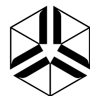
Diasporas in conflict: Peace-makers or peace-wreckers?

Edited by Hazel Smith and Paul Stares



United Nations University Press

TOKYO • NEW YORK • PARIS

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Part I

The analytical and conceptual framework

1

Diasporas in international conflict

Hazel Smith

The study of diasporas in conflict reflects an urgent international social problem. The capacity of some diasporas to secure tangible and intangible resources in support of armed conflicts, the often opaque institutional and network structures that can allow for transnational transfers of arms and money to state and non-state actors, including terrorist groups, as well as to more deserving causes (for instance as humanitarian assistance), along with rapid transnational communication, mean that, in the era of globalization, diasporas have been reconstructed as new and potentially powerful actors in international politics.

A large body of excellent scholarship has investigated the notion of diaspora, not least that by many contributors to this book, including Nadje Al-Ali, Khalid Koser, Gabriel Sheffer, Zlatko Skrbiš and Khachig Tölölyan.[1] Others who have made seminal contributions include, for instance, Avtar Brah, Robin Cohen and William Safran.[2] There is less research explicitly on the role of diasporas in conflict, with major exceptions being the work of Yossi Shain and of Paul Collier and his colleagues at the World Bank.[3] This book is intended to supplement this latter literature by offering a comparative study of diasporas in international conflict, informed by an explicit analytical and conceptual framework, which is set out in Chapters 2 and 3, and based on detailed empirical case studies.

Theoretically, the book invades the discipline of political science and international relations and establishes a conflict resolution analytical framework. Conceptually, the book supports the view that it is dif-

Diasporas in conflict: Peace-makers or peace-wreckers?, Smith and Stares (eds), United Nations University Press, 2007, ISBN 978-92-808-1140-7

ficult to offer an unproblematic shared understanding of the concept of diaspora but also takes as a premise that there is enough commonality of understanding of the concept that a comparative investigation of patterns of diaspora interventions in conflicts makes sense. The key empirical research question that contributors were asked to respond to was: ‘‘In the case of a specific conflict, how did the diaspora respond? Were they peace-wreckers or peace-makers?’’

This volume has three core objectives. These are normative, empirical and policy related. The normative objective is to find ways to encourage peaceful resolution to conflicts through the active and positive intervention of diasporas and to discourage intervention that fuels conflicts. The empirical objective is to chart and analyse diaspora interventions in conflict and to see if any cautious generalizations may be made about such interventions. The policy objective is to identify leverage points in the different stages of conflict such that constructive interventions by diasporas may be encouraged and destructive interventions discouraged.

The theoretical framework

This book investigates the diverse roles of diasporas in different phases of what conflict resolution theorists sometimes call the ‘‘conflict cycle’’, as outlined by Jacob Bercovitch in Chapter 2 of this book.[4] The book therefore starts with an explicit conflict cycle framework that incorporates analytically separate but practically related normative, conceptual, empirical and policy lenses.

Contributors to the volume also attempt definitional tasks to allow for taxonomies of diasporas and diasporic activity in conflict. Sheffer, for instance, whose work is cited by a number of our contributors and who also writes in this volume in Chapter 4 on the Jewish Diaspora, refers to a fundamental difference between state-linked and stateless diasporas. He identifies the development of diasporas as historical phenomena – arguing for three historical waves of diasporic formation. These are the ‘‘historical’’ diasporas, formed in pre-modern times; the ‘‘new’’ diasporas, formed since the industrial revolution; and, lastly, the ‘‘incipient ethnonational’’ diasporas – those of very recent origin. Sheffer further argues that a fruitful way to frame the analysis of diaspora activity ‘‘at home abroad’’ is to conceive of the ‘‘diaspora profile’’. This includes identification patterns, strategies towards host counties, organizational activities and transnational activities.

The conceptual framework

The conceptual foundation more or less assumes that diasporas are social groups that (i) settle and establish themselves in another country and (ii) are internally heterogeneous. Different parts of the same diaspora can and do have different interests, defined among other things by class, gender, generation, occupation or religion. Diasporas are rarely constituted by a single factor other than the broadest of connections to a specific homeland. Diasporas are not, for instance, defined by their religion. The Palestinian diaspora provides a good example of where one marker of difference is that between Christian and Muslim.

