

THE ROLE OF DIASPORAS IN CIVIL WAR¹

Introduction

In January this year, news was released of Somalis in the West being involved in the continuous civil war in Somalia. Prime Minister Mohamed Ali Gedi of the transitional government accused Somalis in the West, including those in Norway, of support for the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). The UIC is a group of Sharia (Islamic Law) Courts in the South of Somalia, encompassing a wide range of religious viewpoints, from moderate to quite militant. Norwegian media reported that Somali young men were eager to go back to Somalia to fight for the 'islamists'. Earlier, suggestions were made that Somalis in the West sent money to support the UIC, which was termed 'supporting terrorists' financially.

Why is there such great interest in the alleged financial and physical support for the Islamists in Somalia by Norwegian Somalis? First, of course, there is a link assumed to the 'war on terror'. After 9-11, international security concerns have taken on a new dimension, with the realization that not only states but also individuals can cause threats to security on a global scale. There is the realization that a failed state like Somalia can pose a threat to national security elsewhere, through the migration of militant civilians and as a consequence of the inability to control activities going on in the country. In the Somali case, al Qaeda members allegedly have been able to go into hiding there, and the bombings of the American Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania are said to have been staged from Somalia.

A further element of concern is the fact that those who are actively engaged in the Somali war may actually be Norwegian citizens. This fact would radically change the dynamics of rights and responsibilities of states and citizens because it affects relations between the various states involved. Not only are there international concerns, but these issues also play out on the national level. The possibility that there may be people living in Norway who adhere to radical Islam is frightening as this could pose a direct threat to national security and reduces people's feelings of safety. The fact that the phenomenon of Muslim migrant extremism is referred to as 'the enemy within' is revealing. Relatedly, there is a more general fear that transnational attachments of any kind, whether malignant or benign, weaken an immigrant's attachments to the home country and thus the coherence of the nation-state². The 'national order of things', as Malki (1992) refers to the nation-state system, is founded on citizens belonging to one or the other state. Any type of transnational activity thus creates a concern about national loyalties.

The recent increase of interest seems to imply that transnational military and political activities are a new phenomenon, but the question is whether this is the case. Past examples of transnational organizing which sought to politically transform the 'home' include overseas Chinese in the 1911 revolution; the Jewish diaspora in the creation of Israel; and the activities of Irish-Americans over time with respect to the conflict in Northern Ireland (Cohen 1997). Also, more regional transnational activities are and have been common, inter alia where regional refugees are involved. Examples of this phenomenon include the organization of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), a government-in-exile formed in the 1960s among Palestinian refugees in Jordan; and the establishment of the Rwandan Patriotic Front by Rwandan Tutsi refugees in Uganda, who reentered the country to topple the Hutu government in Kigale which had instigated the Rwandan genocide (Salehyan et al. 2006).

¹ I am grateful to Kristian Berg Harpviken for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

² Although research is far from conclusive on this point, and some actually suggest a positive link between transnationalism and integration (Faist 2000; Kivisto 2001; Snel et al. 2006).

Rather than the phenomenon being new, what is new is the increasing interest within the social sciences in transnationalism (Mazzucato et al. 2004), including political transnational activities. The concept of transnationalism first emerged in the 1970s. It emerged in different disciplinary fields, and developed in different directions. When the term was originally introduced in International Relations (IR) by Keohane and Nye (1971), it drew attention to the role of nonstate actors whose importance had been neglected by the dominant Realist paradigm. Whereas the term originally was associated with all forms of transnational activity, it later became associated with economic relations, especially the role of transnational corporations in international affairs (Wayland 2004: 407). Furthermore, in IR the concept of transnationalism was narrowed down to focus on the international activities of nongovernmental actors (NGOs) and advocacy networks (Tarrow 2001).

Other types of nonstate actors received far less attention within IR, though they were the focus of attention in other disciplines. In anthropology and sociology, for example, the transnational activities of individuals, and mostly migrants, have been the main point of focus. In these academic fields, the transnational relates to the human impacts of globalization. It is conceptualised as 'a continuous flow of people, goods, money and ideas that transgress national boundaries and thereby connect different physical, social, economic and political spaces' (Mazzucato et al. 2004). While much of this work has analyzed migrants' social, cultural and economic transnationalism, a growing literature, in particular on forced migrants, addresses migrant political transnationalism.

