The transnational exile complex
How to think about African diaspora politics

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Contents

List of abbreviations

ALiR	Armée pour la libération du Rwanda (Army for the Liberation of Rwanda)
ADRN-Igihango	Alliance pour la démocratie et la réconciliation nationale (Alliance for Democracy and National Reconciliation)
ARENA	Alliance for the Renaissance of the Nation
CNDP	Congrès national pour la défense du people (National Congress for the Defence of the People)
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
FAR	Forces armées du Rwanda (Armed Forces of Rwanda)
FDLR	Forces démocratique de libération du Rwanda (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)
LCSI	London Centre for Social Impact
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
NRM	National Resistance Movement
RANU	Rwandan Alliance for National Unity
RDGD	Rwandan Diaspora General Directorate
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
UFDR	Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (Union of Democratic Forces for Unity)
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

1   Introduction

In May of 2011, the British police issued warnings to two Rwandan nationals living in London that they faced an 'imminent threat' of assassination at the hands of the Rwandan government (Siddique 2011). One of these individuals, Jonathan Musonera, is a founder of a group of exiled former military officers, the Rwanda National Congress, a new political party of exiles directed at challenging the current Rwandan political leadership on a number of issues, which was founded in Bethesda, Maryland, and now has a presence in London, Montreal, Paris, and several other major sites of the Rwandan diaspora. The other, Rene Mugenzi, stood as a Liberal Democrat candidate for Greenwich borough council, and runs a social enterprise, the London Centre for Social Impact which runs, amongst other things, activities and seminars 'aimed at members of African Diasporas and African Diaspora Organisations who are determined to improve the quality of lives of people in their countries and transform their area into a better place to live in through various social innovation actions'.[1]

At the same time, the Rwandan government is reaching out to its diaspora through a new set of institutions (the new Rwandan Diaspora General Directorate, RDGD), events (such as the Diaspora Youth Conference held in London two months after the alleged assassination attempts) and policies (the RDGD aims to 'tap' the diaspora in four areas: investment advocacy, 'mobilisation', and skills transfer). This is not an isolated case: it is becoming increasingly obvious from work on a range of diasporic populations, from Eritreans (Al-Ali, Black et al. 2001; Redeker Hepner 2008) to Zimbabweans (Crush and Tevera 2010; McGregor and Primorac 2010), that the diasporas have a politics of their own which extends beyond the particular place in which these populations live, and which is taken extremely seriously, not least by the governments of the homeland.

The purpose of this paper is to try and make sense of this politics. It identifies a gap in the current literature, proposes a conceptual framework as a way forward, provides some brief applied cases to illustrate its use, and indicates what research agenda we believe follows from this conceptualisation of transnational political mobilisation. The structure of the piece corresponds to those four purposes.

2   A hole in the literature, and a plug

Over a decade ago, Steven Vertovec (1997) distinguished three categories of the meaning of diaspora: as social form, as type of consciousness, and as mode of cultural production. The diasporas literature can be cast – only slightly polemically – as largely concerned with unpacking these categories. It understandably focuses on the historical and sociological questions about diaspora: broadly, how diasporas form, why they persist over time, and what diasporeans *do* (viz. the behaviour, actions, and discourses of those taken to be diasporic), rather than the politics of the organisations, networks, and institutions which so often

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[1] Retrieved from the LCSI website 'About Us' section on 02/06/2012 (http://www.centre4socialimpact.org/training/seminar-london-african-diaspora-development-africa-0)

accompany diasporas, how such mobilisation takes place, how that may vary, and what consequences such political mobilisation and contestation then has for that diaspora and the wider world. Put simply: the diasporas literature remains largely disconnected from the mainstream of contemporary political science.

This is despite the fact that Rogers Brubaker's crucial admonition – that we not reify diasporas as objects but rather regard diaspora as a stance deployed ideologically by participants in social contestation – is seven years old (Brubaker 2005). This should point scholarship in the direction of understanding 'diaspora' as a mode of political organisation. However, much work continues to take the diaspora as an entity or a population with more-or-less fixed borders suitable for positioning under the analytic lens as a *thing*. Such exceptions as exist to this (e.g. Sökefeld 2006) are addressing fundamentally sociological questions, rather than the broader questions of international politics where diasporas seem to have ever-increasing prominence.[2] Lyons and Mandaville (2012) correctly place much of the contemporary work on diasporas in three boxes: the study of integration or the lack thereof (Baumann 1996; Lucassen 2005), ethnic lobbying (Smith 2000; Anwar 2001; Sheffer 2003; Shain 2007), and the new politics of citizenship. What unites these literatures is conceptualising diaspora politics as a subset of the politics of the hosting state by a community of non-citizens present on the territory of that state. This, the Trojan horses literature, is undoubtedly important, but in conceptualising the politics of diaspora as solely 'host-state-facing'[3] it misses precisely those dimensions of diasporic politics which cannot be studied within the statist frames of conventional social theory.

Similarly, although scholars in politics and international relations have successfully exposed the inadequacies of 'statist' mainstream social science (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Sheffer 2003; Adamson 2006; Adamson and Demetriou 2007; Ragazzi 2009), there has yet to emerge a clear or overarching conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between diasporas, transnational politics, and the older questions of the conventional study of politics. Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller's study (2003) offers insight into the factors explaining variance in the 'degree' of mobilisation, but their quantitative framework necessarily involves much

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[2] For example, Sökefeld's proposed research questions are
   1. What triggers the diasporic imagination of community?
   2. Who produces and disseminates a discourse of transnational community?
   3. What events, strategies, and practices are instrumental for this mobilisation?
   4. What are the internal social and political dynamics of mobilisation?

These are the right sorts of questions, but they are only one small proportion of the questions a satisfactory account of exile politics would have to answer. Furthermore, Sökefeld's approach amounts to the ultimately incomplete injunction to incorporate the insights of work on social movements into the study of diasporas. This is undoubtedly true, but without developing a systematic framework which enables it to be incorporated in a robust comparative manner, the injunction does not have much by way of teeth.