Diasporas involve a complex of always shifting power relations. Change in relations of power within diasporas, and the way these changes intersect with external configurations of power, provide much of the conceptual framework for this book. Although this book is multidisciplinary, it nevertheless adopts a political science perspective, which is essentially concerned with "who gets what, where, when and how and who is advantaged and disadvantaged in this process" – the classic questions of political analysis. We assume that the outcomes of shifting power relations are consequential in answering these questions.

We also assume that the nature of diaspora intervention in conflict is a result of the respective power relations within diasporas and between diaspora, home and host country. Diasporas intervene in conflict because they can. Diasporas without access to power of some sort, whether direct or surrogate, do not intervene in conflicts.

The gender dimension

Given that our approach views diaspora as non-homogeneous and as constituted by unequal relations of power within and between itself and other social groups, and that significant axes of power inequality can be class, gender, ethnicity and religion, the next research question must be when and why these differential power relations matter in conflict. Our generic response is that they all matter at different times in different conflicts. More specifically, however, the book draws on the growing body of scholarly research and empirical evidence from humanitarian organizations that women suffer disproportionately in conflict because of the gendered nature of social relations that universally allocate caring or nurturing responsibilities and roles to women.

None of our contributors takes the simplistic view that women suffer more than men in all circumstances in all conflicts. Instead our approach

is that men and women, boys and girls experience conflict differently owing to the pervasive nature and strength of socially constructed gendered roles in any society. In Chapter 3 of this book, Nadje Al-Ali, following the conflict cycle framework established by Bercovitch in Chapter 2, shows that gender matters at every stage of conflict – whether this be pre-conflict and pre-escalatory phases, acute conflict and war, or peacemaking and post-conflict reconstruction.[5] All women and men directly experience conflict through a gendered prism. This gendered patterning of human and social behaviour in conflict affects women's and men's lives.

Al-Ali emphasizes, however, that gendered patterns of social relations do not result in a ''uni-dimensional'' experience of conflict for women and men. Women are not always victims; sometimes they are perpetrators of violence and sometimes agents of peace. Women may be relatively more vulnerable in times of war but, conversely, the rupture to societal norms, which is often caused by war, may also open up new possibilities for women to participate in public and political life. Nor does gender ever matter on its own. Al-Ali insists that gender is only one aspect of power hierarchies within social relations, ''and does not necessarily constitute the most significant factor''. Social relations are also built around, for instance, ''economic class, ethnic and religious differentiation, sexual orientation and political affiliation''.

Paying attention to the diverse social constitution of diasporas, including the gendered differentiations, does more than remind us of the differing experiences of women and men in conflict. As Al-Ali points out, it is also a powerful reminder that diasporas are heterogeneous entities. Politically this has the significant consequence of forcing a rethink of who should represent diasporas, perhaps helping, Al-Ali argues, ''to shift away from the tendency to portray elder male political leaders as representative of the communities' views, politics and aspirations''.

The 10 case studies that comprise the remainder of the book build on the theoretical and conceptual framework established in the preceding chapters to investigate the central research question – are diasporas peace-wreckers or peace-makers?

Space precludes an investigation of each and every diaspora and all activities in every conflict, although some attempt is made to provide a representative range of cases from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Similarly, the case studies address diasporic activity at varying stages of the conflict cycle, depending on the diaspora input to the particular conflict.

Diaspora involvement in enduring or long-lasting conflicts as well as in conflicts of more recent origin is evaluated. In Chapter 4, Gabriel Sheffer examines what for some is the paradigmatic diaspora, that of the Jews, in

the context of the Arab–Palestinian–Israeli conflict. In Chapter 6, Khachig Tölölyan also analyses an "old" diaspora – that of the Armenians, in the context of the Karabagh conflict between Armenians and the state of Azerbaijan. By contrast, in Chapter 5, Mohammed Bamyeh evaluates the relatively "new" Palestinian diaspora, formed in the wake of the 1948 refugee movements of Palestinians from what is now the state of Israel, in the context of the continuing Palestinian–Israeli conflict.

