

Outlook

EDITION

15

ASIA NEW ZEALAND FOUNDATION • BUILDING NEW ZEALANDERS' KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ASIA

ENGAGING ASIA: THE ROLE OF THE DIASPORA

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FEBRUARY 2011

ISSN 1177-7893 (Online-PDF)



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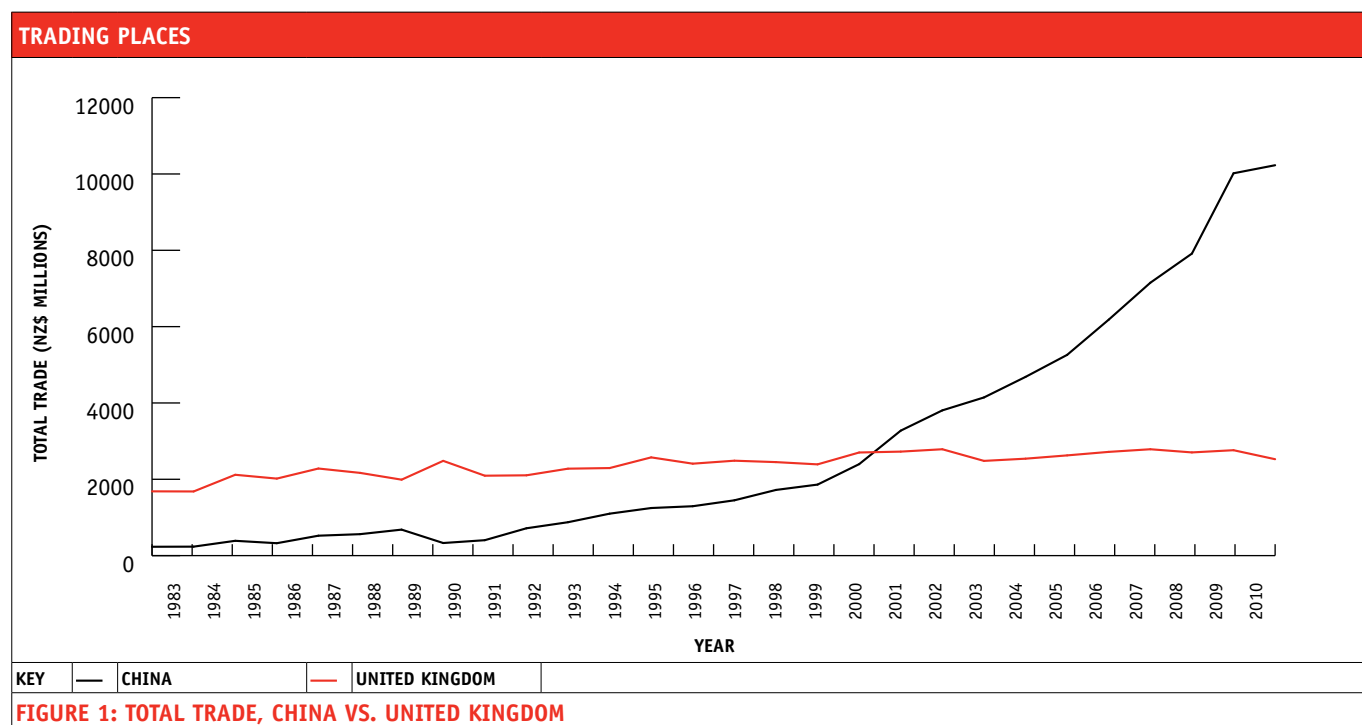
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to a large number of people for assisting with the wider research behind this report. First, I owe thanks to around 200 interviewees from various New Zealand government departments and expatriate groups. This particular report has benefited especially from the insights of officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry of Social Development, as well as members of Kea New Zealand and the Tokyo-based Nga Hau E Wha kapahaka group - ka nui te mihi ki a koutou. Secondly, I am thankful to colleagues who have commented on or otherwise assisted with this work. In particular, Andrew Butcher has been both a source of substantive feedback and a steward of the publication process. Various email exchanges with Robert Didham have also been stimulating and helpful. I am also indebted to Richard Grant and three anonymous Asia New Zealand Foundation reviewers for their constructive criticism of the drafts. Alison Gamlen and Asia:NZ kindly assisted with copyediting at various points, but remaining errors are my responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

FOR THE PAST HALF CENTURY NEW ZEALAND has been going through the geopolitical equivalent of a massive earthquake. From the middle of the 19th century until well past the middle of the 20th, it was firmly part of what historian James Belich calls the “Anglo-world”, comprising Britain, its settler Dominions and sometimes America and “Anglo-prone” parts of Europe.¹ In Belich’s account, New Zealand’s role in this globe-spanning conglomeration was metropolitan London’s equivalent of New York’s Wild West hinterland, and the flows of goods, services, money, ideas and people reflected this link.

However, with decolonisation, especially since the 1970s, New Zealand has been overhauling its settler society image and refashioning itself as part of the emerging Asia-Pacific region. In 1955, Britain still took two-thirds of New Zealand’s exports.² Almost half of New Zealand’s immigrants came from Britain, and more than 80 percent were “British subjects”, while only 1 percent came from China. By 2010, China was New Zealand’s second-largest trading partner (see Figure 1, page 3).³ As many new immigrants were Asian as were British (see Figure 2),⁴ and the old imperial legal status of “British subject” no longer even existed.⁵ Meanwhile, in the 1970s, consistent net migration gains – which had underpinned New Zealand’s “classic settler society” reputation for a century⁶ – gave way to a more complex pattern involving massive surges of emigration and periodic net migration losses.⁷ Depending how you count them, there are now between half a million and a million New Zealanders – something like one in five or six – living in other countries.⁸ This constitutes one of the world’s larger per capita diasporas.



1 Belich, J. 2009. *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 2 Belich, J. 2001. *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*. Auckland: Allen Lane the Penguin Press. Page 311.
 3 Cif import plus vdf exports. Annual June Data. Source data: Statistics New Zealand, *Infoshare*. Author’s analysis.
 4 Source data: Statistics New Zealand, *Infoshare*. Author’s analysis.
 5 See Green, D. “1840-1948: British Subjects”, in *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, available at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/citizenship/1>, accessed 7 Sep. 2010. Also see Identity Policy Team. 2006. *An Analysis of New Zealand Citizenship by Descent*. Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs. Pages 5-6.
 6 See Castles, S., and M. J. Miller. 2003. *The Age of Migration*. 3rd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Page 7.
 7 Bedford, R., and E. Ho. 2006. “New Zealand: A Country of Immigration and Emigration”, in *Migration Happens: Reasons, Effects and Opportunities of Migration in the South Pacific*, ed. K. Ferro and M. Wallner. Wien: Novara bd. 4.
 8 Gamlen, A. 2007. “Making Hay While the Sun Shines: Envisioning New Zealand’s State-Diaspora Relations.” *Policy Quarterly* 3 (4):12-21. Page 12. Also see Didham, R. 2009. *Intersections: Southeast Asia and Diaspora Engagement*. Asia New Zealand Foundation Outlook Report 11. Pages 4-6.

“The drift from Britain is an old story, but the tectonic shift towards Asia is far from finished.”

