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Introduction

The world after September 11, 2001, is a scary place. Many, already feeling powerless due to globalization, now feel even more vulnerable to factors beyond their control. From social, political, economic, and psychological points of view, current events and media reports lead us to fear "other" perhaps as never before. The result in some circles is a creeping xenophobia and general anxiety about the unknown. Two logical targets for this fear and insecurity are immigration, especially diasporas – immigrants who still feel a connection to their country of origin, and information technology (IT). Much has been written about them to inspire fear, including their links to terrorism.

A case in point is the 2008 United States Senate report, *Violent Islamist Extremism, The Internet, and the Homegrown Terrorist Threat*. Nonprofit and Muslim organizations greeted it with scathing criticism of its underlying assumptions about the Internet and immigrants, especially American Muslims; the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) railed against what it called proposed violations of freedom of speech. These groups argued that the narrow focus represented by the report will inspire fear, justify discrimination, and violate constitutional rights – all without necessarily preventing or protecting American citizens from homegrown terrorism. Citing the example of Timothy McVeigh – a native-born terrorist – the ACLU argued, "This narrow focus could cost us dearly in the future" (cited in OMB Watch 2008).

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While policy efforts related to the report are underway, the data to support the connections between diasporas, the Internet, and terrorism remain sparse. The U.S. Senate report cites three examples of Internet-supported homegrown terrorism by immigrants but does not provide data beyond these anecdotes. It refers only (in an endnote) to the 2007 Pew Research Center survey of Muslim Americans, wherein 27% of those polled refused to state an opinion on Al-Qaeda and 5% viewed the organization favorably. Other research shows a significant increase (approximately threefold) in the number of websites linking diasporas and terrorism from September 11, 2001 to May 2002 (Brynen 2005). Neither of these data sets measures a connection between diasporas and actual terrorist activities or their use of the Internet and terrorist activities.

Writing about fear factors, and especially terrorism, is a growth industry. And, yes, individual diasporans may use the Internet to participate in violent and/or terrorist activities. But surely there must be different perspectives on these issues? Immigration, information technology, and their implications for society worldwide are complex phenomena. They deserve a nuanced investigation, a more holistic analysis, and a view to looking beyond gloom and doom to balance the scorecard on these realities, which, after all, are embedded features of the world today.

In this book, I analyze the impact of digital diasporas – diasporas organized on the Internet – in international affairs. These impacts include potential to foster democratic values, support integration in the host society, and contribute to security and socio-economic development in the homelands. I argue that migrant integration can be eased when diasporans (members of diasporas) have opportunities to express their hybrid identities (a sense of self that is neither wholly of the homeland nor exclusively reflective of the hostland) collectively. Such expression increasingly occurs through activities in support of the homeland. It is most supportive of peace and integration when it encompasses liberal values and other features consistent with an increasing identification with the adopted country. IT facilitates these agendas on a number of fronts. Digital diasporas use the Internet to negotiate their identity and promote solidarity; learn, explore, and enact democratic values; and mobilize to peacefully pursue policy influence, service objectives, and economic participation in the homeland.

How do communities of migrants become diaspora communities, that is, with identities that sustain at least psychological links to the homeland? How do these identities reflect the diaspora experience? How do they become transformed into something more than an identification with the homeland, yet not exclusively identified with the adopted country culture? And what are the implications of these hybrid identities for integration in the adopted society, and for policy and development influence vis-à-vis the homeland? How does information technology contribute to identity outcomes and their potential manifestation in the real world? This introductory chapter addresses why we should care about these questions, and reviews our current state of knowledge. I then introduce my own approach to this subject matter, and discuss the contributions and implications of this study. The next sections present the research design and provide an overview of the five home countries for the digital diaspora case studies. I close by presenting the structure of the book.

UNDERSTANDING MIGRATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: THE IMPERATIVE

Diasporas have always been important actors in global and domestic affairs. As early as the fifteenth century, Chinese trade networks fostered important transnational economic benefits and the Chinese diaspora influenced – for better or for worse – the political, social, and economic systems in their adopted societies. More recently, the United States faced the challenge of integrating the Irish into American society at the turn of the twentieth century and later concerns regarding their support to the Irish Republican Army. Since the 1950s, the United States has provided organized support for the integration of the Cuban diaspora, while it hopes that some diaspora members will participate in, and possibly return to, a post-Castro Cuba.