In an attempt to increase our understanding on the transnational facets of civil war, and possibly draw out a number of interesting themes for further research, this paper will focus on the role of ethno-national diasporas in the various stages of civil war. Ethno-national diasporas are defined as 'a socio-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries. Members of such entities maintain regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as their homelands and with individuals and groups of the same background residing in other host countries' (Sheffer 2003: 9-10). Here, my main focus will be on those diasporas caused by forced migration. I will provide an overview of their key domains of influence in processes of conflict and peace building, and address the question of whether this influence means a prolonging of war or a better chance for peace.

I will mainly look at the role of the wider diaspora, rather than those in neighbouring countries (see also Van Hear 2002). Furthermore, I will look at the role of these diasporas in civil war holistically, including various aspects of political transnationalism that may contribute both to civil war and peace processes. My choice is informed by my own expertise, which is on the transnational activities of refugees. It is also informed by the fact that within IR, the transnational facets of civil war are being discussed, taking a more regional and narrow approach (see e.g. Gleditsch 2006; Salehyan et al. 2006). For this paper, I have reviewed literature on migrant political transnationalism in order to provide a wide variety of case studies, ranging from Sri Lanka to Somalia to El Salvador.

Key Domains of Influence

Many ethno-national diasporas are produced by political repression or violent protracted conflict in the home states. Thus, it is very important to recognize that the relationship of a transnational community to its country of origin is 'as likely to be defined by a desire for transformation, contestation and political change as it is by nostalgia, continuity and tradition' (Adamson 2001: 155). According to the 1951 Geneva Convention, a refugee is a person who 'owing to wellfounded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality,

membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country' (UNHCR 1996). Many refugee communities display a political and social orientation toward the country of origin as a consequence of the forced character of their stay outside their country of origin. Often, the leadership of the political opposition are amongst those refugees who move further abroad. Political events and conflicts in the country of origin continue to influence and often divide the communities, and political links to the country of origin remain significant.

Furthermore, not only characteristics of refugeeness but also characteristics of being in diaspora play a role. As Wayland (2004: 417) points out, persons who migrate from a closed society to an open society are able to capitalise on newfound freedoms to publish, organise, and accumulate financial resources to an extent that was impossible in the homeland. Motivated by their experiences and facilitated by broader globalization processes, diasporas play an increasingly important role in the various stages of civil war. Diasporas adopt different strategies for influencing change in their countries of origin. Østergaard-Nielsen (2003: 70) distinguishes between direct and indirect strategies, where direct refers to transnational activities that are directly targeted at the countries of origin, and indirect refers to activities that are indirectly targeted at those countries, through other actors. Direct may come through giving economic, political or even military support to political counterparts in the homeland, while indirect strategies include lobbying or bringing pressure to bear on the international community. Drawing on this categorisation, I will here distinguish between financial contributions; military and political involvements; and advocacy and lobbying.

Financial Contributions

Over the last decade or so, interest in remittances has increased dramatically. There is a general understanding that migrant remittances are vital in an increasing number of national economies worldwide. But these substantial amounts are not only interesting because they contribute economically: they are also of great importance because they have the potential to alter the local balance of resources and power. The financial contributions of diasporas raise tens of millions of dollars annually for opposition groups around the world (Adamson 2001: 165). This may prolong civil wars by several years, as in a large number of countries, warlords make use of diaspora connections and exploit or use migrants to advance power and wealth (Ballentine 2003; Collinson 2003). Though it is clear that the links between remittances and conflict should not be underestimated, at the same time it is very difficult to establish exactly how and to what extent remittances prolong civil war.

One major obstacle is that, despite an increased focus on remittances, statistics are still very limited. In order to estimate total remittance flows, a top-down or bottom-up approach can be selected (Lindley 2006: 5). The bottom-up approach is based on survey data on average transfers and government statistics on numbers of migrants. There is a lack of reliable data on these issues, and a common tendency to underreport remittances. On top of that, remittance senders will not provide reliable information on their contributions in support of warring factions in the country of origin.

