



Diaspora in conflict settings: from war-mongers to recovery and development?

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Global turbulence and migration crises, 1989-2009

- From the collapse of communism, 1989-91....
-to the collapse of the neo-liberal order, 2008-09
- Upheavals during these two decades have led to a rash of migration crises....
- ...that have generated new diasporas
- ...that are becoming significant players in conflict...
- ...or in the recovery and development of conflict-ridden societies

Outline

- Migration crises and diaspora formation
- The rise of interest in conflict and diaspora
- The formation of refugee/conflict-induced diasporas
- Diaspora engagement in conflict settings
- Diasporas, transnational social security and integration into the global political economy

Agency interest in conflict and diaspora: 'transforming whole societies'?

World Bank and others see

- Conflict, destruction, dislocation, displacement....
-as an opportunity for socio-economic transformation ('silver lining' argument)

A tabula rasa?

- 'Post-conflict situations often provide special opportunities for political, legal, economic and administrative reforms to change past systems and structures which may have contributed to economic and social inequities and conflict'(GTZ 2000).
- 'The collapse of states in crisis need not be prevented, since a 'better state' cannot emerge until that collapse has taken place' (GTZ 2000).

Somalia: 'structurally adjusted' by war

- The prolonged absence of a central Somali government means that Somali society is more directly exposed to both the beneficial and the harmful effects of globalisation....The civil war achieved what the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s did not, that is, economic deregulation that has enabled the expansion of the private sector (UNDP Somalia Human Development Report of 2001: 40-41).

Conflict, displacement and diaspora formation

Conflict and displacement disperse people:

- within their own countries (internal displacement)
- in neighbouring countries (near diaspora)
- in countries further afield (wider diaspora)

Refugee diaspora formation: three cases

- **Sri Lankan Tamils**
 - Civil war since 1983:
 - internal displacement
 - refugees in south India
 - Gulf migration
 - asylum migration to Europe, North America and Australia
- **Somalis**
 - State collapse and war since late 1980s:
 - internal displacement
 - refugees to Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and Yemen
 - labour migration to Gulf
 - asylum seekers to western countries, including 'secondary migration' from Kenya to Europe
- **Afghans**
 - War and displacement since late 1970s:
 - internal displacement
 - refugees to Pakistan and Iran
 - return
 - labour migration to Iran
 - asylum seekers and resettled refugees in Europe and North America

Summary: conflict, displacement and diaspora formation

- Conflict and displacement disperse people:
 - within their own countries (internal displacement)
 - in neighbouring countries
 - in countries further afield
- Hierarchy of destinations
- With dispersal come transnational links and networks...
- ...and with such links come influence on homeland

Shift in perception of diaspora role in conflict settings

- From diasporas as ‘war mongers’ or ‘peace-wreckers’ (Collier and Hoeffler)...
-to diasporas as ‘peace-makers’/’peace-builders’...
- ...or as ambivalent (Van Hear 2002; Smith and Stares 2007).
- Rise of World Bank and other agency interest in diaspora and conflict

Long distance nationalism

- Diasporas sometimes harbour rather romanticised attachments to their group of origin and may nurse grievances as a form of asserting continued belonging. They are much richer than the people in their country of origin and so can afford to finance vengeance. Above all, they do not have to suffer any of the awful consequences of renewed conflict because they are not living in the country. Hence, they are a ready market for rebel groups touting vengeance and so are a source of finance for renewed conflict (Collier 2000: 14).
- There are two types of diaspora. On the one hand there are minorities living in the near abroad, fearful of their vulnerability to local nationalisms and often more extreme than those living on home territory...On the other hand, there are disaffected groups living far away, often in the new melting pot nations, who find solace in fantasies about their origins which are often far removed from reality (Kaldor 2001: 85).

