Digital Diasporas

Identity and Transnational Engagement

In the first full-length scholarly study of the increasingly important phenomenon of digital diasporas, Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff examines how immigrants who still feel a connection to their country of origin use the Internet. She argues that digital diasporas can ease security concerns in both the homeland and the host society, improve diaspora members’ quality of life in the host society, and contribute to socioeconomic development in the homeland. Drawing on case studies of nine digital diaspora organizations, Brinkerhoff’s research supplies new empirical material regarding digital diasporas and their potential security and development outcomes. She also explores their impact on identity negotiation, arguing that digital diasporas create communities and organizations that represent hybrid identities and encourage solidarity, identity, and material benefits among their members. The book explores these communities’ implications for policy and practice.

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2-1 Model for Digital Diaspora Identity and Engagement
Acknowledgments

This project began with the notion of collaboration and in the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001. My colleague, Lori Brainard, suggested it would be interesting to pursue a research project together. Our challenge was finding a hook that linked her expertise in online communities with my interest in international development. I am deeply indebted to Lori for exposing me to the wonders of communities in cyberspace, suggesting a collaboration in the first place, embracing such an unusual combination, and working with me on the first phase of the program. That phase was funded by the George Washington University Center for the Study of Globalization, to whom I also owe a debt of gratitude.

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