The top-down approach uses data provided by remittance companies, national and international financial institutes. Yet these statistics mostly do not distinguish between the different purposes for which remittances are sent, and, more problematically, most of the money that is transferred to conflict areas does not pass through these formal channels. In the case of Afghanistan and Somalia, for example, the *hawala* system is mainly used. *Hawil* is an Arabic word that means transfer, usually of money or responsibility, and the *hawala* is a worldwide, informal system of value transfer operated and used by Afghans, Somalis and

other migrant groups, for remittance sending and business transactions (Horst et al. 2002). Although referred to as an informal exchange mechanism, it usually operates according to well-established rules based on trust. The main concern governments and international financial institutions have is the lack of transparency of the system, as this could be a source of potential abuse (Weiss Fagen et al. 2006).

Despite inadequate statistical data, a growing body of literature has begun to analyze the role that members of diasporas play in providing material support for armed conflicts. A World Bank report, for example, indicates that countries which ended a civil war five years ago and which had an unusually large diaspora based in the US, had a 36 percent chance of conflict recurring, as opposed to a 6 percent chance in countries with an unusually small diaspora (Collier 2000: 6). It states, rather unsubstantiated in my view, that diasporas are very dangerous in civil war, because they are much richer than the people in their country of origin and they are a ready market for rebel groups as a source of financing. Yet the argument has been also been made that diasporas offer great potential for peace; an issue I'll come back to.

Growing evidence exists that many active, non-state armed organizations are financed by revenues from diaspora communities. A classic case is the financial support for the IRA by the Irish community in the United States (Adamson 2001: 166), but other well-reported examples exist. Most notable is the Sri Lankan case, where the Tamil diaspora has provided substantial resources that sustained both the armed struggle for a separate Tamil state as well as the Tamil refugee communities (McDowell 1996; Van Hear 2002; Cheran 2003; Wayland 2004). The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)'s resources largely come from the Tamil diaspora, though there is some disagreement as to whether these are collected voluntarily or through coercion. The LTTE is also said to be directly involved in the remittance transfer business, from which it takes a cut – another form of transnational transfer (McDowell 1996).

In the Ethiopian Civil War that led to the formation of the Eritrean state, the diaspora played a vital role as well. The links between the diaspora and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) go back as early as 1961, and involve financial contributions as well (Koser 2001b). Informants recall how during the 1970s, Eritrean refugees in Tripoli had regular meetings to collect money that would be sent to an EPLF bank. The money was used to buy medicine, weapons, books and such for the fighters in Eritrea (Al-Ali et al. 2001: 586). Throughout the world, Eritrean refugees were mobilized to contribute to the war effort through a very systematic network of 'mass organisations'. The EPLF also established a network of NGOs known as the Eritrean Relief Association. This network quite successfully targeted host country NGOs and other donors for contributions. In addition, in the UK, it organized regular public collections.

Whereas the ability to raise financial and other resources may be greater for these types of secessionist movements³, other cases have also been documented. Somali diaspora groups have been mobilized to support various factions, and 'patriotic feeling and civic pride have been converted into valuable material support in the form of diaspora donations, investment and activism on behalf of political formations and communities in Somaliland and Puntland' (Lindley 2006: 6). The diaspora has been a critical source of funds for clan militias, which have raised funds, sometimes through coercion, from clan members living abroad (UNDP 2001: 132). A similar situation has been observed in Darfur, where some of the main players are supported with resources from the diaspora and may in fact largely be dominated by diaspora politicians (Endre Stiansen, personal communication). In these contexts, it is not unlikely that diaspora involvement indeed prolongs the conflict.

³ See also evidence on the Kurdish (Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003), Kosovan (Adamson 2001: 166) and Sikh case (Ellis et al. 2001).

Military and Political Involvements

Including transnational politics into an analysis of civil war has become vital. Ethno-national diasporas utilise transnational opportunities to pursue political goals in various states, thus creating a nexus between domestic and transnational politics. Including the transnational reveals how 'despite unfavourable conditions in the home country, factors abroad may protract an otherwise non-existent or short-lived insurgency. Such factors constitute a transnational opportunity structure' (Wayland 2004: 417). In the case of Sri Lanka, for example, the combination of greater political freedom, community organising and access to advanced communications and financial resources in receiving states, has allowed the Tamil separatists of the LTTE to engage in protracted insurgency against the Sri Lankan government army. The war is being fought within Sri Lanka, but Tamil efforts are supported by the Tamil diaspora (Wayland 2004: 424). Thus, any analysis that does not take the political role of the diaspora into account, remains incomplete.

