

International Migration Programme

*Diasporas and Development : Perspectives on Definitions and Contributions*

Piyasiri Wickramasekara

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## Foreword

The *Perspectives on Labour Migration* is a working paper series introduced in 2003 to supplement the International Migration Papers series. The papers are intended to contribute to current issues and debates on international labour migration. They are intended to offer results of ongoing research, different perspectives, and a variety of approaches to the often controversial debates on national and international migration policy and practice. The responsibility for views expressed is primarily those of the author/s.

In this paper on *Diasporas and Development: perspectives on definitions and contribution*, Piyasiri Wickramasekara, Senior Migration Specialist, International Migration Programme of the International Labour Office (ILO), takes up an important aspect of the current migration and development debate - the role of diasporas and transnational communities as contributors to the development of their origin countries.

It is a slightly modified version of a paper initially prepared as a resource paper for the Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN) research project on “A Swiss Network of Scientific Diasporas to Enforce the Role of Highly Skilled Migrants as Partners in Development” coordinated by the Federal Institute of Technology, Lausanne (EPFL – Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne) in partnership with the International Labour Office (ILO) and the University of Geneva (UNIGE).

In the first section, the author reviews different definitions of diasporas and transnational communities. He then provides some statistical information and estimates available on diaspora communities in different regions of the world with some discussion of their profiles. In the next section, the author examines the nature and diversity of diaspora contributions to development as documented by various writers, and concludes by suggesting areas for further study and research.

Geneva, July 2009

Ibrahim Awad  
Director  
International Migration Programme

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## I. Introduction

The importance of diaspora or transnational communities as a development resource has been recognized in the recent discourse on migration and development (Devan and Tewari, 2001; GCIM, 2005; Kuznetsov, 2006; UNESCO, 2006; GFMD, 2007). The background report for the United Nations High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (United Nations, 2006a) pointed out that citizens working abroad can be development assets for countries of origin. Diasporas have been hailed as harbingers of new knowledge, innovators and reputation ambassadors, among others (Devan and Tewari 2001). The purpose of this paper is to raise some conceptual issues on diaspora definitions, measurement and contributions to home countries. It is based mainly on a review of recent literature focusing on the linkages of diasporas with development. In the first section, I shall review definitions of the diaspora and transnational communities. The second part deals with some estimates of the diaspora and information on their profiles. In the next section, I shall highlight the nature of contributions of the diaspora to home countries and the conclusions focus on areas for further research.

## II. Conceptual issues in defining transnational communities and the diasporas

The terms ‘transnational communities’ and ‘diasporas’ are now increasingly being used interchangeably. Obviously the more long-standing term is ‘diaspora’ which has historically been associated with the notion of dispersion of an ethnic population outside its traditional homeland. It is linked with the notion of forced displacement, victimization, or alienation. Cohen (1997) characterized diasporas in terms of several attributes: dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically; alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions; a collective memory and myth about a homeland; and an idealization of the supposed ancestral home. He categorized diasporas using a five-fold classification with specific examples: *victim* diasporas (Jews, Armenians, slave diasporas), *labour* diasporas (Indian indentured labour, Italians, Filipinos), *imperial/colonial* diasporas (Ancient Greeks, British, Portuguese), *trade* diasporas (Lebanese, Chinese) and *cultural* diasporas (Caribbean). The categories are not mutually exclusive however, with overlapping features between some types. Long-established or mature diasporas may date back centuries while newer diasporas can be the result of labour migrations or refugee flows in recent decades. The former can be described as mature diasporas with a long history of migration and settlement and integration such as Armenian, Chinese, Indian, Jewish, Irish diasporas, among others.

‘Transnationalism refers to processes and activities that transcend international borders. In the last two decades or so, transnationalism has become a popular term which “represents an attempt to formulate a conceptual framework for understanding the ties – social, economic, cultural and political – between migrants’ host and origin countries” (King and Christou, 2008). ‘Diaspora’ is a much older concept than transnationalism and is differentiated from contemporary international migration and

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transnational communities given its “historical continuity across at least two generations, a sense of the possible permanence of exile and the broad spread and stability of the distribution of populations within the diaspora.” In other words, ‘time has to pass’ before a migration becomes a diaspora (King and Christou, 2008). The TRANS-NET project has defined transnationalism “as a *perspective* on cross border migrations and on the ties migrants and others forge in the processes connected” in its review paper (TRANS-NET, 2008). It highlights that transnational linkages and migration across boundaries entails manifold political, economic, social, cultural and educational implications.

The term diaspora has itself become subject to different interpretations in recent times. This is partly due to its association first with anthropological and social studies and then with migration and broader development studies. With increasing globalization and transnationalisation forces, it has acquired a broader meaning – to refer to persons outside their country of origin and covering diverse groups such as political refugees, migrant workers, ethnic and racial minorities and overseas communities.

Sheffer’s definition of the diaspora is closer to the broader definitions currently being used: “Modern Diasporas are ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin—their homelands” (Sheffer 1986). Some writers have adopted this definition in their discussions (e.g., Koser, 2003; Newland and Patrick, 2004).

While Sheffer (1986) discussed the issue before the emergence of the more recent development discourse where diasporas are seen as potential agents of home country development, he stressed trans-state networks (in current parlance, ‘transnational networks’) and the ‘triadic relations’ between host, origin states and the diasporas themselves.

Orozco (2006a) however, maintains that diasporas are not formed as a “consequence of dispersion, common national ancestry, or simply any kind of connection.” He adds: “There is a process by which groups are motivated or influenced to become diaspora”. The elements of this process are: consciousness about the need or desire for a link with the homeland at the community level; the homeland’s perceptions of emigrants; the outreach policies of governments in the homeland; and the existence of relationships between source and destination countries. This however, seems to mix up definitional issues with the expected role of the diasporas as a development resource.

It is important to recognize that diasporas or transnational communities are by no means homogeneous or closely knit groups. They criss-cross with a diverse range of economic, social and ethnic characteristics.

Currently much more than in the past, diasporas include complex mixes of people who have arrived at different times, through different channels, through different means and with very different legal statuses. When divisions in the country of origin are also taken into account, such diasporas can thus be highly fissiparous, which can give rise to problems of coherence when mobilising for development and other purposes.” (Van Hear, Pieke et al., 2004)

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Faist (2007) finds that both terms, diaspora and transnational community, to be too restrictive, which imagines a rather homogeneous cross-border social formation. According to him:

Transnational social formations and a systematic transnational approach is an alternative. Transnational formations—also: fields, spaces—consist of combinations of ties and their contents, positions in networks and organisations and networks of organisations that cut across the borders of at least two national states. In other words, the term refers to sustained and continuous pluri-local transactions crossing state borders. (Faist, 2007)

One can also look at some operational definitions adopted by countries/regions or regional entities in regard to diaspora. The following definition of the Caribbean diaspora is broad-based and does not assume any responsibilities or obligations on the part of the diaspora. The “people” boundaries of CARICOM are not confined to the physical boundaries of our regional homelands. The living boundaries of CARICOM are to be found wherever CARICOM nationals or their progeny reside and work” (Patterson, 2007).

This wider sentiment is captured in the definition of persons of Indian Origin (PIO).

The Indian Diaspora spans the globe and stretches across all the oceans and continents..... They live in different countries, speak different languages and are engaged in different vocations. What gives them their common identity are their Indian origin, their consciousness of their cultural heritage and their deep attachment to India. (Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001)

However, the following definition adopted by the African Union (AU) Executive Council implies a conditional one based on the willingness of the diaspora to contribute to African development: “The African Diaspora consists of peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union.” The diaspora are also described as Africa’s sixth region. This is closer to the Orozco’s definition of willingness to contribute to home countries.

The European Commission (2005: 23) uses a broad definition in its Communication on Migration and Development.

The diaspora from a given country therefore includes not only the nationals from that country living abroad, but also migrants who, living abroad, have acquired the citizenship of their country of residence (often losing their original citizenship in the process) and migrants’ children born abroad, whatever their citizenship, as long as they retain some form of commitment to and/or interest in their country of origin or that of their parents. In some extreme cases, such as the Chinese diaspora, people may still feel part of a country’s diaspora even though their family has been living in another country for several generations.

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This also highlights the links between generations and the sense of identity.

What appears more suitable for the present discussion is the definition by Van Hear et al.

Diaspora are defined as populations of migrant origin who are scattered among two or more destinations, between which there develop multifarious links involving flows and exchanges of people and resources: between the homeland and destination countries and among destination countries. (Van Hear, Frank Pieke et al., 2004)

While the subtle distinctions between recent or new diasporas and transnational communities can be appreciated, I shall use them interchangeably in the rest of this paper – a practice in line with the recent literature.

In the next section, I shall look at the numbers and profile of select diasporas.

### **III. Estimating the diaspora numbers and profiles**

It is important to estimate the magnitude and profile of diaspora communities for assessing their roles and potential contributions to both countries of origin and destination. The profiles can be described in terms of gender, age, skills, among others. Yet there are serious data problems in relation to the estimation of numbers and profiles due to several factors (Ionescu, 2006).

First and foremost is the fact that there is no standard and consistent definition of a diaspora population as shown above. Second, it is difficult for countries of origin to keep track of migrant communities abroad over periods of time. The transition to citizenship in host countries and the emergence of the second and third generations make tracking the diaspora quite a tricky exercise. Third, while some countries or agencies have started electronic databases of the diaspora, registration is often voluntary and there is substantial underestimation. One can only provide a range of estimates from low to high.