[3] It might be thought that this is unfair to the literature on 'ethnic lobbying'. What, after all, are their activities directed at if not the home state? However, the methodological point remains true, which is that this work is concerned with lobbying the state in the country of residence in order to change its policy towards the homeland. Put simply: the homeland is approached only through the intermediary of the hosting state. In so conceptualising the issue, this literature restates the statist essentialism it often purports to overthrow.

conceptual stretching (all remittance transfers, political or not, are taken as manifestations of the quantity of transnational political mobilisation), they conceive of the politics of such communities as solely to do with the country of origin (not across the diaspora), and they are uninterested in the processes leading to the formation of communities which are prior to any such mobilisation. Similarly, there is work on the homeland impacts of transnational politics networks (Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Koslowski 2005), the role of political networks which bypass the state (Adamson 2005), and the role of transnationally networked communities in locally rooted political processes (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003). These are indispensable pieces of work, and our purpose is not to denigrate them: rather, it is to suggest that these threads need to be pulled together to get a better look at the working of the whole.

On the other hand, the explosion of work on transnationalism has not advanced much beyond Vertovec's central theoretical insight: that there are multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of nation states. There remains very little by way of work aimed at understanding the totality of transnational exile politics as a global system stretching across borders back to the homeland and horizontally across the diaspora. Far too often, the putatively 'transnational' work actually only studies the politics of one community in one place For example, Sahoo and Maharaj's *Reader in the Sociology of Diaspora* (2007) contains articles on Lebanese communities in Senegal, Iranians in American, Bangladeshis in the UK, Tamils in Malaysia, Jains in America, and so on and so on. Although there are some other pieces which purport to give a 'wide-angle' lens on a given diaspora in its totality, such pieces are invariably schematic, anecdotal, and atheoretical.

Without wishing to dismiss this literature, it should be clear that what is missing is an attempt to talk about the whole as a network where manifestos for Zimbabwean elections can be written in London, or competing armed groups of Rwandans in the Eastern DRC hold their rival congresses in Amsterdam and Antwerp. In particular, by limiting the analytic lens to one place, much of what is genuinely transnational is lost: the specific conditions of politics within a community under the quasi-anarchic conditions of geographic dislocation in multiple jurisdictions. Furthermore, though innumerable case studies have accumulated identifying the transnational aspects of marriage (Hirsch 2003; Charsley 2006), historical memory (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Saldívar 2006; Schwenkel 2006), terrorism (Enders and Sandler 2000; Aydinli and Yön 2011), and so on and so forth, Vertovec's central insight has not been pushed much further than it was fifteen years ago. Instead of the interminable dispute between transnational and statist frames for understanding phenomena, we want to use our research to try and understand how the transnational is structured by states, and how the state system is conditioned by the transnational. For example, in migration studies, significant amounts of literature has pushed transnationalism as an alternative framing to state-centrism (Cohen 1997; Vertovec 1997; Faist 2000), while in practice the interesting analytical question is not which one should be privileged but, rather, how can we conceptualise their interaction (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Gamlen and Marsh 2012).

It is key to our research that states increasingly need to take transnational networks seriously, and that transnational organisations skilfully engage in 'jurisdictional arbitrage': striking a set of complementary 'deals' across borders which take advantage of the imbalances in resources, legal freedoms, and so on in different jurisdictions. These claims imply that the transnational should not be understood as a discrete set of research questions or relations separate from, or

opposed to, conventional questions of statist international politics, but rather that understanding either properly requires us to take both seriously.

So, our project aims to produce a unified framework for a global understanding of the conventional questions of politics across the transnational domain of the 'potentially diasporic', and how that spills out to affect international relations and comparative politics. This is an enquiry, most fundamentally, about political organisation and mobilisation, but it does not *ex ante* buy into the diaspora as a reified thing, but rather understands diaspora as one potential mode of identity and organisation which is itself contested. Nor does it simply attempt to cut and paste the analytic tools for studying other movements, communities, or political organisations, but rather come up with a new framework for understanding the difference the transnational makes. The lynchpin of that framework is our conception of diaspora, and a bit of conceptual kit we call the 'transnational exile complex'.

3   The diaspora and the transnational exile complex

For our purposes, 'diaspora' describes a Weberian ideal type (1904/1949) and a Durkheimian social fact (1895). The former is an analytic category for the purpose of picking out both communities and individuals who may be more or less 'diasporic' depending on the extent of their correspondence to the ideal type, however specified. It is important to note that ideal types can easily be essentially contested (Gallie 1955), as the example of 'democracy' makes obvious. Such picking out is useful in order to identify a population with a view to drawing conclusions about them (i.e. given a particular definition of diaspora, how do 'they' arise, what do they 'do', with what consequences, etc.).

What such picking out may not have much to say about is the latter way of conceiving diaspora: the definition disputes in academic journals as to what a diaspora 'is' are largely unrelated to the vernacular 'liberalisation' of diaspora in the last two decades to encompass a far broader range of groups. Put simply, that those Rwandans not living in Rwanda have come to think of themselves as (and be regarded as by other as) a diaspora is itself an important object of study. To the extent that communities *themselves* deploy the term 'diaspora' is important irrespective of whether we might think the communities in question do not bear any resemblance to the ideal typical diaspora. As countless authors have reminded us, diaspora is a practice (Adamson and Demetriou 2007), a stance (Brubaker 2005), or a discourse (Van Hear 2012). The point of starting from a Durkeimian framing of diaspora as social fact (i.e. something that exists in virtue of its social meaning with the power to constrain individual behaviour) is that it enables us to take these critiques seriously without relinquishing aspirations to robust nomothetic social science.

The notion of a 'diaspora' can therefore be understood to be inherently politically and socially constructed. It is subject to a process of contestation over insider/outside boundaries and orientation, and can intersect with other organisations and identity categories in complex ways. To be labelled as a 'diaspora' is just one possible mode of representation in the context of transnational political mobilisation. To be taken to be a diaspora has important social and political consequences, regardless of any fit with academic definitions: to be a diaspora is to be an object of organisation, shaping, and influence. It is to have 'business' with the homeland

and, conversely, to be that homeland's business. It is to be 'a population' known and subject to particular techniques of power (Foucault 2009): states try to reach out and shape their diasporas, and other diasporas within their borders, organisations well up from below, and compete across 'the' diaspora for the right to speak in its name, determine its politics, its structure, its membership, and where it directs its resources.

