

## DIASPORAS, TRANSNATIONAL CITIZENSHIP AND VOTING RIGHTS

### ■ Introduction by Katharine Betts

*We live in an era of globalisation and increased migration, both temporary and permanent. This has created diasporas where people of the same national origin are scattered over the face of the Earth. What should be the political rights and obligations of members of these diasporas, regarding both their country of origin and their country of residence?*

*Graeme Hugo, an Australian geographer and demographer, outlines the situation of the Australian diaspora. Marco Fedi and Carlo Carli are both Australian citizens of Italian background who are active in politics. Fedi is a Member of the Italian Parliament, representing the new overseas electorate of Africa, Asia, Oceania and Antarctica. Carli is a member of the State Parliament of Victoria, Australia, representing the inner urban Melbourne electorate of Brunswick. They have different views on the implications of the recent reforms to the Italian constitution which created rights for members of the Italian diaspora to elect their own representatives to the Italian parliament.*

*The following three articles are extracted from papers delivered at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne on 25 August 2006 at a seminar titled 'Dual citizenship and voting rights: an Australian perspective'. These papers will be published in full in the forthcoming issue of the Italian Australian Institute Journal edited by Simone Battiston, Bruno Mascitelli, and Barbara VanErnst. Copies may be obtained from the Italian Australian Institute Research Centre at La Trobe University. For information call (03) 9479 6430 or visit the website at <<http://www.iai.com.au>>.*

## DEFINING AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL POPULATION IN THE ERA OF GLOBALISATION

### Graeme Hugo

*In an era of increasing mobility and multiple citizenship, how should we define Australia's population? The author presents a demographer's view of the Australian diaspora and how it might be measured. He also argues that Australia should develop a diaspora policy.*

### INTRODUCTION

The traditional view is that a national population comprises the people living within national boundaries on the night of a census enumeration. However, the increased international mobility and emergence of multiple citizenship which have been associated with globalisation have produced a challenge to this long-held fundamental of demography. It is the argument of this paper that for some purposes and in some contexts the nation-state may not be the appropriate 'spatial envelope' to define national populations. Increasingly in a globalising world people who identify in an important way with a nation may not be within the national boundaries on the night of the census. Indeed they may live more or less permanently in another country. Increasingly citizens and others who identify with Australia are living outside the country. For some purposes the traditional view of a national population comprising people living within national borders on the night of a census enumeration needs to be modified to incorporate those citizens and nationals elsewhere. An attempt is made here to conceptualise diaspora in demographic terms and to discuss ways in which it can be measured. Some comments are also made on some policy implications

### DEFINING DIASPORA

The term expatriates is used to refer to any people who are citizens or permanent residents of a nation but who reside on a

long-term or permanent basis abroad. On the other hand, the term 'diaspora' has its origins in the Greek word 'to colonise' and until relatively recently it has been used to refer largely to a group of people who are linked by common ethno-linguistic and/or religious bonds who have left their homeland, usually under some form of coercion, and who have developed a strong identity and mutual solidarity in exile. The Jewish diaspora has been the classic example.<sup>1</sup> In the contemporary context, with the acceleration in international mobility, the term has been used more broadly to encompass expatriate populations who are living outside of their home countries and retain linkages with their origin countries.<sup>2</sup> Reis distinguishes between two groups of diaspora theorists: on the one hand are those who focus on 'classical' diasporas based on the Jewish archetype, while, on the other, are those who co-mingle contemporary diasporas with issues of transnationalism and globalisation.<sup>3</sup> It is the latter, wider conceptualisation which is of particular relevance to contemporary discussion of the impacts of emigration on development and it is the one which creates some particular challenges to demography. A distinction also has been made in studies of diaspora 'between a symbolic ethnic identity of "being" and a more active "diaspora identity" requiring involvement',<sup>4</sup> with the latter implying active participation in activity in the homeland.

