</sup> But what are the consequences of this migration, elective or otherwise, for post-conflict stability and development? Are diasporas conflict entrepreneurs, seeking to stimulate, support, and sustain the conflict in their homelands? Are they an additional competing interest in the reconstruction of war-torn societies, further complicating legitimacy and political compromises? Or are they contributors to stability, sustained peace, and development?

Several studies have examined the role of organized diasporas in promoting policy and regime change in their home territories (see, for example, Byman et al. 2001; King and Melvin 1999/2000; Cohen 1996). Nationalist and/or factionalist interests do not necessarily translate into destructive contributions. The very affinity that may result in supporting conflict, also lends itself to reconstruction and development. Well beyond their often-cited remittances, diasporas contribute to development (Iskander 2008), human rights advocacy and the promotion of good

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<sup>1</sup> Since the end of World War II, 236 armed conflicts have been recorded worldwide, with 126 of those occurring since the end of the Cold War alone (Harbom et al. 2008). In 2007, 34 of these conflicts were active. From 2002-2007 alone, 118 non-state conflicts occurred; these are conflicts involving rebel groups, or ethnic and/or religious communities.

<sup>2</sup> According to the OECD, in 2007 member countries spent \$37.2 billion on 48 fragile and conflict-affected states, with 50% of that reaching only five countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Pakistan, and Sudan) (OECD 2009, 2).

<sup>3</sup> By the end of 2007, conflicts had generated over 14 million refugees and asylum seekers and 21 million internally displaced people; worldwide, over 8.5 million refugees have been warehoused for ten years or more (US Committee for Refugees 2008). In the United States alone, between 1980 and 2007, over 2.3 million refugees arrived (US Office of Immigration Statistics 2007).

governance (Brainard and Brinkerhoff 2006), philanthropy (Brinkerhoff 2008b), and economic development (for example, Gillespie and Andriasova 2008). In fragile and post-conflict states, diasporas contribute to governance by supporting effectiveness, legitimacy, and security (Brinkerhoff 2007). Particularly in post-conflict scenarios, tapping the diaspora may at once be necessary and unavoidable, given the drive among some diasporans to insert themselves into the rebuilding process.

Analyses of the role of diasporas in security and conflict have concentrated on their support for insurgencies and their contribution to political instability. These analyses tend to essentialize diasporas, ignoring their varied composition and resulting motivations and activities. A nascent but growing body of literature seeks to balance the scorecard by focusing on diasporas' potential contributions to peace, security, and post-conflict reconstruction. These literatures have a tendency to ignore that diasporas are one of many interest groups and do not necessarily merit privileging in the design of peace and reconstruction policies and programs. This paper outlines diasporans' potential motivations vis-à-vis homeland conflict, summarizes the general findings of these two literatures, and identifies policy implications accordingly. By providing at least a broad brush of the positive and negative influences of diasporas, I establish why a more nuanced understanding of diasporas and peace and conflict is so important to policy and practice for a more peaceful world.

## **Diasporas and their Motivations vis-à-vis the Homeland**

Diasporas are immigrants who maintain a connection, psychological or material, to their country of origin. Several features common to diasporas bind their members and suggest a potential for collective action. Cohen (1997, 515) identifies a range of these, including:

- A collective memory and myth about the homeland....

- An idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation.
- The development of a return movement which gains collective approbation.
- A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate.... [and]
- A sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement.

These features contribute to the development of communities of identity, where members reinforce in each other their links to the home culture and associated values. Because identity is defined vis-à-vis an “other,” the identity created may represent a reinforcement of homeland cultural artifacts. Case studies and anecdotal evidence support the notion that in diaspora, diasporans may become more “national” or “ethnic” than their compatriots who remain in the homeland (see for example, Brinkerhoff 2009). Diasporans may even reinvent their identities and histories, as is well-documented in the Hindutva movement (see Lal 1999).

Diaspora groups and members may be more or less inclined to concern themselves with quality of life and policies vis-à-vis their home countries. Political activism resulting from cultural identity, whether targeted to home or host country, is likely to be driven by interests and obligations deriving both from the homeland and the host society. Homeland crisis—including conflict—may inspire new or renewed interest among later diaspora generations, as seen, for example, in Afghanistan (see Kerlin 2008; Brinkerhoff 2004). Alternatively, diasporans may rely on their American identity when thoughts of their homeland create psychic pain (Friedman 1994). Some argue the higher the cost to status and security in their adopted country, the greater the likelihood that the diaspora community as a whole will split and/or fail to mobilize (see Esman 1986).

Duration of residence and degree of integration into a host society do not necessarily determine diasporans’ engagement with the homeland. In his classic work, Hansen (1952) posits

a linear model of integration. With deepening assimilation, diasporans may increasingly focus on improving their quality of life in the host country as opposed to contributing to the homeland, as identity rooted in the ancestral homeland may dissipate. This assertion has been challenged by Portes and Zhou (1993), who argue that assimilation may be segmented, depending upon the opportunities and constraints established by earlier generations. And there is some evidence to suggest that immigrants may embrace whichever cultural identity (homeland versus host society) is more quality of life enhancing (see, for example, Waters 1999). In the case of Salvadoran, Dominican, and Colombian immigrants to the United States, contrary to the linear model, Guarnizo and Associates (2003) find that the longer a diasporan has been in the host country, the more likely s/he is to be actively engaged vis-à-vis the homeland.

Diasporans mobilize, in part, to express their identities, and these identities can be reinforced through activity on behalf of the homeland. Some may be motivated by a sense of obligation or guilt, as they seek to reconcile their preference for the adopted country with their allegiance to a suffering homeland (see Brinkerhoff 2006). Diasporas' ethnic affinities may create sympathy or feelings of guilt vis-à-vis conflicting groups. Episodic conflict in the homeland can serve to sustain a mobilized collective identity (Koinova forthcoming). Diasporans may also "harbour grievance" much longer than homeland residents (Bigombe et al. 2000, 333; see also Lyons 2007); Armenia is, perhaps, the best known example (see, e.g., Shain and Barth 2003). On the other hand, because some may not have been directly impacted by the conflict and may have access to alternative information sources, they may change their initial orientations towards the homeland conflict (Baser and Swain 2008).

The felt need to actively express and mobilize identity may derive, in part, from various forms of marginalization (social, economic, political, or psychic), confusion and a sense that the

homeland identity will be lost without proactive expression, or simply in response to social reinforcement and perhaps pride (Brinkerhoff 2009). Elsewhere, I describe in detail the potential motivations, identity construction strategies, and mobilization choices diasporans may make (Brinkerhoff 2008a). These choices reflect a psychic need all humans share: to belong to a collective identity. Even where extremist groups provide this sense of collective identity to those who may be psychologically marginalized, recruitment tends to be based on friendship and kinship ties, for example, with recruits joining as groupings of soccer friends (Atran 2008).