In reifying diasporas as 'things' with a predetermined social existence (Lukács 1923/1967), we miss the political contestation which determines the parameters of that social field, and the system of positions within it (Bourdieu 1979). Beginning with the concept of 'diaspora' may not be the most helpful way in which to ultimately understand diaspora politics. Instead, an ontological turn is required, which shifts the locus of analysis outwards to the broader context of transnational political mobilisation, which needs to be understood as antecedent to the range of organisational and identity structures that may or may not subsequently emerge. This call to situate diaspora politics within a wider framing has parallels with the ontological progression of social scientific debates around other forms of identity mobilisation. For example, debates on 'ethnic conflict' have evolved from seeing ethnic groups as ahistorical and essentialised (Kaplan 1994; Huntington 1996) to regarding them as subject to a prior political process of social construction and instrumentalisation (Mamdani 1996; Sen 2006). It is an analogously contingent process, transnational political mobilisation – through which a range of intersecting identities may be constructed, instrumentalised, and contested – that we wish to explore.

This recognition means it is important to take a broader analytical perspective and study the roots of the 'orientations' of diasporas, i.e. their understandings of (a) what the homeland is, (b) who is part of the diaspora, (c) what 'return' and/or 'liberation' entail, (d) what other struggles (religious, ethnic, socio-political) with the 'diasporic' struggle are seen as coextensive, if not co-constitutive. Many of these are frequently taken as given, but are ideologically contested, and their 'decontestation' (Freeden 1998) needs to be explained as the outcome of historically rooted social and political processes.

Examples of contingency and contestation within the processes of transnational political mobilisation abound. Who will be regarded as a co-national in the diaspora will be understood very differently by the Zimbabwe Vigil in London and the Rhodesian Association of Western Australia; 'liberation' was understood by the first generation of Angolan nationalists in explicitly anti-capitalist terms (Neto, Mondlane, Cabral, etc. all met as students at the 'House of Empire', an official student association in Lisbon, largely under the influence of the Portuguese communist underground); early Eritrean activism amongst nationals was a motley mix of religious organisations (The Muslim League), a radical left underground (the Workers' Syndicate of Eritrea), youth organisations (Al-Shabab, Partite Giovanile Federalists Eritrei, etc.) and professional associations (The Asmara Teachers' Association, Mah'ber Memheyash Hagarawi Limidi, etc.). It is by no means obvious that all of these organisations understood the homeland, justice, or return in the same ways, or even thought of themselves as all part of a homogenous diaspora that all could agree on the borders of (at least at the beginning).

These messy processes of contestation are (a) conducted by and (b) the background for political organisations. Our key concern here is not that no writing on this exists – it does – but that a framework capable of including all the phenomena and variables of interest is

missing. There is therefore a need for a framework that goes beyond singular or monolithic interpretations of 'the diaspora'. It needs to be one that recognises: (a) the inherently contested nature of transnational political mobilisation; (b) the global scale of the nodes and networks that structure transnational political mobilisation; (c) the complex interconnections and interstices within and across organisations and identity categories.

Therefore, we adopt the term 'transnational exile complex' to refer to *that group of organisations which engage in the political contestation of a particular homeland, the individuals within them, and the relationships between each of them*. This definition has a number of elements that require explanation.

It is 'transnational' because it exists not just in more than one place but through ties and interactions across borders. Our concern is with 'exiles' rather than the diaspora, because we wish to broaden our enquiry to include all those people engaging in the politics of the homeland, premised on the claim that it is their homeland without at the point of that engagement being physically in the homeland. We wish to take seriously Brubaker's injunction to regard 'diaspora' as a stance taken within that dynamic process of contestation, not something antecedent to it. There could be (and is) transnational exile political organisation which is prior to the formation of diasporic consciousness, or political claims-making premised on the idea of diaspora.

We focus on 'exile' because it provides a context that is, by definition, inherently political vis-à-vis the homeland state, and because it enables us to recognise that diaspora is just one possible stance or mode of organisation that may emerge among exiled groups. In using 'exiles' as a minimalist and inclusive category, rather than the ideal-typical understanding of diaspora, we drop almost all of the definitional criteria of Cohen, Safran et al., in order to include those people excluded from reified concretised conceptions of diaspora, and to include the political processes which may create and give specificity to the boundaries of the diaspora. The populations we are studying here will often be a bafflingly complicated mélange of refugees, militants, attendees of seminars and universities, exiled former regime elites, asylum seekers, and labour migrants (running the gamut from undocumented Zimbabweans on South African farms to Rwandan senior employees of the African Development Bank).

Nonetheless, we retain the focus on exiles rather than migrants because we wish to pick out those making a political claim about the manner of their departure from the homeland and their relationship to the current state (viz. one aimed at contestation, one way or another). Their insistence on imaginations and discourses of shared identity and home distinguish them from other kinds of transnational social formulations by making their condition more straightforwardly political. However, exiles are not an outlier totally different from other transnational groups; rather it is that they are an excellent fulcrum for analysing transnational political organisation in general, precisely because they are invariably the most politicised of such groups. In that sense, the predicament of exiles may be regarded as a synecdoche for transnational political mobilisation in general.

We use the term 'complex' because it picks out a *set* of organisations which relate to each other in a particular way: (1) there are *multiple* organisations within the complex; (2) they are *networked*, i.e. linked by antagonistic or collaborative ties – material and non-material – and these links are persistent patterns of association which define, enable, or restrict the behaviour

of organisations as much as their internal composition (Hafner-Burton, Kahler et al. 2008); (3) they exhibit non-linear patters of association such as nesting (i.e. existing within another), overlapping (i.e. adopting parallel functions), or interacting (collaborating, competing, or engaging in strategic interaction over extended periods of time). All three of these dimensions of association may capture institutional, material, or ideational relationships. The notion of 'complexity' borrows directly from a literature within political science on 'regime complexity', which maps out the interactions between institutions (Raustiala and Victor 2004; Alter and Meunier 2009; Keohane and Victor 2011).

Transnational political organisation exhibits these relationships both *within* the complex of organisations explicitly identified with a particular diaspora and *without* to a broader set of connections to other exiles, identity groups and organisations, the hosting country, ideological fellow travellers, and so on. These non-linear patterns of association usefully describe the internal composition of the complex but also its relationships with the outside world, and both are important to understanding transnational politics. The border between what is 'in' the transnational exile complex and what is 'outside' is often fuzzy.

Finally, although exiles are just one potential case for unpacking the politics of transnational organisation, a focus on exiles – more than many other transnational populations – allows us to look beyond exiles to other potential areas of transnational activity. This is because exiles engage in an extraordinarily diverse range of activities across a plethora of sites, with considerable variation in outcomes. Other transnational actors may fit this description too – such as, potentially, activists – but as Lyons and Mandaville point out, 'the rise of the global NGO represents a form of transnational politics quite distinct from the politicised human mobility that forms the core focus of [politicised diasporas]' (Lyons and Mandaville 2012).