#### **The foreign born population**

The diaspora numbers at a given point in time relate to a stock concept. In measuring diaspora populations, one handy – though by no means comprehensive indicator – is the total number of migrants in the world. The United Nations Population Division (United Nations, 2006b) has estimated total global migrants in 2005, defined as those residing outside their place of birth (the foreign born population) at 191 million and the number may amount to 200 million at present. But this foreign born population or people outside their country of birth include both temporary workers and those settled abroad or long-term residents in foreign countries. Some may already be naturalized citizens of the countries of destination. Some countries use the criterion of nationality in discussion of migrant populations; a foreign born immigrant may disappear from the immigrant numbers when he/she acquires citizenship in the country. Moreover the foreign born estimate does not include the second or third generations of the diaspora (born in the host country) since only the foreign born population is counted.

Table 1: Global migrants

Region	Migrants			
	2000		2005	
	Millions	percent	Millions	percent
Africa	16.5	9.3	17.1	9
Asia	44.4	25.1	53.3	28
Europe	64.1	36.3	64.1	34
Latin America and the Caribbean	6.3	3	6.6	3
Northern America	40.4	22.9	44.5	23
Oceania	5.1	2.6	5.0	3
Total	176.7	100	190.6	100

Source: United Nations (2006b).

The following table attempts to capture the size of the diaspora in selected countries based on different sources.

Table 2: Estimates of diaspora populations

Country	Estimated number for recent year (million)	Percentage of national population
USA	7.0	2.5
Australia	0.9	4.3
New Zealand	0.5- 0.85	21.9
India	20.0	1.9
Armenia	9.0	
Pakistan	4.0	2.8
Philippines	7.5	9.0
China	30 to 40	2.9
Japan	0.87	0.7
Italy	29.0	49.4
Canada	2.7	9
Mexico	19.0	19
Republic of Korea	6.4	13.2
Vietnam	2.6	3.2
Africa	3.0	---

Sources: (Government of India, 2001; Bryant and Law, 2004; World Bank, 2007; Hugo, 2008; Newland and Patrick, 2004; other sources cited in text)

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## Selected diaspora estimates for regions and countries

### The African diaspora

Africa had long been affected by forces associated with slavery, colonialism and globalization creating a situation in which African persons were dispersed in different regions of the world. It is therefore, important to distinguish between the old (traditional) and the new diaspora, who are more in the nature of transnational communities as mentioned above.

The African Diasporas can be classified broadly into two categories:

(a) Africans in America, the UK, Brazil/Latin American/Caribbean as a result of involuntary migration and

(b) The new African immigrants, mainly in North America and Europe and to a smaller extent in Australia and Japan, among others, as a result of voluntary migration for education or employment. According to the World Bank (World Bank, 2007), the official estimate of documented 'voluntary' African immigrants in North America and Europe is about 3 million – one million in the United States, 282,600 in Canada and 1.7 million in Europe. (The figure for Europe does not include immigrants from North Africa).

The African Union figures (Table 3) shows the difference according to these distinctions. Of course, these are probably more in the nature of "guesstimates."

Table 3: The African diaspora

Region	Population size	Generations
America (USA, Canada)	39,161,513	Descendants and immigrants
Latin America	112,645,204	Descendants
Caribbean	13,560,263	Descendants
Europe	3,512,183	Immigrants

Source: [http://www.info.gov.za/issues/african\\_diaspora/What\\_is\\_the\\_Diaspora.pdf](http://www.info.gov.za/issues/african_diaspora/What_is_the_Diaspora.pdf)

### The Indian Diaspora

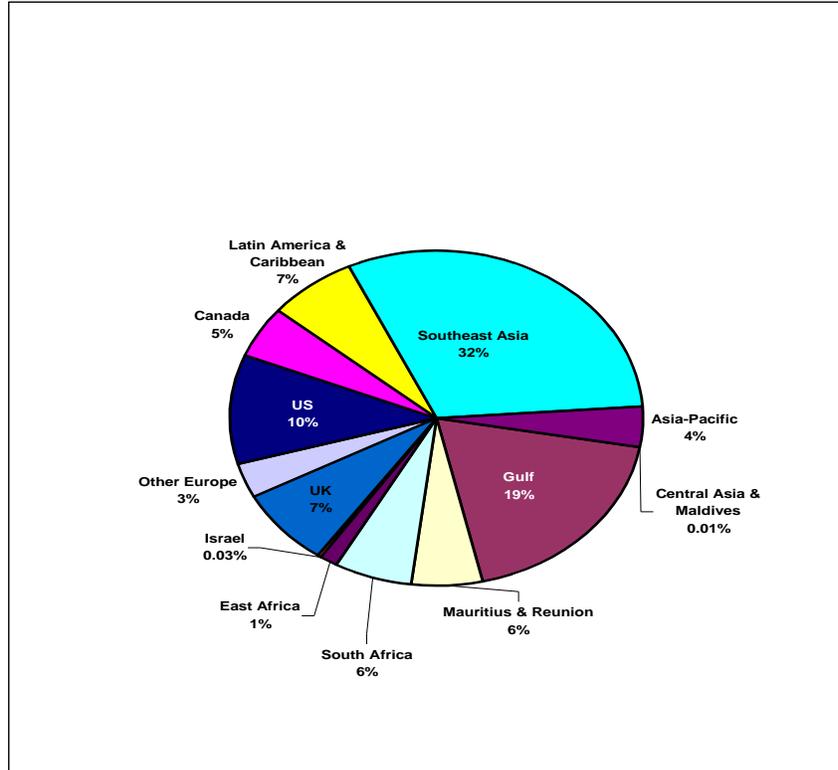
The High Level Committee on the Indian diaspora estimated the total Indian diaspora globally at about 20 million which included persons of Indian origin (PIOs) and overseas Indians (Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001). Non-Resident Indian [NRI] means a 'person resident outside India' who is a citizen of India or is a 'person of Indian origin.'<sup>1</sup> 'Person of Indian Origin' (PIO) includes *foreign citizens*

<sup>1</sup> All definitions from the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs website: <http://moia.gov.in/showfaqmain.asp?page=5&catid=7>

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*of Indian origin or descent*, including second and subsequent generations. It is thus closer to the concept of overseas Chinese. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the Indian diaspora by region.

Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of NRIs and PIOs by Region



Source: Government of India (2001). Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora.

The bulk of the Indian diaspora populations are found in Asia (36%) and the Gulf countries (19%). Including Mauritius, Africa hosts 13 percent, while 15 percent reside in North America. In Europe, the United Kingdom is the single most important host country reflecting colonial linkages with India.

### The Chinese Diaspora

Overseas Chinese estimated at about 30-40 million globally and living in about 30 countries comprise one of the largest diasporas in the world (GCIM, 2005). China tended to view overseas Chinese initially with suspicion. This attitude changed largely following the economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. Since then, China has introduced many concessions and incentives to the overseas Chinese and given them special status to visit and invest in China. They have been the major source of large FDI flows into China. The OECD estimates that in 2004, investments made by overseas Chinese in the People's Republic of China comprised some 45 percent of the country's total FDI (GCIM, 2005).

At the same time, China is promoting a two-track approach by focusing also on the more recent intellectual and scientific diaspora by targeting “Overseas Chinese Professionals (OCPs)” who are more recent emigrants as students and researchers to the West. The numbers are of course, much smaller than for Overseas Chinese. According to Biao (2005), between 1985 and 2003, an accumulated number of more than 700,000 students went overseas for study and about 180,000 of them returned to China on a long-term basis, therefore creating a pool of OCPs of 520,000 (including students who may return later). Combining the new OCPs with those who left before 1949 (estimated to be 600,000), Biao estimates that the total OCPs at the current time (by end of 2003) to be 1.1 million, including 140,000 who left after 2000 (Biao, 2005).

## The US diaspora and the Foreign Born Population in the United States

There are no accurate estimates of the American diaspora overseas. According to a State Department estimate for 2005, about 6.6 million Americans (excluding military) lived in 160-plus countries.<sup>2</sup> The US Census Bureau has generally included only “federally affiliated” groups—members of the military and federal employees and their dependents—but has excluded private citizens residing abroad from recent censuses. The 2010 Census will also exclude this category due to cost reasons.

At the same time, there is extensive data on the foreign born population of the United States from the Censuses. The 2000 Census provides the following information.