Diaspora collective identities do not form exclusively around the homeland, nor are they the same for all within a diaspora. Diasporans frequently adopt hybrid identities that, along with features of the homeland, encompass the civic and cultural values of the host society (Brinkerhoff 2009). These values may even be consciously sought through elective migration or destination choices. Sometimes, these reflect an embrace of liberal values more generally, as contrasted, perhaps with the homeland experience and/or as an inspiration to mobilize for whatever purpose. For example, John F. Kennedy's famous inaugural speech, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country," has broad appeal not only among diasporans in the US, but in Europe as well. It is used as a call to serve not the home of residence, but the now distant homeland (Ibid).<sup>4</sup>

Hybrid identities inform political considerations and action agendas vis-à-vis the homeland, whether they pertain to potential conflict within the homeland and/or among sub-groups of its society, or human rights, quality of life, or partisan political agendas. For some, liberal values give rise to a belief in basic freedoms, and psychological empowerment, reflecting

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<sup>4</sup> In addition to the US-based examples cited in Brinkerhoff (2009), I have heard this quotation cited by diaspora groups based in the Netherlands and Sweden at several recent policy workshops.

a belief that these diasporans can effectively work to advance, protect, and embody these rights for themselves and potentially the homeland (Brinkerhoff 2009). Drawing from the cases of Lebanon and Kosovo, Koinova (forthcoming) suggests that the rhetoric of liberal values may also reflect an instrumentalist agenda on the part of diaspora organizations seeking to reinforce their sovereignty aims vis-à-vis the homeland (see also Shain 1999).

When a diasporans' home country is embroiled in conflict, for some, national and homeland identity can become problematic, increasing stress and a sense of marginalization in the country of residence (see, for example, Esman 1986; Cohen 1996). These challenges are, of course, compounded when the diaspora is a result of forced migration. Efforts to proactively promote and recreate particular homeland identities may be more acute in the absence of a physical homeland (see Koslowski 2005); under these circumstances, diasporans may maintain stronger links with their compatriots in the homeland (Sheffer 2003). Assessing the merits of resulting diaspora contributions is necessarily subjective. As is so often heard, one person's terrorist is another one's freedom fighter. For some, migration is a tactic intended to enable political influence or even armed mobilization targeted to the homeland. As Koslowski (2005) notes, sometimes exit is necessary in order to have a voice in the politics of ones country.

Beyond identity expression, diasporans may mobilize to maintain or acquire power resources. These include: economic, social (social status based on social roles or on complying with socially valued criteria), political (ability to influence the exercise of authority), moral (perceived legitimacy of actions), informational, and physical (i.e., coercion or violence, depending on perceived legitimacy of applied physical force) resources (Uphoff 2005). Resulting behavior could range from conflict-entrepreneurial actions, such as support for insurgents and exclusive policy agendas, and/or interference with peace negotiations; to diaspora philanthropy,

skills and knowledge transfer, and business investment, all intending to promote homeland economic growth and quality of life.

Finally, diasporans' motivations to intervene in the homeland may be protective of their quality of life in the adopted country. Deriving from cultural obligations, diasporans face a great deal of social pressure from family and home communities to continue to provide financial and other forms of support (Hammond 2006). This self-interest is complicated by the sympathy and guilt noted above. For example, on Somalinet, an online discussion forum of the Somali diaspora, members seek to reconcile their preference for the adopted homeland with their allegiance to a suffering homeland (for example, Somalinet, *What would you miss?*), with all the guilt (*Any Hope for Somalia?*) and self-interest (*PEACE & Your POCKET: Good for your \$\$\$\$*) this may entail (Brinkerhoff 2006). Beyond direct contributions in the homeland, this motive may also manifest in political influence and diplomacy in the host country or to international bodies in support of peace, reconciliation, and commitments to reconstruction and development.

To summarize, diasporas form around shared identity constructs associated with the homeland. Diasporans' intervention in matters concerning the homeland depends on interests and obligations rooted in the host society as well as the homeland. However, the degree of a diasporans' integration into the host society is not the sole determinant of whether or not or the extent to which one engages on behalf of the homeland. Motivations to influence or contribute (constructively or destructively) to the homeland include socio-cultural obligations, guilt, and grievance; and power, influence, and violence that may have even inspired migration. For some, homeland conflict and humanitarian emergencies inspire new or renewed interest and action on behalf of the homeland; for others, the resulting psychic pain can lead diasporans to seek further integration into the host society. Diasporans may feel compelled to express their homeland



identity and engage in related activities due to a sense of marginalization in the host society, rooted in a psychological need to be a part of a collective identity. Diasporan collective identities may combine features of both the homeland and host society cultures, including liberal values that may inform agendas vis-à-vis the homeland and may be instrumental in efforts to promote them. Diasporans also may mobilize to influence the homeland in order to acquire a range of power resources, and these behaviors may manifest in a range of actions, from violence to meaningful contributions to peace, stability, and quality of life. Finally, diasporans may have an interest in promoting peace, stability, and development in the homeland in order to reduce homeland family and community dependencies.

### **Diaspora Interventions in Homeland Peace and Conflict**

Theory surrounding the role of diasporas in international affairs is nascent. Shain and Barth (2003) use constructivism to investigate diasporans' identities, motives, and preferences; and liberalism to explain their resulting actions. This paper adopts a similar approach. Situating diasporas in the international relations theories most pertinent to diasporas and homeland conflict—international politics and security—is somewhat problematic. Koslowski (2005) reviews the international relations theories that are state-centric and transnational (focusing on nonstate actors), in his efforts to build a conceptual framework for understanding diasporas' role in domestic and global politics. He finds that neither of these sets of theories adequately accounts for diaspora phenomena, particularly with respect to the globalization of domestic politics. Similarly, Adamson (2005) explores how diasporas (among other globalizing forces) are challenging “traditional notions of national security” (32), blurring the lines between internal and external security and institutions.

Adamson and Demetriou (2007) assert that the diaspora phenomenon is a function of both “non-state political entrepreneurs” *and* state elites, who may use the notion of diaspora to solicit support for political, material, or conflict agendas. In this sense, diasporans become important actors in a “boomerang” effect (Keck and Sikkink 1998), whereby internal actors use diasporans to voice, promote, and engage what cannot be done within the borders of the homeland (for the Ethiopian case, see Lyons 2007; for Lebanon, see Koinova forthcoming). This experience reinforces the porosity of national boundaries and at once confirms diasporans not only as agents, but also instruments of change, driven by complex interests within and outside of national regimes. Indeed, Adamson (2006) argues diaspora populations may be a state’s most important resource, and migration policy is a possible tool for exercising national interests. She confirms that international migration presents new opportunities for transnational action that may be used to conduct civil wars in weak states (Ibid.). Adamson’s and Demetriou’s (2007) questioning of the continued reliance on the nation state as the primary unit of analysis in international relations is particularly relevant to situations of conflict and fragility, where borders may become porous, and directly challenged (legally, possibly violently, and ideationally). On the other hand, Brainard and Brinkerhoff (2006) suggest that diasporas can at once challenge some forms of national sovereignty, while reinforcing others.

