

Wilfrid Laurier University

## Scholars Commons @ Laurier

---

Southern African Migration Programme

Reports and Papers

---

7-2011

### No. 24: South Africa's Two Diasporas: Engagement and Disengagement

Jonathan Crush

*Balsillie School of International Affairs/WLU, [jcrush@wlu.ca](mailto:jcrush@wlu.ca)*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.wlu.ca/samp>



Part of the [African Studies Commons](#), [Economics Commons](#), and the [Migration Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Crush, J. (2011). South Africa's Two Diasporas: Engagement and Disengagement (rep., pp. 1-22). Waterloo, ON: Southern African Migration Programme. SAMP Migration Policy Brief No. 24.

This Migration Policy Briefs is brought to you for free and open access by the Reports and Papers at Scholars Commons @ Laurier. It has been accepted for inclusion in Southern African Migration Programme by an authorized administrator of Scholars Commons @ Laurier. For more information, please contact [scholarscommons@wlu.ca](mailto:scholarscommons@wlu.ca).



**SOUTHERN AFRICAN MIGRATION PROGRAMME**

**SOUTH AFRICA'S TWO DIASPORAS: ENGAGEMENT AND  
DISENGAGEMENT**

**SAMP POLICY BRIEF NO 24**

**JULY 2011**

**JONATHAN CRUSH**

**© SAMP**

## Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction .....	3
2.0	Diasporas of the South .....	4
3.0	South Africa’s Two Diasporas .....	7
3.1	The African Diaspora within South Africa.....	7
3.2	The South African Diaspora outside Africa .....	11
4.0	Forms of Diaspora Engagement.....	15
5.0	Conclusion.....	18
	Acknowledgements .....	19
	Endnotes.....	19

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The African diaspora is increasingly viewed as a key to realizing the development potential of international migration.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, there remains considerable confusion about who exactly constitutes the diaspora and which groups should be targeted for “diaspora engagement.”<sup>2</sup> For some, the diaspora consists of all migrants of African birth living outside Africa. The African Union’s definition of the African diaspora, for example, “comprises people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality.”<sup>3</sup> The World Bank goes a step further to distinguish between an involuntary and a voluntary, a historical and a contemporary, component of the diaspora: “Over four million voluntary immigrants of African origin reside in the West. This ‘voluntary’ Diaspora is distinct from the vastly larger ‘involuntary’ Diaspora that populates North America, Europe, the Caribbean, and Brazil. On matters of African development, however, the interests of both groups often intersect.”<sup>4</sup>

1.2 Despite differences of emphasis, most definitions of the African diaspora in the migration and development literature agree on two things. First, the African diaspora is located outside the continent, usually in several different countries or regions but primarily in the North. Second, membership of the African diaspora is predicated on an interest or involvement in African development. Former South African President Thabo Mbeki, for example, conveyed both messages when he argued at the 2007 African Ministerial Diaspora Conference that “there is an urgent need for knowledge sharing and economic cooperation between Africa and the Diaspora.”<sup>5</sup> The African Union similarly notes that members of the Diaspora must be “willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union.”<sup>6</sup>

1.3 Clearly, the African Union and African governments have little interest in engaging with those who have turned their backs on Africa for a new life elsewhere. From that standpoint, a definition of the diaspora that demands actual or potential engagement in African development makes perfect sense. What does not make sense is the idea that diaspora individuals and groups are located exclusively outside Africa. Perhaps, as Bakewell notes, this is not surprising for “these tend to be wealthier, better-educated and more organized groups” with easier access to donor and African government officials and business groups across the globe.<sup>7</sup> This may well be true, but it is also elitist, ignoring the much larger number of ordinary migrants whose “hidden” contributions to development go largely uncelebrated and unrecorded (except perhaps in aggregate remittance statistics). There is no reason why the African diaspora should not include all migrants who maintain links with Africa, and the many migrants from Africa who live and work in other African countries.<sup>8</sup>

1.4 This paper argues for a spatially inclusive definition of the African diaspora that encompasses all migrants of African origin wherever they live so long as they are outside their country of origin. This would include people of African origin (not just first-generation migrants) resident in the North, in the South and, crucially, in Africa itself. There are, in other words, African diasporas outside Africa and African diasporas within Africa, and the two are often closely connected. Accordingly, this paper:

- (a) Discusses the development rationale for a revised definition of the African diaspora, which encompasses African migrants living in other countries within the continent
- (b) Discusses the case of South Africa, which is a major African migrant country of origin and destination
- (c) Compares the African diaspora in South Africa and the South African diaspora outside South Africa
- (d) Reflects on the general relevance of the South African case study for our understanding of the role of the diaspora in African development.

## 2.0 Diasporas of the South

2.1 The migration and development debate initially tended to imply that the only stream of relevance to African development was migration from South to North.<sup>9</sup> One line of analysis argued that the North should encourage economic development in origin countries to reduce the pressure for out-migration from regions such as Africa.<sup>10</sup> Another sought to encourage (skills) migration from the South to the North while simultaneously avoiding charges of promoting a debilitating “brain drain” by emphasizing the positive diaspora feedback mechanisms of out-migration (remittances, investment, knowledge transfers, and so on).<sup>11</sup> China and India are held up as exemplars of diaspora-fed development.<sup>12</sup> The curious feature of this debate is that it ignores the long-standing reality that South-South migration is numerically more important than South-North migration and continues to grow in volume and economic importance.<sup>13</sup>