We agree with Lyons and Mandaville that the political and networked nature of diasporic populations makes them the best candidates for studying these phenomena, but deny that they are as distinct as they would have it: insofar as there is nothing substantive the study of exiled groups omits, they can serve as a synecdoche of transnational organisation. The particular reason why exiles are thus synecdochic – people have moved, in a highly politicised way, which almost by definition brings in the political contestation we wish to examine, and with it, all the variation in organisational form we wish to unpack – does not rule out the potential use of this research to the thriving literature on international social movements and NGOs (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Warkentin 2001; Mendelson and Glenn 2002; DeMars 2005; Tarrow 2005; Ahmed and Potter 2006).

4   Nesting, overlapping, interacting applied

Transnational political mobilisation needs to be understood as a process of contestation. In order to begin to understand that process and its effects, it is crucial to be able to identify and trace the network of actors and their relationships that form the transnational exile complex. In order to develop our framework, we borrow from the application of complexity theory to political science. Debates on international institutions – referred to as 'regime complexity' have used a set of concepts to map-out complex relationships across normative and organisational structures, and understand the consequences of their relationships and

intersections. Some of those core concepts, we argue, are useful for tracing the interactions and relationships across nodes of the transnational exile complex.

In order to illustrate how this works, we developed a three-by-three framework which can be operationalised to empirically identify transnational relations across the complex (see tables 1 and 2). Across the left hand column, we draw upon three concepts used in regime complexity, which refer to the qualitative nature of relationships between structures: overlapping (i.e. exhibiting parallel structures, functions, etc., complementary or contradictory); nesting (i.e. relations of embeddedness); interacting (i.e. competitive, cooperative, or otherwise strategic relations). Across the top row, we identify the types of structures to which these relationships can refer: institutional (i.e. formal legal-rational structures); material (i.e. resources: people, arms, finance, etc.); ideational (i.e. ideologies, identities, 'mythico-histories'). This basic framework can be used to map structural relationships both within (Table 1) and without (Table 2) from a particular complex.

For a given transnational exile complex (e.g. the Zimbabwean exile complex) it would be possible to use this framework to draw a basic network diagram, illustrating the nature of these structural relationships within and without the complex, within a given time period. Producing a full map of any one complex, in which all its nodes and links were described, is beyond what we have space for, and would not necessarily serve our purpose (it is possible, if not likely, that any one particular complex would not exhibit complex dimensions of association in all the dimensions we wish to identify as of interest in our typology).

Instead, this section will explain the content of tables 1 and 2 in order to provide explication of the types of relationship we believe need to be included in the systematic study of transnational politics. Our focus here is on African exiles. This is because we believe many of these cases are understudied by the comparative literature, and because the deep historical roots of migration in many African cases make them ideal for comparing migration over time, and assessing the importance of global systemic factors relating to period. In particular, it has become a commonplace of the literature that transnational political mobilisation is a contemporary phenomenon rooted in globalisation – the transnational politics of Africa during the cold war offer ideal conditions for subjecting this platitude to robust testing. However, although our focus here is on Africa, we see no reason *per se* why conclusions drawn about African migration should not be generalisable to other cases of transnational political organisation (i.e. Tamils, Kurds, Palestinians, Haitians, and so on).

	Institutional (i.e. formal legal-rational structures)	Material (i.e. resources: people, arms, finance, etc.)	Ideational (i.e. ideologies, identities, 'mythico-histories')
Nesting (i.e. relations of embeddedness)	The factional split within the MDC within the Zimbabwean Diaspora, or the national sub-directorates of the RDGD *(1.1.1)*	Flows of money within the Eritrean orthodox church overseas which are a smaller part of general flows of resources to fund armed struggle in the homeland *(1.1.2)*	'Struggles within the struggle', such as emancipatory struggles over gender, land, generational injustices, etc. *(1.1.3)*
Overlapping (i.e. exhibiting parallel structures, functions, etc., complementary or contradictory)	The existence of welfarist homeland associations, religious associations, political parties existing in the same places, recruiting from the same people *(1.2.1)*	'Fundraising for development' which is conducted by sub-directorates of the RDGD and their antagonists in the anti-government diaspora *(1.2.2)*	The ways in which ideas can play parallel but contradictory roles, i.e. the understanding of land within Zimbabwean nationalism *(1.2.3)*
Interacting (i.e. competitive, cooperative, or otherwise strategic relations)	The often vicious competition between organisations purporting to represent Rwandans in Eastern DRC, i.e. FDLR, ARENA, Nation-Imnaga, ADRN-Igihango, UFDR, etc. *(1.3.1)*	The ways in which decisions as to what to spend resources on by Rwandan groups in Eastern DRC were informed by judgments about what 'investments' were being made by other parties *(1.3.2)*	The internal agonistic dialogues and contestation between different ideological strands of the diaspora, i.e. traditionalist Islamic and radical anti-capitalist strains of the Eritrean diaspora in the '50s and '60s *(1.3.3)*

Table 1: Examples of relationships *within* the transnational exile complex

Note: the contents of these boxes contain illustrative examples, but there is frequently more than one way in which, for example, material relationships could be considered overlapping, and thus they are not meant to be exhaustive.

	Institutional (i.e. formal legal-rational structures)	**Material** (i.e. resources: people, arms, finance, etc.)	**Ideational** (i.e. ideologies, identities, 'mythico-histories')
Nesting (i.e. relations of embeddedness)	The status of the MPLA within the Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas, or the MDC within Socialist International *(2.1.1)*	Where material flows of arms and funding are part of a broader set of material flows, such as the use of Cameroonian diasporic associations in London as conduits for development funds *(2.1.2)*	Understanding 'the struggle' as part of a greater whole, i.e. global anti-capitalist struggle, pan-Islamic revolution, etc. *(2.1.3)*
Overlapping (i.e. exhibiting parallel structures, functions, etc., complementary or contradictory)	The overlapping in advocacy work conducted by Zimbabwe Vigil in the UK and the Commonwealth Human Rights Directorate *(2.2.1)*	The use of malaitsha (informal cross-border transportation) networks by the MDC to get politically compromised individuals out of the county *(2.2.2)*	The attempts of modern Rwandan dissident exiles to frame their nationalist agenda as complementary with the 'good governance' agenda of donors *(2.2.3)*
Interacting (i.e. competitive, cooperative, or otherwise strategic relations)	The extremely close relationship between the Rwandan Patriotic Front and the Ugandan National Resistance Movement *(2.3.1)*	The flows of resources between ZANU, ZIPRA and ZAPU on the one hand and Umkhonto we Sizwe, Frelimo and so forth on the other *(2.3.2)*	The ideological cross-fertilisation of the Southern African liberation movements in the camps, prisons, and capital cities they were thrown together in *(2.3.3)*