The international community recognizes that sustained peace must account for the interests of nationals who have left their geographic homeland, whether they intend to return or not. Depending on the nature of the conflict and the make-up of refugee and migration waves, diasporas likely reflect the very factions that led to conflict. Reconciliation may necessitate their participation in peacebuilding and reconstruction. Once peace is established, diasporas become essential from another perspective; diasporas can make significant contributions to post-conflict

reconstruction and development. And their role may be essential, especially since the track record of donor attention to the long haul of post-conflict reconstruction is abysmal. In a study of ten post-conflict countries a pattern emerged wherein official development assistance spiked in the immediate aftermath, gradually declined in the subsequent two years, and then fell sharply (Schwartz et al. 2004).

For better or for worse, diasporans may intervene with direct activities in the homeland, or indirect ones targeted to mediating actors, such as host country governments and international bodies (see Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003; Horst 2008). The most noticeable and commonly recognized diaspora interventions in the homeland include: economic remittances, philanthropy, human capital, and political influence, including international advocacy and participation in peace processes. Even when diasporans are not acting out the most explicitly destructive roles as conflict entrepreneurs and sustainers, each of the constructive contributions noted above can have a darker side.

### **Remittances**

Remittances are perhaps the best known constructive contribution diasporans make to their homelands; estimated at \$70 billion per year in 2004, \$125 billion in 2005, and \$167 billion in 2006 (World Bank 2004, 2005, 2006). Other 2006 estimates place 2006 global remittances at \$300 billion (IFAD 2007). In either case, they significantly outpace global overseas development assistance. Less studied and understood are remittance volumes and impacts in countries embroiled in or recovering from conflict. That remittances are essential to sustaining livelihoods during conflict is well-known. For example, according to the OECD (2009), in 2007, remittances to Liberia equaled its GDP; during Kosovo's civil war (1998-1999), remittances accounted for 45% of annual domestic revenues (Demmers 2007). But their contribution to peacebuilding,

reconstruction and post-conflict development requires more research and analysis. Remittances are of great importance due to their ability to “alter the local balance of economic, political, and military power” (Horst 2008, 320).

By sustaining livelihoods and basic services during conflict, diaspora remittances may represent a foundation upon which peace and development can be expanded (see Fagen and Bump 2006). Importantly, remittances may be the only factor preventing disarmed and demobilized combatants from re-engaging in violence, especially when jobs may be scarce in the immediate aftermath of conflict (see Lubkemann 2008). Since by definition conflict countries have hampered or nonexistent institutions, most financial transfers occur through the informal sector. These systems are often important conduits for external actors—including businesses and development agencies. During conflict, diasporans may not question the need for remittances; but as the homeland transitions towards peace, they may be more likely to ask for justifications for requests and to evaluate each one accordingly, as has been documented within the Liberian diaspora (Lubkemann 2008).

Studies on economic remittances to Somalia may be illustrative for other conflict and post-conflict countries. Remittances are estimated to support 40% of urban household incomes (Kulaksiz and Purdekova 2006), and have supported education investments throughout Somalia’s long conflict (Lindley 2006). Remittances have driven the development of financial service mechanisms and communication technologies (Maimbo et al. 2006), and have expanded trade (Nenova and Harford 2004). Waldo (2006) reports that these financial systems are not as informal as may be assumed. Among other things, they enjoy broad trust from diverse groups based, in part, on some degree of transparency.

However, these transfer systems are tools that can be used to promote quality of life and economic growth just as easily as they might support violence. Even well-intended, constructive money transfers (e.g., for household/family remittances, philanthropy, or investment) may be transferred informally, through hawala systems. Resources that travel through these systems support the purchase of material goods that are transferred, and these may include weapons. Profits through the system may also support conflict entrepreneurs; hawaladars who are themselves conflict entrepreneurs may also arise.

Byman and Associates (2001) note that diasporas are likely to become a growing concern for their support to insurgencies as they are more reliable funding sources than states and, unlike states, they do not seek to control insurgencies, only to support them.<sup>5</sup> Diaspora resources may at least partially replace the funds previously accessible through Cold War politics (Adamson 2005). In the 74 active insurgencies between 1991-2001, Byman and Associates (2001) found refugees to account for 21% of outside support, and diasporas (those immigrants who are settled in foreign countries) to account for 19% of such assistance. For example, the Kosovo Liberation Army established an international “Homeland Calling” fund (Adamson 2005, 2006). Horst’s (2008) study of Norway-based Somalis revealed that during the course of a single conflict, money raised from the diaspora could range from \$500,000 at the lowest sub-clan levels, to as high as \$5 million at the clan level.

Collier’s and Hoeffler’s (2001) initial findings are no surprise then. After five years of post-conflict peace, the presence of a large diaspora increases the likelihood of renewed conflict

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<sup>5</sup> Notable cases include support to the Tamil rebels in Sri Lanka, Kurdish guerillas in Turkey, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization. The Irish Republican Army is well-known demonstration of diasporas’ role in sustaining conflict.

in the home country six-fold.<sup>6</sup> The initial Collier-Hoeffler model suggests that the reason diasporas may have such a negative impact regarding the re-emergence of conflict in the homeland is financial (Bigombe et al. 2000). Diasporans' frequent residency in relatively wealthier societies than the homeland, inclusive of income earning opportunities, gives them a proportional advantage in supporting their policy agendas of choice (see also Koslowski 2005), which may include initiating, fomenting continued, or renewing violence. Furthermore, diasporans are not directly subject to the consequences of their influence in the homeland (see, for example, Koslowski 2005), including the immediate costs of conflict.

While in some cases they may initiate insurgency support, diasporans also have become targets of manipulation and solicitation from homeland insurgents. In some cases, they even may be coerced into supporting continuing conflict, as has been documented among the Tamil diaspora in Canada (Human Rights Watch 2006), and the Kurds in Germany (Adamson 2005). By contributing to homeland-oriented charities diasporans may unwittingly support conflict in the homeland. As a result, some of these charities have been placed on terrorist watchlists, disbanded, and/or had their assets frozen.<sup>7</sup> Disasters may at once inspire diaspora charitable giving and provide opportunities for insurgency fundraising. Tamil organizations collecting money for tsunami relief are thought to have used the resources to acquire weapons for the LTTE (Vertovec 2005).

Diaspora remittances can be significant to both peace and conflict. As Horst (2008) notes, even when they are supporting violence, they are “part of a larger economy of war” (322). Their

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<sup>6</sup> Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom (2008) revisit these findings.