2.2 At an aggregate level, South-South migration has generated an estimated 45 percent of the current global migrant stock compared to only 37 percent for South-North migration (Table 1). There is considerable uncertainty about how to configure South-South migration within the global migration-development debate.<sup>14</sup> By tacking on the activities of migrants in the North to other North-South “development” linkages, (for example, by constructing graphs comparing flows of remittances with aid flows and foreign direct investment), the emphasis on South-North linkages is maintained. Ironically, the sizable contribution of South-South remittances—estimated at 30 percent of the total — is usually “hidden” in aggregated global flows.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 1: Cumulative Global Migration Flows, 2005**

Origin	Destination			
	North		South	
North	25 million	14%	8 million	4%
South	64 million	37%	87 million	45%

Source: Calculated from Global Migrant Origin Database v4 Updated March 2007;  
[http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global\\_Migrant\\_Origin\\_Database\\_Version\\_4.xls](http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global_Migrant_Origin_Database_Version_4.xls)

2.3 While there is growing awareness of the role of South-South migration in development, the term “diaspora” is rarely used in this new literature. In their pathbreaking analysis of South-South migration and remittances, for example, Ratha and Shaw use the term only once, to refer to the dispersal of African groups within the interior of Southern Africa in the 19th century.<sup>16</sup> The irony of this use of the term to describe the movement of people *within* Africa will not be lost on those who agree with the fundamental premise of this paper. There is thus a need to develop a conversation between the new literature on South-South migration and the growing analysis of diaspora engagement with Africa.

2.4 Bakewell notes that “African diasporas within Africa are absent from the picture” of migration and development. There are five basic reasons why the definition of the African diaspora should be expanded to include migrants who have relocated to other countries within Africa.<sup>17</sup> First, consistent with the general argument made above about South-South migration, Africa itself is the most important destination for African migrants. The Sussex University Global Migrant Origin Database v4 figures for global migrant stock indicate that the main destinations for African migrants are Africa itself (13 million or 53 percent of the total), Europe (7.3 million or 30 percent), the Middle East (2.6 million or 10 percent), and North America (1.2 million or 5 percent) (Table 2). Nearly two-thirds of African migration is to countries of the South. In total, 53 percent of African migrants live in Africa and 47 percent live outside the continent.

**Table 2: Global African Migrant Stock by Region**

	Number	Percent
<b>NORTH</b>		
Europe	7,337,542	29.4
North America	1,239,722	5.0
Australasia	223,095	0.9
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8,800,359</b>	<b>35.3</b>
<b>SOUTH</b>		
Africa	13,181,759	52.8
Middle East	2,595,856	10.4
Asia	339,014	1.3
Latin America	58,273	0.2
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>16,174,902</b>	<b>64.7</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,975,261</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Calculated from Global Migrant Origin Database v4 Updated March 2007;  
[http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global\\_Migrant\\_Origin\\_Database\\_Version\\_4.xls](http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global_Migrant_Origin_Database_Version_4.xls)

2.5 Secondly, with the exception of forced migration movements, the majority of migration within Africa is developmental in nature, motivated by the search for better economic opportunity and building sustainable livelihoods at home (often at the microscale of households and communities). Migrants are driven by the desire to obtain the resources (financial and otherwise) to reduce poverty and to ensure a better standard of living for their dependents, including children. They also generally maintain much stronger social and economic ties with home than those who have left the continent. Circular migration is fast becoming a new “development mantra” in the North.<sup>18</sup> Within Africa, however, circular migration has been the dominant form of migration for decades. If diaspora engagement is defined by actual or potential involvement in the development of countries of origin, then most African migrants in Africa are already fully engaged.

2.6 Thirdly, another new “mantra” in the migration-development debate is the idea of “codevelopment.” African diasporas within Africa are clear agents of “codevelopment,” contributing to the development of origin *and* destination countries. Their contribution to countries of destination is often downplayed or minimized; migrants are rarely seen as a development resource in African countries of destination. More often they are viewed as a threat to the interests of citizens, as takers of jobs, bringers of crime, consumers of scarce resources, and drainers of wealth. Across the global South, the activities of migrants are increasingly and often misleadingly viewed as antithetical to development.<sup>19</sup> The xenophobic violence that rocked South Africa in May 2008 and left 64 people dead and scores injured was accompanied by a bellicose antforeign rhetoric that blamed migrants for many of South Africa’s social and economic ills and ignored the contribution of migrants to South Africa’s own development.<sup>20</sup>

2.7 Fourthly, members of the African diaspora in Africa are often closely networked personally and economically with the diaspora outside Africa. These economic linkages are particularly intense in the case of globalized trading networks such as those run by Senegalese and Somalians. Zimbabweans living in the United Kingdom are often referred to as a “diaspora” while those in South Africa are generally not.<sup>21</sup> Yet both send large sums in remittances back to Zimbabwe, sometimes to the same household. There is no logic to why remittances from Zimbabweans in Europe are designated a “diaspora” contribution while those from South Africa are not. More generally, to ignore the African diaspora in Africa is to exclude over half of all African migrants as potential participants in, and beneficiaries of, diaspora policy initiatives.

2.8 Finally, “elitist” definitions of the African diaspora tend to focus on the development contributions of the highly skilled, educated, and networked members of diasporas in the North. This is highly problematic since it excludes many ordinary development actors who have migrated out of Africa. It has the added disadvantage of excluding African migrants in Africa on the grounds that most are supposedly unskilled and have low earning power. This is a dangerous

assumption since it excludes, by definition, the development contribution of such migrants and many highly skilled, educated, and networked Africans who do live and work in other countries in Africa.