Table 2: Examples of relationships *without* the transnational exile complex towards others

Institutional complexity

Within the complex, plenty of organisations are *nested* (1.1.1): the RDGD has sub-directorates organised at the national level (as does the Rwandan National Congress). The MDC-in-exile has an internal split mirroring the split at home following the divisions over participation in the 2005 Senatorial elections. Organisations may also be nested within broader political organisations and movements (2.1.1): Angola's Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) was its own movement, but also a component part of the Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas. Diasporic institutions also may *overlap* with each other (1.2.1): hometown associations, political parties, and government-run diaspora organisations may all operate in the same spheres in complementary or contradictory ways. Equally, many of the functions of these institutions will overlap with parallel non-diasporic organisations (2.2.1): the targeted interventions of LCSI in the Rwandan diaspora exist alongside the institutions of the British welfare state, much as the Rwandan National Congress may occasionally be engaged in complementary advocacy with organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Transparency International or the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. Thirdly, the institutions of transnational exile politics *interact* with each other (1.3.1), and with other institutions they are linked in to (2.3.1): in the DRC, the organisations of the former Armed Forces of Rwanda (FAR) and its successor organisations (ALiR, FDLR) engaged in repeated contestation with each other over who was to be *the* voice of Rwandans in the DRC. A decade earlier than in Uganda, the Rwandan Alliance for National Unity (RANU) and its successor the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) had an extremely complex relationship with Museveni's National Resistance Army, at some points working in concert (to the extent that some called the RPF 'an army within an army') and sometimes antagonists regarding the status of Banyamulenge in Uganda, policy towards Rwanda's Second Republic, and so on.

Material complexity

Links need not be organisational ties, but can also be flows of resources – money, arms, 'warm bodies'. These flows can be nested (1.1.2), as where the membership fees and charity fundraising efforts of the National Union of Eritrean Workers, the National Union of Eritrean Women, and the National Union of the Eritrean Youth and Students were also part of a wider network of cash flows financing the armed struggle to liberate the homeland. Equally, financial flows back to the homeland can be part of a broader network (2.1.2). Material ties also overlap (1.2.2 and 2.2.2): there are frequently a variety of routes whereby resources are sent back to the homeland, or directed for activism in hosting country, and so on. These flows may be complementary, as when the funding of the diaspora for political activism in the homeland is supplemented by the aid from donors, or contradictory, as where 'tithing' of the Eritrean diaspora helped to fund both sides in the Eritrean 'Civil Wars' (1972-74, 1980-81) fought between competing organisations seeking to liberate Eritrea (the ELF, the EPLF, etc.). Perhaps obviously, resource flows will also interact with each other (1.3.2 and 2.3.2): resources directed in one direction will come at the expense of another in some circumstances whereas in others the collaborative deployment of material resources will be mutually beneficial, as with the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army's (ZIPRA) joint missions with Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Ideational complexity

Although it is widely granted that there are complicated networks of institutions and material flows within diasporas (if not always systematically studied), it is not always as readily

understood that diasporas are also battlegrounds of ideas, with intricate and multifaceted intellectual landscapes. Any map of the orientations of a diaspora[4], will be as complex as the charting of organisations or material flows, just as much in need of explanation, and will equally seriously condition the impacts that diaspora has upon the wider world.

Our theoretical approach to this complexity will be drawn from Freeden's 'morphological' approach to ideology (1998), understood as the mental frameworks of political concepts necessary to understand and effectively engage in political action, which are defined through 'decontestation' – the imposition of concrete, determinate meanings on contested political concepts (such as 'homeland', 'diaspora', 'citizen', etc.) – and the interrelated configuration of those concepts with others ('justice', 'return', 'liberation', etc.). Our methodological approach to researching the ideational complexity of transnational exile complexes is draws on Van Dijk's (1998) multidisciplinary work on studying ideology as constituted, transmitted, and made visible through 'communicative practices' (i.e. discourse) and social structures.

The sorts of complexity the ideational landscape a transnational exile complex exhibits mirror its potential for institutional or material complexity. 'Ideational nesting' (1.1.3 and 2.1.3) refers simply to the idea, on the one hand, that other ideological struggles may be understood as sub-categories of liberation and return (i.e. particular generational struggles, the correction of specific historical injustices, etc.), or, on the other, that liberation and return itself can be understood not only in terms of return for a specific group to the homeland, but as a sub-section of a wider emancipatory agenda, be that global proletarian revolution (for the MPLA), Pan-African liberation (for anti-Rhodesian Zimbabwean exiles), or Pan-Islamism (for sections of the Eritrean diaspora). Similarly, there is plenty of ideological overlapping: within the diaspora (1.2.3) there may be multiple mutually-contradictory decontestations of the homeland, the diaspora and return, and the ideological content of the struggle may overlap with that of other ideologies (2.1.3), as with the Rwandan National Alliance's colonisation of contemporary discourses concerning good governance and transparency, or the agendas of Nasserism, Ba'athism, or Pan-Islam at various junctures during the Eritrean liberation struggle. Finally, the complex exhibits ideational interaction (1.3.3), in that disporas are also often spaces of ideological ferment, in which agendas and understandings of the world are crystallised through agonistic confrontation and deliberation about the nature of the struggle, and diasporas frequently engage in ideological cross-fertilisation with other intellectuals, thinkers, and ideologues not directly related to the struggle (2.3.3) as Angolans did in the Communist underground of Europe during the '50s and '60s, and Zimbabweans did in military bases and prisons during the struggle.

5   What is to be done (the research agenda)

This paper does very little except suggest one way of conceptualising the transnational politics of exile. It is our belief that this framework is more complete and theoretically accurate than prior characterisations, but it only sets the terms of questions, rather than answering any of them. In particular, this framework puts three things on the agenda. Firstly, we simply do not

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[4] i.e. their understandings of (a) what the homeland is, (b) who is part of the diaspora, (c) what 'return' and/or 'liberation' entail, and (d) what other struggles (religious, ethnic, socio-political) with the 'diasporic' struggle is seen as coextensive, if not co-constitutive.

have maps of African diasporas approaching anywhere near completeness (understood in terms of the 'where', and also in terms of all the variables of interest identified here). Such attempts as do exist are too frequently confined to one or two places (Rafti 2004; Portes, Escobar et al. 2007; any number of studies could be cited here, but excellent work matching this description would include Mügge 2011) or are deeply unreliable efforts produced by governments without much attempt at scholarly rigour (as with the Rwandan Government's Diaspora Census). The second and third questions concern taking the transnational exile complex as a dependent and independent variable (i.e. what factors explain the variation in the shape of such complexes, and what effects such variations have upon the world).