<sup>7</sup> For a full reporting of cases and efforts to protect US-based nonprofits, see the OMBWatch project on Securities and Charities [http://www.ombwatch.org/nonprofit\\_organizations\\_and\\_counterterrorism\\_measures](http://www.ombwatch.org/nonprofit_organizations_and_counterterrorism_measures).

significance in determining outcomes, then, depends on the specific context of that war. Additionally, regardless of surface impressions, assessing the intentions of remitters is subjective and highly complex, as the examples of charity conduits, where intended philanthropy may be diverted, attests. Horst (2008) provides an example from the other perspective, where a seemingly obvious attempt to support violence actually may have been meant to support peace. One of her research subjects confirmed that his Somali sub-clan purchased three armored vehicles with the support of diaspora remittances. The context he described included a nearby clan, better equipped than the remitter's sub-clan, who had threatened an attack. In the end, this attack never materialized. According to Horst (2008, 331), the remitter saw this as a consequence of the armored vehicle purchase, "so rather than seeing this purchase as contributing to conflict, he actually perceived it as crucial in guaranteeing stability."

### **Philanthropy**

In war-torn societies, the motives for diaspora philanthropy may be solely philanthropic, combined with aspirations for peace, or provide a cover for political and conflict objectives (as above). Salih Kaki from the Sudan Civil Society Forum explains diaspora philanthropy for peace as progress on a learning curve. She confirms why diasporas remain politically involved in their war-torn homelands and suggests that tactics may be changing as diasporas gain a better understanding of how to meet their ultimate objectives:

...most of us are victims of the bad politics back home. It is because of this painful experience that we have developed this prevailing tendency of supporting different political groupings at home that wage divisive politics and do not want to compromise. There are now attempts by some of us to break this totalizing tendency and relate to the situation back home in a nonpolitical manner. For example, we want to foster conflict transformation in Sudan through the civil society channels. In this respect, we want to promote peace through development by focusing on other very important non-political issues, such as community self-help projects and socioeconomic developments... changing the old attitude will

not be easy but it is our realisation now that as diaspora we can be more effective in promoting peace in our homeland if we stop relating to the situation back home mainly through political channels (qtd. in Mohamoud 2005, 28).

Other studies of the Somali diaspora similarly find that many believe humanitarian or development support to their homeland is the best or the only way to support lasting peace and stability (Horst 2008, Kleist 2008), including, for example, “productive investments that create a new middle class with clear interests in peace or ... focusing on educating the new generation into a different mindset while creating opportunities for them” (Horst 2008, 334).

Challenging conditions in the homeland may foster greater philanthropic interest within the diaspora. In response to traditional humanitarian need, one Pakistani diaspora organization in Britain raised \$25 million for relief in the aftermath of the 2005 Kashmir earthquake (Özerdem 2006). As seen in post-conflict societies, homeland crisis may also inspire renewed interest among later diaspora generations. For example, the end of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan spawned the creation of new diaspora organizations to support its reconstruction (Kerlin 2008), and mobilized many second generation Afghan-Americans for the first time (Brinkerhoff 2004). Some support may derive from small-scale, informal efforts. After conflict a proportion of financial remittances may be transitioned to remittances in-kind in order to support humanitarian aims, seed microenterprises, or pursue rebuilding and development projects. Liberia has witnessed such a partial transition, as diasporans seek to reduce dependencies (Lubkemann 2008).

Diaspora philanthropy organizations can provide simple and flexible ways for diasporas to contribute skills and resources to philanthropic efforts. Participation is for the most part not very taxing, as it often concerns financial donations, product purchase, and/or information exchange. Especially important in fragile contexts, these organizations can act as intermediaries



between traditional development actors, and diasporas and local communities, for example, identifying needs and priorities of local communities and communicating those to donor organizations, NGOs, and diasporans to solicit funding and expertise; and diaspora organizations may demonstrate innovative programs and approaches that can be replicated and/or used to advocate for traditional actor administrative and programmatic efforts and reforms (Brinkerhoff 2004, 2008b). For example, Somali women in Mogadishu organized an education and livelihood project for young combatants. The project was financially adopted by diaspora Somalis in Norway. After raising approximately \$10,000 and engaging in significant lobbying to government agencies and NGOs, the Norwegian Government began funding the project (Horst 2008).

Examples from Afghanistan (Brinkerhoff 2004) and Liberia (Lubkemann 2008) serve to illustrate some of the advantages of diaspora philanthropy in post-conflict societies.

Afghans4Tomorrow is a vehicle for members of the Afghan-American diaspora to take leave and vacation time from their jobs in order to go to Afghanistan and make contributions of time, energy, and expertise to the rebuilding effort. A4T is particularly innovative in reducing the costs to labor contributions by framing opportunities for the short-term, potentially implemented during vacations from full time jobs or school in the adopted country. Among the projects A4T has implemented in Afghanistan are Ministry of Finance (MOF) training and staffing support, and support to schools. In 2004, the Liberian Community Association of Northern California shipped a container worth over \$12,000 in medical supplies and contributed \$30,000 to rehabilitate three hospitals. Over seven years another Liberian diaspora organization supported post-secondary education for more than 2000 refugees in Ghana, providing and administering an annual budget of \$150,000. Smaller, ad hoc, efforts include “Edward” who provided \$800 to

rebuild the road and three bridges connecting his home village to Monrovia. He subsequently provided an additional \$500 for chainsaws and training to start a lumber business.

Diaspora philanthropy can also be used as a tool to advance political and conflict agendas. Conflict entrepreneurs may combine violent and non-violent tactics as they seek to tap the resources of transnational networks (Adamson 2005), as demonstrated by some transnational charities that ultimately support networks for violence. Examples of mixed tactics include Hamas in Lebanon, and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Individual diasporans may also use philanthropy to enhance their reputations and connections in the homeland. This is most notable with respect to diasporans seeking political office. For example, prior to the 2005 Liberian Presidential election, several of the diasporan candidates founded their own nonprofits, including those aimed at supporting orphanages, schools, and training and microenterprise.

Diaspora philanthropy can also have unintended consequences. It can be selective and discriminatory in its application, both regionally and among demographic groups, hence exacerbating conflict. In Somalia, the unequal distribution of resources is an important structural factor in conflict. Though support may be intended to create stability, it may actually provide greater fodder for conflict (Horst and Gaas 2009). Even in peaceful times, remittances and philanthropy can be polarizing (see for example, Gardner 1995).