### **3.0 South Africa's Two Diasporas**

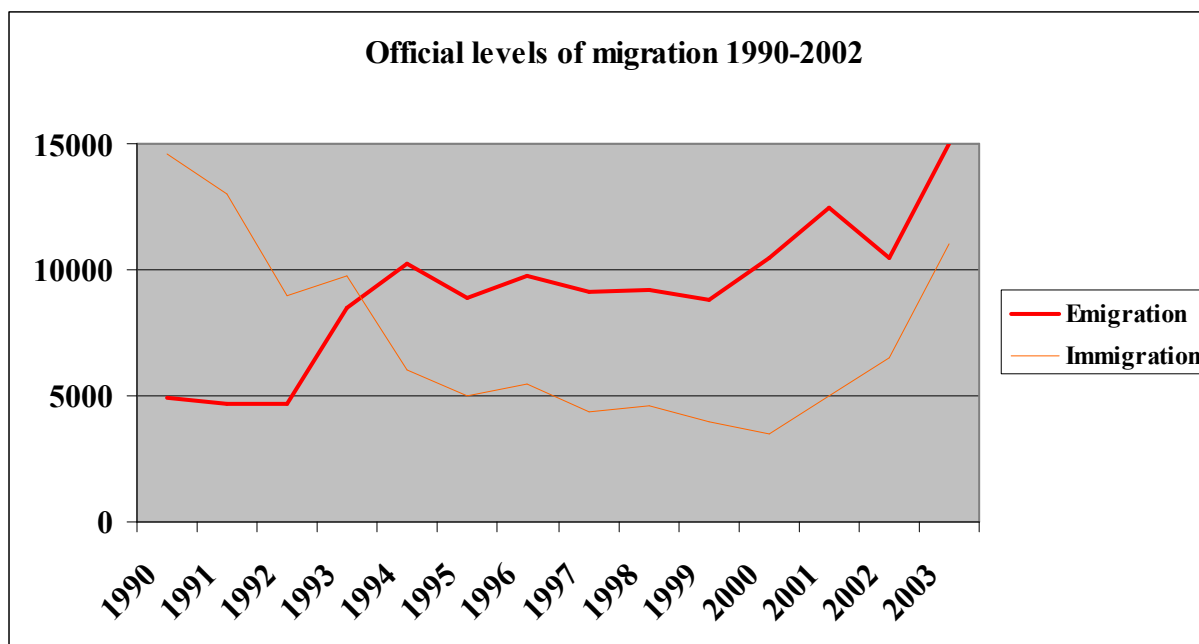
South Africa is a country of significant in-migration and out-migration. Prior to 1994, immigration easily exceeded emigration. After 1994, legal immigration fell while emigration continued to grow. Since 2000, both have increased sharply (Figure 1). Official statistics significantly undercount both emigration and immigration, but the trends shown are generally illustrative of postapartheid migration movements. Together, these flows have created, a growing African diaspora within South Africa, a sizable South African diaspora outside the continent, and a smaller South African diaspora within Africa. This chapter focuses on the first two of these diasporas: the African diaspora within South Africa and the South African diaspora outside Africa.

#### **3.1 The African Diaspora within South Africa**

3.1.1 South Africa's migrant stock was just over 1 million in 2001 (Table 3). Of these, 23 percent were from Europe (a legacy of apartheid-era immigration) and 72 percent were from Africa.<sup>22</sup> The 2001 South African Census recorded 730,000 foreign-born African migrants from 54 different African countries. However, the vast majority were from other states within the Southern African Development Community (95 percent). Of these, 39 percent were from Mozambique, 19 percent were from Zimbabwe, 17 percent were from Lesotho, 5 percent were from Namibia, and 4 percent were from Swaziland (Table 4). Around 20,000 migrants were from East Africa, 16,000 were from West Africa, and 4,500 were from North Africa. Since 2001, the number of migrants from Zimbabwe, in particular, has increased markedly.<sup>23</sup>

#### **Figure 1: Official Levels of Migration, South Africa, 1990–2002**





Source: Unpublished data from Statistics South Africa.

<b>Table 3: Migrant Stock in South Africa, 2001</b>		
<b>Region of Origin</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>NORTH</b>		
Europe	236,000	23.0
North America	9,000	1.0
Australasia	4,000	0.5
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>249,000</b>	<b>24.5</b>
<b>SOUTH</b>		
Africa	729,498	71.5
Asia	27,000	3.0
Middle East	6,000	0.5
Latin America	13,000	1.0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>776,000</b>	<b>76.0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1025000</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Unpublished Data from Statistics South Africa; 2001 Census.

<b>Table 4: SADC Countries of Origin of Migrants to South Africa, 2001</b>		
<b>Country of Migrant Origin</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Mozambique	269,669	39.2
Zimbabwe	131,887	19.2
Lesotho	114,941	16.7
Namibia	38,148	5.5
Swaziland	28,278	4.1
Zambia	20,770	3.0
Malawi	19,673	2.9
Botswana	14,955	2.2

<b>Angola</b>	9,937	1.4
<b>Congo, Dem. Rep.</b>	3,772	0.5
<b>Tanzania</b>	3,330	0.5
<b>Mauritius</b>	2,577	0.4
<b>Other</b>	191	<0.1
<b>Total</b>	687,899	100.0
Source: Unpublished Data from Statistics South Africa; 2001 Census.		

3.1.2 There is actually considerable uncertainty about the current number of African migrants in South Africa. The 2001 South African Census recorded 690,000 other Southern African Development Community-born migrants. The Sussex University Global Migrant Origin Database v4<sup>24</sup> has an almost identical total but a totally different distribution by country of origin (with Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo combined increasing from 16,000 to 300,000), Mozambique falling by 120,000, Lesotho by 107,000, and Zimbabwe by 73,000 (Table 5).