Ethno-national diasporas provide a source of recruitment for many armed opposition groups engaged in violent struggles in the home country. Transnational mobilization most often takes place between neighbouring countries, as has been documented elsewhere (see e.g. Salehyan et al. 2006; Gleditsch 2006; Harpviken 2006). Yet there are also cases of mobilization of fighters in the wider diaspora. Throughout the struggle for an independent Eritrea, for example, through a very systematic network of 'mass organizations, Eritrean refugees were mobilized for the armed struggle by the EPLF (Al-Ali 2001: 586). At the same time, the Ethiopian government had to deal with another nationalist movement, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). OLF was created in 1974 with the goal of establishing an independent state for the Oromo, and received training from the EPLF in the process. While it largely drew on local and regional fighters, a few particularly committed individuals in the wider diaspora returned for periods of what they term 'national service' with the OLF (Sorenson 1996: 443). The same happened among Kosovo-Albanians abroad during the war in Kosovo – and to a smaller extent in the other recent Balkan wars (Kristian Berg Harpviken, personal communication).

Besides direct military support, diasporas are vital for providing various kinds of political support. In ethnic conflicts, national identity politics for example often draw heavily on elite support from the diaspora. As Sorenson (1996: 443) stresses, diaspora populations are particularly fertile breeding grounds for the social construction of nationalist mythologies. Many nationalist movements derive significant political support from sympathisers in the diaspora, who use the nationalist project of creating a new homeland as a way of dealing with their own physical and existential displacement⁴. Political activities that are directed towards the creation of a homeland give purpose and a sense of justice to their lives. Being in diaspora, they can build on the work of foreign academics, journalists and other writers who have been active in the production of nationalist discourse (Sorenson 1996: 464)

The Kurdish diaspora, for example, is a highly politicised community. The political developments in Kurdistan play a large role in the lives of refugees in various western countries, and there is a high degree of political activism in support of the Kurdish cause (Wahlbeck 1998). Kurds in Europe for example have been able to produce and sustain an alternative imagined community beyond that defined by their host states as well as their home state. Communication technologies have made it possible for dispersed communities of Kurdish activists and intellectuals to pool their assets, taking advantage of the variations in resources and political opportunity structures (Adamson 2001: 160). A clear example of this is provided by the existence of Kurdish satellite television. This reflects 'both the problems

⁴ See also Fuglerud (1999) on this.

that Turkey has in suppressing Kurdish identity in the age of technology and open borders, as well as the growing role of the usually wealthier and better educated Kurdish diaspora in Europe' (Adamson 2001: 162).

Diasporas have become critical agents of social, political and cultural change in more conventional, less confrontational, ways as well. In the post-war phase, for example, diasporas often emerge as a new, albeit heterogeneous, voice in national affairs (Landolt 1999: 296). Their power in this field to a large extent depends on whether the post-war government of the state they left is willing to listen to this voice, for example by allowing them to vote or engaging them in various political processes in the home land. Especially if the diaspora played a vital role in bringing the government into power, this does happen. In 1993, the Eritrean diaspora was invited to participate in a referendum for independence. Participation in the diaspora was well over 90 percent, and almost all votes were cast in favour of independence (Koser 2001a: 145). After the referendum, overseas nationals were also closely involved in the drafting and ratification of the Constitution⁵.

Diasporas at times are also allowed to vote in elections, and even if they are not, may influence voting decisions in their country of origin. One reason for this is that, in some instances, they are believed to be better informed as they have better access to media and communication networks. Another is that many voters depend on remittances from their relatives abroad (Itzigsohn et al. 1999: 328-9). This political influence expands the field of political competition to include the transnational.

Whereas the diaspora in many ways may be a reflection of the alliances and divisions common in the country of origin, they may also represent a new voice. From their experiences as migrants and their encounters with different political and social systems, new perspectives may develop. In the case of El Salvador, for example, new political and social actors emerged in the diaspora who were 'committed to a transnational social justice and community development agenda that embodied the distinct vision of the Salvadoran migrant citizenry' (Landolt 1999: 295). It was not just the elite who participated, but also ordinary Salvadoran migrants who had never before participated in politics but developed an interest and had the opportunity in exile. Their main goal was to hold on to and contribute to the process of national reconstruction and reconciliation that followed the civil war. This is an example of a case where exile, rather than deepening divisions, led to greater unity and a commitment to peace processes.