Table 4: Profile of Selected Demographic and Social Characteristics for the US Foreign-born Population: 2000

U.S. CITIZENSHIP STATUS		%
Total foreign-born population	31,107,890	100.0
Naturalized U.S. citizen	12,542,625	40.3
Entered 1990 to 2000	1,759,385	5.7
Entered 1980 to 1989	3,777,455	12.1
Entered before 1980	7,005,785	22.5
Not a citizen	18,565,265	59.7
Entered 1990 to 2000	11,418,890	36.7
Entered 1980 to 1989	4,687,305	15.1
Entered before 1980	2,459,065	7.9

Source: based on information at: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/foreign/STP-159-2000il.html>

In March 2000, an estimated 10.4 percent of the U.S. population was foreign born, up from 7.9 percent in 1990. The rapid increase in the foreign-born population from 9.6 million in 1970 to 31 million in 2000 reflects the high level of international

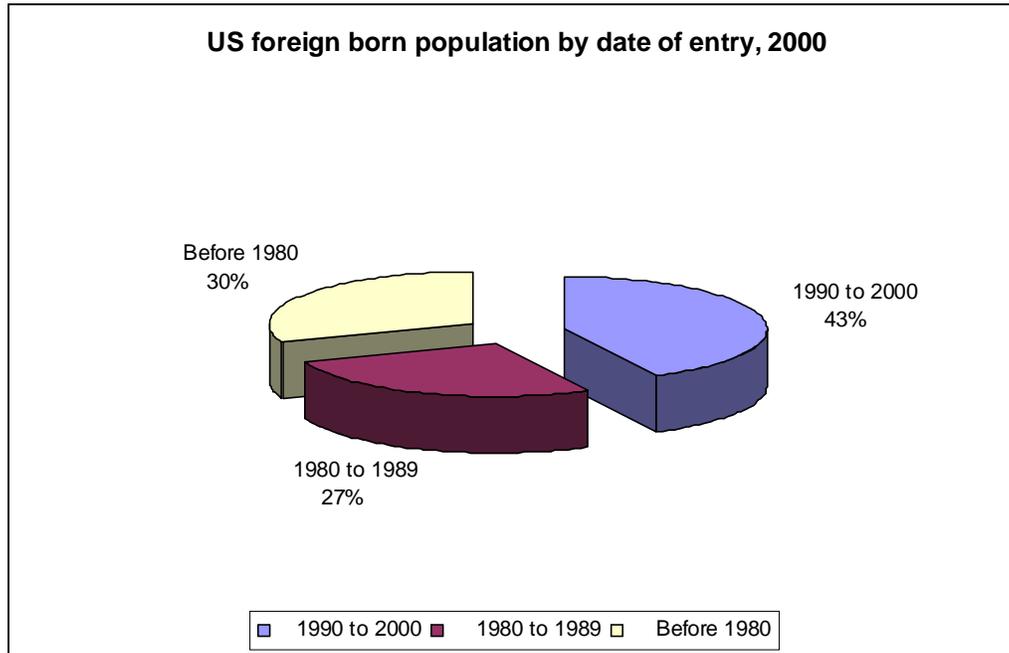
<sup>2</sup> [http://www.aaro.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=34&Itemid=46](http://www.aaro.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=34&Itemid=46)

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migration during the recent decades. The transition to citizenship shows that those who arrived earlier have higher rates of citizenship – overall 40% have acquired US citizenship.

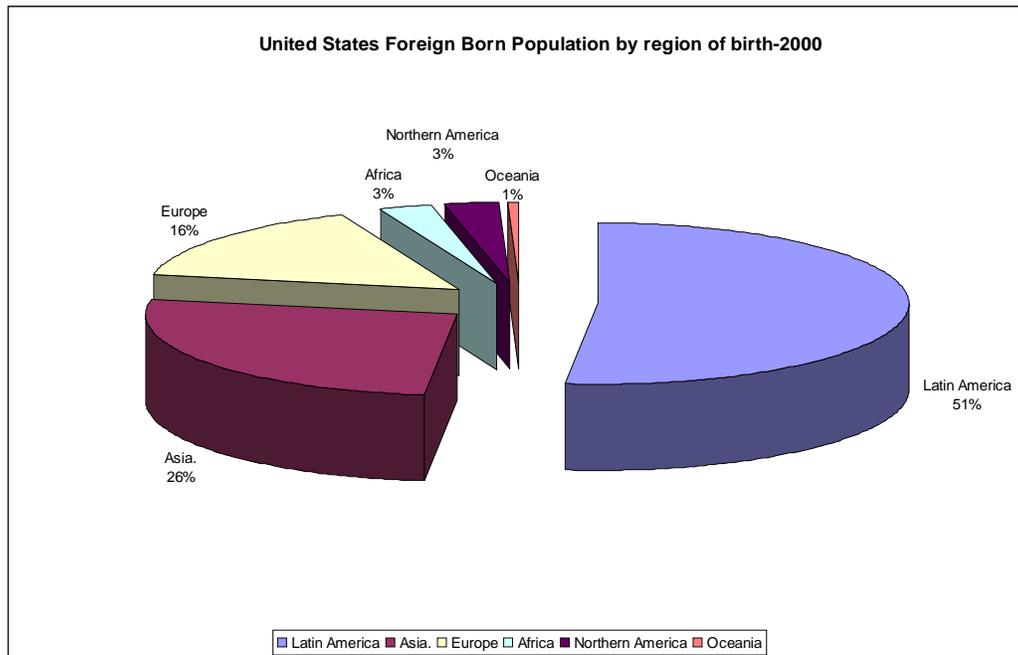
Figure 2 shows that the bulk of the foreign born (43%) have arrived in the decade, 1990-2000. About 70% have arrived since 1980.

Figure 2: US foreign born population by date of entry, 2000



In terms of source regions of the foreign born population, Latin America comes first with slightly over half of the total. Asia accounts for 26 percent while the traditional source – Europe – now accounts for only 16 percent. The share of Africa is relatively small at three percent (Figure 3).

Figure 3: United States Foreign Born Population by region of birth-2000



Source: based on information at: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/foreign/STP-159-2000I.html>; Census 2000 Brief - The Foreign-Born Population: 2000 (C2KBR-34.pdf), US Census Bureau, December 2003.

## New Zealand Diaspora Populations

Gamlen (2007) correctly observes that the number of New Zealanders abroad has never been accurately counted and remains unknown (Gamlen, 2007). Estimates range from 460,000 to 850,000 while the media quote about one million. Gamlen noted that the differences in estimates related to whether individuals were or whole family units were counted, a significant number of whom are not New Zealand born and/or are not New Zealand citizens (KEA, 2006). The phenomenon of dual citizenship among a significant number of New Zealand citizens living overseas also complicates estimations. He concludes that New Zealand's diaspora may range between about a tenth or a fifth of the total New Zealand population and perhaps up to quarter of its tertiary qualified workforce (Gamlen, 2007). A study commissioned by KEA – New Zealand's Global Talent Network - *Every One Counts*-- also reveals the complex interests and diverse loyalties that affect expats' connections with New Zealand. The expats in the sample seem socially engaged with New Zealand through family and friends, yet relatively detached economically and politically (Box 1).

---

## Box 1: New Zealand's diverse expatriate community

- One fifth of expats surveyed have been overseas for 10 years or more.
- A high proportion of respondents have formed deep attachments overseas.
- One-third of expat New Zealand citizens surveyed also have citizenship of a second country.
- Over half of their spouses or partners are not New Zealand citizens.
- Over two-thirds of their children either do not have New Zealand citizenship or have another citizenship as well.
- Among those who consider themselves New Zealand expatriates are about 6% of respondents who first migrated to New Zealand and then moved to another country.

Source: <http://www.keanewzealand.com/news/eoc-summary.html>

Another important aspect of the profile of the diaspora is their educational levels and skills. This is discussed next.

## Profiles of the Diaspora

### Skill profile of the diaspora

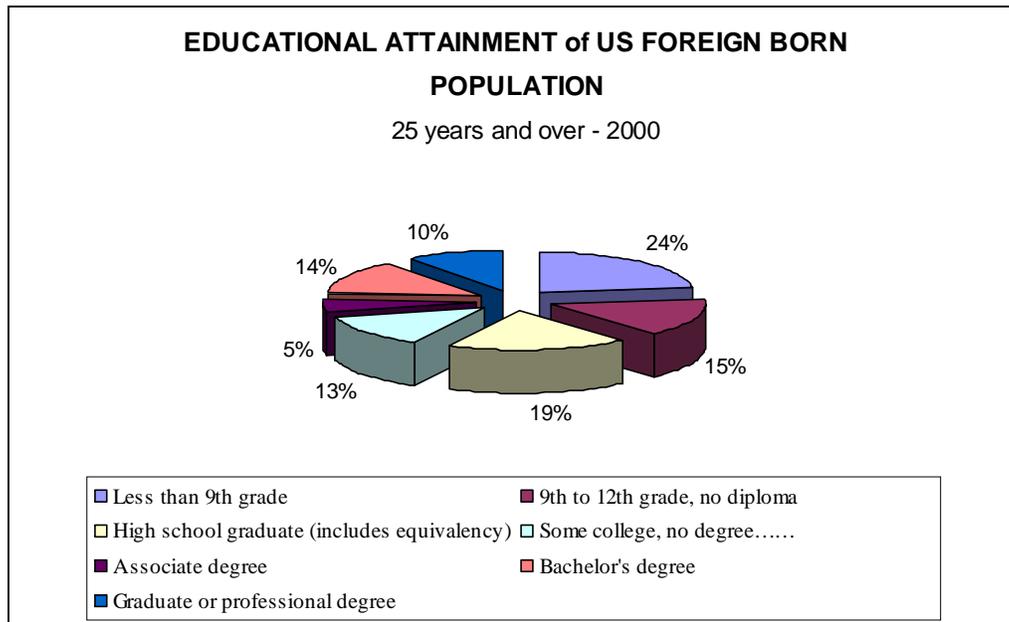
Recent discussions have focused mostly on the intellectual or skilled or scientific diaspora. Yet, diaspora populations represent a wide spectrum of skills ranging from low, medium to highly skilled. Similarly development contributions are also not a monopoly of the skilled diaspora (see section 4). Of the global migrant worker population, about 30 percent may be highly skilled according to recent estimates.<sup>3</sup>

Data from the United States show that 37 percent of the foreign born population had less than a high school diploma. Those with a tertiary degree and above were almost one-fourth, while high school graduates or higher was 56 percent of the total (Figure 4).