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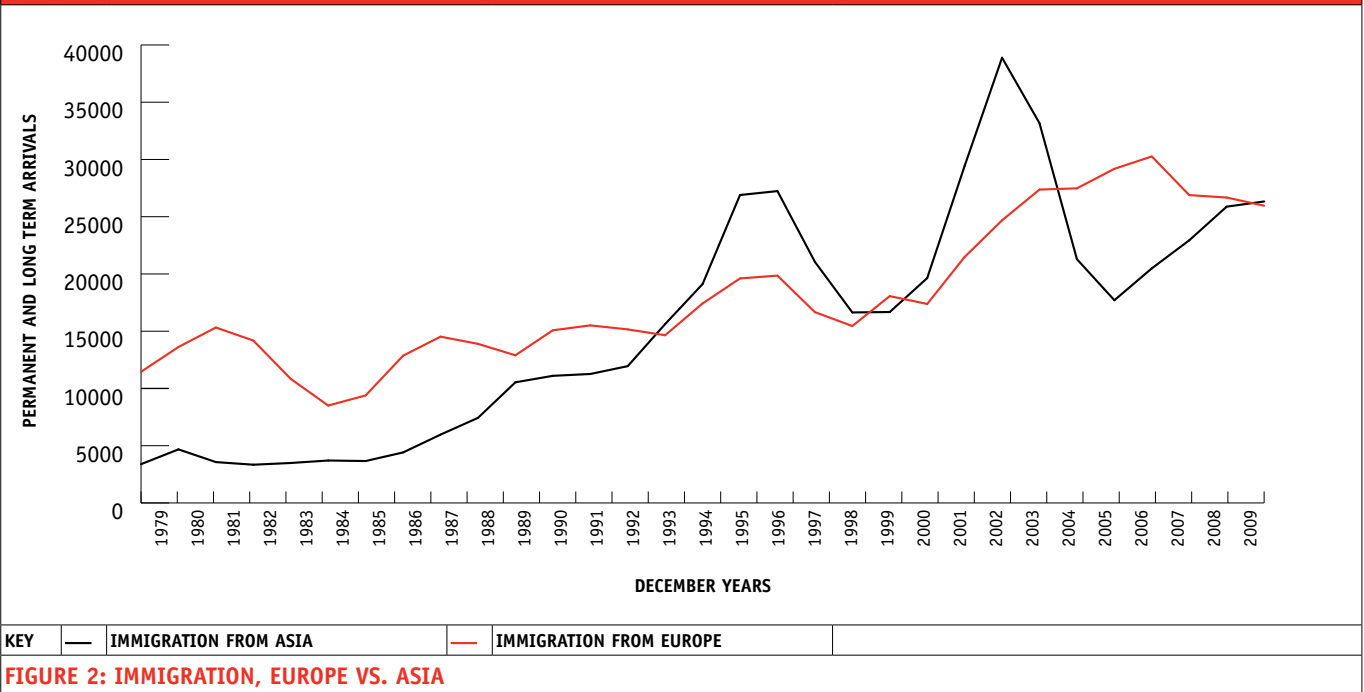


FIGURE 2: IMMIGRATION, EUROPE VS. ASIA

The drift from Britain is an old story, but the tectonic shift towards Asia is far from finished. Even today, most New Zealanders abroad are dispersed across the “Anglo-world”; the international borders that now sub-divide this space are still relatively “thin”, and even though movement within it is no longer virtually internal as it was in the heyday of the British Empire, it is still relatively frictionless owing to the maintenance of visa-free mobility arrangements and provisions for the portability of key citizenship rights and obligations. No such infrastructure ties New Zealand into Asia; borders with countries in this region remain thicker, fewer New Zealanders spend time there (see Figure 3, page 4)⁹ and it is no coincidence that, according to a senior New Zealand diplomat in Hong Kong, many New Zealanders who go there “drop off the radar”. Likewise, Asian culture still feels threatening to many non-Asian New Zealanders, and many markets in Asia remain untapped.

⁹ Source data: Statistics New Zealand, *Infoshare*. Author’s analysis.

“Loyal diaspora groups can contribute a great deal to their homelands, as investors or investment catalysts.”

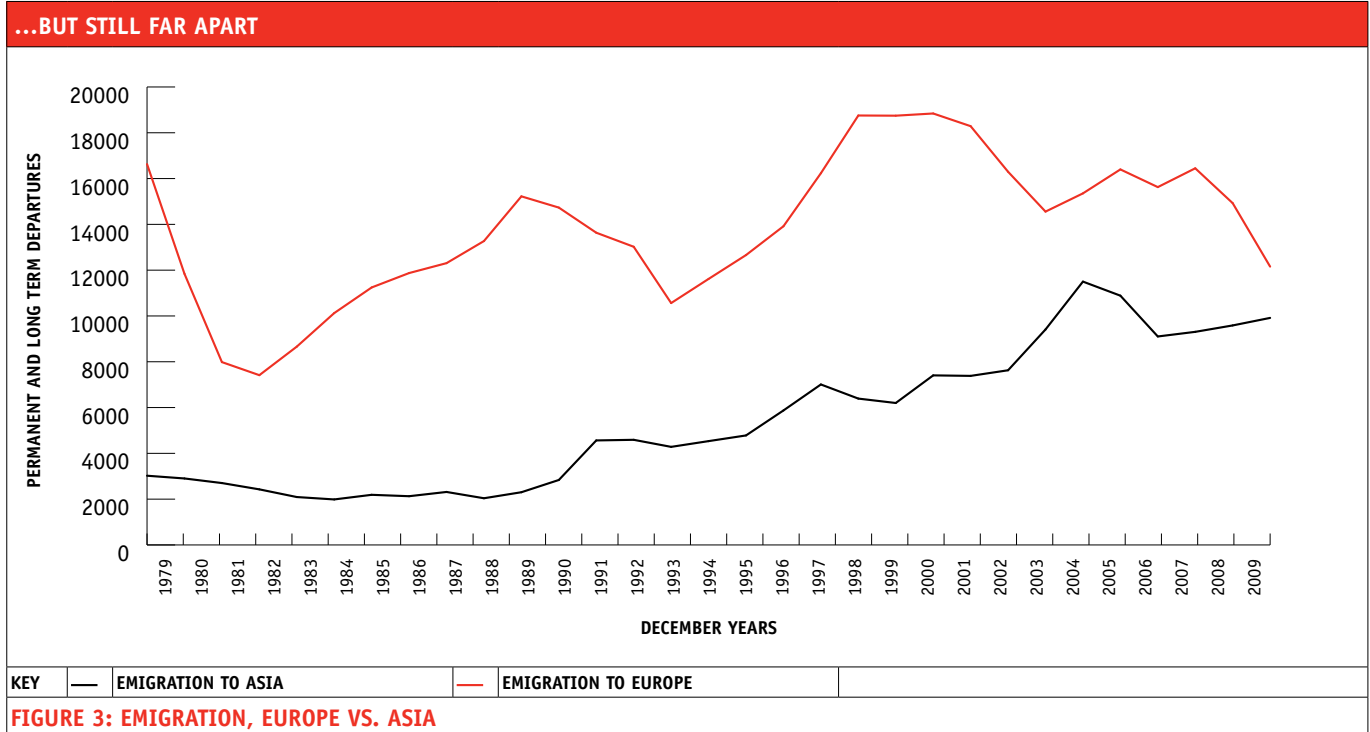


FIGURE 3: EMIGRATION, EUROPE VS. ASIA

This may be a missed opportunity: diaspora communities can represent a huge asset for their origin countries.¹⁰ By fulfilling their responsibilities to citizens abroad and addressing their needs, governments of migrant-sending countries can mobilise their loyalties. And loyal diaspora groups can contribute a great deal to their homelands, as investors or investment catalysts, as beach-heads into new markets, as experts with connections to global centres of excellence, and as ambassadors willing to use their international influence on their homelands’ behalf. By the same token, through “building” a New Zealand diaspora in Asia, and engaging more strategically and coherently with diaspora groups already there, New Zealand can deepen its economic, political and social engagement with Asia.