Advocacy and Lobbying

The focus of political activities in diaspora is not only on the country of origin. Members of transnational communities may also work for political change by networking with a variety of international agencies, state and non-state actors. In this case, their aim is mainly to raise international awareness, thereby increasing pressures for political change in the home state (Adamson 2001: 156). One way of doing this is by providing accurate information. Members of diaspora groups often put much effort into providing alternative sources of information regarding the political situation in their homeland. In cases of severe suppression of information, such as is the case in the civil war in Algeria, access to unofficial sources of information is heavily dependent on personal networks, travel or cell phone conversations (Adamson 2001: 163). In these instances, the diaspora is also best situated to gain access to information. Television and especially Internet are media that are utilised extensively for disseminating the message to a wider audience. Furthermore, conferences, marches and

⁵ A similar process has taken place in Somaliland.

demonstrations are organized in the host country in order to draw attention to, and inform the public about, what is happening in the country of origin.

Besides playing an important role in providing alternative sources of information, various diasporas have invested greatly in lobbying activities aimed at bringing an issue on the international agenda. Adamson (2001: 162) draws attention to the importance of 'ethnic lobbying' in US politics, though it is also suggested that such lobbying rarely is successful. Whereas the Kurds have been mentioned as a diaspora with some success in this field (see e.g. McDowell 1996; Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003), Bosnians and Eritreans have been seen to be unsuccessful in their attempts (Al-Ali et al. 2001; Koser 2001a).

It may be more productive to lobby for support indirectly, through sympathetic NGOs and advocacy networks. In fact, diaspora groups and advocacy networks often use similar strategies and thus can learn from and draw on one another (Adamson 2001: 163). Both can help put issues on the international agenda and engage in framing activities that reshape public opinion on a specific issue. Both can empower and legitimate certain forms of domestic opposition groups. And both can engage in actions that simultaneously create political pressures from above and below. Part of the diaspora strategy will be targeted towards transnational advocacy networks, in order to give their political cause greater legitimacy internationally and draw on a wider range of resources.

Does diaspora involvement mean war or peace?

Having outlined some of the main activities that diasporas engage in to influence the outcome of civil conflict in their home country, I now want to turn to the question of whether these activities lead to peace, or prolong war. In the case of the continuous civil war in Somalia, recent media reports clearly suggest that diaspora involvement prolongs war, by supporting the fighting parties financially or physically. In a recent interview with a Norwegian-Somali, an interesting twist was given to these allegations. The man had sent his younger brother remittances in order to move from Somalia to Qatar; not primarily because of fears for his safety, but rather because he was afraid that his brother would get involved in the fighting. After the Ethiopian invasion, according to my informant, many young men in Somalia were ready to take up arms and there was a real need for peace rather than more fighting.

Although in the literature, there is a greater focus on the negative aspects of diaspora involvement in civil war, the evidence is not conclusive at all. According to Wayland (2004: 425-6), transnational networks sustain ethnopolitical conflicts and diasporas can play a major role in this process because the resources they provide can upset the existing balance of economic, political and military power in the homeland. At the same time, she indicates that these resources may not be enough to definitely change the outcomes of ethnic wars, and that the role of states remains vital as well. Refugees are often associated with conflict, and seen to spread arms, combatants and ideologies conducive to conflict (Salehyan et al. 2006; Gleditsch 2006). Yet little is known about the ways in which diaspora groups are involved in conflict resolution as well as post-conflict reconstruction. This section outlines some of the risks and potentials of diaspora engagement during times of civil war and peace building, but more research is needed to have a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at stake.

Risks

In the case of Darfur, the diaspora involvement, varying from financial support from Sudanese in the Gulf States to political support from those in Europe and the US, led to a hardening of positions, according to Endre Stiansen (personal communication). In peace negotiations, one third to a half of the delegates are from the diaspora, with many having left over 30 years ago. According to Stiansen, they have the required competence, but they also

have more radical stances, as they do not take part of the conflict in a physical sense. Whereas the Darfur diaspora has limited impact through advocacy and lobbying, they do have a great impact on some of the key actors involved, supporting a range of rebel leaders financially and politically. In this description of the risks of diaspora involvement, Stiansen points out three major problems: members of the diaspora do not face consequences on the ground; they do not have up-to-date information about the situation; and they do not have a single stance.