The remaining case studies, of Colombians, Cubans, Sri Lankan Tamils, Kurds, Croats, Eritreans and Cambodians, are of diasporic intervention in conflicts that began well before the post–Cold War period. The major exception is the Colombian conflict, in which the violence has developed exponentially in the post–Cold War period. Nevertheless, Virginia Bouvier points out in Chapter 7 that the roots of the conflict, which engages the government, the military, left-wing military groups and right-wing paramilitaries, lie in the guerrilla warfare against the state that began in the 1960s.

The Cold War origins of conflict between Fidel Castro's Communist, pro-Soviet Cuba and the United States, the leader of the capitalist and democratic world camp, are evaluated by Jean Grugel and Henry Kippin. They argue in Chapter 8 that relations between the two and, by extension, the Cuban diaspora in the United States have been frozen "in an outmoded Cold War mould". By contrast, C. Christine Fair, analysing the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Chapter 9, explicitly claims that the "origins and continuation" of the Sri Lankan conflict are "exogenous to the dynamics of the Cold War and its demise". Fair goes on to argue that, if any international event shaped Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora involvement in the conflict, it was the terrorist attacks on New York's Twin Towers on 11 September 2001. The diaspora did not want to be associated with anything that could be called "terrorist" and thus began to dissociate itself from Tamil Tiger activity in Sri Lanka. In other words, the international "political opportunity structure" changed in 2001, and the separation of the diaspora from the insurgents became more likely and more feasible.[6]

Denise Natali in Chapter 10 also makes use of the idea of "political opportunity structure" as an analytical framework to investigate the involvement of the Kurdish diaspora in the Iraq conflict from 1998 onwards.[7] Natali points to the Kurdish diaspora's differentiated opportunities arising from its different states and political systems – Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria – and from its dispersal in Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, Israel and Greece. The Kurdish diaspora, Natali finds, was both peace-maker and peace-wrecker. Natali shows that here were "varying diasporic roles during different periods of the conflict cycle, some of which supported peace-making and some of which encouraged conflict".

The Kurdish diaspora came tantalizingly close to achieving, at least partially, its goal of a political community, if not a state, that it could call its own in northern Iraq in the aftermath of the 1990/1991 Gulf war. The Croatian diaspora, in contrast, achieved what many of its members had previously only dreamt about – the establishment of a fully fledged, internationally recognized sovereign state in the early 1990s. Zlatko Skrbiš evaluates the Croat experience in Chapter 11, demonstrating among other things that, although not as ‘‘old’’ a diaspora as the Kurdish one, Croatian aspirations for statehood were of long duration. Again similarly to the Kurdish experience, it was the international political opportunity structure that provided the possibilities for diaspora intervention in support of those aspirations. In the case of the Kurds, the two wars in Iraq, in 1991 and in 2003, provided the opening for the diaspora to intervene in support of the struggle to achieve an independent sovereign state; in the case of Croatia, it was the end of the Cold War that provided this opening.

Natali and Skrbiš argue respectively that Kurds and Croats were both peace-wreckers and, at different times, contributors to peace-building. Both also argue that the type of diaspora intervention was shaped by the political opportunity structure, including, more particularly (according to Skrbiš), the way in which the diaspora itself had been constituted through historical experience. Understanding the historical interests, aspirations and efforts of the diaspora and its organizational structures helps in understanding whether and in what circumstances diasporas might enter into conflicts as either peace-wreckers or peace-makers or as neither.

Khalid Koser, in his discussion of the Eritrean diaspora in Chapter 12, reiterates the point that diasporas can be both peace-wreckers and peace-makers but argues strongly that the positive side of diaspora intervention in conflict has been little told.[8] To this end his chapter seeks to redress the balance. Koser shows that the Eritrean diaspora made positive contributions to reconstruction after conflict, ‘‘not once but twice’’, in the aftermath of independence and of the conflict with Ethiopia. Koser charts these contributions schematically in terms of economic, political, social and cultural activities, which have both a home and a host country focus. This useful schema could well be used to analyse diaspora involvement in other post-war reconstruction efforts and thus extend our analytical capacities for understanding what diasporas may or may not do in the aftermath of conflict.