This report discusses how New Zealand currently relates to its diaspora in Asia, why it does so, and how it could do so better. It is divided into three sections. Firstly, it provides some background on what the term diaspora means and what the “New Zealand diaspora” looks like. Secondly, it outlines the reasons why many governments are increasingly taking an interest in “their” diasporas. And thirdly, it provides a detailed analysis of New Zealand’s existing diaspora-related policies in Asia, highlighting important challenges and opportunities that future policies may need to consider.

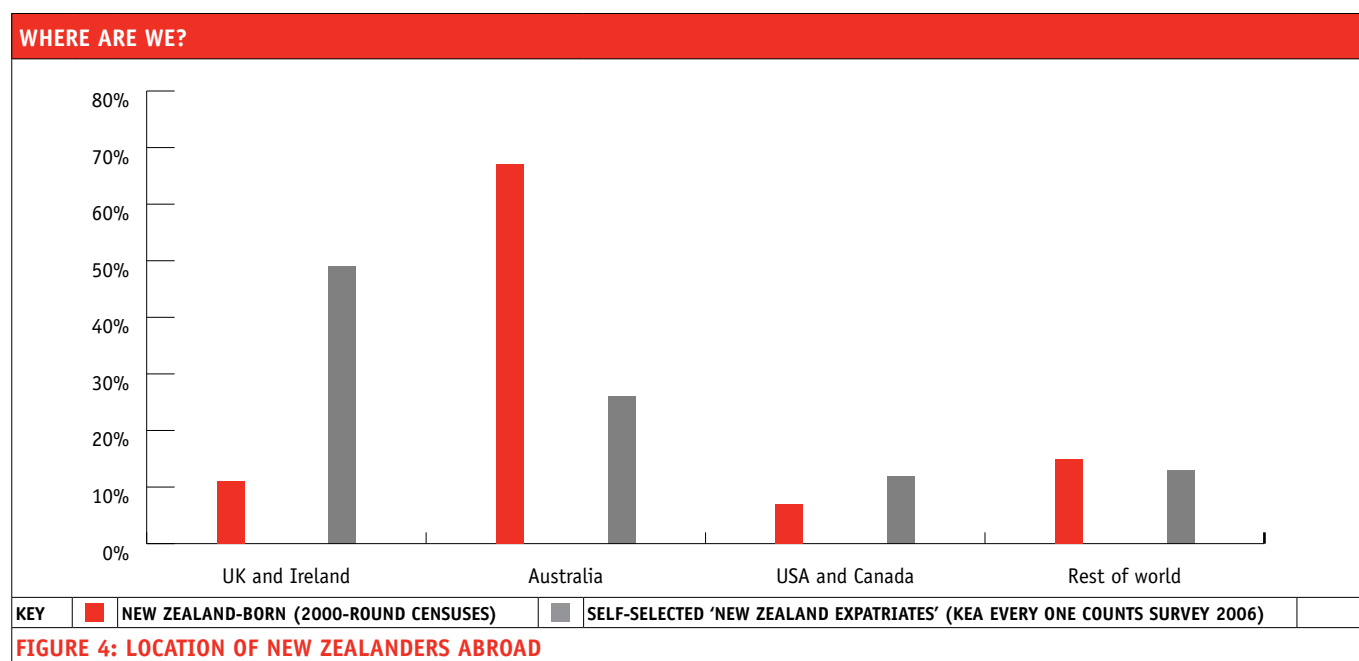
10 For example, see Fullilove, M., and C. Flutter. 2004. *Diaspora: The World Wide Web of Australians*. New South Wales: Lowy Institute for International Policy, Longueville Media; Kuznetsov, Y. 2005. “Mobilization of Diaspora Networks for Knowledge Transfer.” World Bank; Merz, B. J., L. C. Chen, and P. F. Geithner, and Harvard University. Global Equity Initiative. 2007. *Diasporas and Development*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Global Equity Initiative Asia Center Harvard University; Brinkerhoff, J. M., ed. 2008. *Diasporas and Development: Exploring the Potential*. Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner, Finch, T., H. Andrew, and M. Latorre. 2010. *Global Brit: Making the Most of the British Diaspora*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

SECTION 1. DEFINING “DIASPORA”

LIKE MANY GOOD AND IMPORTANT IDEAS, the term “diaspora” has often been overused, and consequently there has been much debate over what it actually means.¹¹ According to current consensus, the essential features of a diaspora group are dispersion to two or more locations, ongoing orientation towards a “homeland”, and the maintenance of a group identity over time.¹² Understood in this way, a diaspora can be succinctly defined as “an imagined community living away from a professed place of origin”.¹³ This definition is specific enough to be useful and broad enough to encompass not only the Jews and other archetypal diasporas, but also more recent emigrant and expatriate groups.¹⁴

New Zealand’s diaspora is mainly distributed through Australia, the United Kingdom and Ireland, and North America (see Figure 4).¹⁵ Different ways of measuring the diaspora give us quite different pictures of it: if counting New Zealand-born people living abroad, Australia is easily the most important region.¹⁶ But if more interested in transnational identifications and connections with New Zealand, the distribution looks different. The Kea Every One Counts survey of 2006 (also discussed in Robert Didham’s previous Outlook report on South East Asia)¹⁷ used a snowball sampling method to capture some 18,000 responses from self-identified New Zealand expatriates;¹⁸ although the sample was not random, the results strongly suggest that New Zealanders in the UK and Ireland identify and connect with New Zealand more than expatriates anywhere else. Not only did more UK-based expatriates make the effort to respond to the survey, but those who did had stronger social and economic connections to New Zealand and were more inclined to return.¹⁹

From this snapshot at least, there still appears to be a strong “Anglo-world” bias to New Zealand’s diaspora. Didham’s comment about South Asia’s population exchange with New Zealand is more generally true of Asia: “It is a history largely of outflow [from Asia]”.²⁰



11 Safran, W. 1991. “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return.” *Diaspora 1* (1):83-99; Tölölyan, K. 1996. “Rethinking Diaspora(S): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment.” *Diaspora 5* (1):3-36; Cohen, R. 1997. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: UCL Press.

12 Butler, K. 2001. “Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse.” *Diaspora 10* (2):189-219; Brubaker, R. 2005. “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (1):1-19.

13 Vertovec, S. 2009. “Cosmopolitanism in Attitude, Practice and Competence.” MMG Working Paper 09-08, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity. Page 5.

14 For example see Hugo, G. 2006a. “An Australian Diaspora?” *International Migration* 44 (1):105-33.

15 Source data: 1) Global Migrant Origin Database, Migration and Development Research Centre, University of Sussex. Accessed 2007; 2) Kea New Zealand, *Every One Counts 2006*. Author’s analysis.

16 Bryant, J., and D. Law. 2004. “New Zealand’s Diaspora and Overseas-Born Population.” New Zealand Treasury Working Paper 04/13; Dumont, J.-C., and G. Lemaître. 2004. “Counting Immigrants and Expatriates in Oecd Countries: A New Perspective.” OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper.

17 Didham, R. 2009. “Intersections: Southeast Asia and Diaspora Engagement.” Asia New Zealand Foundation *Outlook Report 11*. Page 14.

18 See <http://www.keanewzealand.com/global/every-one-counts>, accessed 7 Sep. 2010.

19 Gamlen, A. Forthcoming. “New Zealand and Its Diaspora.” In *New Zealand and International Migration: A Digest and Bibliography*, ed. P. Spoonley and R. Bedford. Auckland: Massey University.

20 Didham, R. 2010. “Future Potential and the Invisible Diaspora: New Zealand and South Asia Diasporas.” Asia New Zealand Foundation *Outlook Report 12*. Page 17.

“When New Zealand wins at sport or excels on the global stage, Kiwi accents around the world thicken a bit.”