In OECD countries, the educational status of the foreign born population and the second generation also varies considerably among countries as shown in Appendix Table A1. The share of low-educated among the foreign born is relatively high in Denmark, France, Germany and Switzerland among both men and women. Both Australia and Canada show high levels of those with high education, which probably reflects their selective talent admission policies. The United Kingdom also has a high share of the foreign born population with high levels of education. The comparison with the second generation in these countries shows some interesting features. Except in Australia, the share of the low-educated persons shows a remarkable decline from the first to the second generation in most countries. The gains are mostly in the middle levels of education.

<sup>3</sup> Based on information provided by Lindsay Lowell, Georgetown University.

Figure 4: Educational Attainment of US Foreign Born Population



Source: based on information at:

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/foreign/STP-159-2000II.html>; Census 2000 Brief - The Foreign-Born Population: 2000 (C2KBR-34.pdf), US Census Bureau, December 2003.

Table A2 (Appendix) shows the distribution of low-educated persons in the total and the foreign born labour force. The foreign born share of the total low educated labour force (in the total working age population) is high in Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland and the USA. Among the foreign born labour force, the low educated share is particularly high in France, Greece, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the USA. Overall for the 25 countries of the European Union (excluding the new accession states, Bulgaria and Romania), the low educated foreign born formed 14 percent of the total low educated labour force and 35 percent of the foreign born labour force.

The data cannot reflect the fact that a considerable number may be working below their qualifications which affects their potential contributions. The OECD (2007) found that in all of the OECD countries considered, almost 50 percent on average (or at least 25 percent) of skilled immigrants were 'inactive, unemployed or confined to jobs for which they are over-qualified'. It found that immigrants were more likely than the native-born to hold jobs for which they were over-qualified. Foreign-born women were at an even greater disadvantage. According to Table 5, the differences between native and foreign workers were particularly pronounced in the case of Australia (over 30 percent) and in Spain and Sweden (more than double) .

Table 5: Over-qualification rate of native and foreign-born populations in selected OECD countries (%)

Country	Native-born	Foreign-born
Australia	12.9	18.9
Canada	21.3	25.2
France	10.8	13.7
Spain	7.3	19.8
Sweden	7.6	18.7
United Kingdom	14.0	18.4
United States	14.0	17.3

Source: Table II.2, p.137, OECD 2007

There is good data available from Switzerland about the skill composition of migrants from the GIAN project on scientific diasporas (Table 6). Since 1990, migrants to Switzerland have been more and more highly skilled, whatever the origins of population (apart from Latin America in aggregate terms). In 2000, highly skilled migrants represented 36.4 percent of the migrant labour force compared to 22.2 percent ten years previously. This proportion reaches 38.9 percent, 30.1 percent, 38.3 percent and 35.4 percent among migrants from North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia respectively. Again, migrants from South Africa, China and India are mainly high-skilled (73.1%, 61.7% and 79.5% respectively) (Pecoraro and Fibbi, 2007).

It is not clear how many of the migrant labour force enjoy permanent or long term residence status to form a settled diaspora.

Table 6: Distribution of the migrant labour force by skill level: Switzerland

Geographical origin	2000		
	Highly skilled %	Low-skilled %	Total
Europe	35.3	64.7	649'414
EU-1 5/EFTA-3	41.6	58.4	413'665
Other European Countries	20.2	79.8	235'749
Africa	33.7	66.3	24'013
North Africa	38.9	61.1	9'323
Sub-Saharan Africa	30.1	69.9	14'690
South Africa	73.1	26.9	629
North America	90.5	9.5	9'607
Latin America	38.3	61.7	17'386
Colombia	45.8	54.2	1'508
Asia	35.4	64.6	43'304
China	61.7	38.3	2'527
India	79.5	20.5	2'923
Oceania/Other Countries	78.3	21.7	1'797
Total	36.4	63.6	745'521

Note: The migrant population represents all foreign-born persons irrespective of the date of their entry into Switzerland. (Pecoraro and Fibbi 2007)

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## Temporary migrants vs. settled migrants or long term residents

Part of the foreign born population does not belong to the diaspora if we define them as settled immigrant populations. The increasing proliferation of temporary labour migration schemes in recent years has increased the importance of those migrating on temporary basis. The contractual migration to the Gulf since the mid-1970s has been by nature temporary, although some workers, especially skilled workers, are able to acquire repeat renewals of their stay. Part of the Indian diaspora population in the Middle East (estimated at 19 percent of the total) may fall into more settled category in the Gulf. There is however, no data on the duration or renewals of migrant stays. Weiner (Weiner, 1986) has contrasted temporary migrant workers and their treatment and integration into a diaspora in the Middle East and Western Europe in the mid-1980s. He noted that the ideology of return and temporariness is intrinsic in the Gulf model whereas there are possibilities for settlement in the Western model. The recent thrust on temporary migration in the North as well may reverse this trend.

Skilled workers admitted on temporary programmes and students in higher studies have the option to change their temporary status. In the United States, among scientists and engineers, only 11 percent were found to have temporary status. (Kannankutty and Burrelli, 2007)

The Philippines makes estimates of the total migrant stock worldwide. Almost 40 percent are permanent migrants who form the core diasporas, while some workers in irregular status also may be long term settlers in some cases.

Table 7: Philippines: Total migrant stock in the world

Type	Number	Percent
Permanent	3,692,527	42.3
Temporary	4,133,970	47.4
Irregular	900,023	10.3
Total	8,726,520	100.0

Source: POEA, 2008

Traditional settler countries such as Australia and Canada are also increasingly resorting to temporary admission of skilled workers, who have the option of changing their status. In 2006, Australia admitted 192,000 persons under the regular migration programme while admissions for temporary migration for work amounted to 210,000 (including working holiday makers) (OECD, 2008).

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## First generation and second/third generation diasporas

### Box 2: Definitions of diaspora generations

- The foreign born: the first generation.
- The second generation: those native-born children with one or both parents foreign born.
- Young immigrants: children who migrated to the host country often with their foreign born parents.

OECD (2007) argues that the term ‘second generation’ is not ideal, however, because: it does tend to suggest an ‘inheritance’ of immigrant characteristics, which may be true to some extent, but does not reflect the fact that the person in other respects, including language, education and indeed cultural outlook, may be indistinguishable from other native-born persons. Most young immigrants may have been educated abroad, at least in part (OECD, 2007).

It is difficult to derive the second generation from most databases and censuses may not contain information on the place of birth of the individual, as well as on that of the parents (Heckathorn, 2006). There is no consistency across OECD countries in recording parentage of native born children of immigrants (OECD, 2007: Box 1.5, p.78).

The US population data provides rich information on this aspect. In March 2000, the data from the 2000 Current Population Survey (CPS) shows that 11 percent of the foreign born population were aged 65 and over. The share of older people among the foreign born declined sharply, from 32.6% in 1960 to 11.0 percent in 2000 (He, 2002).

More than one-third of the older foreign born are from Europe, compared with 15.3 percent of the total foreign born population. In contrast, people from Latin America accounted for only 31.3 percent of the older foreign born but 51 percent of the total foreign born.

The shifting world regions of birth of the US foreign born is reflected in the shares of the older foreign born. Historically, Europe was the primary source of the foreign born. A much higher proportion of the older foreign born than of the total foreign born are naturalized citizens (70.2 % compared with 37.4 % respectively in 2000), in part because typically they have lived in the United States longer.

A Migration Policy Institute (MPI) study based on 2000 Census data (Dixon, 2006) highlights the following features of the second generation in the USA (Box 3).

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### Box 3: The Second Generation in the USA – 2006

- The second generation accounted for nearly 11 percent of the US population in 2006. About 12 percent (35,436,774 individuals) of the US population are foreign born, 11 percent (30,994,680) are second generation and 77 percent (226,068,824) are third-or-later generation.
- Two of every three members of the second generation have parents born in Mexico, Europe, or Canada. About 35 percent of the second generation have parents born in Europe or Canada, while 29 percent have parents born in Mexico. Asia: 18 percent; Latin America (other than Mexico): 16 percent.
- More than two of every five members of the second generation have a US-born parent.
- Members of the second generation with Mexican and Asian roots were more likely to have two parents born in the same world region.
- The second generation tend to be very young. The median age of the second generation is 21 years, compared with 38 years among the foreign born and 37 years among the third-and-later generation. The young age of the second generation reflects the large, recent wave of immigrants to the United States.
- The second generation of European and Canadian origin are four times older than those with roots in other areas.
- Members of the second generation are more likely to finish college than both the foreign born and members of the third-and-higher generation. About 31 percent of the second generation 25 and older have completed a four-year college degree or higher compared with 27 percent of the foreign born and 28 percent of the third-and-later generation.

Source: Dixon, 2006

The study, however, tells little about the second generation in age groups below 25 years. The special issue of the Migration Information Source has provided important information in this regard and other aspects.<sup>4</sup> Studies of second generation from particular regions or countries can yield rich information as shown by a survey of Mexican second generation in California (Waldinger and Reichl, 2006).

### Return diaspora or reverse diaspora

As Russel King stated in his seminal article on return migration, ‘return migration is the unwritten chapter in migration’s history’ (King, 2000). There is considerable interest in return migration, particularly of the diaspora and its impact on development of home countries.