3.1.3 The latest World Bank estimates confuse the situation still further, increasing Lesotho by 200,000, Mozambique by 120,000, and Zimbabwe by 451,000. The World Bank total is 1.1 million but records no migrants at all from key sending countries such as Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, and Namibia. Official estimates of the number of irregular migrants in South Africa bear no relationship to any of these estimates, varying between 4 million and 10 million (with the number of Zimbabweans usually put at 2 million to 3 million). None of these estimates have any basis in fact and are likely highly exaggerated. One study used 2001 South Africa Census data and projections from date of entry by a large migrant sample in Johannesburg, and estimated that there were 900,000 Zimbabweans in South Africa in 2007.<sup>25</sup>

<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>2001 South Africa Census</b>	<b>Democratic Republic of Congo (Version 4)</b>	<b>World Bank</b>
<b>Angola</b>	11,806	152,057	0
<b>Botswana</b>	17,819	2,989	24,849
<b>Congo, Dem. Rep.</b>	4,541	149,462	0
<b>Lesotho</b>	114,941	8,246	208,226
<b>Madagascar</b>	220	316	0
<b>Malawi</b>	25,090	26,568	10,662
<b>Mauritius</b>	3,500	32,149	0
<b>Mozambique</b>	269,669	150,369	269,918
<b>Namibia</b>	46,225	4,215	0
<b>Seychelles</b>	257	3,144	0
<b>Swaziland</b>	34,471	2,007	80,593
<b>Tanzania</b>	3,923	52,554	0
<b>Zambia</b>	23,550	44,809	0

<b>Zimbabwe</b>	131,887	59,109	510,084
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>687,899</b>	<b>687,994</b>	<b>1,104,331</b>

Source: Statistics South Africa, Global Migrant Origin Database v4, World Bank.

3.1.4 Unpublished data from Statistics South Africa for the 2001 Census allow the construction of a general profile of the African diaspora in South Africa at that time (Table 6). The Census showed that 80 percent of the African-born migrant stock was black and 20 percent was white (primarily immigrants from ex-settler colonies such as Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). The migrant stock is also male dominated, although the feminization of migration is proceeding rapidly.<sup>26</sup> In 2001, approximately 64 percent of the migrant stock was male and 36 percent was female. The Census also reveals that far from being an undifferentiated, unskilled, and marginalized group of migrants, there is considerable variety in the skill levels and earnings of African migrants in South Africa. For example, only a quarter of the migrants were in unskilled (“elementary”) occupations. Just as many were in skilled and professional positions, and 45 percent were doing semiskilled jobs.

<b>Table 6: Demographic Profile of African Diaspora in South Africa, 2001</b>			
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
<b>Race/Sex</b>			
Black Male	380,866	53.5	
Black Female	188,484	26.5	
Subtotal	569,350	80.0	
White Male	68,144	9.6	
White Female	74,265	10.4	
Subtotal	142,409	20.0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>711,759</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Occupation</b>			
<b>Skilled</b>			
Senior Managers/Officials	21,991	6.6	
Professionals	28,021	8.4	
Technical	21,582	6.5	
Farmers	12,087	3.6	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>83,681</b>	<b>25.1</b>	
<b>Semiskilled</b>			
Plant/Machine Operators	26,625	8.0	
Crafts and Trades	66,638	20.0	
Clerical	21,824	6.5	
Services	33,682	10.1	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>148,769</b>	<b>44.6</b>	
<b>Unskilled</b>			
Elementary Occupations	82,244	24.6	
Other	19,167	5.8	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>333,861</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Income Bracket</b>			
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
R1–R400	81,412	19.6	19.6
R401–R800	70,375	17.0	36.6
R801–R1,600	94,996	22.9	59.5
R1,601–R3,200	70,447	17.0	76.5

R3,201–R6,400	39,734	9.5	86.0
R6,401–R12,800	31,079	7.5	93.5
R12,801–R25,600	16,923	4.1	97.6
R25,601–R51,200	6,227	1.5	99.1
R51,201–R100,240	1,979	0.5	99.6
R100,241–R200,480	1,097	0.3	99.9
>R200,480	595	0.1	100.0
TOTAL	413,874	100.0	

Source: Unpublished Data from Statistics South Africa.

Note: R = Rands.

3.1.5 The income range of migrants was also considerable. Of those earning an income, 60 percent earned less than R18,000 a year in 2001 and 86 percent less than R72,000 a year. Less than 1 percent earned more than R250,000 a year. In part, the low overall earnings are a function of the low rates of remuneration for most unskilled and semiskilled positions in South Africa. Rates of pay for skilled and professional migrants are higher but still do not compare with those in Europe or North America. Many poorer households, however, supplement their income through informal sector activity, which is generally not reflected in the Census data. Also, many migrants are unable to get jobs commensurate with their qualifications and experience and end up working in lower-paid jobs.

### **3.2 The South African Diaspora outside Africa**

3.2.1 The collection of systematic comparative data for the South African diaspora outside Africa is in progress by the Southern African Migration Programme. The precise number of South African emigrants is unknown because official South African emigration statistics are known to undercount the flow by as much as two-thirds.<sup>27</sup> Destination-country immigration statistics are more reliable, but they do not always record departures, so census data need to be used to provide a more accurate picture of cumulative migration. The Global Migrant Origin Database v4 suggests that Europe is a major location of South African migrant stocks (at 244,000 or 40 percent of the total) (Table 7). The main countries of destination are the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Germany. Other important regions of destination include North America (18 percent of the total) and Australasia (each at 18 percent). In other words, three-quarters of South Africans abroad live in the North. The large number of South Africans recorded as living in other African countries (especially Mozambique and Zimbabwe) is almost certainly incorrect.