The complex as independent variable

In international relations: during the period of exile, political entrepreneurs within the diaspora will engage in a variety of strategies to reinsert themselves back into the politics of the homeland. In so doing, they will impact upon the international state system in a variety of ways. Most obviously, transnational exiles are becoming central to explaining patterns of conflict and cooperation in many parts of the world, and particularly in Africa. The presence of large populations can become a security problem rapidly, and the networked character of the complex means that issues in one state become issues for the region very rapidly (most obviously with Rwandans in the Eastern DRC and Zimbabweans in South Africa). Further, the relations the complex builds with others, including political elites in hosting countries, can create patterns of amity and hostility which are crucial to understanding the dynamics of alliance formation and conflict on the continent. The foreign relations of Ethiopian under the Derg, for example, require understanding the presence of Eritrean, Oromo, and Tigrayan diaspora populations in its neighbours. More importantly, the presence of these complexes and their operationalisation gives sovereignty itself a networked character; relations between states are not just *about* their exiled populations, but frequently conducted *through them* or *with them* as a resource.

We could not agree more with Lyons and Mandaville that 'Rather than viewing diasporic activism as problematic, its pervasiveness is such that it should be viewed as a normal tool of statecraft' (2012: 19). For example, it has been alleged that the Rwandan government conducts an unofficial and illicit foreign policy in Congo through militant interlocutors such as the CNDP.[5] Furthermore, such organisations often push back, becoming important actors in the international state system in their own right. More than many of the transnational organisations trumpeted by the globalisation literature, political organisations in the transnational exile complex do the same sorts of things states do, but without their juridical character: they tax 'their' populations, they raise armies, launch wars and occasionally even return to rule the homeland.

When exiles return the complex often becomes more, not less relevant. Firstly, some organisations within the complex now become important institutions of state or networks of domestic political elites. The RPF becomes the army, the ruling party, the top echelons of business, the bureaucracy, etc. As such, the relations of the complex to other political actors become the international relations of that state. For example, the close alliance between the

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[5] This is not to say that the CNDP are mere puppets or satellites of the Rwandan government. Rather, it is that politicised organisations in the diaspora with their own agendas, such as the CNDP, can nonetheless be operationalised with

RPF and the Ugandan National Resistance Movement (NRM), whilst ideological fellow travellers and collaborators during the Ugandan bush war, then becomes a close alliance between the Ugandan and Rwandan states, at least until its implosion during the Second Congo War. Secondly, these networks without states become *networked states*, which is to say that they become states with a unique set of resources to tap: their politicised and organised populations abroad which were frequently moulded into a cohesive and well-oiled political machine during the period of exile. Not all exiles always return, and those that are part of the institutions of the complex that remain abroad become outposts of the state beyond its borders, again, granting sovereignty a networked character it would not otherwise have. This recognition potentially creates an opportunity to bring together literature on sovereignty (Krasner 1999) and network theory (Hafner-Burton, Kahler et al. 2008) to create an understanding of sovereignty as inherently networked and transnational. This is turn has the potential to reconceive how international relations thinks about the relationship between transnationalism and the state (Nye and Keohane 1971; Risse-Kappen 1995; Keck and Sikkink 1998).

The upshot of all this is that the return of such politically organised exiles to rule allows us to ask a question mainstream international relations can't see, but one which is central to almost all theory within the discipline since Westphalia: the extent to which juridical statehood matters. The return of exiles to rule is one of the only instances that allow us to hold almost every variable of interest except the holding of statehood. This is particularly true in those instances where the transformation was extremely rapid, and the assumption of juridical statehood granted almost nothing by way of material resources, either because a new state has been formed *tout court,* as in the case of Eritrea, or the former government gutted the state apparatus entirely, as in the case of Rwanda (when the Hutu power government fled across the border into Congo-Zaire in 1994, they took with them the entirety of the state's financial assets, the fuel reserves of the state oil company, all the rolling stock of national public transport, and the Rwanda's national coffee stock. Almost the entire army and government bureaucracy moved with them, and they repeatedly re-entered Rwanda to loot more (Polman 2010, 24) – it is hard to imagine a circumstance where the attainment of juridical statehood added less).

Much of international relations has been and continues to be consumed in a debate over the substantive force of statehood's juridical aspect. This debate is usually seen as essentially unanswerable because of the historical covariance of the emergence of legal statehood with the development of modernity in general. Yet the return of the transnational exile complex allows us to isolate the substance of the difference a state makes. In other words, it potentially creates a context within which to counterfactually test the hypothesis: does juridical statehood matter? Indeed, this becomes especially interesting within the African context, in which the nature of the African state has been subject to constant contestation between actors temporarily holding juridical sovereignty and other actors within – and sometimes outside – the state (Jackson 1990; Clapham 1996; Bayart, Ellis et al. 1999; Herbst 2000).

In comparative politics: as Lyons and Mandaville point out, 'what is less studied is the question of how politics in the country of origin is transformed by the current upsurge in the political activism of increasingly mobile, transnational populations' (Lyons and Mandaville 2012). For almost all of the conventional questions of politics, the presence of a sufficiently organised and politicised network of exile is a potential resource for other political actors,

including states, as well as potential spoilers. Such 'outsiders' are frequently demonised by states as invading 'others' that can be costlessly blamed for any given malaise, but they are, precisely because of their vulnerability, at least as often integrated into political order, frequently in military roles or as enforcers: Paul Kagame as Museveni's Chief of Military Intelligence; James Kaberebe as Kabila's Chief of Staff. The attractiveness of transnational exiles as potential key constituencies is precisely that, on the one hand, the precariousness of their position in the hosting country makes them cheaper to co-opt and more willing to engage in extra-judicial repression, and, on the other, that they can tap, through transnational networks, a set of resources that other potential selectorates do not. For example, the presence of Rwandans in Eastern Congo totally changed the calculus of political survival for the Zairean regime, and Mobutu repeatedly tried to use the former Government of Rwanda resources to settle internal Congolese political fights of his own. The upshot of this is that we expect a correlation between hosting nodes of the transnational exile complex and a variant of authoritarianism where exiles and the hosting political elite are linked in the appropriate way. The transitions literature and the writing on regime survival more broadly is replete with work on the role played by the military and the security services. What is neglected is the vital role which exiles often play in that process.