Most up-to-date research now not only avoids simplistic measures such as birthplace to study diasporas, but has moved beyond agonising over definitions and compulsively comparing size (“my diaspora is bigger than yours”) to look at how and why diasporas emerge and dissipate.²¹ A crucial insight from such studies is that people are more or less “diasporic” in different circumstances. Wars, natural disasters, political campaigns, celebrations and sporting events can all galvanise a sense of nostalgia and congregation among people with links to a distant home. As I found during interviews with New Zealanders around the world,²² when New Zealand wins at sport or excels on the global stage, Kiwi accents around the world thicken a bit; All Black’s jerseys and greenstone pendants congregate not only in London and Sydney but also in Tokyo, Shanghai and Bangkok. Diasporas are not fixed, pre-existing groups; instead, diaspora identity “may be lost entirely, may ebb and flow, be hot or cold, switched on or off, remain active or dormant. The degree of attachment — and mobilization around it — often depends upon events affecting the purported homeland”.²³

A crucial point to recognise is that governments are focal points for activities that can periodically galvanise diverse and dispersed networks into a cohesive diaspora, based on core organised groups of “activists”. In many countries, consular outreach and related activities play a crucial role in establishing and maintaining core diaspora associations, which are in turn useful for diplomatic and trade promotion purposes.²⁴ On the other hand, when governments seem to obstruct expatriate voting rights²⁵ or interfere with the portability of emigrants’ pension entitlements, they often unwittingly mobilise a vociferous and embarrassing opposition.²⁶

These groups may remain relatively small and semi-dormant for much of the time, but are sporadically roused into action around specific events or issues – at which time they “send a buzz” through much wider networks, activating transnational identities and activities amongst a much wider group. This is the process to which I refer when using the terms “engaging diasporas” or “diaspora engagement” in this paper. Governments around the world are increasingly aware of the role of coherent and strategic policies in this process, for reasons that will now be discussed.

21 See, for example, Vertovec, S. 1997. “Three Meanings Of ‘Diaspora’, Exemplified among South Asian Religions.” *Diaspora* 6 (3):277-99; Brubaker, R. 2005. “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (1):1-19; Sökefeld, M. 2006. “Mobilizing in Transnational Space: A Social Movement Approach to the Formation of Diaspora.” *Global Networks – a Journal of Transnational Affairs* 6 (3):265-84; Dufoix, S. 2008. *Diasporas*. Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press.

22 The following section draws on fieldwork trips and interviews and correspondence with New Zealand migrants and officials in London, Sydney, Canberra, Tokyo, Paris, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Wellington from 2004 to 2010.

23 Vertovec, S. 2005. “The Political Importance of Diasporas.” *Migration Information Source* June.

24 Hughes, S. 2009. “Enterprise Ireland: International Diaspora Strategy Workshop.” In *Diaspora Strategy Workshop*. National University of Ireland, Maynooth.

25 For example, see Smith, R. C. 2008. “Contradictions of Diasporic Institutionalization in Mexican Politics: The 2006 Migrant Vote and Other Forms of Inclusion and Control.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (4):708-41.

26 For example, see <http://www.pension-parity-uk.com/>. Also see Clark, G. 2002. “Country of Residence and Pension Entitlement: The Arbitrary Geography of UK Legal Formalism.” *Environment and Planning A* 34:2102-06; Sriskandarajah, D., and C. Drew. 2006. *Brits Abroad: Mapping the Scale and Nature of British Emigration*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research. Pages 79-82.

SECTION 2. WHY ENGAGE DIASPORAS?

KNOWING THE POWER OF THEIR POLICIES to unite their supporters, governments can mobilise an enormous asset by engaging with expatriates in a strategic and coherent way. But doing so involves acknowledging key responsibilities, both to their citizens at home and abroad, and to other states. “Diaspora strategies”²⁷ therefore tend to be driven by three main concerns: national interests, obligations towards citizens abroad, and international cooperation over migration.

ENGAGING DIASPORAS TO FURTHER “NATIONAL INTERESTS”

Many governments see imperatives and opportunities to protect or further “national interests” through engagement with their diasporas.

Migration and transnationalism are linked to profound social, cultural, economic and political transformations in migrant-sending states.²⁸ Families and households are being “stretched” among multiple locations and fiscal systems, leading to new patterns of domestic responsibility, tax contribution and reliance on state support.²⁹ Education providers are having to understand and adapt to transformations in the skill composition of labour markets through migration and new forms of transnational work.³⁰ Diaspora remittances, investments and trade are transforming home-country markets in goods, services and real estate, with important consequences for firms and financial institutions.³¹ Overseas voters and diaspora lobbies are increasingly important in both the domestic and foreign politics of sending countries.³²

Public data collection and service provision in sending states are under increasing pressure to adapt to these transformations by accounting for an “effective population” that includes many people based abroad, rather than a traditional census-night population.³³ They are doing so both by generating new diaspora policies and initiatives and by overhauling existing policies with a diaspora dimension, which have traditionally been overlooked and allowed to evolve in an ad hoc, arbitrary way, often resulting in incoherence and injustice.³⁴ The imperative to adapt to migration and transnationalism is a key reason why many states are “engaging diasporas”.³⁵

But engaging the diaspora is not merely a desperate response to the imperatives of globalisation; it is often seen as a way of seizing its opportunities. Recent decades have seen the revival of an earlier optimism in the longstanding debate about the relationship between emigration and development.³⁶ Current thinking, particularly in neoliberal circles, holds that migration – like many “free market” mechanisms – is generally welfare improving but prone to failures that require supportive policies. The most important of such policies are those that foster ongoing loyalty and involvement among emigrants and their offshore networks, encouraging them to remit money, invest, share their expertise, and use their influence abroad to sway host-country decision-makers and open new markets.

Optimists see coherent and strategic diaspora policies as a way not just of adapting to catch up, but of streamlining to get ahead.³⁷

27 Lerner, W. 2007a. “Expatriate Experts and Globalising Governmentalities: The New Zealand Diaspora Strategy.” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32 (3):331-45.

28 Vertovec, S. 2004. “Migrant Transnationalism and Modes of Transformation.” *International Migration Review* 38 (3):970-1001.

29 Lunt, N., M. McPherson, and J. Browning. 2006. *Les Familles Et Whanau Sans Frontieres: New Zealand and Transnational Family Obligations*. Wellington: Families Commission.

30 For example, see Hewison, K., and K. Young. 2006. *Transnational Migration and Work in Asia*. London: Routledge.

31 For example, see Maimbo, S. M., and D. Ratha. 2005. *Remittances: Development Impact and Future Prospects*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

32 See Sheffer, G. 1986. *Modern Diasporas in International Politics*. London: Croom Helm; Shain, Y. 1995. “Multicultural Foreign Policy.” *Foreign Policy* 100:69-87; Fullilove, M., 2008. *World Wide Webs: Diasporas and the International System*. Double Bay, NSW: Lowy Institute for International Policy.

33 Bedford, R., J. Poot, and T. Ryan. 2006. “The ‘Effective’ Population of Niue.” In *Pathways, Circuits and Crossroads. New Public Good Research on Population, Migration and Community Dynamics*. Wellington. Also see Hugo, G. 2006b. “Defining Australia’s National Population in the Era of Globalization.” *People and Place* 14 (4):26-33.

34 Levitt, P., and R. de la Dehesa. 2003. “Transnational Migration and the Redefinition of the State: Variations and Explanations.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 26 (4):587-611; Østergaard-Nielsen, E., ed. 2003. *International Migration and Sending Countries: Perceptions, Policies and Transnational Relations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; Barry, K. 2006. “Home and Away: The Construction of Citizenship in an Emigration Context.” *New York University Law Review* 81 (1):11-59; Brand, L. A. 2006. *Citizens Abroad: Emigration and the State in the Middle East and North Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Fitzgerald, D. 2006. “Rethinking Emigrant Citizenship.” *New York University Law Review* 81 (1):90-116; Gamlen, A. 2008. “The Emigration State and the Modern Geopolitical Imagination.” *Political Geography* 27 (8):840-56.