### **Human Capital<sup>8</sup>**

Diaspora populations are one of the most fruitful sources for human capital for reconstruction and development. Human capital contributions may take the form of repatriation or shorter-term philanthropic support. Diaspora human capital is often necessary to staff and re-

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<sup>8</sup> Portions of this section draw from Brinkerhoff 2008c.

staff government and development programs. For example, in Afghanistan and Iraq, the filling of specific government and development positions is/was solicited from among diasporans with the requisite expertise; similar recruitment occurred in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (see, for example, King and Melvin 1999-2000). While not often documented or systematically researched, international organizations and their contractors look to diaspora populations to staff their reconstruction projects and programs (see, for example, Brinkerhoff and Tadesse 2008). Through the private sector, diasporans bring their entrepreneurship, knowledge, and skills, sometimes as the first to invest in post-conflict countries, whether due to perceived ethnic advantage, a more informed risk analysis, or altruism (see Gillespie et al. 2001). Furthermore, diasporans can combine cultural/language knowledge and local networks with skills, knowledge, and networks from abroad.

Migrants are more likely to return (permanently or temporarily) if they have permanent legal status in the host country. Such status more often may be granted to the highly skilled, who receive preferential treatment in the immigration process. But this may not always be the case, particularly for those who may be the best match of skills to needs in the homeland, and particularly in post-conflict situations, where residential standing may be based on temporary legal status. If diasporans knew they could come and go with impunity, they might be more inclined to investigate options for return, as well as support from abroad. Interestingly, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf lobbied the US Government to grant permanent residence to the many Liberians residing there, or at least to extend their Temporary Protective Status. Permanent return may not be necessary or realistic. Rather than forgoing diasporans' potential knowledge and skills contributions altogether, temporary, virtual, and circular options may be more palatable and welcomed options.

Diaspora participation may be essential for the expertise that is needed, but may also pose challenges to security and legitimacy. Resulting tensions and resentments can retard reconstruction or, at worst, stimulate continued or re-emerging conflict. A review of post-conflict state building confirms that the repatriation of diasporans can lead to the emergence of a new political elite, which can give rise to new political tensions (Chesterman et al. 2004). For example, the experience of Eastern Europe in drawing from its diaspora to staff key political and governmental positions was short lived as Western diasporans came to be seen as threats to the local political and economic elites (for the Ukraine experience, see King and Melvin 1999/2000). When diasporans aspire to political power and influence these tensions are exacerbated.

Diasporans' presence alone can reintroduce and/or worsen existing ethnic tension, potentially replicating pre-conflict stratification of skills and class, and consequent opportunity and resources. In rebuilding government, in particular, tradeoffs between expertise and ethnic representation may be necessary to reach sustainable peace agreements. Those who return can introduce new divisions and resentments among those who stayed and endured and those who enjoyed perceived luxuries while others suffered (see, for example, IOM 2005). New inequities may also be introduced through incentive payments for repatriation or temporary skills transfer. Return programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for whatever purpose, generated substantial resentments on the part of continuous residents when they provided additional subsidies in the form of salaries or housing assistance as perks for returning to which local residents had no access (see, for example, Black 2001).

Returning diasporans (temporary or longer term) may also inspire resentments simply by virtue of a "helper" mentality, and these resentments may be worsened by the diasporans' attitude and behavior. Diasporans' perceived relationship to the homeland may inspire hubris,

with inaccurate assumptions about local culture and systems. Depending on the length of their separation from the homeland, they may be more or less effective at navigating political and cultural systems and reading associated cues. Research on diaspora human capital posits that effective contributions are most likely if the period of absence does not exceed 10-15 years (Olesen 2003). In post-conflict countries, depending on the length of the conflict, it may be necessary to recruit from among these established diasporas anyway, given the loss of human capital and consequent needs.

Experiences from conflict/post-conflict settings confirm these challenges. In discussing diaspora knowledge transfer in Africa, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bernard Lututala Mumpasi, rector of Kinshasa University confirms that returnees may be out of touch with the needs and relevance of their expertise to their native country. Furthermore, these returnees may manifest disdain for their local counterparts and systems. Such disdain, whether real or imagined, yields significant resentment on the part of local residents “who, in extremely difficult conditions, make sacrifices... to continue to operate, despite being abandoned by politicians and development actors” (qtd. in Government of Belgium et al. 2006, 231).

These challenges primarily concern externalities from diasporan efforts to contribute human capital to homeland reconstruction. Of perhaps greater concern are diaspora activities that may directly and more immediately impact conflict. Most notably, diasporas are an important source of combatant recruitment. Among the better known examples are the efforts of the Kosovo Liberation Army to recruit from the diaspora (see, for example, Adamson 2006).

### **Policy/Attitudinal Influence**

Sometimes the aim of diaspora identity politics is simply to keep the ethnic identity alive; often this objective combines with more political aims to create and sustain an ethnic homeland.

For example, in the 1990s, Kurds in London broadcasted Kurdish language television throughout Europe and into Turkey at a time when Turkey did not permit Kurdish language television. The program featured folk dances and children's programming, and alternative news reporting, including issues of Kurdish human rights (Koslowski 2005).

Diaspora communities may be explicitly maintained and mobilized for the purpose of influencing international public opinion and building political support for human rights and political freedoms and also for particular partisan agendas. Those who reside in relatively open and democratic societies can capitalize on newfound freedoms to do so (Wayland 2004; Koslowski 2005). One of the largest contributions diasporas make to insurgencies is through diplomatic pressures (Byman et al. 2001). Demmers (2007) credits the Croatian diaspora for garnering the support of the international community in their conflict with the Croatian Serbs in the 1990s.

Shain (1999) contends that diasporas can both "humanize" and "Americanize" U.S. foreign policy, combating isolationist tendencies, on the grounds of American values of freedom and democracy. In doing so, they can contribute meaningfully to the quality of life in their home territories (e.g., through lobbying for foreign assistance, and/or informing policy and programs). For example, diaspora lobbying has increased US foreign assistance to homeland countries and is rumored to lead to their selection for specialized aid programming, such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation, despite indicator-based selection systems. Diaspora advocacy also highlights human rights abuses and seeks to engage the US Government in negotiations with homeland governments. For example, the U.S. Copts Association lobbied the US Government on behalf of human rights activist Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim, who had been imprisoned in Egypt allegedly on corruption charges (see Brainard and Brinkerhoff 2006).

Assessing the potential opportunity or risk of diaspora advocacy efforts can be challenging. Sometimes partisan interests are at play under the guise of inclusive and democratic platforms (see Mohamoud 2005). As interest groups, diaspora nationalist movements can influence homeland politics, fostering instability and supporting continuing conflict, as documented, for example, among Sikhs and Hindus in diaspora (Biswas 2004). Even when one subset of a diaspora promotes an extremist agenda in the homeland, another subset may arise to counter it, as Biswas (n.d.) demonstrates in the case of the US-based Indian diaspora and Hindu nationalism.