The argument that diasporas are more radical in their hatred and more uncompromising in their standpoints because of not facing the consequences of war, is a common one. In relation to this, Sorenson (1996: 443) argues that the Oromo diaspora's motivations and commitment are 'affected by the material and cultural conditions they face in their new country, rather than those in the country affected by civil war. Cheran (2003: 8) argues against such views by stating that they homogenize diaspora nationalism, and do not distinguish between different causes. Yet, of course, the issue of what is a legitimate struggle for self determination and what is a terrorist act against the state, will be answered in many ways by different actors.

The fact that diasporas do not have accurate information about the current conditions in their country of origin, is also important to take into account. If refugees fled their country five, ten, twenty, or more years ago, how able are they to engage in politics on the ground? In the Oromo case, it has been pointed out that supporters of Oromo nationalism face entirely different conditions from those in Ethiopia, and derive much of the information on which they base their decisions and actions second-hand (Sorenson 1996). Furthermore, this nationalism is conditioned by nostalgia, and builds on 'Oromo traditions' from which the elite diaspora is distanced from.

A final, and major concern in relation to the involvement of diasporas in civil war, is the fact that they are so divided. According to Sökefeld (2006: 280), there is an 'unspoken and rather cosy connotation of diaspora as community'. But there are significant cleavages and political differences within the group of people we have labelled 'diaspora' throughout this paper. Diasporas are 'stratified by class, caste, education, occupation, religious affiliation, cultural interests, urban or rural background' (Werbner 1999: 24). This is true for Tamils, Sikhs, Kurds, Somalis, Eritreans, Salvadorans, Afghans and most other groups that constitute exiled diasporas. At times stratifications are based on previous, homeland-related alliances, and in those cases, transnational political action appears to reproduce pre-existing power asymmetries (see e.g. Guarnizo 2003). At times, they are based on new divisions developed in exile or on divisions between the diaspora and those in the country of origin. It is thus vital, when studying the impact of diasporas on civil war, to disaggregate the different groups that a diaspora is constituted of, as well as how these groups relate to the domestic polity.

Potentials for Peace

Besides supporting the different actors in civil wars, members of ethno-national diasporas are actively involved in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation. This topic is of particular interest and requires further research. Many diasporas are critical agents of social change, and the transnational social field may be seen as a field in which 'established structures of domination and exploitation are contested, altered and reconstructed (Landolt 1999: 292). There is of course the question of how this is done, and whether these aims do not create further conflict. But when the transnational dimension proves to be vital to the advancement of a discourse on human rights and a critical debate on violence and repression, this can only be seen as a healthy development. In the cases of Haiti and El Salvador, for example, such processes have been noted to make a difference (see e.g. Gammage 2004). Migrants often gain the space and resources to fight for more peaceful and equal conditions in their country of origin.

Furthermore, and importantly, once a conflict has ended, the diaspora can do much to maintain the often fragile peace. In the reconstruction phase, remittances are often vital in guaranteeing stability on both micro and macro level. In the case of Somaliland and Afghanistan, for example, remittances have proven essential (Ahmed 2000; Monsutti 2004; Stigter et al. 2005). Furthermore, political resources gained once abroad may prove vital for guaranteeing stability. Members of the diaspora are often counted upon to help form newly created political institutions and staff the civil services. Many of them are highly motivated to contribute to the rebuilding of the homeland, and have required the necessary skills to do so. And many do have a genuine wish for reconciliation, as in the case of El Salvador: the transnational strategies of the diaspora reflected a desire for rapprochement and collaboration across the political and class divisions (Landolt 1999: 312). Unfortunately, however, such potentials for peace are underreported and need further study.

Suggestions for Further Research

Though the literature on migrant political transnationalism is expanding, there is still relatively little work done on the role of the wider diaspora in civil wars. The following topics may be relevant to consider when drawing up a research agenda on the transnational facets of civil war that focuses on diasporas:

- How do state and nonstate actors like diasporas compete and collaborate in conflict and in bringing an end to civil war
- How do various transnational actors work to manage and resolve conflicts
- How can we find ways to disaggregate the 'diaspora' concept in order to understand the contributions of different elements within these groups
- What are the power relations between local and transnational actors in civil war
- Can we find interdisciplinary ways of studying transnational facets (methods, theoretical framework)

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