In our final chapter, Khatharya Um evaluates the activities of a comparatively very recent diaspora, the Cambodians, which was largely generated out of the most savage of conflicts in the 1970s when over 1 million people died in Cambodia and half a million became refugees. Um reinforces the message of all the contributors to this volume that dias-

poric intervention in the ‘‘home’’ country and the form that it takes are constrained and shaped by the opportunities available in host countries and in the transnational spaces in which they operate. Um insists that the ‘‘ability of diasporas to engage in homeland politics thus depends not only on their desire and intrinsic capabilities but also on the *opportunity* to do so’’ (emphasis in the original). Um, like Natali and Skrbiš among others, discusses the phenomenon of diasporic involvement in post-conflict governments. Incidentally, Um points out the high-profile role of diaspora women in the Cambodian government. Um’s conclusions echo those of all the case-study contributors. Diasporic involvement in conflict still needs to be studied but what can be said is that diasporas play ‘‘significant and varied roles’’ in the whole range of activities in the conflict cycle.

Peace-wreckers, peace-makers or neither?

The case-study contributors have produced a number of rich empirical and analytical findings. Some of these are case-study specific but, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, many of the analytical and conceptual conclusions are shared. Some of these findings have already been alluded to above, but perhaps the most significant, and worth reiterating, is that diasporas play varied roles in conflict; and different groups and individuals within the same diaspora may have different approaches, organizations, interests and objectives within the same conflict. Even where a diaspora is more united on objectives, it may play a positive role in peace-making but also may play a negative role in terms of a contribution to continued conflict. Whether a diaspora will play either or none of those roles can best be understood, according to our contributors, by tracing not just the capacities of the diaspora (agency) but also the transnational opportunities available to it (structure).

In the rest of this section I summarize the findings of this research in a more schematic manner and look at the policy implications. The chapter closes by identifying areas that could be fruitful for further research.

The findings

- Perhaps the first finding of all the contributors to this volume is that ‘‘history counts’’. From Cambodia to Croatia, Palestine to Israel, and Eritrea to Armenia, evaluating the historical context enables both analyst and policy-maker to understand the interests, aspirations, institutions and objectives of diasporic communities as actors in international conflict.

- C. Christine Fair, Denise Natali and Khatharya Um, in their studies of, respectively, the Tamils in the Sri Lankan conflict, the Kurds in the Iraq conflict and the Cambodians in conflict and post-conflict reconstruction, explicitly remind us that history certainly counts – but it counts in very specific ways. Diasporas are agents but specific and empirically observable ‘‘political opportunity structures’’ provide both constraints and opportunities that shape what diasporas can and cannot do in each stage of the conflict cycle.
- Diasporas can be both peace-makers and peace-wreckers in conflict and, significantly, can choose to play neither role. Khalid Koser, for instance, argues strongly that the Eritrean diaspora plays a positive role in the conflict cycle. Given its ongoing substantial contributions to the reconstruction of its homeland, it is a peace-maker. In fact, it is hard to find from this research an example of a diaspora in conflict that has been a thorough-going peace-wrecker. All arguably want peace – the major question is, on what terms. The radical Croatian independence movement located in the diaspora may come nearest to the crude conceptualization of ‘‘peace-wrecker’’ if the criterion used is that of acting as fund-raiser for the purchase of arms on international illegal markets. As Zlatko Skrbiš points out, however, even the radical elements wanted peace – but peace with independence, not peace per se. By contrast, Virginia Bouvier finds that members of the Colombian diaspora in the United States by and large do not want to be associated with the Colombian conflict – believing that such an association threatens the stability of the life they are building in the United States and as transnational agents between Colombia and the United States.
- Owing partly to the very opportunity structures identified in our second finding, a diaspora can be both peace-maker and peace-wrecker in the same conflict at different periods. In other words, diaspora involvement can be both positive and negative in the same conflict.
- Because of the heterogeneity of diasporas, diaspora individuals and organizations can play contradictory roles, some contributing to conflict and others contributing to peace. Jean Grugel and Henry Kippin, for example, find that, whereas the dominant factions in the Cuban diaspora in the United States have maintained a highly conflictual approach to Castro’s Cuba, there are indications that a younger generation would welcome a more pragmatic approach to the conflict.
- A surprise finding was that diasporic activity was not significantly influenced by whether or not Cold War or post–Cold War conditions applied – except as the most distant of background factors. The demise of the Soviet Union and the change in the international landscape from bipolarity, characterized by rivalry between the former Soviet Union and the United States, to a unipolar international system, led by the