Today, information and people cross international borders at speeds and in numbers unimagined previously. Together, migration and telecommunication advancements make diasporas all the more relevant to international affairs. The answer of why we should care about diasporas and the Internet revolves both around the risk factors and the great potential they hold for

constructive political and socio-economic contributions. I begin with the former.

Diasporas and the Internet: Potential Security Implications

Some see the accelerated movement of people and information as cause for alarm, particularly after September 11, 2001. Globalization has enhanced economic and political interdependence and, at the same time, has afforded opportunities for some countries and communities to advance while leaving others behind. The resulting marginalization exacerbates the potential for conflict, nationally and internationally, on economic, political, and/or social grounds.[1] The first decade of the new millennium was fraught with conflict. Already in the 1990s, ethnic conflicts became much more numerous and severe (see Anderson 1999; Duffield 2001), in several cases spilling over into neighboring countries and international policy deliberations. Social tension leading to conflict inside nation-states is not new, though the consequences and potential for conflict escalation through external intervention have increased through globalization.

Organized diasporas may threaten global security (see Faist 2002; Weiner 1995). Several studies examine the role of organized diasporas in promoting policy and regime change in their home territories.[2] Some scholars describe the evolution of diasporas' relations vis-à-vis their homeland governments as moving "from victims to challengers" (see Cohen 1996). In situations of conflict, diaspora communities may raise money to support continuing warfare, promote public opinion and international interventions in support of their cause, and may prevent resolution, even when their compatriots are prepared to negotiate (Anderson 1999). The existence of diasporas may substantially increase the likelihood of conflict in their home countries (Collier and Hoeffler 2001). The instability diasporas generate within countries can have spillover effects with implications for global security.

[1] See Collier et al. (2003); Gissinger and Gleditch (1999); and Lake and Rothchild (1996).
[2] See, for example, Byman et al. (2001); King and Melvin (1999/2000); Shain (1999, 1994–1995).

Organized diasporas may use information technology to facilitate these agendas.

With the recent war on terrorism, even elective migration to industrialized countries has sparked new concerns ranging from the migration of terrorists to the harboring of terrorists by immigrant communities, the financial support of terrorist activities through charity foundations, and, finally, the recruitment of terrorists from within seemingly assimilated diasporas. These possibilities magnify the importance of socially and politically integrating migrants and refugees into receiving societies. In addition to economic challenges, immigrants face the socio-psychological challenges associated with negotiating their way through a new culture and embracing an altered identity, while still maintaining an identity associated with their culture of origin.[3] For many, integration is a stressful process culturally, socially, and economically (Nelson-Jones 2002).

The inability to integrate, or identity distress, may be associated with violence (Hernandez, Montgomery, and Kurtines 2006). The structure of violence encompasses exclusion, inequality, and indignity (Galtung 1996). Feelings of marginalization and social exclusion may lead to violent behavior and exacerbate existing conflict.[4] This linkage may be particularly salient for youth (Phillips and Pittman 2003). Those who lack a collective identity have been described as "psychologically desperate" and easy prey for terrorist organizations who seek to fill this psychological void (Taylor and Lewis 2004, 184). In other words, if they lack an existing sense of belonging, individuals become vulnerable to recruitment into whichever social structures can provide it, regardless of the purpose of these social structures (Brinkerhoff 2008a).

Conventional wisdom holds that IT, especially as it is applied transnationally, poses a threat to nation states' sovereignty and capacity to govern. IT has "exposed the porosity of geographic and political borders and the limited extent of any national jurisdiction" (Montgomery 2002, 26). Wilson's (1998) literature review found a significant degree of agreement that state sovereignty – and, arguably, capacity – is being

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[3] Hermans and Kemper (1998); Lavie and Swedenberg (1996); Friedman (1994).
[4] See, for example, Barber (2001) on Palestinian youth and the Intifada; and Lemarchand (2000) on the conflict in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

eroded by IT, as a result of states' increasing inability to control information both within their borders, as well as at the supranational level.

Recent research on IT and terrorism confirms the Internet's enabling features for terrorist activities, including its ease of access, anonymity, and international character.[5] The Internet's speed and flexibility accelerates the global dissemination of ideas and agendas, and the absence of mediation enables the articulation of these without the review and fact checking of traditional media (Margulies 2004). Indeed, the Internet has become the principal platform for dissemination and recruitment for jihadist terrorist movements (see, for example, Awan 2007). Some have even claimed that IT highlights the marginalization resulting from globalization, promoting despair and hopelessness in the South, and thus contributing to the emergence of terrorism (Elnur 2003).