In discussions of brain drain, there have been often references to a reverse brain drain implying the return of professionals back to the home country. If they move to a third country from the host country, it no longer represents a return as such. Recent OECD research shows high rates of return among migrants from OECD countries although they do not distinguish between returnees on the basis of duration. The

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.migrationinformation.org/issue\\_oct06.cfm](http://www.migrationinformation.org/issue_oct06.cfm)

findings indicate that departures by foreigners from OECD countries can represent anywhere between 20 percent and 75 percent of arrivals in any given year. Further, depending on the country of destination and the period of time considered, 20 to 50 percent of immigrants leave within five years after their arrival, either to return home or to move on to a third country - secondary emigration (OECD, 2008).

The pattern of permanent returns is clear in the case of migration to Australia. Table 8 reveals an interesting picture. Along with settler arrivals, there are departures of both natives and migrants. The definition is based on the intentions recorded, but still they indicate a fairly consistent pattern. While the data pertains only to APEC member countries, it shows a common pattern of returns and circular migration, particularly for Hong Kong SAR which records a two-thirds return level.

Table 8: Australia - Settler Arrivals and Permanent Departures (Australia- and Overseas-Born) to APEC Member Countries, 1993-94 to 2005-06

Country of Last Residence	Settler Arrivals	Permanent Departures as % of Arrivals from each country		
		All Persons	Australia- Born	Overseas- Born
Brunei	1,447	110.2	73.3	37.0
Canada	10,397	127.4	74.1	53.4
Chile	2,455	67.4	22.6	44.8
China (Excluding Taiwan Province)	76,352	28.1	6.8	21.3
Hong Kong SAR	41,872	97.8	32.1	65.7
Indonesia	30,297	34.1	15.2	18.9
Japan	9,203	90.6	50.2	40.4
Korea, Republic of	10,352	36.9	7.8	29.1
Malaysia	30,759	21.4	10.8	10.6
Mexico	441	53.1	30.2	22.9
New Zealand	275,829	49.3	18.8	30.5
Papua New Guinea	3,481	129.3	93.0	36.3
Peru	1,770	13.9	6.8	7.1
Philippines	42,969	7.5	3.0	4.5
Russian Federation	4,376	7.3	3.6	3.7
Singapore	44,173	52.6	31.4	21.2
Taiwan Province of China	16,109	47.5	5.4	42.1
Thailand	16,007	42.3	21.4	20.8
U.S.A	24,658	236.9	161.4	75.4
Vietnam	30,398	20.9	5.2	15.7
Total	673,345	52.7	23.4	29.3

Source: Hugo, Badkar et al., 2008

Another term which has become popular is the concept of the 'Reverse diaspora'. This is a reference to the return of diasporas to the origin country. The Canadian diaspora raise some interesting issues about reverse diaspora moves. The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada puts the number of Canadians overseas at about 2.7 million, about nine percent of the population (Metropolis, 2006). As in the case of Australia, a substantial part of the overseas Canadians are recent immigrants who

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have chosen to emigrate not long after coming to Canada. It is estimated that one-third of male immigrants between 25 and 45 (at the time of arrival) left Canada within 20 years of coming there, with about half of those relocating within the first year. This was especially so of Hong Kong SAR immigrants who arrived between 1990 and 1994.

The Asia Pacific Foundation estimated 200,000 Canadians living in Hong Kong SAR by 2006 or so, most of whom were natives of Hong Kong SAR and return migrants from the 1990s. (Metropolis, 2006) According to a survey, some 15 percent of recent Chinese immigrants leave Canada in the first year after they have landed in Canada. Over half of these returns happened within 3 years. The most important motivation for moving to Canada is acquiring Canadian citizenship or permanent residency, followed by studying in Canada and living in a better natural environment. The major motivations for returning to China were found to be greater opportunities for promotion, higher paying jobs and more job security. On the Canadian side, the top contributing factors were Chinese qualifications and experience not being recognized and lack of Canadian work experience.

What is important is that when immigrants with the right of return (either as citizens or permanent visas) go back to their home countries, they form a dual diaspora – a return of the diaspora for the country of origin and a diaspora abroad from the perspective of the destination country. In other words, for Canada, it is the Canadian diaspora who have gone to Hong Kong SAR whereas for Hong Kong SAR, it is the return of the diaspora who initially left the territory.

This is the real reverse diaspora movement rather than the incoming immigrant populations mentioned in the case of the New Zealand study by Bryant and Law (2004). Bryant and Law have defined “reverse diaspora” as people born elsewhere who migrate to live in New Zealand as New Zealand’s “reverse diaspora” (Bryant and Law 2004). It is however, more logical to define the reverse diaspora as those who first immigrated to a host country and then moved back to the home country. The KEA (2006) study showed that this group comprised about 6 percent of respondents of New Zealand’s expatriate population.

In the case of China, the return of professionals is not that large (Biao, 2005). Over the period 1985-2003, out of over 700,000 who emigrated, only 180,000 returned – implying that almost three-fourths of the OCPs remained overseas (Table 9).

Table 9: The scope of outflow, return of students and OCPs, China (acuumulative, 1985-2003)  
(10,000 persons)

Time (1)	Outflow (2)	Return (3)	OCPs (remain overseas) (4)	% remaining overseas (4)/(2)
Up to 1985	4	1.65	2.35	58.75
Up to 1991	17.0	5	11	64.71
Up to 1995	25.0	8.1	16.9	67.6
Up to 2000	34	14	20	58.82
Up to 2001	48.6	15.22	33.38	68.68
Up to 2002	58.3	16	42.3	72.56
Up to 2003	70+	18	52	74.29

Source: Biao, 2005

### Migration status: Diaspora in irregular status

Since immigrant populations could consist of some who entered in an irregular manner or who have become irregular over time, it is indeed logical to expect some incidence of immigrant populations in irregular status. There are no global estimates but there is anecdotal evidence. The Philippines estimates that 16 percent of its total migrant stock of eight million is in irregular status. Out of the Mexican diaspora in the United States, a substantial proportion of the low skilled may also be in irregular status. Portes et al. (2006) found that immigrants in irregular status ranged between 80 to 98 percent of the total immigrant populations in the United States from Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Colombia.

Table 10: Profile of immigrants in USA from selected Latin American countries

Item	Colombia	Dominican Republic	Mexico
Total immigrant population	470,684	764,945	9,177,487
Legal immigrants 2001	16,730	21,313	206,426
Percent of total immigration	1.6	2.0	19.4
Those in irregular status %	98.4	98.0	80.6
Professional speciality occupations %	16.1	9.4	4.7
College graduate %	21.8	9.5	4.2

Source: Adapted from Portes et al., 2007

### Diaspora concentrations

Diaspora populations may be concentrated in one or two top destinations or scattered over many countries. The concentration of diasporas is important because they represent a tangible target group of transnational communities for engagement for both destination and source countries.

This concentration is evident in New Zealand and Canadian diasporas who are centred largely in Australia (77%) and the United States (83%), respectively. Table 11 shows the situation for a few major countries of destination. While New Zealand

is attracting migrants from 177 countries in 2001, there were more than 10,000 migrants from 16 countries. Australia and Canada show still much greater diversity as regards the origin of migrant communities with 56 and 72 countries respectively accounting for more than 10,000 migrants (Bryant and Law, 2004).

According to the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, there are about 10,000 or more overseas Indians in 48 countries and more than half a million persons of Indian descent in 11 countries, where they represent a significant proportion of the population of those countries.

Table 11: Numbers of migrant communities, New Zealand and selected countries, 2001

Country	Number of countries from which the selected country has at least:		
	100 migrants	1,000 migrants	10,000 migrants
Australia	166	110	56
Canada	185	140	72
Denmark	114	51	14
Ireland	--	30	2
Italy	143	83	33
Netherlands	146	76	26
New Zealand	120	48	16

Source: Bryant and Law 2004

The above discussion has shown that the diaspora numbers can be quite important for some countries. Moreover it highlights their diversity which needs to be recognized in diaspora engagement policies. Diaspora links to home countries may cut across some of these profiles when both male and female or high and low skilled form common associations to support the home country.

The current interest in the diaspora is not just about mapping their numbers or profiles. Such mapping is called for in evolving the best approaches to engaging the diaspora for home country contributions.<sup>5</sup> In the next section, I shall review the forms and channels of these contributions as reflected in recent discussions.

#### IV. Diaspora roles and contributions

Recent years have seen a major emphasis on linkages between migration and development (ILO, 2008). One of the major linkages identified in this context is contributions by the diaspora communities to home country development. The role of the diaspora in contributing to development has been reiterated by many researchers and recent global initiatives. Box 4 highlights some of these.

<sup>5</sup> I prefer the term 'engaging' to 'mobilising' diasporas. As Hein de Hass (2006) has rightly pointed out: "[M]igrants *are* already mobilised for development on their own initiative."

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## Box 4: Recognition of the role of the diaspora

➤ The Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM)

Diasporas should be encouraged to promote development by saving and investing in their countries of origin and participating in transnational knowledge networks.

➤ ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2006): Guidelines on transnational communities (Principle 15 on Migration and Development)

15.4. promoting and providing incentives for enterprise creation and development, including transnational business initiatives and micro-enterprise development by men and women migrant workers in origin and destination countries;

15.9. facilitating the transfer of capital, skills and technology by migrant workers, including through providing incentives to them;

15.10. promoting linkages with transnational communities and business initiatives.

➤ The UN Secretary-General's Report on International Migration and Development (United Nations, 2006a)

Governments understand that their citizens working abroad can be development assets and are strengthening ties with them. (Paragraph 59).