United States, no doubt did allow for the emergence of ''hot'' conflicts in Croatia and Karabagh and for greater opportunities for the achievement of objectives in terms of the Kurdish diaspora. These case studies nevertheless indicate that the process and outcome of diasporic activity in post–Cold War conflict provided only one of a number of salient factors in the structure/agency matrix within which the activities of diasporas in conflict can be explained.

- We did not discover strong patterns of correlation of diasporic activity across the different stages of the conflict cycle. In other words, diasporas did not all participate in the same way in each specific phase of the conflict. In periods of hot conflict, for instance, the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, especially in the aftermath of the bombing of the Twin Towers in New York on 11 September 2001, and the Colombian diaspora were, broadly speaking, not supportive of armed struggles, whereas the Croatian diaspora actively raised funds for weapons and occasionally donated combat personnel.
- There are no predetermined patterns of diasporic activity in conflict. Those looking for a predictive theory of diasporic involvement in international conflict could be pointed in the direction of the transnational political opportunity structures identified by a number of our contributors as affecting the transnational political organization of the diaspora. Analysis of the political opportunities available in the ''host'' country and the international normative environment that supports or condemns diasporic activity in a particular conflict could help build a model of diasporic opportunity in conflict. Whether this would be a predictive model awaits further research.
- This research has conceptual implications. Drawing on her case study, Virginia Bouvier calls into question the presumption that diaspora Colombians in the United States primarily conceive of themselves in relation to Colombia as the ''homeland''. Bouvier goes on to raise doubts about whether the concept of ''homeland'' can withstand empirical evidence that indicates that the Colombian diaspora, and possibly other diasporas, can best be understood as primarily transnational, as opposed to national, subjects of international politics. Bouvier argues that, if this is the case, then the old frame of reference of sending/receiving countries also becomes questionable, perhaps even redundant and unhelpful for analysis.

Khatharya Um's research reinforces Bouvier's findings that the way in which the terms ''host'' and ''home'' country are used in the majority of scholarship evaluating transnational migration is unsatisfactory, in that it fails ''fully to capture the nuances and complexity of the transnational experience'' and can thus be misleading. ''Home'', she argues, is not a single fixed place for the Cambodian diasporic individual and nei-

ther is the ''host'' country a transitory place for most. Um criticizes the vantage point of the home/host dichotomy which connotes ''a defined linearity . . . from the point of exit to the point of re-incorporation''.

Zlatko Skrbiš tackles the concept of peace itself. Skrbiš shows that for the Croatian diaspora the pursuit of peace was compatible with the purchase of illegal arms abroad to support Croatian belligerents in the Balkan wars of the 1990s. This is because peace, for diaspora Croats, meant peace with independence. Peace without independence was not conceived of as peace at all. For outside observers therefore, the Croatian diaspora could have been seen as a peace-wrecker, because of its fund-raising for illegal arms shipments. For the diaspora, such fund-raising meant support for a final peace, which was ''achievable only through military victory''; it was ''interested in victory that would bring peace rather than in peace per se''.

- Finally, our contributors demonstrate that targeted policy interventions can make a difference to whether, and to what extent, diasporas play a positive or a negative role in conflict. Outcomes are not all accidental, despite the powerful shaping abilities of the political opportunity structures that both constrain and enable. Agency matters.

  The right policy at the right time ''both in origin and in destination countries'', as Khalid Koser argues in his discussion of the Eritrean diaspora, is important. Natali's work on Kurdish involvement in the conflicts in Iraq supports the conclusion that host country policy matters in terms of diasporic propensity to contribute to peace or to become involved in aggravating tensions in order to perpetuate conflict. Natali's study builds a carefully substantiated argument that is worth reporting in its entirety because of its detailed analysis and its potentially useful foundation for host country policy guidelines towards diasporas involved in international conflict.