35 De Haas, H. 2006. “Engaging Diasporas: How Governments Can Support Diaspora Involvement in the Development of Countries of Origin.” Oxford: Oxfam Novib, Ionescu, D. 2006. *Engaging Diasporas as Development Partners for Home and Destination Countries: Challenges for Policymakers*. Geneva: IOM.

36 Faist, T. 2008. “Migrants as Transnational Development Agents: An Inquiry into the Newest Round of the Migration-Development Nexus.” *Population Space and Place* 14 (1):21-42; Skeldon, R. 2008. “International Migration as a Tool in Development Policy: A Passing Phase?” *Population and Development Review* 34 (1):1-18; de Haas, H. 2010. “Migration and Development: A Theoretical Perspective.” *International Migration Review* 44 (1):227-64; Gamlen, A. 2010. “The New Migration and Development Optimism: A Review of the 2009 Human Development Report.” *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 16 (10).

37 See Lerner, W. 2007b. “Expatriate Experts and Globalising Governmentalities: The New Zealand Diaspora Strategy.” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32 (3):331-45.

“Optimists see coherent and strategic diaspora policies as a way not just of adapting to catch up, but of streamlining to get ahead.”

MEETING RESPONSIBILITIES TO “EXTERNAL CITIZENS”

“Engagement” implies a two-way process, and boosting diaspora loyalty and involvement cannot be seen separately from addressing diaspora needs and concerns. Migrant-sending states have important responsibilities to their citizens abroad, not only to look after them in times of trouble but also to refrain from interfering with their freedom of exit and other citizenship rights. It is crucial to recognise that many emigrants and their kin networks are legitimate “stakeholders” in the futures of their homelands.³⁸

However, because diaspora policies are typically ad hoc, they often fail to meet these obligations. An example discussed in this report is where pension portability regulations arbitrarily penalise emigrants. Such injustices seldom occur deliberately; instead, they come about through lack of oversight, because they exist in the grey area between domestic and foreign policy.

Governments are increasingly reviewing and streamlining these grey areas as part of strategic and coherent approaches to their diasporas – both because it is the “right” thing to do and because they realise the influence of well placed diasporas and want to keep them loyal and constructive rather than disgruntled and alienated.

COOPERATING INTERNATIONALLY OVER MIGRATION

“Diaspora engagement policies” are also seen as a way of enhancing international cooperation over migration, and this also helps to explain their recent rise. There has been increasing recognition that migration is one of the most visible and controversial forms of contemporary globalisation, but that – unlike the other main global flows, which have an International Monetary Fund and a World Trade Organization – migration lacks a coherent multilateral regulatory framework.³⁹ Instead, we have a complicated global migration governance pattern, involving conflicts of interest among states and a United Nations system in which responsibility for migration is shared uneasily across several rival agencies.

Coherent and strategic diaspora policies are seen by many as a compromise between two contending visions of global migration governance: one in which competitive nation-states exercise exclusive sovereign control over migration, and another in which some kind of World Migration Organisation dictates how migration should be managed in the interests of all.

Diaspora engagement policies compromise between these extremes: rather than an overweening international bureaucracy or anarchic inter-state relations, these policies involve sending and receiving states sharing responsibility for upholding migrants’ rights, sharing authority over aspects of migrants’ lives, and sharing the overall economic benefits of migration.

To many policy-makers with a fresh interest in the grand idea of engaging diasporas for global development, dusty old policy areas such as consular outreach, visa-free travel and welfare portability often seem obscure or marginal at first glance. But the once-clear line between domestic policy and foreign policy is blurring, and these are the mechanisms governments now use to cooperate over migration, to meet their obligations to migrants and to turn migration from a drain into a gain. They are the plumbing behind the poetry of “engaging diasporas”.

38 Bauböck, R. 2009. “Stakeholder Citizenship and Democratic Participation in Migration Contexts.” In *The Ties That Bind: Accommodating Complex Diversity in Canada and the European Union*, ed. J.-E. Fossum, J. Poirier and P. Magette. Canadian Studies, 105-28.

39 Betts, A. Forthcoming. “Introduction.” In *Global Migration Governance*, ed. A. Betts. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

SECTION 3. ENGAGING THE DIASPORA IN ASIA

THESE THREE MOTIVES – NATIONAL INTERESTS, OBLIGATIONS TO CITIZENS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION – are all reasons for New Zealand to deepen its engagement with its diaspora in Asia. As outlined in the introduction, New Zealand’s deliberate geopolitical re-orientation towards Asia is young, and a key sign of this is the marked tendency of New Zealanders to migrate outwards along the established and well maintained paths to other parts of what James Belich refers to as the “Anglo-world” – rather than to Asia. A more strategic and coherent approach to New Zealand’s diaspora in this region could help it to re-orientate towards Asia by encouraging New Zealanders to spend more time in the region, by mobilising the loyalties and contributions of those already there, and by enhancing interstate cooperation with Asian countries over migration- and diaspora-related issues.

This section reviews a number of key New Zealand Government-related diaspora policies and initiatives in Asia, highlighting positive examples and singling out a few instances where a more strategic and coherent approach could lead to more positive outcomes.

BUILDING A DIASPORA IN ASIA

The foreign service is a pillar of New Zealand’s diaspora relations – particularly the consular and trade divisions. Senior diplomats and trade officials interviewed in this research often highlighted the value of expatriate networks and associations to overseas missions. Diaspora groups can assist with access to important buyers, to decision-makers, to “market shapers”, to centres of excellence and to skills and knowledge needed by government agencies or their clients. Expatriate connections can act as search and support networks for newly appointed officials, academics and entrepreneurs, helping them to integrate and orientate quickly in an unfamiliar locale. Access to affluent and influential local expatriates can also help to provide credibility for representatives of New Zealand organisations. For these reasons, overseas missions often maintain close relations with the leaders of a range of expatriate groups, keeping an eye out for significant new arrivals who might be tapped for roles in trade promotion or informal ambassadorial activities. As one Japan-based trade official pointed out, this is particularly important in emerging markets where New Zealand’s presence is relatively new but prioritised for the future, including many of those in Asia.

In order to capture benefits from diaspora groups, overseas missions in Asia sometimes offer them symbolic, logistical and financial support; they often establish and help to govern expatriate clubs and societies, host their activities, dedicate officials’ time, and assist with secretarial or secretariat functions at key moments such as national celebrations. A leading example is New Zealand’s Consulate General in Shanghai. The post was established in the early 1990s, in reflection of New Zealand’s increasing orientation towards Asia and the growing importance of the relationship with China. Officials quickly established a Kiwi network to meet informally for drinks once per month in a well known local expatriate pub. These soon became well known social occasions, often attracting crowds of 100 or more New Zealanders and their partners and friends. According to New Zealand entrepreneurs and businesspeople who have worked in the city, these evenings became key networking opportunities, which would routinely lead to hiring and joint ventures. Parallel to this informal role in establishing networks, the consulate has spearheaded the creation by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise of a venue called “New Zealand Central” – “a world class business centre for New Zealand companies [that] provides a physical presence for the New Zealand brand in Shanghai”.⁴⁰ One key function of the centre is to provide hot desks and meeting/conference facilities for Kiwi entrepreneurs getting set up in the city.