➤ Department for International Development, UK, London: "Moving out of poverty - making migration work better for poor people."

[T]he positive economic, social and political connections that diasporas maintain with their countries of origin have the potential to be an engine for development (DFID, 2007).

➤ European Commission (2005) Migration and Development: Some Concrete Orientations

As part of transnational communities linking countries of origin and countries of residence, diasporas can make an important contribution to the development of their home countries. (p.23).

➤ Global forum on Migration and Development, Brussels 2007.

Home and host countries should integrate diaspora initiatives into national development planning and poverty reduction strategies, both at national and local level (GFMD, 2007).

## Diversity of diaspora roles

The diaspora roles have been described in different ways. For example, Newland and Patrick (2004: 2) state:

For many countries, the Diasporas are a major source of foreign direct investment (FDI), market development (including outsourcing of production), technology transfer, philanthropy, tourism, political contributions and more intangible flows of knowledge, new attitudes and cultural influence.

Ionescu (2006) has documented a number of these contributions for different regions. The diaspora agenda of the African Union highlights the extensive nature of expected contributions (Box 5). The African Union has recognized the diaspora as

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an integral part of the continent and led on to its official designation of the African diaspora as the “Sixth Region” of the African Union, alongside North, South, East, West and Central Africa.

Box 5: Diaspora Agenda of the African Union

The AU diaspora agenda covers six broad areas:

- (i) international affairs, peace and security (seeking a strategic response to globalization);
  - (ii) regional development and integration (mechanisms for joint projects aimed at infrastructure development);
  - (iii) economic cooperation (joint venture mechanisms to transform manufacturing industries and ensure Africa as a favourable investment destination);
  - (iv) historical, socio-cultural and religious commonalities (identifying concrete projects or areas of cooperation);
  - (v) women, youth and children (exploring new models and initiatives to protect the vulnerable and people with disability); and
  - (vi) knowledge sharing (including communication technology to address the digital divide; research collaborations on energy, environment, agriculture and food processing, science and technology; health; emphasizing mathematics in education, intra-Africa and external trade etc).
- (World Bank, 2007)

While all the above roles are possibilities, one has to decide which factors work best in which contexts and the extent to which diaspora profiles affect the outcomes. There is inadequate information on the relative impact of different diaspora contributions (Lowell and Gerova, 2004). Such assessments would require much more empirical information than presently available. Kuznetsov (2008) spells out a hierarchy of diaspora impacts starting from remittances at the bottom and going up to donations, investments, knowledge and innovation with institutional reform at the top. However, he does not explain the logic of this hierarchy.

There are several factors to be considered in evaluating diaspora contributions.

- *Two-way nature of diaspora contributions*

Diaspora communities contribute to both host and origin countries. From the viewpoint of the host country, they represent ‘migrant communities’ or the foreign born and their descendants rather than a ‘diaspora’. While the migration-development discourse has primarily focused on the contributions of the diaspora to home countries, their first and foremost contribution has been to host countries. It has been noted by the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora:

The Indian Diaspora has transformed the economies and has come to occupy a pride of place in the life of those countries. Its members are found as entrepreneurs, workers, traders, teachers, researchers, inventors, doctors, lawyers, engineers, managers and administrators. (Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001)

It added that the Indian Diaspora had the distinction of being the second largest diaspora in the world with a huge purchasing power, estimated at around US\$300 billion.

- *Actual and potential contributions to countries of origin*

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It is also important to distinguish between the potential and actual contributions of the diaspora communities. While there is wide consensus about the potential, there is no guarantee that these will be realised without some effort on the part of migrant communities or some intervention by destination and origin countries. In other words, the gap between ‘promise and reality’ needs special attention in diaspora discussions. As mentioned earlier, Orozco maintains that several conditions are necessary for groups to be motivated or influenced to become a diaspora which cover both diaspora willingness to have links with home countries and the outreach policies of the home governments. (Orozco, 2006a)

- *Positive and negative contributions of the diaspora*

The third point to highlight is that diaspora contributions can also be negative for the home country’s development where they prolong conflicts and fuel insurgencies. This applies to both intellectual and other diaspora groups. The cases of Eritrea, Kosovo, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, etc. are well-known, where diaspora engagement has created negative situations (Newland and Patrick, 2004). Vertovec (2004, 2005) cites the role of some overseas communities in ‘nation-wrecking’ rather than ‘nation-building’ and sustaining insurgency and terrorism in the home countries.

In the following Box (6), I have attempted a somewhat crude categorization of these different contributions for illustrative purposes. Needless to add, some of these factors are closely inter-linked.

Box 6: Diverse Contributions of the Diaspora

- Positive
  - Economic
    - Financial remittances, FDI & investments, outsourcing, exports related to demand for home country goods, tourism, business networks
  - Intellectual
    - Transfer and sharing of skills, know-how, knowledge through Diaspora Knowledge Networks and other means; advice on economic reforms. transfer of market based institutions
  - Philanthropy – charity and donations for home country infrastructure and other purposes;
  - Political
    - Lobbying, advocacy, mediation, reducing reputation barriers.
  - Social and cultural contributions
- Negative
  - Sustaining conflict in home countries
  - Fuelling insurgent movements and terrorism

## Diaspora contributions by skill profile

In identifying diaspora contributions, there is a clear distinction made between two categories of diasporas: low skilled (LS) and high skilled (HS). Some researchers focus on the educated diaspora described as intellectual or scientific diaspora (Khadria, 1999; Meyer and Brown, 1999; Barre, et al. 2003; Kuznetsov, 2006; Wescott, 2006). Kuznetsov's (2006) paper contains a number of country case studies highlighting the role of the educated diaspora. A series of recent studies by the Asian Development Bank (Wescott, 2006) also focussed on such contributions. Some countries such as China focus mainly on professionals in their diaspora outreach as seen by the definition of the diaspora and policy attention on Chinese Overseas Professionals. At the same time, other researchers, especially those working in Latin America, highlight the contribution of all types of migrants (Orozco, 2006a and 2006b; Orozco, 2003; Lucas, 2004; Portes, 2007). As rightly noted by Lowell and Gerova (2004): "[T]here is little differentiation made in the literature as to which mechanisms are primarily those of low- versus high-skilled diasporas, much less which common mechanisms may exist".

In Table 12, I have tried to sketch a list of contributions and their relative importance for these two groups of the diaspora. Needless to say this bipolar dichotomy between low skilled and high skilled ignores the wide spectrum of skills between these two extremes and also considerable interactions among them. These factors can also make a difference to the outcomes. In short, there is no real basis for ignoring the contributions of the less skilled diaspora groups. In other words, both HS and LS do contribute. Since the low skilled are more likely to be in temporary status than the high skilled, their contributions may be greater. Most existing sources of data noted in Column 4 of Table 12 do not show the contributions by skill profiles. Only special surveys and case studies can throw light on them.

In the sections below, I shall briefly focus on three selected mechanisms of diaspora contributions: knowledge networks, other contributions by migrants/migrant organizations and philanthropy. The objective is simply to illustrate the conceptual issues relating to identification and measurement of these contributions rather than to discuss the issues in detail. I shall not deal with remittances which have received extensive discussion in recent literature.

Table 12: Positive contributions of diasporas by skill profile

Specific contribution (1)	High-skilled (2)	Low-skilled (3)	Sources of information (4)
Economic			
Remittances	++	+++	Central Banks/World Bank-IMF data
Customers for home country goods	++	++	Export/import data in source and host countries
Business and trade promotion	+++	++	Diaspora organisations; country records
Investments/FDI	+++	+++	National and international sources
Entrepreneurship	+++	+++	Studies
Home visits and tourism	++	+++	Country data; surveys

Outsourcing contracts	+++		Trade and company data
Intellectual			
Technology, innovations and skills transfer	+++		Special surveys/ case studies
Digital networks/virtual return	+++		Web search; Research studies
Advice on home economic reforms	+++		Country Case studies
Political			
Lobbying, advocacy	++	+	Country case studies
Mediation and reducing reputation barriers	++		Country case studies
Promoting democratic reform and human rights	++		Country case studies
Philanthropy			
Home town associations/ matching grants	+	+++	Surveys; organization records ; interviews
Charitable donations to communities, health and education, etc.	+++	++	Country data/ organizational records ; case studies
Social and cultural			
Social capital (networks)	++	++	Special studies; web search
Cultural exchanges	+	+	
Support to potential or new immigrants	+	++	Case studies and surveys; Diaspora organization records

Note: More + means stronger contributions

## Diaspora Knowledge Networks (DKNs)

A major area of attention in recent literature is on the potential of the intellectual or the scientific diaspora to transform brain drain into brain gain in the context of home countries. This is also the first brain gain mechanism identified in the GIAN project - A Swiss Network of Scientific Diasporas - to enforce the role of highly skilled migrants as partners in development using scientific diaspora networks. It is said to facilitate the other two brain gain mechanisms: strategies of investment in research and experimental development and North-South research partnership programmes. In theory they enable regular contacts, transfer of skills, virtual linkages, participation and return. The diaspora abroad represent in this sense a brain bank to be drawn upon by the home country.