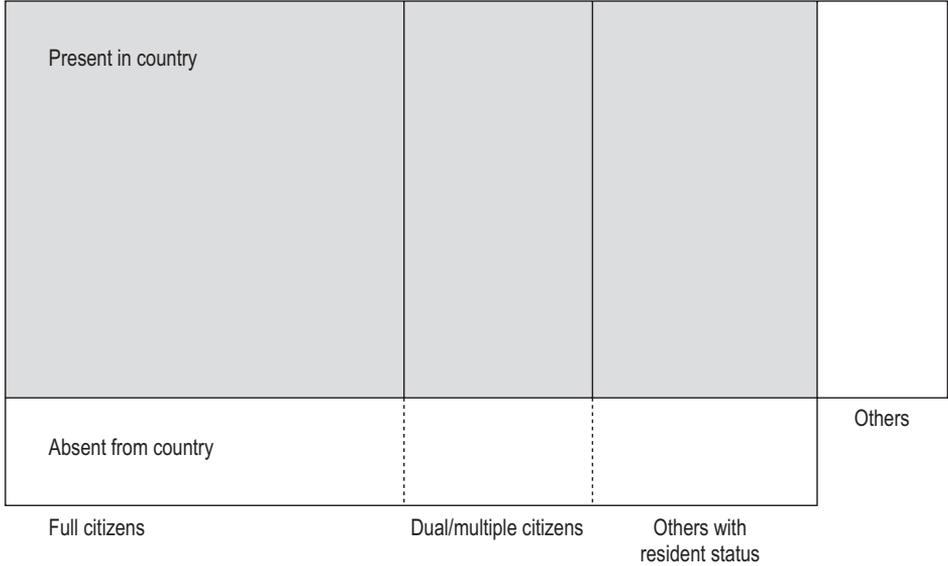
Diaspora represents a significant challenge to the concept of the nation-state since it implies that significant numbers of a nation’s citizens increasingly do not reside within the national boundaries for significant periods of time, in many cases permanently.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, in sociology and international relations there is contemporary questioning of the nation state being considered the appropriate envelope within which many issues of significance should be studied. In demography there has been no such questioning. It is suggested here that there needs to be a similar debate within the discipline for at least two reasons. Firstly, research into national populations in some countries and for some purposes needs now to include national citizens and residents living and working abroad if it is going to be meaningful. Any consideration of Mexico’s human resources, for example, which only includes those resident in Mexico on the night of a population census, will be a partial one. Secondly, demographers have considerable influence

on the multilateral and national agencies responsible for population censuses and other important collections of economic, social and demographic data. These are almost all locked within the nation-state paradigm in terms of the information they collect and how they collect it. Accordingly, little information is collected on diaspora populations and this is a major constraint on research designed to understand the dynamics of such populations and to develop relevant and timely recommendations on policy regarding them.

It needs to be stressed that the national populations, which are the basis of virtually all demographic analysis, are only one of several national demographies in a globalising world. This is depicted in Figure 1. In the diagram the shaded area indicates the national population enumerated in most national censuses. In the case of Australia it includes:

- Australian citizens resident on the night of the census
- Australian citizens absent on the night

**Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of a national population**



of the census but whose households provide information on them

- Australians with multiple citizenship resident on the night of the census
- non-citizen, permanent residents who are resident on the night of the census.

In many nations temporary visitors are not counted. However, there are also a number of persons who are citizens of the country (or permanent residents) who are living and working on a permanent or long-term basis elsewhere and are excluded from the national enumeration. Of course there is considerable variation between nations in the numbers in the three lower boxes of the diagram.

The key point that is raised is whether or not it is important to take into account the people in the lower three boxes of Figure 1 in counting the national population. Research with Australian expatriates leaves no doubt that the majority of them strongly identify with Australia, most continue to identify strongly with Australia, most maintain strong linkages with Australia and many intend to return.<sup>6</sup> Moreover there is increasing evidence that the diaspora can be a significant positive influence in facilitating the economic and social development of origin communities.<sup>7</sup>

### **HOW BIG IS AUSTRALIA'S DIASPORA?**

From the perspective of national census taking, expatriates are demographically similar to deaths in that information on the people involved cannot be obtained directly from them because they are not living within national boundaries at the time the census is taken. In the case of both, information can be obtained directly from other family members still residing in the country but this will not obtain information on all emigration or all mortality.

In determining the size of expatriate communities a significant problem is to separate short term visitors to the

destination country from those who have a longer term commitment to residence in the destination country. One way would be to include only those that have formally taken out residence in the destination country but this would exclude substantial numbers who have a long term commitment to the destination. Moreover, censuses usually do not identify non-citizens who have permanent or temporary residence, although in a globalising world it would be strongly advisable to expand the coding of questions on citizenship to accommodate this. Another issue is whether expatriates who are on extended 'working holidays' in destinations should be counted as expatriates. Such mobility is associated with a desire of young people to gain experience and in some nations has become almost a rite of passage for young adults.<sup>8</sup>

One approach is to use the censuses of destination nations to put together a picture of the numbers of expatriates residing in those nations. This is of course facilitated by the synchronisation of national censuses recommended by the United Nations to be around the beginning of each decade and which is followed by most countries.<sup>9</sup> Much can be gained from bringing together census data of destination countries to build up origin/destination matrices of migration. One interesting initiative in this area has been undertaken by the Office for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),<sup>10</sup> which launched a project in July 2003 to collect data from all OECD National Statistics Officers (NSO) on the stocks of foreign-born populations in order 'to obtain by aggregating across receiving OECD countries, data on expatriates by country of origin'.<sup>11</sup>

As an estimate of the number of Australian expatriates these data are manifestly incomplete on two counts. Firstly, they do not include many countries in which there are significant numbers of Australians, like Italy and Singapore.