A number of other New Zealand missions in Asia provide various kinds of “public space” for expatriate commercial and communal activities, in the expectation that this will redound to their diplomatic and trade promotion agendas. A particularly interesting example of this kind of *quid pro quo* arrangement is the way overseas missions draw on local Māori groups to provide *pōwhiri* and *whakangahau* (formal welcoming ceremonies and cultural entertainment) at official events. Adding a Māori element to such occasions is an important way of distinguishing “Brand New Zealand” – a kind of “unique selling point” for Kiwi firms and organisations. In return, embassies and their parent ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, typically do not pay the performers, but rather provide support in kind, such as free travel to performance locations, invitations to prestigious events and use of embassy space for practices, workshops and social occasions. The model organisation in this regard has always been London’s Ngāti Rānana group (“*Rānana*” is a Māori transliteration of “London”). Founded in the 1950s, Ngāti Rānana travels all around the UK and Europe, performing at official and semi-official New Zealand events in return for reimbursement of costs and support in kind, such as free or cut-price space within New Zealand House for storage, rehearsals and events.

40 See <http://www.nzte.govt.nz/explore-export-markets/north-asia/doing-business-in-china/pages/new-zealand-central-shanghai.aspx>, accessed 23 July 2010.

“Clearly there is much positive engagement between New Zealand and its diaspora communities in Asia, but a more strategic and coherent approach could sometimes help considerably.”

Most of the Asian region is now “serviced” in this way by a relatively recently formed Tokyo-based *kapahaka* group called “Ngā Hau E Whā” (the Four Winds – an allusion to the diverse tribal origins and migratory pathways of the group’s members). This group was initially established in the mid-1990s by New Zealanders on the Japan English Teaching (JET) Programme, to perform at an annual international cultural festival in the Saitama Prefecture on the outskirts of Tokyo where they were based. After one member left his phone number with the embassy, an official called back, referring him to several Tokyo-based New Zealand firms seeking Māori performers for their corporate events. Soon group members were regularly performing and teaching about Māori culture at events to promote New Zealand, and representing New Zealand at international festivals.

The group began to meet more regularly on embassy premises, and in return began to perform at the embassy’s annual welcoming ceremonies for new arrivals on the JET Programme, as well as helping officials to network in specific sectors where group members worked. As its performance repertoire expanded and word spread, the group began to receive invitations from New Zealand embassies and consulates around the Asia-Pacific region to perform at official occasions. In late 2004, in a meeting at the embassy facilitated by diplomatic staff, the group established a charter and committee, allowing it to expand its membership, increase its number of performance engagements and accumulate savings to invest in new uniforms and market itself more effectively. The group now performs a role similar to that of London’s Ngāti Rānana, supporting New Zealand’s diplomatic and corporate presence throughout East and South East Asia.

Kea New Zealand is another important government-sponsored diaspora initiative branching out in Asia. Initially called the “Kiwi Expats Association”, Kea was founded by philanthropist Sir Stephen Tindall and expatriate business academic David Teece as a private-public partnership with the New Zealand Government – which later became the main funder of the initiative – as part of efforts to transform New Zealand into a “knowledge economy”, in part by building on the loyalty, skills, resources and international connections of New Zealand expatriates.⁴¹ Since its inception as a kind of closing action point to the Knowledge Wave Conference in 2001, Kea has become a significant player in New Zealand’s relations with New Zealanders abroad.

Kea’s presence in Asia is still limited largely to the East and Southeast, but it has been expanding rapidly. According to CEO Ross McConnell, the organisation now has around 2,300 members across Asia, and is represented in Japan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand and China (with chapters in Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong). Some of these representations take the form of fully formed regional chapters with their own Kea governing committees, as is the case in Tokyo, Shanghai and Beijing. These committees generally bring together senior diplomats (sometimes *ex officio*), corporate representatives from the leading bilateral trading sectors, and entrepreneurs.

The China chapter retains a paid regional manager based in Shanghai, funded by a combination of private sponsorship and New Zealand Government funding. In other regions, Kea is represented through loose partnerships with previously existing and independently governed New Zealand Chambers of Commerce – on a basis where “Kea provides the online connectivity of Kea members” in the region, and “works with the [local] New Zealand... Chamber of Commerce on events and local communications”.⁴² Such arrangements cover Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong and Korea, and aim eventually to “enhance the connectivity and benefits for members and partners alike”. Few would dispute that these “partnerships” have yet to deliver much more than hazy goodwill, but then again, Kea’s main argument often seems to be that goodwill is valuable in itself.

In locations where it is meaningfully established, Kea does play a role in galvanising New Zealand communities and facilitating their contributions to New Zealand. The organisation maintains a central online database of expatriate contacts in the region; through periodic surveys and mailouts, it is able to send a low-voltage “New Zealand buzz” through the network, activating members’ ties to other Kiwis and to home. Where organised “chapters” exist, they can deliver a higher-voltage buzz through events around visiting politicians, business leaders or cultural icons to mark national celebration days or other sporting or cultural occasions. These events provide a forum for expatriates to meet socially, remember their “Kiwi-ness”, and start thinking like a group. At the same time, the database and organisational structure allow Kea to monitor what is going on in these regions, and to feed this information into government statistics and policy – reinforcing the idea that expatriates are part of the “national” population. The wider aim of all this is to activate a sense of belonging and loyalty to New Zealand, and to translate that into material benefits, or “deal flow” as Kea staff sometimes call it.

41 Office of the Prime Minister. 2002. *Growing an Innovative New Zealand*. Wellington.

42 See <http://www.keanewzealand.com/asia/groups/kea-thailand>, accessed 23 July 2010.

“As long as no systematically collected data on expatriates exists, no single government department is responsible for diaspora-related issues.”

The founding of the Tokyo Kea chapter is one example of this constituency-building process in action. According to Kea’s website, “Kea Japan was launched on 31 October 2009 in Tokyo when Prime Minister John Key addressed a group of over 150 Kiwis in the giant rugby ball venue prior to an All Blacks test match”.⁴³ Among other things, the group is now helping the New Zealand embassy to organise events for the Japan East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youth – a New Zealand-Japan intergovernmental programme based on reciprocal visits of 50 young people with the aim of developing them into “Future Business Counterparts”. Fittingly, considering its diaspora-building role, the programme uses the acronym JENESYS (pronounced “genesis”).⁴⁴

Much of Kea’s work seems to follow this iterative pattern of “leveraging” high-profile New Zealand-focused events to galvanise a core membership, then using the membership to generate more events. This has allowed the organisation to grow from an online database of some 5,000 expatriates and a couple of loosely organised chapters in 2003, to a database of some 30,000 and a series of 20-something widely spread chapters (some more active than others) in 2010.

Government and expatriate groups have – sometimes grudgingly – accepted Kea’s increasingly strident role and it now often plays a role in linking up pockets of ongoing activity led by New Zealand companies, sports and cultural groups, and overseas government missions. In a number of places, this role seems to have helped generate a stronger sense of coherence, collectivity and linkage to New Zealand amongst offshore Kiwi networks.

Clearly there is much positive engagement between New Zealand its diaspora communities in Asia, but a more strategic and coherent approach could help considerably to keep things on an even keel. There is very little strategic thinking or sharing of best practices among posts, and much relies on the personal interests of individual officials. This can sometimes be very frustrating for local expatriates, as highlighted in interviews with the leaderships of a number of groups. Consular engagement with expatriates can be “ad hoc and evolutionary”: some missions do more than they need to, while others do much less. A prominent expatriate businessman in a major East Asian city expressed frustration with the ad hoc short-term approach of trade officials, complaining that different officials would sometimes arbitrarily obstruct business activities that previous officials had supported. Similar complaints were voiced by another businessman who had been based in the region and become involved in the leadership of an expatriate group. Another leader of the same group summed up these kinds of criticisms, saying New Zealand’s engagement with expatriates “should ultimately not depend on the changing ambassador or the changing staff, it should be a policy.... if they want to get something back for it then they’ve got to put something in.” These complaints indicate a loss trust and a lack of support from an important constituency. While these views are not universal, they can set the tone across a much wider network, and therefore it is worth taking them on board.