Diaspora groups may use the Internet not only to promote particular political agendas that may foment conflict in the homeland, but also to promote secessionist movements and civil war. Those opposed to their homeland government may "use the Internet to reach out to the international media to disseminate propaganda, recruit, train, and solicit funds and influence international public opinion, and, most importantly, to network with diasporas across the globe" (Tekwani 2003, 178). For example, Kashmiri militants fighting for independence from India maintain websites in Britain. Separatist groups similarly have used the Internet to advocate against the Indonesian government in East Timor and Papua New Guinea, with websites based in Portugal and New Zealand respectively; and against the government of Papua New Guinea, with a website hosted in Australia (Tekwani 2003).

Diasporas and the Internet: Potential Contributions

Diasporas' potential constructive contributions encompass policy influence supportive of liberal values, integration and conflict

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[5] See Weimann (2006); Tsfati and Weimann (2002); and Lal (2002). See also the *Washington Post*'s series: August 7–9, 2005 (Coll and Glasser 2005; Whitlock 2005; Glasser and Coll 2005). These concerns were voiced before 9–11, see for example Whine (1999).

prevention, and socio-economic development, each of which may be facilitated by the Internet. Due to their attachments to the homeland and the ease of telecommunications, diasporas are increasingly apt to insert themselves into economic, political, and development processes vis-à-vis the homeland.

Diasporas have become essential to many national economic and political agendas. In several countries, diasporas contribute significant portions of their homeland's gross domestic products (GDPs). In 2006 (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) 2007), for example, in Latin America diasporas accounted for over 31% in Grenada, almost 25% in Honduras, and approximately 21% in Haiti. In Africa, diasporas accounted for almost 49% of GDP in Guinea-Bissau, 39% in Sao Tome and Principe, 38% in Eritrea, and over 34% in Cape Verde. In Asia diasporas contributed almost 37% of GDP in Tajikistan, over 34% in PDR of Laos, and over 31% in Kyrgyzstan. Almost 35% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and a little over 25% of Lebanon's GDP come from their diasporas. In Europe, over 31% of Moldova's, and almost 22% of Albania's GDP come from their diasporas. Globally economic remittance estimates now outpace official development assistance: $70 billion per year in 2004; and estimated at $125 billion in 2005, and $167 billion in 2006 (World Bank, 2004, 2005, 2006). Other estimates place 2006 global remittances at $300 billion, with most going to Asia (over $113 billion), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (over $68 billion), Europe (over $50 billion), Africa (over $38 billion), and the Near East (over $29 billion) (IFAD 2007).

Diaspora homeland investment may be crucial to resource-strapped developing countries; their relatively weak institutions, political risks, or lower incomes may discourage the typical, nondiaspora foreign investor (Riddle, Brinkerhoff, and Nielsen 2008). First, diasporans may be more likely to invest in economies that others would consider high risk, simply because they have knowledge and relationship opportunities that other investors lack (see Gillespie et al. 1999; Gillespie, Sayre, and Riddle 2001). Second, they can combine this knowledge with the skills, knowledge, and networks they have cultivated abroad, yielding important synergistic advantages (Gillespie et al. 2001, 1999). In India's IT industry, diasporans played a significant role not only as direct investors (approximately 16% of foreign direct investment (FDI) to the sector) but as

brokers of investment relationships, leading to the much-lauded success of India's IT industry (Margolis et al. 2004; Saxenian 2002a). Part of this success is attributed to the Indian diaspora's role in proposing and promoting necessary changes to the legal framework in order to improve the investment climate (Saxenian 2002b).[6]

Beyond economic contributions, developing countries can benefit from diasporans' skills transfer, and cultural and civic awareness/experience (Nyberg-Sorensen 2004). These contributions are particularly salient in countries suffering from brain drain in specific technical sectors, but also in countries seeking to advance their development more generally (see Wescott and Brinkerhoff 2006). Diasporans may repatriate for the purpose of capacity building, whether permanently or for short-term assignments. Experimentation with virtual return is also on the rise, whereby diasporans contribute knowledge and expertise and/or transfer knowledge through IT technologies and video conferencing. Examples include Dutch-Ghanaian doctors providing patient diagnosis to hospitals in Accra, and diasporan delivery of health policy analysis training by video conference in Ethiopia. Diasporans may also contribute to homeland development through employment in the development industry (see, for example, Brinkerhoff and Taddesse 2008).