> Stateless diasporic communities linked to legitimized leaders and organizations are more likely to pursue strategies based on negotiation than are diasporas de-legitimized in the international arena. Legitimate networks can serve the peaceful interests of their diasporas and homelands, whereas illegitimate ones can discourage peace-making. Second, diasporas are likely to act as peace-makers if engagement in homeland politics is perceived as identity-reinforcing and legitimate. The more inclusive the political system or proposed system, the more are diasporic activities channelled into that system and shaped accordingly, rather than taking place outside the system in more confrontational forms. Third, the higher the stakes for achieving nationalist claims in the war's outcome (nationalism legalized, statehood or autonomy), the more likely it is that interventions will support conflict resolution. Similarly, the lower the stakes (continuation of the status quo, loss of territorial sovereignty), the more likely it is that diasporas will refrain from negotiation or will engage in hostility.

Policy implications

The first policy recommendation is that specific analysis of specific diasporas at specific stages in specific conflicts needs to take place and that over-generalizations about what diasporas may or may not contribute to international conflicts are rarely helpful. Not all diasporas have the same capacities, opportunities or motivation to intervene in conflict and diasporas rarely are monolithic entities in terms of interests and objectives. Moreover, a diaspora may have different objectives at different stages of the conflict. For instance, the Croatian diaspora both funded armed conflict and, in the later stages of conflict, was active in support for peace-building once national independence had been achieved.

A second policy recommendation is that host states can change the opportunity structures available for diaspora contributions in such a way as to channel positive contributions to peace-making and to dissuade the negative contributions of peace-wreckers. Diaspora organizations and leadership that promote peace should be included in policy-making processes and those that support military activities should be penalized.

It can be argued that some diaspora organizations may be supporting military activities "in a good cause", perhaps with the objective of overthrowing dictatorships in their home countries. This is not a satisfactory reason to ignore fund-raising or propaganda activities by diasporas that support military actions abroad, however, because in well-ordered and democratic states it is the government's responsibility and prerogative alone to decide on military activities abroad. If a diaspora wishes to influence the policy choices of its host government in support of military activities in the homeland, the only acceptable avenue of influence should be through lobbying within the normal domestic process.

It would equally be a mistake to underestimate or to overestimate the potential contribution of diasporas in international conflict. Global policy-makers can be greatly assisted by diaspora communities in particular crucial phases of conflict, for instance in providing remittances in post-conflict reconstruction. Koser shows in his chapter on Eritrea for example that the Eritrean diaspora contributed substantially to nation-building after conflict. Each diaspora is different, however, and some diaspora individuals may simply wish to be allowed to carry on their new lives in the host country, away from the conflict from which they have escaped, as for instance Bouvier shows in the chapter on Colombia.

Another lesson is that in most cases the home country will need to exercise leadership and certainly coordination of diasporic activities. This would help avoid resentment by local populations of diasporic leaders "parachuting in" to tell those who have endured the suffering of war what to do from the safe confines of Western capitals. Home country governments will also wish to exert control over powerful diasporic

groups with access to external resources, including access to governments in major capitals, in order to maintain the prerogatives of sovereign governments.

On the other hand, if diasporas are to contribute to peace processes, they will need passive or active support from host and home countries. If major powers want to encourage diasporas to engage productively in peace processes, they need to create the legislative framework to make that possible. This could be as simple as giving tax breaks on remittances for post-conflict reconstruction or facilitating access to relevant policy-makers in host countries.

A final lesson for global policy-makers is that major powers and international organizations cannot abrogate their own responsibilities to seek peace in long-lasting and intractable conflicts. Even the most dynamic diaspora is not equipped to resolve major conflicts on its own. Israeli and Palestinian diasporas are unlikely, for instance, to have much impact on the promotion of peace in the Middle East unless substantial intervention by the major powers provides some realistic hope that peace might be possible. In the meantime, these diasporas can contribute only marginally to positive initiatives, leaving a wide space for more negative contributions by sections of the diaspora that do not see room for compromise. For global policy-makers, the additional lesson therefore is that diasporas do not solve conflict on their own.