Such complaints sometimes reflect unrealistic expatriate expectations, but this is not always the case. Nor do they usually reflect deliberately malign government interventions. Often, they arise from unclear or contradictory policies leading to unintended and mutually frustrating consequences. Government missions are composites of staff seconded from various departments with competing priorities. They experience high staff turnover, and their resources shift with political and economic currents. So long as no systematically collected data on expatriates exists, no single government department is responsible for diaspora-related issues, and there are no generally accepted best practices surrounding engagement between government missions and local diaspora groups, such complaints seem bound to arise from time to time. Addressing the issue of coherence and coordination could minimize disgruntlement and maximize trust and cooperation with diaspora groups. As argued throughout, wooing expatriate leaders can mobilize wider networks – and may therefore be worth the small amount of effort it usually takes to keep them happy.

43 See <http://www.keanewzealand.com/groups>, accessed 23 July 2010.

44 See <http://www.keanewzealand.com/asia/events/jenesys-programme-nz-and-japan>, accessed 23 July 2010.

“New Zealand’s visa-free mobility, pension and healthcare portability, and extradition arrangements with Asian countries are all rudimentary at best.”

INTEGRATING NEW ZEALAND’S DIASPORA IN ASIA

An additional, longer-term area for policy development is to enhance the mobility of New Zealanders to Asia, by re-orientating aspects of New Zealand’s “external citizenship”⁴⁵ provisions. “Diaspora integration” is simply my shorthand for more formal ways of recognising New Zealanders abroad and extending them membership rights and obligations.⁴⁶ As hinted above, diaspora integration includes laws and treaties on visa-free travel, welfare portability, tax residency and extradition. In a sense, it covers the social component of broader regional integration. It is in this area that New Zealand’s enduring orientation towards the “Anglo-world” is most pronounced, and its distance from Asia most visible.

Economic and political integration with Asia has progressed considerably in the past half century. A number of formal arrangements connecting New Zealand with Asia are already in place, including regional structures such as APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation), in which New Zealand has been a full member since 1989, and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), where New Zealand is a partner country. New Zealand is also a full member of the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum. There is also the Trans-Pacific Partnership (involving Australia, Brunei, Chile, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and the United States in addition to New Zealand), and Closer Economic Partnerships with Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, and ASEAN plus Australia (AANZFTA). There is also a Free Trade Agreement with China. These overlay older regional structures such as the Colombo Plan – which, while oriented towards economic cooperation, has also always incorporated a strong social development emphasis, for example through training programmes aimed at raising skill levels in developing countries to equip them to utilise new technologies and infrastructure being developed by the Plan’s physical investments.⁴⁷

However, the affinity and trust required to cement more productive economic and political relations with Asia rely on closer social and cultural integration. In this respect New Zealand’s relationship with the region is still relatively underdeveloped: New Zealand still has relatively few mechanisms with which to recognize and manage the citizenship rights and obligations of New Zealanders in Asia, and this limits the ability of New Zealand institutions to maintain close ties to them.

There are some preliminary infrastructures in place, in the form of agreements and protocols relating to migration woven through the existing wider regional structures mentioned above. For example, ten of New Zealand’s 35 double taxation agreements are now with Asian countries (see Table 1, page 13); this at least prevents New Zealanders in some Asian countries falling under two tax nets simultaneously.⁴⁸ But New Zealand’s visa-free mobility, pension and healthcare portability, and extradition arrangements with Asian countries are all rudimentary at best. This is yet another area where New Zealand’s diaspora connections to South Asia, in particular, are “invisible” – as Robert Didham puts it.⁴⁹ New Zealand has extradition treaties with only two Asian countries⁵⁰ and visa-free access agreements with only seven of the 22 countries covered by Asia:NZ (Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand).⁵¹ Only six of New Zealand’s 30 or so Working Holiday schemes cover countries in Asia (Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand).⁵² Perhaps most importantly, especially given demographic trends, New Zealand does not have any bilateral agreements on healthcare and pension portability with Asian countries: virtually all of its agreements are with “Anglo-world” countries.⁵³

The absence of such an infrastructure leaves New Zealanders who spend time in Asia without a social safety net, making the costly and risky act of migration and transnational entrepreneurship costlier and riskier. No wonder then, that New Zealand receives so many more migrants from Asia than it supplies to the region.

45 Baubock, R. 2009. “The Rights and Duties of External Citizenship.” *Citizenship Studies* 13 (5):475-99.

46 Gamlen, A. 2008. “The Emigration State and the Modern Geopolitical Imagination.” *Political Geography* 27 (8):840-56.

47 Also see Didham, R. 2009. “Intersections: Southeast Asia and Diaspora Engagement.” Asia New Zealand Foundation *Outlook Report* 11, October, 2009. “Future Potential and the Invisible Diaspora: New Zealand and South Asia Diasporas.” Asia New Zealand Foundation *Outlook Report* 12, April, 2010.

48 Inland Revenue website, “For non-residents & visitors: double-tax”, <http://www.ird.govt.nz/yoursituation-nonres/double-tax>, accessed 4 May 2009.

49 Didham, R. 2009 “Intersections: Southeast Asia and Diaspora Engagement”, Asia New Zealand Foundation *Outlook Report* 11, October 2009.

50 Extradition with Commonwealth countries and a streamlined process with Australia and the UK are governed by the Extradition Act 1999. New Zealand has extradition agreements with Korea, Hong Kong, Fiji and the USA. New Zealand may be bound by a number of agreements, including one with India signed by the UK before New Zealand became independent. See <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Treaties-and-International-Law/06-International-Courts-and-Tribunals/6-Extradition.php>, accessed 23 July 2010.

51 See Henley Visa Restrictions Index – Global Ranking 2009, available at <http://www.henleyglobal.com/citizenship/visa-restrictions>, accessed 1 May 2009.

52 See <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Countries/index.php#holidays>, accessed 23 July 2010. Bedford, R., and J. Lidgard. 1998. “Visa-Waiver and the Transformation of Migration Flows between New Zealand and Countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, 1980-1996.” In *Vanishing Borders: The New International Order of the 21st Century*, ed. L. Boon-Thong and T. Shamsul-Bahrin. Aldershot: Ashgate, 91-110.

53 New Zealand has pension portability agreements with the UK, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, Jersey and Guernsey, and reciprocal healthcare agreements with Australia and the UK.

“Problems with pension portability are indicative of wider problems of incoherence in New Zealand’s diaspora policies.”

THE SAME OLD HORIZON?