Diasporas are important political constituents in homeland political processes, including post-conflict constitutional processes. For example, significant efforts were made to include the Afghan diaspora, primarily in Germany and North America, in the drafting of the Afghanistan Constitution in 2002; broad participation from the diaspora also was sought for providing feedback on the draft (Brinkerhoff 2004). Diasporas as interest groups can assist in reconstituting legitimacy for post-conflict governments. Campaigning for the 2005 Liberian elections was probably more intense in the United States than in Liberia itself (see Lubkemann 2006). There are 14 counties in Liberia, yet it is often said that five more exist in the United States (Providence, Philadelphia, DC, Staten Island, and Minneapolis). The diaspora at once financed the presidential campaigns for the 2005 elections and provided many of the candidates, including President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Diaspora campaign contributions can also yield formalized political influence in the homeland. For example, \$4 million in contributions to Franjo Trudjman's campaign earned the Croatian diaspora 12 of the 120 parliamentary seats (Djuric 2003; qtd. in Demmers 2007).

Diasporas also advocate for peace. In diaspora, ethnic groups who share a geographically defined homeland may mobilize around a unified diaspora identity in order to promote peace in their homelands. For example, the Sudanese diaspora in Europe organized across ethnic lines for a peace tour to demonstrate that peace across ethnic lines and based on an overarching Sudanese identity is possible. Such efforts create multiple loyalties and mutual dependencies, and these new identities increase the degree of trust across category boundaries. The Somali (Kleist 2008; Horst 2008) and US-based Ethiopian diasporas have also pursued reconciliation within the diaspora, in the latter case with the assistance of a facilitator (see Lyons et al. 2004). In Somalia, in addition to conflict, diaspora remittances support cultural mechanisms specific to conflict resolution, such as the funding of a *shir* (traditional clan assembly), and *diya* payments (compensational payments) deemed necessary for reconciliation (Horst 2008). Members of the Somali diaspora also have created a “virtual *shir* in cyberspace” (<http://www.somalishir.org/>). On the other hand, diaspora direct participation in conflict resolution in the homeland can inadvertently lead to disastrous outcomes when potentially “out of touch” diasporans lobby for policies that hinder sustainable peace, e.g., focusing on retribution and blame.

Diasporas can make meaningful contributions to peace negotiations (see Zunzer 2004; PILPG 2009). They can assist mediators to locate warring parties (Baser and Swain 2008); they may pressure these groups and leaders to participate in peace negotiations; and they may lobby the governments in their countries of residence to engage in and/or facilitate negotiations, as in the case of Ireland (Cochrane 2007). Diaspora participation can inspire trust and confidence for conflicting groups and international facilitators alike, in part, by providing insights into the conflict and the actors (Hall and Swain 2007). In both Darfur and Nepal, diaspora networks issued joint statements identifying possible options for inclusion in peace agreements; in Burundi



and Sudan, diasporas have supported the implementation of peace agreements (PILPG 2009). Diasporans may participate in third-party mediation, albeit not as entirely neutral parties (see, for example, Baser and Swain 2008). This was the case, for example, for Somalia and Afghanistan (Zunzer 2004), and Ugandans in London (Spear 2006).

## **Policy Implications**

Table 1 summarizes diasporans' potential positive and negative contributions to homeland conflict, peace, and reconstruction and development. The paucity of some categorical entries should not be taken as an indication of relative importance. For example, while only two potential negatives are listed under diaspora philanthropy, the potential impact of using philanthropy as a cover for political and conflict objectives should not be underestimated. This is similarly true of the potential importance of diaspora human capital to post-conflict reconstruction and development.

A range of contingencies should be considered when assessing diasporans' contributions—positive and negative—to homeland peace, conflict, and reconstruction. As a starting point, it is imperative that diasporas are understood not as a monolithic actor with unwavering exclusive interests. As the discussion demonstrates, the same diaspora has potential to make a range of contributions to the homeland—constructive, destructive, as well as unintended. Assuming, as some of the literature does, that conflict-generated diasporas are likely

**Table 1. Summary of Potential Diaspora Contributions to Peace and Conflict**

<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Potential Positive</b>	<b>Potential Negative</b>
<b>Economic Remittances</b>	Significant proportion of GDP, esp during conflict; may out pace ODA.	Informal transfer systems can be used to support continuing conflict.
	Sustaining livelihoods during conflict and providing a foundation for future economic development.	Charitable contributions using informal systems may inadvertently support illicit trade, contributing to continued violence.
	May support DDR by supporting alternative income generation.	Informal systems may profit or be created by conflict entrepreneurs.
	Create financial transfer systems for the above, as well as for other external actors from the international community.	More reliable than state-supported insurgencies, with less control over tactics and objectives.
	May be transformed from subsistence to investment as the conflict subsides.	May explicitly call for and support factional violence.
	Is often a sustained source of support for the long-haul of reconstruction and development, when donor commitments wane.	
Diasporans are not subject to the consequences of their financial contributions.		
Insurgency groups may target diasporans for manipulation and extortion.		
<b>Philanthropy</b>	Can refocus diasporans' support, making it more constructively strategic.	Can provide a cover for political or conflict objectives.
	Can become a bridge of reconciliation within diasporas.	Can be selective and discriminatory, potentially exacerbating local conflicts.
	Can reduce dependencies and create new opportunities and hope for homeland residents.	

Contribution	Potential Positive	Potential Negative
	<p>May represent significant source for needed humanitarian assistance.</p> <p>Can contribute short and longer term knowledge transfer.</p> <p>Informal organizations and efforts may be flexible, enabling more people to participate.</p> <p>May become important intermediaries between traditional actors, local communities, and diasporas.</p> <p>May demonstrate replicable innovation or efforts that can be formalized and extended.</p>	
<b>Human Capital</b>	<p>May be essential for reconstruction and development, e.g., for restaffing government and development programs.</p> <p>Bring entrepreneurship, knowledge, skills, and networks.</p>	<p>Can introduce tensions and resentments that retard reconstruction or stimulate renewed or re-emerging conflict.</p> <p>May create a new political elite and give rise to new political tensions.</p> <p>Can replicate pre-conflict stratification of skills, class, opportunities, and resources.</p> <p>May introduce new tensions between those who stayed and endured and those who “lived comfortably.”</p> <p>“Helper” mentality, possible overestimation of home country knowledge, and arrogance may create tensions.</p> <p>May be an important source for combatant recruitment.</p>
<b>Policy/ Attitudinal Influence</b>	<p>May influence international political opinion for the protection of human rights and political freedoms.</p>	<p>May support partisan agendas that will exclude important groups and stakeholders, fomenting continuing tensions and possibly conflict; resulting peace agreements may yield further exclusion, sowing the seeds for conflict in the future.</p>