3.2.2 The South African diaspora outside Africa is therefore located mainly in countries with historical immigration ties to South Africa (Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the United Kingdom) and newer destinations (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States) (Table 8). Migration to all of these destinations continues in considerable numbers. In the case of

Australia, for example, the 2006 Census shows that 4,000 to 6,000 migrants entered from South Africa each year from 2001 to 2006, adding to the 22,000 who arrived in the immediate postapartheid period (between 1995 and 2000) and the 40,000 who moved there during the apartheid period. The 2006 New Zealand Census shows that 3,000 to 4,000 migrants arrive from South Africa each year. In this country, too, there was a postapartheid surge (14,000 between 1996 and 2001) of migration from South Africa.

<b>Table 7: Regional Distribution of South African Diaspora</b>		
<b>Region</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>NORTH</b>		
Europe	243,716	40
North America	108,221	18
Australasia	105,721	18
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>457,658</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>SOUTH</b>		
Africa	302,764	20
Asia	14,042	2
Middle East	9,500	1.5
Latin America	2,305	0.5
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>328,613</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>786,721</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Calculated from Global Migrant Origin Database v4 Updated March 2007;  
[http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global\\_Migrant\\_Origin\\_Database\\_Version\\_4.xls](http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global_Migrant_Origin_Database_Version_4.xls)

<b>Table 8: Major Countries of South African Diaspora</b>	
	<b>Numbers</b>
United Kingdom	142,416
Australia*	104,120
United States	70,465
Canada	37,681
Germany	34,674
New Zealand*	26,069
Netherlands	11,286
Portugal	11,197

Source: Calculated from Global Migrant Origin Database v4 Updated March 2007;  
[http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global\\_Migrant\\_Origin\\_Database\\_Version\\_4.xls](http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global_Migrant_Origin_Database_Version_4.xls)  
 Note: \*Updated for 2006 Census.

### 3.2.3 Out-migration from South Africa occurred in three distinct phases:

- (a) *Pre-1990 (primarily migrants, exiles, and refugees of all races leaving apartheid South Africa)*: Emigration spiked during periods of political unrest (such as in the 1960s after the Sharpeville massacre, in the 1970s after the Soweto Uprising, and during the state of emergency in the 1980s). Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom were primary destinations during this period.

- (b) *1990–2000*: Departure of many conservative whites who were not prepared to live under a democratic African National Congress government and objected to the loss of historical white privileges. Most of these migrants went to Australia and the United Kingdom, but the numbers moving to New Zealand increased sharply.
- (c) *Post-2000*: Growing migration of skilled people and professionals of all races pushed by concerns about crime and safety and attracted by the more open immigration policies of skills-seeking Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries.

As Table 9 shows, annual immigration to Canada has remained reasonably constant, but there has been a major increase in the rate of migration to Australia and New Zealand.

	Australia		Canada		New Zealand	
	Number	Average per year	Number	Average per year	Number	Average per year
Pre-1990	38,860	—	19,505	—	2,877*	—
1991–2000	29,202	2,920	12,790	1,297	19,668**	1,311
2001–2006	32,723	6,544	6,795	1,160	18,273	3,655

Source: 2006 Census.  
 Note: — = not available  
 \* Pre-1986.  
 \*\*1986–2000.

3.2.4 The emigration potential of skilled South Africans still in the country remains extremely high. In a survey of health professionals in South Africa, SAMP found that 50 percent of all health professionals had given a “great deal” of consideration to leaving the country and 30 percent expected to be gone in five years.<sup>28</sup> According to every social and economic measure (except collegiality), there were more dissatisfied than satisfied professionals, and the “Most Likely Destination” rated more highly than South Africa. The Most Likely Destinations were Australia and New Zealand (33 percent), the United Kingdom (25 percent), the United States (10 percent), Europe (9 percent), and Canada (7 percent). Nearly 40 percent of professionals had “often” been contacted by a recruitment agency in South Africa and 25 percent were “personally approached” about working abroad.<sup>29</sup>

3.2.5 Most South African emigration consists of families rather than individuals and the gender split is very even in the diaspora. In Australia, for example, there were 51,037 male and 53,095 female South African migrants at the time of the 2006 Census. The age profile of South Africans in New Zealand shows that a quarter of South African migrants were under age 20 in 2006, again an indication of extensive and recent family unit migration. The largest adult group (40 percent) was people in their 30s and 40s, presumably their economically active parents.

3.2.6 A precise occupational breakdown of the South African diaspora has yet to be compiled, but it is known that many migrants enter countries of destination under skilled immigration categories.<sup>30</sup> Rates of unemployment are also extremely low in the diaspora. In Australia, for example, 35,115 male South Africans and 29,663 females were employed in 2006 (and only 1,329 working-age males and 1,424 working-age females were unemployed). Data for the health profession suggests that this is one of the major professions for migrants in destination countries, where South African medical school qualifications are generally recognized (Table 10). The United Kingdom (27.5 percent of the total) has been the major destination for South African physicians followed by the United States (27 percent) and Canada (21 percent). Nurse migration is also dominated by the United Kingdom (49 percent), followed by Australia (19 percent) and the United States (14 percent). The United Kingdom is even more important as a destination for South African dentists (68 percent) and pharmacists (42 percent).

