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978-0-521-74143-9 - Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement

Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff

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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 socio-economic 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.

Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff is an Associate Professor of Public Administration and International Affairs at the George Washington University. She holds a Ph.D. in public administration from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and an MPA from the Monterey Institute of International Studies. She consults for multilateral development banks, bilateral assistance agencies, NGOs, and foundations. Combining her research with this work, she published *Partnership for International Development: Rhetoric or Results?* (2002), as well as three co-edited journal issues and more than forty-five articles and book chapters on topics ranging from evaluation to NGOs, failed states, governance, and diasporas. She is the editor of *Diasporas and Development: Exploring the Potential* (2008). She also completed an edited volume for the Asia Development Bank titled *Converting Migration Drains into Gains: Harnessing the Resources of Overseas Professionals* (2006), and she is the editor of the book series *Diasporas in World Politics*. She is the co-director and co-founder of GW's Diaspora Research Program, a multidisciplinary research program on diasporas, identity, policy, and development; she also co-founded the GW International NGO team and co-edited *NGOs and the Millennium Development Goals: Citizen Action to Reduce Poverty* (2007).

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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521741439

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First published 2009

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Brinkerhoff, Jennifer M., 1965–

Digital diasporas : Identity and transnational engagement / Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-51784-3 (hardback) – ISBN 978-0-521-74143-9 (pbk.)

1. Immigrants – Computer network resources. 2. Internet – Social aspects.

I. Title.

JV6225.B75 2009

305.9'06912-dc22 2008643639

ISBN 978-0-521-51784-3 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-74143-9 paperback

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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.

A large number of graduate research assistants helped along the way. In the first phase, in particular, these students sat through lengthy, mind-twisting meetings as Lori and I explored and communicated our evolving research methodology. Our team of students contributed their own thoughts, ideas, and experience and worked tirelessly to randomly select and analyze discussion threads, conduct link analyses, and transcribe interview tapes. I am grateful not only for all of these contributions, but also for their patience and perseverance as they were exposed to everything from sometimes esoteric and deeply religious thoughts to raunchy discussions replete with profanity. These are the many faces of people in cyberspace and together we met them all. Throughout the project our team of dedicated research assistants included: Tom Bryer, Andrew Edelson, Sarah Epps, Tara Hill, Dana Epstein, and Aliza Inbal Belman. I am particularly grateful to Tom

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Acknowledgments

Bryer, who led our student team during the first phase; Tara Hill, who led the second phase and provided particularly insightful analyses of the two most contrasting cyber communities; and Aliza Inbal Belman, who in addition to putting up with the transcription seemed to enjoy the wonders of these inspiring people and ideas and who also suffered the incredibly mundane task of organizing my literature database.

Obviously, this project would not have been possible without the amazing individuals featured in these pages. I especially thank the founders of the organizations studied and all those whom we interviewed. Your commitment to your communities, to your identity, and to service will remain a source of inspiration for me for a long time to come. Thanks to Abdullah Qazi, Abdul Meraj, Tooba Mayel, Ferdous Hakim, Hassib Amiryar, Michael Meunier, Homira Nassery, George Andraws, Nermien Riad, Phoebe Pharag, the staff of Coptic Orphans in Cairo and the many volunteers and children of its Valuable Girl Project there, Bal Joshi, Robert Granger, Daniel Koch, Abdi Osman, and Dorjee Nudup.

The German Marshall Fund and the Rockefeller Foundation invited me to participate in the Bellagio Dialogue on Migration in the summer of 2006. They provided me two glorious weeks of interaction with a range of actors concerned with issues of migration and development, including scholars from a variety of disciplines, advocates and social workers for migrants in receiving countries, legislative assistants, government officials, and leaders of diaspora organizations. Not only did these discussions stimulate my thoughts and provide fodder for further inspiration, during my two-week stay I was gifted four full days in beautiful Bellagio fully dedicated to this project. These were among the most productive days throughout the project, and I thank the German Marshall Fund and the Rockefeller Foundation for this opportunity.

Mike Brown, Dean of the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, provided invaluable assistance in helping me to better recognize the contributions of this study.

Most especially, I thank my husband, Derick Brinkerhoff. Derick came up with the project's working title and clever acronym: Digital Diasporas, Identity, and International Policy Processes, or DIP squared (DIP²). Beyond this creative contribution he is, as always, the most supportive husband a professional woman could ever hope for. And patient too – I thank him for putting up with my almost constant vocalized observations, confirming that identity is everywhere.

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