Contribution	Potential Positive	Potential Negative
	May “humanize” host country foreign policy.	The rhetoric of liberal values can be used instrumentally and may mask partisan and exclusive agendas.
	Can yield deeper commitments to development assistance and meeting the MDGs.	May influence homeland politics in ways that sustain divisive agendas.
	Moderate, bridging groups may emerge to counter extremist agendas both in the homeland and within the diaspora.	Influence may be disproportionate owing to access to wealth and opportunities, potentially skewing political elections with results diasporans are not subject to.
	Can support the legitimacy of post-conflict governments.	May lobby for policies that hinder sustainable peace, sometimes unwittingly.
	May promote reconciliation in diaspora as a demonstration to support reconciliation in the homeland.	Can lobby based on continued grievance, discouraging actors from engaging in peace negotiations.
	Can fund and organize cultural mechanisms specific to conflict resolution	
	Can support peace negotiations:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Locating and communicating with warring parties, connecting them to international mediators</li> <li>▪ Encouraging them to participate</li> <li>▪ Supporting implementation</li> <li>▪ Lobbying host country governments to mediate and support negotiations and implementation</li> <li>▪ Inspiring trust in the process</li> <li>▪ Providing insight into the conflict and actors</li> <li>▪ Suggesting components to peace agreements</li> <li>▪ Directly mediating among conflicting parties</li> </ul>	

or even will engage in conflict generating behavior in the homeland solely by virtue of the fact that they have experienced trauma (see, for example, Faist 2002, Sheffer 2003, Collier and Hoeffler 2001), ignores the importance of opportunity structures to engage, varied motives and considerations concerning quality of life in the place of residence, and the possibility that extreme trauma may be as likely to discourage conflict-promoting behavior as to encourage it owing to conflict fatigue. The Irish-American diaspora demonstrates the extent to which interests within a diaspora can be highly varied and even the most intransigent may change over time (Cochrane 2007).

Understanding and responding to diasporans' potential roles as conflict interest groups and entrepreneurs requires attention to the host society as well (see, for example, Demmers 2007). The policy environment in the countries where diasporans reside can produce incentives and disincentives for diaspora participation in both peace and conflict. Hall and Kosnic (2008) conclude that structural integration is more important to preventing diaspora participation in homeland conflict than is social integration. These findings concur with mine (Brinkerhoff 2008a) with respect to welcoming diaspora identity expression in the host society and encouraging skill building in utilizing the tools of mobilization that are consistent with liberal values, as reflected in formal mechanisms available in the host country.

Bigombe et al. (2000) conclude their discussion of policies for building post conflict peace with a recommendation to enforce new legislation to regulate diaspora organizations, as they note, "the successful management of the behavior of the diaspora may contribute more to peace than any other policy intervention" (335). However, what this "management of behavior" might look like is left unspecified, and the very notion raises important considerations of how such management can contribute to trust building and enhance psychological identification with

the host society, including the liberal values it may represent. What incentives would such managed diasporans have, for example, to partner with the host country government in its efforts to contribute to peace and reconciliation and post conflict reconstruction and development? Indeed, Adamson (2006) confirms the risk that linking migration and security may lead states to over-react. As an example, she points to “the negative impact that surveillance activities have had on alienating Muslims and other populations within the United States” (Adamson 2006, 196).

Diaspora contributions are subject to interpretation and may yield unintended consequences. As noted above, one person’s terrorist is another one’s freedom fighter. Some groups may claim to be working for peace yet be perceived as fomenting conflict, for example, the Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe (Horst and Gaas 2009). With respect to remittances, their importance in supporting conflict depends on the broader war economy, and the intentions of remittance-sending diasporans cannot be gauged even when they seem obvious on the surface, as we see with charity on the one hand, and the purchase of military equipment on the other. Regarding philanthropy, we know it can be used as a means to enhance reputation and connections to the homeland, including for those who are seeking political office. Assessing the merits of such efforts is subjective. If the organizations are effectively contributing to quality of life, does it matter that they derived from mixed motives? The assessment may be clearer in incidents of mixed tactics that include misleading individual donors and using a philanthropic cover for promoting violence.

Human capital contributions may require facilitating conditions, such as permanent legal status in the host country, and may require crafting temporary, virtual, or circular options. Policymakers need to consider the tradeoffs between expertise and ethnic representation in re-

staffing government in order to avoid creating or continuing class and ethnic tensions; and need to take care that incentive payments for return and knowledge transfer avoid or at least minimize introducing new tensions. Policies and programs should also consider that those who may be capable of making the most technical human capital contributions may be the least knowledgeable about home country conditions and the least likely to participate given their lifestyles in the host country.

With respect to political and attitudinal influence, sometimes keeping the homeland alive may contribute to political and conflict aims even if this is not the intention of those who engage in identity-related activities. Partisan aims can be presented under the guise of inclusive and democratic platforms. On the other hand, diasporas are divided in their political agendas and moderate, bridging groups may emerge to counter extremist agendas. While diaspora participation in peace agreements and constitutional processes may be necessary to ensure sustained peace and stability, diasporans may not know enough about the homeland and its conflict to understand the most peace-sustaining policy options. Diasporas should be included early in the negotiation of peace agreements. Settlements would then be more difficult to reach but might prove longer lasting, especially if accompanied by targeted public relation campaigns in countries of diaspora residence (see, e.g., Bigombe et al. 2000). Finally, the famous case of Ahmad Chalabi's influence on US engagement in Iraq demonstrates all too powerfully the need to take care in the selection and weighting of particular diasporans and their views in peace and post-conflict policy and program development.

Many diaspora contributions occur without the intervention of third parties. Given their potential importance, increasingly third parties, such as donors, host country governments, and NGOs, are creating policies and programs to incentivize and enhance the effectiveness of these

contributions. Some areas of contribution may require more such intervention than others. Engaging diasporas in peace negotiations may require support, first, to organize the diaspora and, then, to facilitate their own reconciliation. Third parties may be required to ensure participating diaspora groups do not crowd out minority or otherwise less powerful groups from within the diaspora. Third parties can also be helpful in supporting the costs of repatriation, and especially for short or long term knowledge transfer. This is primarily the domain of the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Development Programme. NGOs, such as International Alert (for example, in Armenia and Sri Lanka), can engage the diaspora business community to facilitate diaspora investment and promote an enabling environment for business in fragile and conflict countries. Such efforts can benefit from the support of donor organizations, such as DFID's support to the UK-based Sierra Leone Investment Forum (PILPG 2009). Elsewhere, I have elaborated a broader framework for an enabling environment to support diaspora contributions to homeland development (Brinkerhoff forthcoming).

## **Conclusions**

Collier's and Hoeffler's (2001) finding with respect to the presence of large diasporas and renewed conflict in the homeland has been used to support a myopic stereotype that diasporas are to be feared, with policies developed accordingly (see, for example, Bigombe et al. 2000). Despite the confirmation of their findings in 2004, in 2008, Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom found surprisingly contradictory results. Surprising, they note, because there is still significant evidence of diaspora funding of homeland conflict. Nevertheless, their more recent analysis finds that doubling the size of diasporas may reduce the likelihood of conflict renewal from 40% to 32.8%. Unfortunately, the authors do not discuss these findings at all, leaving the



interpretation to those who may be relatively knowledgeable regarding diaspora peace-promoting activities.