<b>OECD Country</b>	<b>Doctors</b>		<b>Nurses</b>		<b>Dentists</b>		<b>Pharmacists</b>	
Australia	1,111	15.1	1,083	18.6	152	12.0	23	15.9
Austria	13	0.2	16	0.3	2	0.1	0	0.0
Canada	1,545	21.0	280	4.8	60	4.7	15	10.3
Switzerland	22	0.3	55	0.9	8	0.6	0	0.0
Denmark	2	<0.1	16	0.3	1	0.1	0	0.0
Spain	4	0.1	3	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
France	16	0.2	4	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
United Kingdom	2,022	27.5	2,844	49.0	862	68.3	61	42.1
Germany	12	0.2	22	0.4	3	0.2	0	0.0
Ireland	45	0.6	105	1.8	3	0.2	0	0.0
Mexico	3	<0.1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Norway	0	0.0	49	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
New Zealand	555	7.5	432	7.4	24	1.9	6	4.1
Portugal	44	0.6	58	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sweden	11	0.1	10	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
United States	1,950	26.6	829	14.3	150	11.9	40	27.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,355</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5,806</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Source: Compiled from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Health Workforce and Migration Data at <a href="http://www.oecd.org/document/47/0,3746,en_2649_37407_36506543_1_1_1_37407,00.html">http://www.oecd.org/document/47/0,3746,en_2649_37407_36506543_1_1_1_37407,00.html</a>								

3.2.7 In summary, the African diaspora in South Africa and the South African diaspora outside Africa display distinctive and different characteristics. Table 11 summarizes the major differences in terms of overall sociodemographic profile, migration type, spatial distribution, behaviour, degree of integration in destination countries, and remitting behavior (the subject of the next section). This comparative typology is a useful precursor to a discussion of diaspora

engagement since different types of diasporas have different potentials and propensities for involvement in development activities that benefit their countries of origin.

<b>Table 11: Comparing the Diasporas</b>		
	<b>South African Diaspora Outside Africa</b>	<b>African Diaspora in South Africa</b>
<b>Sociodemographic profile</b>	White (> 80%), family, skilled, tertiary educated, professional,	Black (> 80%), individual (75% male), all skill levels and all education levels
<b>Main migration type</b>	Permanent	Temporary, circular, transnational
<b>Spatial distribution</b>	Concentrated in 6 countries	From 50 African countries but majority (90%) from the Southern African Development Community
<b>Integration</b>	High economic and social integration High rates of permanent residence and citizenship Qualifications recognized	Low integration and high barriers to permanent residence and citizenship High levels of discrimination and xenophobia Deskilling common
<b>Remittances</b>	Low in comparison to income	High in comparison to income
Source: Author's compilation		

#### **4.0 Forms of Diaspora Engagement**

4.1 The division into distinct periods of South Africa's global diasporic dispersal in the previous section is important because the character of actual and potential diaspora engagement differs for each group of immigrants. Engagement interest is relatively high among many pre-1990 emigrants who have risen to positions of professional prominence and economic power and maintain a strong interest in the development of a democratic South Africa. The second group (the migrants of the 1990s) are the least likely to engage, since they left precisely because they objected to the transformation in South Africa and are extremely critical of and negative about their country of origin. The third group, the post-2000 migrants, retain the strongest personal ties with South Africa and are generally less enamored with their countries of destination. They are aware of the enormous social and economic challenges that South Africa faces, have a modicum of guilt about their personal reasons for leaving, and retain an interest in events there. This group displays high use of social networking sites and organizes cultural nostalgia events.

4.2 As a country of migrant origin and destination, South Africa both sends and receives remittances. World Bank calculations suggest that both flows have been increasing in recent years, although the outflow is larger than the inflow. There have been no studies of the remitting behavior of the South African diaspora abroad. Little is known about who remits, how the remittances are sent, who they are sent to, and how they are spent. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a main motivation for personal remitting is to support elderly parents and relatives who



remain in South Africa.<sup>31</sup> There also appears to be a considerable amount of investment in real estate, but how much of the country’s sizable inward flows of foreign investment is motivated or catalyzed by diaspora individuals or companies is unclear.

4.3 The most common form of engagement by the diaspora abroad appears to be tourism and the nostalgia trade. Many South Africans in all of the major destination countries make regular return trips to visit the country, family, and friends. The nostalgia trade is partly responsible for the worldwide diffusion and adoption of products such as South African wine and the ubiquitous rooibos tea. Diaspora-owned companies in all the major destination countries import South African products and African crafts for sale to the diaspora and more broadly. Other common forms of diaspora engagement include support for charities and nongovernmental organizations, involvement in aid programs, and political activities (such as voting in elections).

4.4 Much more is known about the remitting behaviour of the African diaspora in South Africa.<sup>32</sup> The Southern African Migration Programme’s study of five sending countries found that 84 percent of migrant-sending households receive regular remittances from South Africa (compared with only 7 percent that receive income from agriculture). Remittances (cash plus goods) are the most important source of household income. Around 60 percent of remitting migrants remit at least monthly and 95 percent remit annually while 80 percent use informal channels. The amount remitted varies with marital status, age, gender, occupation, and skill level.

4.5 Remittances are spent primarily on household needs—food, clothing, school fees and transportation (Table 12). Over 80 percent of household expenditures in most livelihood categories are met from remittances. The “development impact” of remittances is therefore primarily related to securing household food security and educating children. The expenditure of remittances does benefit informal sector traders and small, medium, and micro enterprises, but the primary beneficiaries of food purchase are increasingly South-African-owned supermarket chains in origin countries. Levels of investment, savings, and business development from remittances are generally low. Little is invested in agricultural production. The question of how to enhance the development uses and impacts of sizable remittance flows has received little attention.