This brings us to the potential contribution of the complex to the literature on transitions. Our suspicion is that the form, depth, scale, and cohesiveness of the complex is a key variable in explaining whether or not transitions in the homeland happen at all, and what form such transitions take. The complex can create sustained international visibility of repression and diplomatic pressure for reform, as Zimbabwe Vigil in the UK has done in the last 10 years. The complex can secure the international connections which generate the funds and training to launch a nationalist struggle, as were secured by the Angolans in the Communist underground of Salazarist Portugal. It can provide the arms and warm bodies for the retaking of the homeland by force, as achieved by the RPF and the EPLF. The literature on transitions is still almost completely statist: new work by Levitsky and Way (2010) points towards the role of the diaspora in regime transitions, but simply codes it as a dichotomous dummy variable. The work on civil wars is not much better: Collier and Hoeffler (2001; Collier and Hoeffler 2002; Collier and Hoeffler 2004) consider the diaspora relevant but only as a source of funding and nothing else, and their proxy for the presence of a large diaspora which funds the insurgency is the proportion of the country's population living in the United States. This proxy does not capture the financial contributions of diasporas, or the presence of non-American diasporas (i.e. the '59-er Tutsis in Southern Uganda, the ex-*flechas* in Rhodesia, etc.). Clearly, there is an important dimension to accounts of transition which the transnational exile complex can illuminate.

The nature of the complex also determines much about the character of the regime formed after transition. Those focussed on regime type (whether institutionalists in the manner of Levitsky and Way (2010), scholars of elite pacting such as North, Wallis et al. (2009), those focused on economic development in the tradition of Przeworski (2000), or those who locate the character of a political regime in the nature – understood in cultural terms – of the polity (Putnam, Leonardi et al. 1994)) have in large part forgotten the back story of the elites which create the new political system: the biography of the time before the transition. As one of us has argued before (Jones 2012), where certain organisations of the complex simply become the new government, as in Rwanda and Eritrea, the historical story about the nature of the complex will be *the* explanatory variable in examining the level of cohesion within the elite,

the relationship between military and civilian establishments, the nature of patron-client ties, and the 'political imaginary' of the elite (i.e. their conceptions of democracy, justice, the state, development, and so on). Equally importantly, the networked character of the complex is not lost when the exiles return to assume the helm of government, but rather, the state itself is networked.

The complex can also be part of a Bayartian (1999) account of the state as powered by strategies of 'extraversion' , i.e. the ways in which African elites manipulate the transnational relationships and processes that created and maintain the continent's dependent position within the global system. Extraversion consists of six strategies (coercion, trickery, flight, mediation, appropriation, and, its opposite, rejection) whereby relationships with the outside world are operationalised to gain resources (for Bayart, rents) for the purpose of securing power within the homeland. Bayart maintains that in Africa sovereignty is defined by the ability to manage dependence through rents. This undoubtedly captures a significant aspect of African politics. As such, those transnational links that African political elites are able to obtain become a vital part of not just their foreign policy, but also the configuration of rule within a territory: the resources of the outside are used to secure hegemony inside. This means that networked states will be able to rule in particular ways; the task of unpacking precisely what sort of transnational connections permit precisely which forms of rule has yet to be undertaken systematically.

The complex as dependent variable
The agenda here is less expansive, but no less significant. Firstly, existing attempts to theorise about the ideational character of an exiled community are drawn almost exclusively from anthropology, and either study only one part of the phenomena, as with Appadurai's (1996) theorisation of 'grassroots globalisation', i.e. the attempts of indigenous peoples to bring their justice claims before global audiences, or only study 'one-population-in-one-place' (or maybe two, at the most) as with Malkki's (1995) study of Burundians in Rukwa and Kigoma, or Glick-Scihller and Fourons's work (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001) on Haitians in the USA. What is lacking is the sort of analysis which can be integrated into a mainstream politics framework, which requires us to make use of the sophisticated work emerging from the study of ideology (Hamilton 1987; Gerring 1997; Norval 2000). Such work does not currently exist. Where ideology is discussed, it is often in extremely simple and schematic terms. For example:

> …*the politicisation of diasporas may take two forms. First, those at a distance (the classic long-distance nationalists) may be particularly partisan because their ties to the homeland are quite symbolic and tend to be more categorical. Second, those who are quite near may also be highly militant in recognition of the likelihood that they will return and will need membership of political communities for protection*' (Lyons and Mandaville 2012)

It should be clear that this dichotomising of ideology omits a universe of potential variation which deserves better by way of explanation. Similarly, Fiona Adamson characterises the ideological variation of such transnational movements as 'existing on a continuum defined by the extent to which an identity is universal or particularistic' (2012: 26). This is an extremely thin and underworked conception of identity, with three key problems: firstly, it is reductive to suggest that ideational variation, or even all the aspects of such variation relevant to work such as Adamson's can be placed on scale (revolutionary Leninism and Wilsonite liberalism are both equally universalist, but that is hardly a very helpful observation); secondly, identity is understood by all these authors in purely instrumental terms (there is an unspoken

materialism in this which would be rejected by the most vulgar Marxist); and thirdly, the movement, population, or diaspora in question is treated as one homogenous, anthropomorphised entity which collectively 'adopts' a unified identity at some point. Lyons' contribution to his own volume (Lyons 2012) – a nuanced and careful exploration of Habesha, Amhara and Tigray identity – suggests he is perfectly well aware that such a framework is inadequate, but the literature provides him with little water between isolated thick description and lazy schematisation. It is thus important that a more sophisticated approach to the ideational aspect of the complex be adopted.

The emergence of identities and political ideologies in exile should be grasped in part by understanding such emergence as fundamentally a process of socialisation, a point illuminated by the social movement framework deployed by Sökefeld (2006), and the work identifying generation as a key explanatory factor (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Levitt and Waters 2006). However, we also need to take seriously the equal importance of the autonomous development of ideas through their decontestation and systematic interrelation by exiled intellectuals (Freeden 1998). Finally, the power struggles through which ideologies and conceptions of the struggle are instrumentalised, imposed, and made into concrete programmes are clearly important, which takes us back to power, the structure of opportunities and threats a diaspora is faced with, and the insights of critical discourse analysts such as Norman Fairclough (2001), Theo van Leeuwen (2008), Ruth Wodak (2009), and Teun van Dijk (1998).