The authors also find a strong relationship between per capita income at the end of conflict and the likelihood of renewed conflict. They infer from these findings the need for the international community to intervene more intensively in the post-conflict economy. However, their findings regarding post-conflict income suggest at least a partial explanation for their findings with respect to diasporas. The very remittances that have heretofore been assumed to support conflict may, in fact, be sustaining livelihoods in ways that better prepare populations for peace. Diasporans, particularly those based in industrialized countries such as the United States, may be well-poised to contribute to post-conflict reconstruction, either in the form of investment, philanthropy, and/or the transition from sustenance remittances to the promotion of sustained autonomy, as Lubkemann's (2008) research on the US Liberian diaspora demonstrates.

Collier's and Hoeffler's (and Söderbom's) contradictory findings suggest a crucial need for deeper analysis of diaspora homeland engagement. Diasporas are not monolithic, and hold the potential for a range of contributions that may be quite significant for both peace and conflict. Hall (2008) outlines a research agenda for better addressing these concerns. His three-pronged approach entails: 1) investigating the variation of individual diasporan motivations and actions, 2) similarly investigating diaspora organizations and networks; and 3) documenting the interrelationships among resulting causes and effects. Such an agenda would also need to account for the dynamic aspect of diaspora interests and agendas.

Beyond Adamson's (2006, 2005) call for new, global strategies for managing transnational security threats—including those posed by diasporas—the “complex, contradictory, and diffuse ways” diasporas impact on peace and security more broadly also need to be

accounted for in policies and programs for peace, stability, and post-conflict reconstruction and development. Many policymakers do not really know what to make of diasporas and so in addition to succumbing to exaggerated negative stereotypes, diasporas may be included somewhat willy-nilly in discussions of policy options, but without much analysis or acknowledgement of the complexity of the phenomenon (see for example, Picciotto 2007). This, despite early recognition that conflict and its resolution cannot be understood using identity groups and nation states as the sole units of analysis (see, for example, Demmers 2002).

Alternatively, considerations of diasporas may be left out of policy discussions altogether. For example, in the OECD's (2008) report, Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building in Fragile Situations: From Fragility to Resilience, diasporas are not mentioned even once. According to the report, "fragility arises primarily from weaknesses in the dynamic political process through which citizens' expectations of the state and state expectations of citizens are reconciled and brought into equilibrium with the state's capacity to deliver services" (OECD 2008, 7). Just as the diaspora phenomenon raises questions about traditional conceptions of national security and the nation-state, so, too, does it challenge our conception of the social contract in modern times. Who is the state and who are its citizens? Whose expectations from both perspectives need to be met in order to support resilience? As the above discussion elaborates, diasporas can ease demands on the state as well as seek to undermine or displace it. Because of their significant potential impact on peace, security, reconstruction and development, it is shocking that frameworks for international engagement in fragile, conflict, and post-conflict states—like OECD (2008)—continue to ignore them.

The potential contributions of diasporas to conflict, peace, and post-conflict reconstruction are varied and significant. Returning to the title of this paper, the first implication

is that post-conflict governments and the international community ignore diasporas at their peril. While diasporas have been a factor in stakeholder and conflict analyses for sometime, they have not been a major focus of analyses for rebuilding and development, excepting the repatriation of refugees and political and government leadership. In addition to diasporas' negative contributions to peace and security, this paper has described the potential constructive contributions diasporas make through remittances, philanthropy, human capital, political/attitudinal influence. Even these contributions are not without risk.

The simple answer to this paper's title question is "yes." Diasporas are extremely heterogenous both in terms of their perceptions and constructions of homeland identity, their relative interest in the homeland, and the directions of that interest (including constructive or destructive). They are at once conflict entrepreneurs, complicating competing interests, and contributors to stability and development. Careful analyses of these communities, their resources, power, and interests are necessary not only to capitalize on potential advantages but also to mitigate risks. So the second implication is the need to develop better analytic frameworks for accounting for diasporas' potential contributions (positive and negative) generally, and with respect to specific homeland conflicts. Beyond Hall's (2008) recommended research strategy, policymakers can already begin to consider the more complete range of potential diaspora contributions drawing on research to date, including the findings summarized in Table 1. A better understanding of diasporas' potential contributions—particularly on a country-by-country and diaspora-by-diaspora basis—will enable post-conflict governments and the international community to know when it may be appropriate to support extant diaspora efforts and when simply to get out of the way. For example, remittances to war torn societies and the informal systems that support them may require some security oversight but their support to maintaining

livelihoods, disarmament and demobilization, and setting the stage for post-conflict reconstruction suggests these systems should not be unduly harassed.

This heterogeneity leads to a third implication. Diasporans represent a range of motivations and associated behavior vis-à-vis the homeland. They are not necessarily subject to the direct consequences of their behaviors. And in some instances their intentions may be politically motivated and/or divisive and conflict inspiring/sustaining. Even well-intended constructive contributions may yield unintended consequences. The extent of their influence may be disproportionate to local decisionmaking processes owing to their relative access to wealth and opportunities. These features suggest that diasporas are one interest group among many who seek to influence local conditions and should not necessarily be privileged in the design of policies and programs for conflict, reconstruction, and development.

Their potential significant constructive contributions suggest a fourth implication. Not only do these suggest a rationale for support; in some cases, it may be prudent for post-conflict governments and development actors to more proactively partner with diaspora groups and organizations. These organizations can provide important intermediary functions for peace negotiations and constitutional processes, and for linking development needs and investment opportunities to qualified and interested diasporans.

A final set of implications concerns diasporans' quality of life in the host society and their relationship to the host government. First, uncertainty and insecurity can contribute to marginalization—social, economic, political, and even psychological. Such marginalization may become a factor in the recruitment of some vulnerable individuals and populations into violent activities (see Brinkerhoff 2008a). In addition, studies show that permanent legal status enhances diasporas' incentives and enables their support to the homeland. Anecdotal evidence suggests

that diasporans who engage in constructive contributions to their homelands may feel a greater sense of empowerment and integration into the host society (Asmallash 2007; Mbanzendore 2007). These findings suggest that host governments should engage with resident diasporas in ways that support and enhance their quality of life, sense of identification with the host country, and development contributions to the homeland. For example, some host governments actively engage with residing diaspora communities for the purpose of crafting and implementing development assistance strategies vis-à-vis their homelands (see, for example, Mohamoud 2007).

This brings us full circle. Diasporas are at once conflict entrepreneurs, competing interests, and contributors to peace and development. Peacebuilding requires both material and attitudinal contributions of both local and external actors over the long haul (Horst and Gaas 2009). Diasporas' participation in these processes is necessary to negotiating sustained peace, laying the ground work for post-conflict reconstruction, and sustaining the resources (material, skills and knowledge, and international influence) necessary to long term recovery and development. They are neither exclusively saints nor sinners but their significance to these processes and outcomes can no longer be ignored.

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