Repeated waves of emigration have led to the creation of vibrant diasporas that possess cutting-edge technology, capital and professional contacts. For example, developing countries accounted for three-quarters (approximately 2.5 million) of the 3.3 million immigrant scientists and engineers living in the United States in 2003.....At a minimum, the technical, market and marketing knowledge of national diasporas is a huge potential technological resource. (Burns and Mohapatra, 2008)

In the case of China it is estimated that there are approximately 1.1 million overseas Chinese professionals (OCPs), including 0.6 million who left China before 1978 and 0.52 million who emigrated after that. Among them a total of 0.8 million have completed education and therefore form a “mature” pool of professionals (Biao, 2005). A particularly significant policy development has been the introduction of a “transnational” perspective by Chinese authorities, as evidenced by the slogan *weiguo fuwu* (serve the motherland) of the late 1990s, as compared to the

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earlier notion of *huiguo fuwu* (return and serve the motherland), which indicates that physical return is no longer regarded as essential. A so-called “dumb bell model”, meaning that a professional has affiliations in both China and overseas and moves back and forth, has been advocated as an effective means to serve the motherland (Biao, 2005).

How extensive are these networks? Meyer and Brown (1999) identified 41 DKN (internet-based) in 1999 and Meyer and Wattiaux (2005) estimated 158 DKNs in 2005. Nineteen of the top twenty Indian software businesses were founded by or are managed by professionals from the Indian diaspora (Westcott, 2006). The industry relies on individuals and professional organizations from the diaspora for ideas, technologies, markets reputational advice and diaspora-led subsidiaries in key markets such as the United States (Wescott, 2006). Kuznetsov (2006) has presented a number of case studies such as GlobalScot and ChileGobal that have helped connect diasporas across the globe. The GlobalScot is said to represent a highly successful network of about 850 Scottish expatriate professionals all over the world. The ChileGlobal is a network of about 100 successful professionals of Chilean origin in the US, Canada and Europe, which has led to co-founding of high-tech firms in Chile.

Yet the gap between the potential and actual contributions drawn earlier or between ‘promise and reality’ applies to these networks. Some of these networks seem to lose momentum after the initial launch. For instance, it is embarrassing to note that the link on the Digital Diaspora Network for Africa (DDNA) initiative<sup>6</sup> by the United Nations Information and Communications Technology Task Force to mobilize the intellectual, technological, entrepreneurial and financial resources of the African diaspora is no longer functional. A recent electronic survey of the South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA) by the South African Research Foundation revealed that 46 percent of 2,440 email contacts in the SANSA database were not working; only 428 responded to the survey and 40 percent of them mentioned that they rarely or never accessed the SANSA website (cited in Seguin et al., 2006). Lowell and Garova (2004) found two major issues with such networks: a) 34 percent of the networks surveyed (61 DKNs) were inactive; b) 27 percent of government assisted Networks had failed (4 of 15). Meyer and Wattiaux (2005) however, disagree and point out that two-thirds of 158 DKNs identified by them were active.

Moreover even an active web presence cannot indicate much tangible impact. Diaspora initiatives are easy to start but it is difficult to maintain momentum unless concrete results materialize. There is a need for significant technical, human and financial resources to make them sustainable. Lack of strong leadership or individual champions and ineffective follow up mechanisms are other causes (Wickramasekara, 2007). This is what Kuznetsov calls the Paradox of Diaspora Initiatives (Kuznetsov,

<sup>6</sup> The link (<http://www.ddn-africa.org/>) visited on 30 November 2008 led to a completely unrelated page (Mortgage Loan and Refinance Center). The webpage of the UN Information and Communications Technology Taskforce which was responsible for the establishment of the Digital Diaspora Networks (<http://www.unicttaskforce.org/stakeholders/ddn.html>) is no longer updated.

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2004). In his view, it is a paradox that for effective utilization of diaspora potential one needs capable institutions at home.

### **Other mechanisms of transnational engagement**

As argued above, it would be useful to focus on all diaspora contributions and not necessarily only on those by the scientific diasporas. There have been a number of pioneering studies in this respect in the Latin American countries, particularly focusing on links with the United States. As Portes (2007) highlights what is important for definition of transnational engagement is the regular execution of such activities unlike an occasional remittance.

According to Orozco (2006a) the transnational relationship between a diaspora and the home country can be captured by **five Ts**: Transportation, Telecommunication, Tourism, Transfer of money and nostalgic Trade. He used a number of indicators relating to frequency of contacts with home country, investments, remittances and businesses in the home country and membership of diaspora or hometown associations as indicators of the level of “transnational engagement” in several studies (Orozco, 2005; 2006a; 2006b). Yet this categorization fails to capture knowledge sharing and transfer of skills and technology, probably as they are based on information gathered at household level.

Table 13 shows the empirical evidence gathered by Orozco (2005) for the Ghanaian diaspora through three survey studies in the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany in selected cities (New York, New Jersey and Washington, DC in the U.S., London in the U.K. and Frankfurt, Germany). It reveals that substantive linkages exist at the individual household level. It also shows that belonging to a Home Town Association is not essential for such engagement since less than 40 percent were members of such organisations.

He concludes that in practical terms, a typical immigrant’s economic linkage with the home country extends to at least four practices that involve spending or investment: family remittance transfers; demand of goods and services; such as telecommunication, consumer goods or travel; capital investment and charitable donations to philanthropic organizations raising funds for the home country’s community.

His results for some Latin American and Caribbean countries show similar patterns (Appendix Table A3). For the region overall and most LAC countries, the major transnational practices are phone communications, buying of home country goods and travel to the home country. The Ghanaian data indicate that more than fifty percent of this population is extensively connected. Orozco argues that the range of Ghanaian engagement in their home country surpasses their Latin American and Asian counterparts. Latin American and Asian diasporas exhibit a strong commitment to family but the scope of their commitment to other sectors of society, while expanding, is relatively narrow. (Orozco, 2006b: 38)

Table 13: Practices of transnational engagement for Ghanaians in:

Country	Germany	U.K	U.S.A
	% of respondents		
Sends money to Ghana other than family remittances	49	50	28
Calls at least once a week	42	71	84
Sends over US\$300	2	9	54
Buys home country goods	88	83	94
Travels at least once a year	34	59	52
Spends over US 1,000)	77	52	83
Helps family with other obligations	58	64	28
Supports or contributes to a Home Town Association	37	28	15
Has a savings account in a bank	89	89	97
Has a mortgage loan in home country	13	11	5
Mean percentage	49	52	54

Source: Table 31, Orozco 2005

Portes et al (2006) define transnationalism among immigrants as their frequent and durable participation in the economic, political and cultural life of their countries, which requires regular and frequent contact across national borders. Innovations in transportation and communications technology available now have made it possible.

On the basis of a detailed study of immigrant organizations of Colombians, Mexicans and Dominicans, Portes et al (2006) find that transnational, civic, philanthropic, cultural and political activities are common among immigrants in the United States and “on the aggregate, they possess sufficient weight to affect the development prospects of localities and regions and to attract the attention of sending governments” (Portes et al., 2007).

The KEA study for New Zealand diaspora is shown in Table 13. The information provided is more limited, but it indicates more social and cultural ties than business interests, which seem quite low at 7.4 percent.

Table 14: New Zealand diaspora contacts

Current Connections with New Zealand (NZ)	Total Number	%
Travel to NZ	806	26.6
Business interests in NZ	224	7.4
Family / Friends in NZ	2952	97.5
Other	147	4.9

Source: KEA 2006

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## Philanthropic contributions

Johnson (2007) defines “philanthropy” as the private, voluntary transfer of resources for the benefit of the public and notes several fundamental elements of “diaspora philanthropy.” These are: charitable giving from individuals who reside outside their homeland and who maintain a sense of identity with their home country; giving to causes or organizations for public benefit in that country. She highlights the difficulties in distinguishing philanthropy from other financial flows, including remittances and financial investments (Johnson, 2007).

Philanthropic contributions can be individual or collective. The best known examples are the Home Town Associations (HTAs) of Latin America, especially Mexico. The recent experience with the response to the Tsunami disaster in Asia has also shown how the diaspora can be mobilized at short notice to respond to sudden disasters faced by home countries

While we do not intend to discuss the mechanics of HTAs here, their growing importance can be captured by a few figures. An MPI study mentions that the number of Mexican HTAs increased from 441 in 1998 to 623 five years later in 25 US states. Estimates of the number of Mexican HTAs active in the United States range from 600 to 3,000. There are at least 200 Ghanaian HTAs in the United States and about 268 Salvadoran associations in the United States. In France, there were an estimated 300 village associations, analogous to HTAs, representing Mauritania, Senegal and Mali in the Paris area in 2000 (Somerville, Durana et al. 2008).

HTAs are used for community and infrastructure development programmes in communities of migrant origin and often attract matching grants from local authorities. There have been extensive discussions of these (Orozco 2006c; Somerville, Durana et al., 2008); attention is drawn to Orozco’s conclusion:

Although the contributions of HTAs are relatively small when compared to development needs or the structural transformations required to improve society, some of their philanthropic activities have a distinct developmental effect.

Diaspora philanthropy to enhance community development at the local village level has been a practice of Filipinos worldwide. In the Philippines, out of about 12,000 Filipino Associations Overseas, 4,000 were recorded as engaged in diaspora philanthropy (CFO). A study of philanthropic contributions of the Filipino diasporas in New Zealand showed that the contributions are made by a variety of sources: resident Filipinos migrants, Filipino personal networks, Filipino organisations, Filipino Church groups, Philippine Embassy, Filipino media, Filipino entertainment groups and Non Filipino entities (Alayon, undated).