<b>Table 12: Use of Remittances in Countries of Origin*</b>		
<b>Expenditure category</b>	<b>Number of households</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Food	3,297	81.9
School fees	2,106	52.3
Clothing	2,101	52.2
Fares (bus, taxi)	1,361	33.8
Seed	968	24.0

Fertilizer	613	15.2
Tractor	549	13.6
Savings	503	12.5
Cement	448	11.1
Funeral	434	10.8
Funeral and burial policies	393	9.8
Roofing	301	7.5
Doors and windows	284	7.1
Bricks	279	6.9
Cooking fuel	240	6.0
Labor	221	5.5
Cattle purchase	187	4.6
Repay loans	168	4.2
Marriage	150	3.7
Purchase goods for sale	147	3.7
Small stock purchase	146	3.6
Feast	139	3.5
Walls	142	3.5
Other building material	121	3.0
Paint	108	2.7
Dipping /veterinary costs	106	2.6
Oxen for ploughing	97	2.4
Vehicle purchase/maintenance	98	2.4
Poultry purchase	92	2.3
Insurance policies	87	2.2
Wood	89	2.2
Vehicle/transport costs	73	1.8
Other special events	45	1.1
Equipment	39	1.0
Labor costs	40	1.0
Other business expenses	24	0.6
Other farm input	23	0.6
Other personal investment	25	0.6
Machinery/equipment	18	0.4
Other transport expenses	17	0.4
Source: Southern African Migration Program 2005; <a href="http://www.queensu.ca/samp">http://www.queensu.ca/samp</a> .		
Note: *Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zimbabwe.		

4.6 Both diasporas are involved in various forms of associational activity with a focus on their home countries. In South Africa, these range from forms of political organization and activism (in the case of Zimbabweans in South Africa), to home cultural associations (particularly common among migrants from West and Francophone Africa in South Africa), and informal migrant mutual help groups such as burial associations and savings and credit groups. Migrant social networks are particularly strong in helping new migrants find accommodations

and employment and, given the general xenophobic atmosphere in South Africa, provide migrants with solidarity and physical protection.

4.7 The South African diaspora abroad is considerably more dispersed, and associational life generally takes the form of cultural associations with only limited development engagement with South Africa. However, there are important diaspora development-oriented organizations and networks—such as the African Diaspora Network and the Nelson Mandela Children’s Foundation in Canada—in which South Africans play a prominent role. Elite knowledge networks have also begun to emerge in the diaspora. The first and potentially most innovative of these, the South African Network of Skills Abroad, has received much positive attention in the literature but failed to deliver on its promise to mobilize the diaspora to address South Africa’s skills shortages. A more recent initiative is the Global South Africans network (which describes itself as a “brain bank of the 1,000 or so best and brightest minds”), which aims to mobilize South Africans in positions of power and influence for investment and skills development in South Africa.<sup>33</sup>

## **5.0 Conclusion**

5.1 A strong case can be made for expanding the definition of the “African diaspora” to include migrants within Africa itself. However, as this paper has shown with regard to South Africa, there are significant differences between the diasporas within and outside of Africa. This means that the nature of their contribution to the development of their home countries also varies. The argument has often been made that the “creation” of a South African diaspora abroad has been driven by the labor needs of major western countries and has had very negative development consequences for South Africa itself. In recognition of this, the South African government developed a new skills-based immigration policy in the form of the Immigration Act of 2002. Growing African migration to South Africa has undoubtedly mitigated some of the negative impacts of the South African brain drain.

5.2 The contribution of the diaspora in South Africa to the development of their countries of origin is clearly sizable. The Lesotho and Mozambique economies would be hard-pressed to even exist without migration and remittances.<sup>34</sup> Households with migrants have much better development outcomes in both countries than those that do not. Zimbabwe’s economic collapse would have happened much sooner and would have been far more devastating but for the massive flow of remittances across the border from South Africa.<sup>35</sup> Remittances and return migration will continue to play a key role in the reconstruction and rebuilding of the country. The potential contributions of diaspora engagement to South African development need further research. Indeed, the new research agenda identified in this chapter should provide invaluable

evidence on how the contributions of both diasporas can be maximized in the interest of those who cannot or choose not to move but to remain.

## **Acknowledgements**

An earlier version of this paper was published in S. Plaza and D. Ratha, eds., *Diasporas for Development in Africa* (Washington: World Bank, 2011). SAMP wishes to thank the IDRC for its generous support.

## **Endnotes**

---

<sup>1</sup> Hein de Haas, “Engaging Diasporas: How Governments and Development Agencies Can Support Diaspora Involvement in the Development of Origin Countries.” Report for Oxfam Novib, International Migration Institute. (Oxford: IOM, 2006a); Ninna Nyberg-Sørensen, ed., *Living Across Worlds: Diaspora, Development and Transnational Engagement* (Geneva: International Organisation for Migration, 2007); Nicholas Van Hear, Frank Pieke and Steven Vertovec, “The Contribution of U.K.-Based Diasporas to Development and Poverty Reduction.” Report for the U.K. Department for International Development, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, (Oxford University: Oxford, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Oliver Bakewell, “Which Diaspora for Whose Development? Some Critical Questions about Roles of African Diaspora Organizations as Development Actors” Danish Institute for International Studies Brief, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, 2009a.

<sup>3</sup> African Union, Report of the Meeting of Experts from Member States on the Definition of the African Diaspora, Addis Ababa, April 11–12, 2005: 7.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank, *The African Union and World Bank: Mobilizing the African Diaspora* (World Bank: Washington, D.C., 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Thabo Mbeki, “Address at the AU-African Diaspora Ministerial Conference” Gallagher Estate, Midrand, South Africa, November 16, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> African Union, Report of the Meeting of Experts from Member States on the Definition of the African Diaspora, Addis Ababa, April 11–12, 2005: 7.

---

<sup>7</sup> Oliver Bakewell, “Which Diaspora for Whose Development? Some Critical Questions about Roles of African Diaspora Organizations as Development Actors” Danish Institute for International Studies Brief, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, 2009a: 3.