**Table 1: Australia-born population living in foreign nations around 2001 and counted in population censuses**

Country	Year	Source	Number
New Zealand	2001	Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Census	56,259
Japan	2001	OECD 2003	9,200 <sup>a</sup>
Germany	2001	Federal Statistics Office, Germany	8,322
Austria	2001	Statistics Austria	1,686
Finland	2002	Statistics Finland	673
Thailand	2000	National Statistical Office, Thailand	1,400 <sup>b</sup>
Hong Kong	2001	Commissioner for Census and Statistics, Hong Kong	6,251 <sup>c</sup>
USA	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	75,314
Belgium	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	1,136
Canada	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	20,155
Switzerland	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	3,420
Czech Republic	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	230
Denmark	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	1,663
Spain	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	3,913
France	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	4,216
Great Britain	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	107,871
Greece	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	20,449
Hungary	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	258
Ireland	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	6,107
Luxembourg	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	96
Mexico	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	281
Netherlands	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	9,529
Norway	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	1,101
Poland	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	608
Portugal	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	1,192
Slovak Republic	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	52
Sweden	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	2,525
Turkey	2001	Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 33	2,938
Indonesia	2002	Soeprobo 2004	2,279
Korea	2002	Park 2004	1,623
Total			350,747

Sources: J.C. Dumont and G. Lemaitre, 'Counting immigrants and expatriates in OECD countries: a new perspective', Conference on Competing for Global Talent, Singapore Management University, Singapore, 13–14 January 2005; (OECD) *Trends in International Migration: Continuous Reporting System on Migration: Annual Report 2002 edition*, Office for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, 2003; Y. Park, 'International migration in Korea 2002–2003', Paper presented at the Workshop on International Migration and Labour Markets in Asia, Japan Institute of Labour, Tokyo, Japan, 5–6 February 2004; T.B. Soeprobo, 'Recent trends of international migration in Indonesia', paper presented at the Workshop on International Migration and Labour Markets in Asia, Japan Institute of Labour, Tokyo, Japan, 5–6 February 2004.

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Population with Australian nationality

<sup>b</sup> Australian citizens

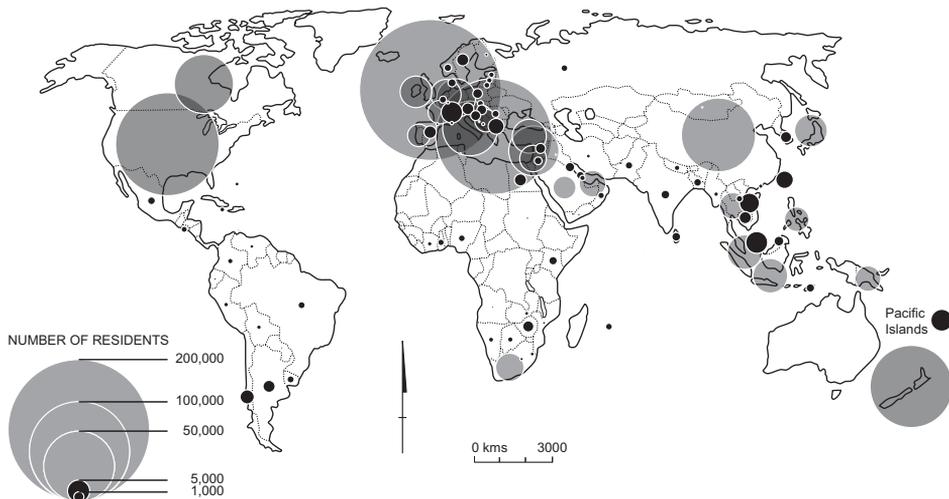
<sup>c</sup> Population with Australian/New Zealander ethnicity born outside of Hong Kong

Secondly, even within nations' censuses under enumerate expatriates.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless Table 1 shows the OECD data for Australians counted in the 2000 round of censuses in other countries. The fact that this is an under estimate is reflected in the Great Britain data which include a population of 107,871 but other estimates put this population as high as 300,000.<sup>13</sup> However the approach of gathering together census data from a number of destination countries to developing a census of expatriates is potentially an excellent one and is being developed for the 2010 round of population censuses.