Diasporas represent important opportunities for more formal development organizations (those funded through Official Development Assistance) to recruit expertise and solicit information for development programs; and disseminate information about priorities and programming, potentially reducing duplication and cross-purpose efforts (Brinkerhoff 2004). Diaspora philanthropy organizations can act as important intermediaries between these formal development actors, and diasporas and local communities, for example, identifying and communicating needs and priorities of local communities and soliciting funding and expertise for those from donor organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and diaspora members. Diaspora philanthropy organizations may also demonstrate innovative programs and approaches that can be replicated and/or used to

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[6] Research on the most effective mechanisms and government promotion efforts targeting diasporas is still in its infancy. For path-breaking examples, see Riddle et al. (2008); Gillespie and Andriasova (2008); and Riddle and Marano (2008).

advocate for development industry administrative and programmatic reforms. These contributions are particularly salient to countries emerging from conflict, for example in Afghanistan (Brinkerhoff 2004) and Liberia (Lubkemann 2004).

On the political front, beyond promoting regime change in their home territories, diasporans have become important constituents and advocates for homeland governments. As of 2000, approximately eighty-nine countries allowed for dual citizenship or included migrants as official members of their political communities (Renshon 2000). The government of Mexico is a leader in terms of incorporating and seeking political support from its diaspora. Elected diasporans can serve in state parliaments. The Institute of Mexicans Abroad, housed in the Federal Secretariat of Foreign Relations, provides advocacy training to Mexican diaspora organizations and includes a Consultative Council of 105 elected representatives of immigrant groups in the United States and Canada (see Ayón 2006). According to Executive Director Carlos Gonzalez-Gutierrez organized diaspora visits include presentations on the government's policy agenda vis-à-vis the United States and training on how to lobby the U.S. government (personal communication).

Diasporas' political activities are likely to grow as they both benefit from and contribute to democratization. Democracy affords both a more conducive environment for diaspora political engagement from the hostland and more opportunities for influence in the homeland (Koslowski 2005). Policy influence in the homeland may support improved enabling environments for socio-economic development, as in the Indian IT sector, and/or it can be used to promote partisan platforms with arguable public benefit. Rather than alternatives (see Hirschman 1970), exit may be necessary for the exercise of voice (Birch 1975; qtd. in Koslowski 2005). Diasporas may have influence disproportionate to their numbers owing to knowledge, skills, and financial capital acquired in the host society, and through their influence on the host country's foreign policy vis-à-vis their homelands (Koslowski 2005, 11). Similarly, diaspora support to homeland political campaigns may disproportionately influence outcomes due to relative currency exchange rates.

Diasporas can both "humanize" and "Americanize" U.S. foreign policy, combating isolationist tendencies, and reflecting American

values of freedom and democracy (Shain 1995, 1999). In the United States, diasporas elect or are pressured to adopt liberal values (Shain 1995, 1999). Their influence on host-country foreign policy – motivated by traditional cultural identity – is most effective when it corresponds with host-country national interest and values – their American identity (Shain 1999). The best known examples in the United States are the efforts of the Armenian and Israeli diasporas (see Shain and Barth 2003). Diaspora communities of identity are often explicitly maintained and mobilized for the purpose of influencing international public opinion and building political support for human rights and political freedoms, for example, groups of the Haitian, Tibetan, and Cuban diasporas (see Shain 1994-1995; see also Koslowski 2005).

Countering exclusive assumptions about their threat to state sovereignty, diasporas have potential to contribute to all three governance components: legitimacy, effectiveness, and security (Brinkerhoff 2007). They can act as an additional watchdog on homeland governments. Given their potential access, through networks on the ground, to local information on policy implementation, regulatory enforcement, and human rights abuses, diaspora organizations may be well-placed to play a monitoring role in support of good governance and donors' efforts to promote governance reforms (Brainard and Brinkerhoff 2006). Using IT, diasporas can facilitate communication channels in support of accountability and responsiveness to human rights concerns, enhancing governance legitimacy (Brinkerhoff 2005). By contributing to the provision of public goods and technical assistance/capacity building of government agencies, diasporas support governance effectiveness (Brinkerhoff 2004). Additionally, they may potentially prevent the participation of fellow diasporans in continuing or instigating renewed violence in the homeland (Brinkerhoff 2006a).

By fostering both bonding and bridging social capital, diaspora organizations can support integration and may prevent latent conflict from becoming manifest.[7] Bonding social capital emphasizes

[7] Conflict prevention aims not necessarily to eliminate the sources of latent conflict, but to reduce the likelihood that conflict will become manifest through violent action (see Leatherman et al. 1999).