A case study of Kenyans in the United States highlighted the rich heritage of philanthropy and dynamic strategies employed by them to support their home countries. Case study data shows that Kenyans support community projects in their hometowns, most notably through emergency relief during disasters, support for AIDS/HIV victims, improvement of community facilities and scholarships. (Copeland-Carson, 2007). The study noted that institutional philanthropy is just

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developing in Kenya with the Kenyan Community Development Fund (KCDF), founded in 2001 by a coalition of Kenyan leaders.

Johnson (2007) ends on an optimistic note: “Optimistically, diaspora philanthropy will prove itself to be a powerful engine for social change as the 21st Century unfolds”.

Yet there is some doubt as to how sustainable and predictable philanthropic contributions are. There is not much evidence of their impact at the macro level or their poverty reducing impact.

## V. Conclusions and directions for research

The foregoing sections have dwelt on consistency of definitions, estimates of numbers and conceptualising contributions of the new diaspora or transnational communities. The three issues are very much inter-related. The picture that emerges is the need for much more work on these issues.

Globalization trends and advances in internet and communications technology and travel and transport have led to many options in transnational engagements. At the same, the increasing attention on promoting migration and development linkages has focussed on the role of the diaspora as a major area of intervention. I have argued that betting on the intellectual diaspora alone in this respect may not be an equitable or sustainable proposition. There is substantive evidence that all categories of the diaspora can play important roles and a broad definition of the diaspora communities will be useful in this respect. The diversity of diaspora contributions is another striking feature which needs to be given due recognition in diaspora engagement policies.

I would like to end the paper by highlighting a number of areas or directions for further research. As the European Commission (2005: 23) rightly pointed out: “A key difficulty that sending and receiving country governments are often faced with in terms of dealing with the diaspora is precisely knowing the diaspora.” Thus, we need better information on diaspora profiles and their transnational engagements within different categories, particularly the determinants of different types of engagement. There is very limited information on the profile and role of women in diaspora communities or their engagement with home countries. One also needs to document patterns of transnational practices that embrace both source and destination countries and/or the wider diaspora (Sørensen, 2007). It is also important to know the extent of integration of the diasporas, and status of respect for their rights in host societies, and the impact of such integration and protection of rights on their contributions. Another priority need is to continue in-depth analysis of the operation of migrant organisations, both formal and informal, and how they contribute to home countries. A critical analysis of current policies followed by particularly countries of origin for engaging their diaspora communities will be most useful in assessing the gap between promise and delivery. Last but not least, all these point to the need for generation and dissemination of data and information on diaspora profiles, networks and their operations using a gender perspective.

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Appendix Table A1. Education levels for immigrants, second generation and other native-born, 20-29 and not in education, by gender, latest available year (percentage)

Country	Education Level					
	Men			Women		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Australia <sup>1</sup> (2001)						
Foreign-born	40	19	41	39	13	48
Native-born, at least one parent foreign-born	46	30	24	44	19	37
Native-born, both parents native-born	49	32	19	50	18	32
Canada (2001) <sup>2</sup>						
Foreign-born	22	18	60	19	16	66
Native-born, both parents foreign-born	16	19	65	9	12	78
Native-born, one parent foreign-born	19	21	61	13	16	71
Native-born, both parents native-born	27	20	53	20	16	65
Denmark (2004)						
Foreign-born	56	35	9	50	39	12
Native-born, both parents foreign-born	57	34	9	44	43	13
Native-born, at least one parent native-born	28	59	13	24	53	23
France (1999)						
Foreign-born <sup>3</sup>	40	44	16	45	37	18
Native-born, both parents foreign-born	29	55	17	26	53	21
Native-born, one parent foreign-born	22	52	26	21	45	34
Native-born, both parents native-born	20	54	26	19	48	34
Germany (2005)						
Foreign-born	39	46	15	42	41	17
Native-born, both parents foreign-born	36	52	12	35	49	16
Native-born, one parent foreign-born	30	56	14	23	56	20
Native-born, both parents native-born	18	62	19	17	57	26
Norway (2004)						
Foreign-born	14	74	12	14	66	21
Native-born, both parents foreign-born	12	75	13	8	73	19
Native-born, one parent foreign-born	6	73	21	5	64	31
Native-born, both parents native-born	5	75	19	4	64	33
Sweden (2004)						
Foreign-born	24	47	29	20	43	37
Native-born, both parents foreign-born	21	57	23	15	53	31
Native-born, one parent foreign-born	16	58	27	12	51	37
Native-born, both parents native-born	11	59	30	8	50	42
Switzerland (2000)						
Foreign-born	44	41	15	46	39	12
Native-born with foreign nationality at birth	14	69	17	13	75	12
Native-born with Swiss nationality at birth	7	74	20	7	81	15
United Kingdom (2005)						
Foreign-born	25	35	40	27	27	45
Native-born with other "ethnic background"	11	54	27	8	55	37
Native-born with "white British ethnic background"	8	65	27	9	60	31
United States (2005)						

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Foreign-born	35	46	19	29	44	28
Native-born, both parents foreign-born	14	59	27	15	57	28
Native-born, one parent foreign-born	13	68	20	9	58	34
Native-born, both parents native-born	10	65	25	7	57	36

Notes: "Low" refers to below upper secondary; "medium" to upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary and "high" to tertiary education.

1. Qualification levels for Australia were classified as follows: Low: No (professional) qualifications; Medium: Certificate; High: Diploma and above.

2. Qualification levels for Canada were classified as follows: "low" refers to "no schooling or Grade 1 to 13"; "medium" refers to "secondary school graduation certificate"; "high" refers to "Trade non-university" and university.

3. Foreign-born for France excludes foreign-born with French nationality at birth.

Sources: Switzerland: Census (2000); Denmark, Norway and Sweden: Population register (2004); Germany: Microcensus (2005); Australia and Canada: Census (2001); France: Étude de l'histoire familiale (1999); United States: Current Population Survey March 2005 supplement; United Kingdom: Labour Force Survey (third quarter 2005).

Source: OECD, 2007: Annex Table I.A1.3, pp.92-93

Appendix Table A2. The low-educated in the total and foreign-born labour force, by age, 2006 (percentage)

Country	Age group 25-34 years old			Total working-age population (15-64)		
	Low-educated share of the labour force	Foreign-born share of the low-educated labour force	Low-educated share of foreign-born labour force	Low-educated share of the labour force	Foreign-born share of the low-educated labour force	Low-educated share of foreign-born labour force
Austria	10.5	41.9	25.0	17.5	25.5	29.0
Belgium	15.3	22.9	28.2	23.5	14.9	31.4
Czech Republic	4.8	5.4	13.9	5.8	4.5	14.5
Denmark	10.1	17.1	23.9	20.0	7.3	25.1
Finland	9.0	8.5	18.6	17.7	3.6	23.1
France	16.2	19.4	31.7	26.6	17.9	42.7
Germany	13.3	39.6	29.6	15.7	28.3	31.8
Greece	23.2	20.2	50.0	35.5	10.7	45.6
Hungary	10.6	2.2	13.7	13.1	1.4	10.6
Ireland	15.0	12.4	11.4	25.9	8.0	17.1
Italy	31.0	14.4	42.9	39.3	9.7	44.9
Luxembourg	21.2	59.8	26.4	29.7	50.2	34.0
Netherlands	16.5	17.5	23.2	26.2	10.2	26.6
Norway	4.1	35.5	14.0	11.1	10.0	14.9
Poland	6.3	-	-	9.0	0.4	10.0
Portugal	56.1	9.0	44.1	69.4	5.5	49.0
Slovak Republic	4.5	0.6	7.0	4.6	0.7	4.8
Spain	32.4	20.0	34.5	42.7	12.4	36.3
Sweden	8.2	26.3	16.0	14.8	16.1	19.1
Switzerland	11.6	71.9	28.1	18.7	43.0	33.0
United States	11.3	54.1	30.9	11.7	38.7	28.8
EU-25	19.0	19.6	31.8	25.4	14.1	35.0
All above countries	15.9	29.6	31.3	19.4	20.7	31.5

Note: Low-educated are those with less than upper secondary education (ISCED 0-2). The EU and All countries lines are weighted averages.

Source: OECD 2008: International Migration Outlook 2008 SOPEMI, Paris, p.128 (OECD, 2008)

Appendix Table A3: Transnational engagement: Latin America and the Caribbean

Country	Colombia	Cuba	Ecuador	El Salvador	Guatemala	Guyana	Honduras	Mexico	Nicaragua	Dominican Rep.	Bolivia	Jamaica	LAC
Calls at least once a week	80	48	98	41	56	42	57	66	70	77	33	75	61
Sends over \$300	27	15	33	32	43	33	8	46	13	17	21	42	31
Buys HCG	88	29	95	66	50	84	74	86	83	65	70	64	73
Has a saving account	39	2	55	16	19	48	16	21	5	29	10	58	27
Travels at least once a year	34	13	51	24	9	45	12	23	19	69	13	69	32
Spends over US 1,000	61	50	90	61	48	54	43	70	26	64	91	58	60
Has a mortgage Loan	12	2	14	13	4	18	12	3	6	6	36	15	10
Owens a small bus	5	2	1	3	2	8	4	2	3	3	4	2	3
Helps Family with mortgage	21	1	24	13	1	21	8	5	7	13	31	16	12
Belongs to HTA	6	--	10	2	3	29	7	2	4	3	1	16	6

LAC= Latin America and the Caribbean.

Note: The original source does not indicate the units of measurement; it appears to be percentage of migrants surveyed.

Source: Orozco 2006b (reproduced with permission from the author).

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