Further research

There is clearly more room for research on how, why, when and to what effect diasporas become involved in international conflict. This book investigates just 10 case studies but attempts to draw some qualified generalizations by using an analytical prism offered by Jacob Bercovitch's conflict cycle schema. This proved useful both to the contributors – as an organizing framework – and to the editors – helping to provide the foundation for some comparative analyses – but could certainly be developed to offer more systematic analysis of a larger number of cases. Future development of the schema could perhaps include Khalid Koser's taxonomic categorization of diasporic input in conflict. Such a schema would also benefit from having a specific analytical frame devoted to the differential activities of diasporic women and men in conflict.

On its own, however, the further development of schemata will not be enough to answer more fully the research questions in which we are interested. The non-glamorous, pedestrian but, it is hoped, rewarding task of more and better empirical work is still necessary to start building the foundations for more sophisticated inductive *and* deductive theories of

diasporas in conflict. Induction may need facts on which to build its theoretical edifices but, equally importantly, deductivists need better facts so that their initial speculative hypotheses are bound by some level of "reality check".

This book has less to say on the "ethics" of diasporic involvement in conflict and the question of responsibility for conflict than on the empirics and the explanatory analysis of diasporic interventions. Mohammed Bamyeh in his discussion of the Palestinian diaspora in Chapter 5 is an important exception. Bamyeh raises some very difficult ethical issues concerning the allocation of responsibility for conflict as part of the process that is necessary to create sustainable peace. Bamyeh's contention is that South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a useful example of opposing sides in the aftermath of a violent and divisive conflict being able to develop a common narrative of responsibility for historic injustice in order to provide the foundations for peace.

Ethical issues are also touched on to a certain extent by Skrbiš in his discussion of what sort of peace, and on what terms, is acceptable to diaspora groups. Although our volume does not come to large conclusions on these important and sensitive ethical issues, it does identify a role for further research to tackle the ethical imperatives of diasporas in peacemaking and peace-building. These include the ethical questions raised by a number of contributors in this book of whether or not diasporas should be engaged in conflicts in the "home" state at all. This is not simply a question for the host state government, which may discourage such involvement. Diasporic involvement in conflict sometimes causes irritation, even anger, back in the "home" country, especially if a diasporic community is wealthier and has access to international political connections that the homeland leaders do not.

Meeting normative, empirical and policy objectives

The normative objective of the book is to try to discover patterns of diasporic activity in conflict such as to support positive and discourage negative activities. In charting the empirical case studies and thus meeting our second objective, our contributors demonstrate that, although transnational political opportunity structures do indeed "shape and shove" diasporic activities, it is also true to say that diasporas are not powerless victims of circumstances. Diasporas have agency, however limited. This means that policy interventions can be designed to discourage peace-wrecking and encourage diasporic peace-making initiatives. These chapters show where that has been possible and also demonstrate to policy-makers of the future that it is worth paying attention to diasporas in

conflict. They can be an enemy of efforts to end conflict – but they can also be a powerful ally in conflict resolution and sustainable peace-building.

Notes

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United Nations University Press
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Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-8925, Japan
Tel: +81-3-3499-2811 Fax: +81-3-3406-7345
E-mail: sales@hq.unu.edu general enquiries: press@hq.unu.edu
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E-mail: unuona@ony.unu.edu

United Nations University Press is the publishing division of the United Nations University.

Cover design by Mea Rhee

Printed in Hong Kong

ISBN 978-92-808-1140-7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Diasporas in conflict : peace-makers or peace-wreckers? / edited by Hazel Smith and Paul Stares.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-9280811407 (pbk.)
1. Emigration and immigration—Political aspects—Case studies.
2. Immigrants—Political activity—Case studies. 3. Conflict management—Case studies. 4. World politics—Case studies. I. Smith, Hazel, 1954–
II. Stares, Paul B.
JV6255.D53 2007
304.8—dc22 2007002607