<sup>8</sup> Oliver Bakewell, “In Search of the Diasporas Within Africa” *African Diasporas* 1(1-2) (2008a): 5–27.

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Crush, “The International Migration and Development Debate: The Implications for Canada” Report for Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Canadian International Development Agency, Ottawa, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Hein de Haas, “Turning the Tide? Why ‘Development Instead of Migration’ Policies are Bound to Fail” IMI Working Paper No. 2, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford, 2006b; Oliver Bakewell, “Keeping Them in Their Place: The Ambivalent Relationship between Development and Migration in Africa” *Third World Quarterly* 29(7) (2008b): 1341–58.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Clemens, “Do Visas Kill? Health Effects of African Health Professional Emigration” Working Paper No. 114, Center for Global Development, Washington D.C., 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Kant Bhargava and J. C. Sharma. “Building Bridges: A Case Study on the Role of the Indian Diaspora in Canada” School of Policy Studies, Queen’s University, Kingston, Canada, 2008; Peter Geithner, Paula Johnson and Lincoln Chen, eds., *Diaspora Philanthropy and Equitable Development in China and India*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Dilip Ratha and William Shaw, “South-South Migration and Remittances” World Bank Working Paper No. 102, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Oliver Bakewell, “South-South Migration and Human Development: Reflections on African Development” Human Development Research Paper 2009/07, United Nations Development Programme, New York, 2009b.

<sup>15</sup> Dilip Ratha and William Shaw, “South-South Migration and Remittances.” World Bank Working Paper No. 102, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2007: 12.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid:17.

<sup>17</sup> Oliver Bakewell, “South-South Migration and Human Development: Reflections on African Development” Human Development Research Paper 2009/07, United Nations Development Programme, New York, 2009b: 58.

---

<sup>18</sup> Kathleen Newland, Dovelyn Rannveig Agunias and Aaron Terrazas, “Learning by Doing: Experiences of Circular Migration” Migration Policy Institute, Washington, D.C., 2008; Kathleen Newland, “Circular Migration and Human Development” Research Paper 2009/42, United Nations Development Programme, New York, 2009; Steven Vertovec, “Circular Migration: The Way Forward in Global Policy?” Working Paper No. 4, International Migration Institute, Oxford University, 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Crush and Sujata Ramachandran “Xenophobia, International Migration and Human Development” Research Paper 2009/47, United Nations Development Programme, New York, 2009; Jonathan Crush and Sujata Ramachandran, “Xenophobia, International Migration and Development” *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 11(2) (2010): 209-28.

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Crush, ed., *The Perfect Storm: The Realities of Xenophobia in Contemporary South Africa*. SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 50, Cape Town, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera, eds., *Zimbabwe’s Exodus: Crisis, Migration, Survival*. (Cape Town: SAMP and Ottawa: IDRC, 2010).

<sup>22</sup> Sally Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants: National Identity and South Africa’s Immigration Policies, 1910–2008*. (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> Daniel Makina, “Zimbabwe in Johannesburg.” In Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera, eds., *Zimbabwe’s Exodus: Crisis, Migration, Survival* (Cape Town and Ottawa: SAMP and IDRC, 2010).

<sup>24</sup>[http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global\\_Migrant\\_Origin\\_Database\\_Version\\_4.xls](http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/Global_Migrant_Origin_Database_Version_4.xls)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Belinda Dodson, *Gender, Migration and Remittances in Southern Africa*. SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 49, Cape Town, 2008

<sup>27</sup> Matthew Stern and Gábor Szalontai, “Immigration Policy in South Africa: Does it Make Economic Sense?” *Development Southern Africa* 23(1) (2006): 123–45.

---

<sup>28</sup> Wade Pendleton, Jonathan Crush and Kate Lefko-Everett, *The Haemorrhage of Health Professionals From South Africa: Medical Opinions*. SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 47, Cape Town, 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Chris Rogerson and Jonathan Crush, "South Africa and the Global Recruitment of Health Professionals" *Africa Insight* 37(4) (2008): 1–15.

<sup>30</sup> Haroon Borhat, Jean-Baptiste Meyer and Cecil Mlatsheni, "Skilled Labour Migration from Developing Countries: Study on South and Southern Africa" International Migration Papers No. 52, International Labour Organization, Geneva, 2002.

<sup>31</sup> Gary Robertson, *South Africans in London* (Wandsbeck: Reach Publishers, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Jonathan Crush and Wade Pendleton, "Remitting for Survival: Rethinking the Development Potential of Remittances in Southern Africa" *Global Development Studies* 5(3-4) (2009): 53-84.

<sup>33</sup> Simon Barber, "A 'Brain Bank' of Expats." *Mail & Guardian*, November 5, 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Crush, Belinda Dodson, John Gay and Clement Leduka, "Migration, Remittances and Gender-Responsive Local Development: The Case of Lesotho" Report for UN-INSTRAW, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2010; Fion de Vletter, "Migration and Development in Mozambique: Poverty, Inequality and Survival" In Jonathan Crush and Bruce Frayne, eds., *Surviving on the Move: Migration, Poverty and Development in Southern Africa* (Cape Town and Midrand: Idasa Publishing and DBSA, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera, eds., *Zimbabwe's Exodus: Crisis, Migration, Survival* (Cape Town and Ottawa: SAMP and IDRC, 2010); Rodreck Mupedziswa, "Diaspora Dollars and Social Development: Remittance Patterns of Zimbabwean Nationals Based in South Africa" *Global Development Studies* 5(3-4) (2009): 229-72; Daniel Tevera and Abel Chikanda, "Development Impact of International Remittances: Some Evidence from Origin Households in Zimbabwe" *Global Development Studies* 5(3-4) (2009): 273-302.