Another potential source for estimating the size of expatriate communities is the registers maintained by embassies and consulates. The methods vary between countries, but the data suffer from the fact that it is not compulsory or enforced for expatriates to register with embassies. In some cases such registration is mandatory if people wish to receive pensions, pay taxes, vote while overseas, and so on, and the post September 11 situation has injected a security imperative into the need for nationals to register. Countries vary in the

extent to which they provide services for their diasporas. Some countries make a major effort, as do particular embassies and consulates, to keep contact with expatriates and arrange regular events for them to participate in. There is no systematic examination of this source available and it would be most useful for such a study to be undertaken. In Australia, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) embassies and consulates estimated that, in 2001, there were 858,866 Australians living in foreign nations and another 264,955 'temporarily present'. It has been difficult to assess the degree of accuracy of these data and, indeed, to establish the methodologies used to collect them in the different nations. Figure 2 shows the DFAT estimates for each nation and the limited quality of the data is seen in the obvious over-estimation of the numbers in Greece. Despite the fact that Greece is an important destination of Australian emigrants,<sup>14</sup> especially returning Greek-born immigrants and other Australians with a Greek heritage, it does not have the second-largest expatriate community. The DFAT estimate puts it at 135,000 while fewer than

**Figure 2: Australian citizens living abroad, 31 December 2001**



Source: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra

20,000 people of Australian, or dual Australian/Greek nationality, were counted in the last Greek census. Nevertheless, the DFAT data give an indicative picture of the extent and size of Australia's diaspora and show important concentrations in Europe, North America and Asia.

### **A DIASPORA POLICY?**

The last few years has seen a massive increased interest in diasporas and particularly in their potential economic and social role in origin countries. The United Nations High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in September 2006<sup>15</sup> drew attention to the potential role of migration in the co-development of both origin and destination communities. Accordingly there is an unprecedented interest among countries in developing policies toward their diaspora. Such policies have a number of objectives. On the one hand they have a developmental objective and seek to facilitate the diaspora in playing a positive role in economic and social development in origin countries. Secondly they have a cultural maintenance objective and seek to assist migrants in maintaining their heritage and continuing to identify with their homeland. The first set of policies addresses issues such as facilitating remittances, investment, trade and knowledge transfer between origin and destination. Moreover return migration is encouraged by some countries—permanent and temporary.

Australia has long experienced a substantial net gain of skilled persons, with immigrants substantially outnumbering emigrants.<sup>16</sup> However, this is no reason why Australia should not consider the adoption of a diaspora policy. The reasons for this can be briefly summarised as follows:

- The Australian diaspora is significant in size and research has shown that many retain a strong Australian identity. Moreover they are increasingly

organising into formal and informal groupings facilitated by advances in information and communication technology and they are an increasingly vocal lobby group in Australia. For example, they have been successful in lobbying for the introduction of dual citizenship and for changes in electoral laws to allow many expatriates to vote in Australian elections.<sup>17</sup>

- The diaspora is selective of the brightest and best in Australia and they do represent a significant national resource of human capital, albeit outside of the country. There are opportunities for building on this to facilitate remittances, trade, knowledge transfer and investment.
- The limited amount of existing research<sup>18</sup> indicates that a high proportion of those who go overseas have strong intentions of returning. However, for those intentions to be actualised it often requires some triggering. There is potential for development of policy that facilitates this return.

Too often diaspora policy is dismissed by pointing out that Australia experiences a net brain gain. The latter is in no way disputed. Nevertheless, Australia has much to gain through engaging its diaspora as well as having an active immigration policy. Indeed Australia has been a world leader in the development of immigration and settlement policies. There can be no doubt that, globally, there is a new emphasis on considering policies which can maximise the positive impacts of diasporas on origin countries. Why cannot Australia provide international leadership in this area as well?

### **CONCLUSION**

Globalisation has seen an exponential increase in the flow across national borders of money, goods, people and ideas and tran-

national networks of all kinds have proliferated. These developments have threatened to undermine several aspects of the nation state as the dominant entity for organising policies, economic development, culture and identity.<sup>19</sup> This has led to a significant shift in thinking among many social scientists in the way in which they approach and study political, social and economic phenomena and processes and also of the spatial envelope in which they study them. For example, Portes<sup>20</sup> has said that it is impossible to understand the sociology of many nations without considering their diaspora. Reis in a similar vein has written:

The emphasis or adherence to the state centric model in the realm of international relations has contributed to the sidelining of entities known as diaspora as a valuable unit of analysis. In this sense, the nation state cannot account for certain features in the emerging global political

economy, which can be better explained by using diaspora.<sup>21</sup>

It is the contention here that such comments can equally be made about the population geographies and demography of many nation states. To ignore the diaspora is to omit consideration of an important element of some national populations who are influential in a number of important social, economic and political areas. It is not only, however, that demographers and population scholars need to be aware of the diaspora in analyses of population phenomena, processes and problems at a national level. Demographers also play an important role in shaping how national populations are to be defined for other purposes. Hence, their influence extends far beyond their own disciplinary boundaries since they shape how much economic, social, political and cultural data are collected as well as demographic information.

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