Diaspora influence on the homeland

Diaspora influence in two main ways:

- From abroad – remittances, individual and collective transfers, lobbying
- On return – permanently/temporarily/coming and going – investment: financial and human capital









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Expel from ICC

ALLOW TAMIL DIASPORA
FREE ACCESS TO
THEIR KITH & KIN

THE WORLD IS SILENT
AS SRI LANKA DESTROYS
OF WAR CRIMES

Transnational transfers

- Individual/household/private remittances
- Collective/public transfers
 - by civil society organisations,
 - home town and old school associations
 - religious organisations
 - support for insurgencies

Transnational transfers

- Portfolio of resources....
- Remittances, collective transfers, other local and transnational resources, such as aid

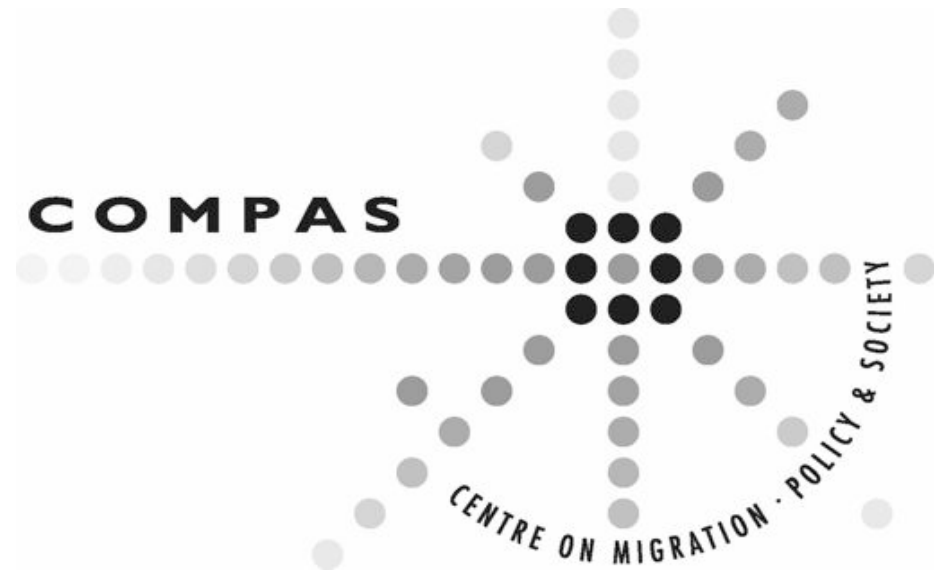
- Portfolio of obligations....
- To families and communities in the host country
- To the wider community in the host country
- To family members and others left behind in the conflict country
- To (transnational) insurgent or opposition groups in the home country
- Tensions between these obligations

- Diaspora provision of 'transnational social security'

Summary

- 1989-2009 a period of global turbulence and transformation
- Upheavals led to conflict, displacement and diaspora formation
- Negative view of diaspora engagement given way to more nuanced view
- Rise of agency interest in conflict and diaspora
- Patterns of diaspora formation shape forms of diaspora engagement
- Influence: from abroad/on return
- Transnational transfers: individual and collective
- Uses: survival, coping, accumulation in conflict and other settings
- Diaspora transfers part of a portfolio of resources and obligations
- Diaspora as providers of 'transnational social security'





(c)

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Conflict, displacement and diaspora formation

1990s and 2000s conflicts and refugee movements....

- ...augment existing diasporas and create new ones

Conflict generates displacement...

- ...but also the means, through diasporas, to ameliorate conflict and displacement
- ...or to exacerbate conflict

Development agency involvement in conflict societies

- World Bank and other agency interest in conflict and post conflict societies since late 1990s
- Critique: the promotion of neo-liberal economies and polities
- Critique of critique: a *liberal* not a *neo liberal* approach

Implications for people and societies in conflict

- ‘Fragile states’ and ‘LICUS’ countries are a source of unwanted people, forces and trends: refugees, fundamentalists, criminals and terrorists....
-but present opportunities for remoulding or wholesale transformation
- Diasporas may be enlisted to transform conflict societies into stable, sustainable communities, *and* reduce pressure for migration?

Shift in perception of diaspora role in conflict settings

From diasporas as 'war mongers' or 'peace-wreckers' ...

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Waves of migration

- Elite/professionals
- Labour migration
- Students
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Family reunion/formation
- 'Regrouping'/secondary migration

The deployment of transnational transfers in conflict settings

- Transfers for survival
- Transfers for coping
- Transfers for accumulation