TABLE 1. NEW ZEALAND’S SOCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENTS

AGREEMENTS WITH ASIAN COUNTRIES			
	Taxation	Working Holiday	Visa-free mobility
Bangladesh			
Bhutan			
Brunei Darussalam			1993
Burma (Myanmar)			
Cambodia			
China	1986		
Chinese Taipei	1996	DU	
Hong Kong SAR*		DU	
India	1986		
Indonesia	1987		1987
Japan	1963	1985	1970
Laos			
Malaysia	1976	1996	1987
Mongolia			
Nepal			
Pakistan			
Philippines	1980		1960s?
Singapore	1973	DU	
South Korea*	1981	DU	1994
Sri Lanka			
Thailand	1998	DU	1987
Timor-Leste			
Vietnam			

DU = agreement exists but signing date unknown

* = Extradition also

AGREEMENTS WITH “ANGLO-WORLD” AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES			
	Taxation	Working Holiday	Visa-free mobility
Australia	1995		Pre-1950s
Austria	2006		1950s
Belgium	1981	2003	1950s
Canada	1980	1994	Pre-1950s
Czech Republic	2007	DU	2000s
Denmark	1980	2001	Pre-1950s
Finland		DU	1970s
France	1979	DU	Pre-1950s
Germany	1978	DU	1950s
Greece			1960s
Ireland	1986	1995	1990s
Italy	1979	DU	1960s
Luxembourg			1950s
Netherlands	1980	DU	Pre-1950s
Norway		2005	Pre-1950s
Poland	2005	DU	2000s
Portugal			1980s
South Africa	2001		Pre-1950s
Spain	2005		1980s
Sweden	1979	2001	Pre-1950s
Switzerland	1980		DU
United Kingdom	1983	DU	Pre-1950s
United States	1983		Pre-1950s

* = Healthcare also

Pension portability is a case in point. Pension portability with Asia would be desirable because it would make it easier for people – i.e. diaspora groups – to act as a filament between New Zealand and Asia by spending time in both places. Currently, bilateral agreements are the best way of achieving portability; they allow people to receive, from each country, an entitlement proportional to the time spent in that country.⁵⁴ However, reciprocal pension agreements with Asia are still a ‘third horizon’ issue, first because Asian pension systems are generally not yet developed enough to allow reciprocal benefits to flow in both directions, and second because the current low outflows of emigrants to Asia would not make agreements profitable for New Zealand. However, as Asian countries develop, age, and share more migrants with New Zealand, agreements will become increasingly feasible and necessary.⁵⁵ In the interim, New Zealand could begin incremental unilateral changes to its domestic portability legislation in order to allow easier pension portability, and therefore freedom of movement, with Asia.

54 Holzmann, R., J. Koettl, and T. Chernetsky. 2005. “Portability Regimes of Pension and Health Care Benefits for International Migrants: An Analysis of Issues and Good Practices.” World Bank SP Discussion Papers No. 0519.

55 E.g. see Park, D. 2010. “Developing Asia’s Pension Systems: Overview and Reform Directions.” In *Regional Conference on Social Protection*, 21-22 April. Asian Development Bank Headquarters, Manila. Also see Friedman, B., E. James, C. Kane, and M. Queisser. 1996. “How Can China Provide Income Security for Its Rapidly Aging Population?” World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series 1674, Holzmann, R., I. W. MacArthur, and Y. Sin. 2000. “Pension Systems in East Asia and the Pacific: Challenges and Opportunities.” World Bank Social Protection Discussion Paper Series 0014.

“New Zealand has long maintained a smooth highway with the “Anglo-world” and until the 1970s saw no real reason to branch out in Asia.”

For example, New Zealand could revise its restrictions on “General Portability” governing payments of New Zealand Superannuation overseas, including into Asia. Currently, New Zealand retirees in Asia and other non-agreement countries must be “ordinarily resident” in New Zealand in order to apply for Superannuation, even if they qualify in other respects: moving to Asia before retirement could therefore wipe one’s entire pension entitlement. Removing this criterion has been proposed in the past but dropped, owing to “administrative difficulties”,⁵⁶ but nonetheless, this makes setting up shop in places like Asia a rather risky business. Moreover, this is just one of many issues surrounding pension portability.⁵⁷ Between 2001 and 2005 the whole portability system was found, by the Ministry of Social Development itself, to be “out of date and inequitable.... significantly out of step with ... many other countries overseas ... [and involve] considerable administrative problems”, as a result of having been “developed in a largely *ad hoc* manner”.⁵⁸ Groups of senior citizens have accused the government of “pension abuse”,⁵⁹ and complaints are voluminous.⁶⁰ Revising the residence criteria would certainly not solve all remaining problems surrounding portability at once, but it would be another small step in the right direction: it would be fairer to pensioners and it would help to facilitate mobility, notably between New Zealand and Asia. This is an example of a small part of a wider need to look coherently at how New Zealand relates to its diaspora.

Engaging Asia is a long-term project of geopolitical reorientation, and no single measure – such as pension portability reform – offers a quick fix. But, as Robert Didham puts it, “Deeper cultural awareness and empathy ... implicitly needed for long-term sustainability [of New Zealand’s relations with Asia], requires closer, more intimate contact, which is enabled by the physical exchange of engaged people in both locations.”⁶¹ In the long term, social infrastructure that allows New Zealand to “integrate” its diaspora in Asia will be a key element of this exchange. Pension portability is just one area where more ‘bridge-building’ is needed. As indicated above (see Table 1, page 13), similar remarks could be made about visa waiver agreements, working holiday schemes, and agreements over double-taxation and (perhaps eventually) extradition. Healthcare portability and compatibility of qualifications could also be added to the list. Taking a fresh look at these areas of regulation surrounding mobility and transnational connection could help to build a productive and engaged New Zealand presence in Asia.

56 Ministry of Social Development, “Review of New Zealand Superannuation – Treatment of Overseas Pensions and Payment Overseas”, 24/11/05, page 28. This explanation has been confirmed by personal communication with relevant officials in the Ministry of Social Development.

57 E.g. see Dale, M. C., A. Lazonby, S. St John, and M. Littlewood. 2009. *Literature Review: New Zealand Superannuation and Overseas Pensions*. Auckland: Retirement Policy and Research Center, University of Auckland.

58 Report to Minister of Finance, Minister of Social Development and Employment, “Review of New Zealand Superannuation Portability”, 31/05/04, pages 10-11.

59 See <http://www.nzpensionabuse.org/>, (accessed 15 October 2010).

60 See Report to Minister of Finance, Minister of Social Development and Employment, “Review of New Zealand Superannuation Portability”, 31/05/04, pages 12-13.

61 Didham, R. 2010. “Future Potential and the Invisible Diaspora: New Zealand and South Asia Diasporas.” *Asia New Zealand Foundation Outlook Report 12*. Page 15.

CONCLUSIONS

IF NEW ZEALAND IS TO BECOME PART OF ASIA, New Zealanders need to spend more time establishing a New Zealand presence there. How can this be facilitated? Part of the answer is that New Zealand will eventually need to address the social aspects of regional relations: it will need to make it easier for New Zealanders to move to Asia and establish themselves there whilst retaining strong connections to New Zealand. This would not only transform the possibilities available to individual migrants, but also allow New Zealand to share in their successes, and foster the interaction, affinity and trust needed to underlie closer economic and political cooperation with Asia – over migration as well as other issue areas. It would require an effort to design a more strategic and coherent approach to policy issues concerning New Zealanders in Asia and further abroad, but it would be worth it: widening New Zealanders’ horizons in Asia widens New Zealand’s horizons in the region. This is the underlying thinking behind the idea of “engaging the diaspora”.

Engaging the diaspora to connect with Asia requires some thinking outside the square of the nation-state – for example, when it comes to differentiating domestic and foreign policies. Engaging the diaspora requires policy makers to ask not only “what can we get?” but also “who are we representing?”, and to acknowledge not only that a good deal with the diaspora needs to work both ways, but also that there are often basic obligations to be met on both sides. It means overhauling ad hoc regulations impinging on New Zealanders who spend part of their lives developing New Zealand’s international links by living in Asia, and coming up with a coherent and fair overall approach to them. Rather than treating foreign and domestic policy as fundamentally distinct, such an approach sometimes needs to view foreign policy instruments as tools for implementing domestic policies beyond New Zealand’s borders. Such an approach could help New Zealand to branch out beyond the “Anglo-world”, and engage more meaningfully with Asia.

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ISSN 1177-7893 (Online-PDF)

Published by the Asia New Zealand Foundation
 – FEBRUARY 2011

ENGAGING ASIA: THE ROLE OF THE DIASPORA

Outlook 15

EDITION

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