These three elements are all part of the explanation for what is distinctive about identity and ideology formation in exile. In particular: what is changed by the context of urgency and insecurity in which exile politics operates; what the dislocation and distance from the homeland changes about nationalist theorising; how the openness entailed by the absence of any single hegemonic state standing over the complex affects matters; and how cohesive 'thick' ideological consensuses are formed (or do not from) out of the distinctive Catholicism and diversity of the intellectual milieus in which exiles operate, and out of the influences to which they are exposed throughout the colonial, Cold War, and post-Cold War periods. This theoretical starting point takes Giorgio Agamben (1998) and Hannah Arendt's (1958) understanding of refugee-hood as 'bare life' – a category of identity utterly denuded of political agency – and reverses it. Often the refugee camp (and spaces of exile more broadly) is a more fertile space of intellectual development than the homeland. In challenging Agamben and Arendt, the project reconceives exile as an inherently political condition in ways occluded by contemporary social theory. Furthermore, recognising the contested process – involving winners and losers – through which transnational political mobilisation occurs and evolves has the potential to challenge monolithic patriotic histories (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992; Tendi 2008; Tendi 2010).

Finally, explaining the organisational character of politics within the complex can also be reconceived using this framework. In particular, taking the starting point of a global complex of organisations rather than a particular community of exiles in a particular place allows us to put the transnational back in transnationalism, by making central what is genuinely distinctive about the organisation of the complex: that it operates in quasi-anarchic circumstances. African exiles in the diaspora have adeptly deployed 'jurisdictional arbitrage': working across borders in order to take advantage of imbalances in resources, legal freedoms, and so on in different jurisdictions. In operating in this liminal space between jurisdictions,

contestation takes place in neither the state of nature nor beneath the Leviathan of a single state (hence the term 'quasi-anarchic'). What politics looks like when political entrepreneurs can go 'shopping' for the jurisdictional circumstances which suit their agendas is non-obvious. It needs to be the subject of further research.

6 Conclusion

The existing literature on diaspora has often taken 'diaspora' as a reified object of empirical analysis, implicitly based on seeing it as a Weberian ideal type. In contrast, this paper understands 'diaspora' as a Durkheimian social fact, being inherently political and socially constructed. Its starting point has been to argue for an ontological turn in how diaspora politics is conceptually understood. Rather than being antecedent to transnational political mobilisation, or as the singular or inevitable analytical concept for understanding transnational political process, 'diaspora' represents just one of a number of possible forms of representation that emerge through processes of political contestation. From a political perspective, analysis cannot begin with the reified 'diaspora' but needs to situate its emergence within a wider perspective. While some authors, most notably Rogers Brubaker, have highlighted this or acknowledged the important connections between diaspora and politics, no unified conceptual framework has emerged through which to understand the contested process of transnational political mobilisation and its effects.

The paper has argued for the need to develop a holistic conceptual framework that can render visible processes of transnational political mobilisation, often obscured by the analytical reification of 'diaspora'. In order to do so it has drawn upon complexity theory: particularly the ways in which it has been drawn into political science to highlight interconnections between networks of institutions. It has developed a framework based on the concept of the 'transnational exile complex' as a way of tracing the material, ideational, and institutional relationships between groups and organisations which engage in political contestation of the homeland state. As a context that captures those who are, by definition, in a relationship of political contestation to the homeland state, 'exile' provides a synecdoche within which to explore the broader notion of transnational political mobilisation.

The 'complex' potentially makes a conceptual contribution to the broader transnationalism literature in at least two ways. First, it moves from looking simply at the way in which one people in one state contests a particular homeland, towards taking a global systemic approach which captures interconnections across organisations and identity categories, and the nature and consequences of those relationships. Second, rather than seeing transnationalism as an analytical alternative mode of analysis to statism, it offers an analytical means to explore and theorise the neglected relationship between states and transnational processes, moving beyond a debate over which is to be privileged towards one over how they interact and with what consequences.

In addition to serving as a heuristic framework through which to empirically identify nodes, networks, and organisational relationships of particular exiled groups, the transnational exile complex facilitates exploration of a number of areas of enquiry, and points to the basis of a research agenda. It enables exploration of the emergence of the complex as a dependent

variable, through the role of, for example, ideology, elite intellectuals, and power struggles. It further allows exploration as an independent variable in relation to a range of core empirical and theoretical debates within political science. It potentially contributes to international relations through a re-conceptualisation of sovereignty as networked and disaggregated from territory. Rather than assuming juridical sovereignty to be the most salient locus of political power, it provides an empirical context within which to counterfactually test the relative significance of juridical sovereignty as a resource of power. It further offers comparative politics an additional independent variable with relevance to debates including but not limited to political transition.

Although this paper has illustrated the core conceptual framework by drawing upon different African transnational exile complexes, it has been beyond the scope of its analysis to apply the theory in any rigorous way or to test propositions or hypotheses generated by the theory. Indeed the next step for future research is to draw upon and use the conceptual tools to empirically explore the emergence and impact of particular African transnational exile complexes at particular historical junctures e.g. Rwanda (1959-1994 and post-1994); Zimbabwe (1964-1980 and post-1997); Angola (1961-1975 and 1975-2002); Eritrea (1952-1991 and post-1991). Such empirical research would need to proceed on the basis of, first, exploring the mobilisation of exiled political groups as a process of contestation within the exiled community and, second, explaining the impact of those groups on the incumbent regime as a process of contestation between those mobilised exiled groups and the homeland state. The only appropriate methodology for examining micro-processes is in-depth qualitative research.

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> This article presents evidence of the scale, relative intensity, and social determinants of immigrants' transnational political engagement. It demonstrates that a stable and significant transnational field of political action connecting immigrants with their polities of origin does indeed exist. The results help temper celebratory images of the extent and effects of transnational engagement provided by some scholars. The article shows that migrants' habitual transnational political engagement is far from being as extensive, socially unbounded, 'deterritorialized,' and liberatory as previously argued. Transnational political action, then, is regularly undertaken by a small minority, is socially bounded across national borders, occurs in quite specific territorial jurisdictions, and appears to reproduce preexisting power asymmetries. The potential of transnationalism for transforming such asymmetries within and across countries has yet to be determined.

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