

A wide range of theoretical and empirical issues were canvassed at the seminar. Alan presented a scheme to try and understand the policies that migrant sending countries make towards their diasporas, proposing that these policies be grouped into three categories: capacity building policies aimed at fostering a coherent constituency and forming governmental institutions corresponding to it; policies to extend rights to the diaspora; and policies to extract 'obligations' or benefits from it. He argued that many of the best known diaspora strategies are about incorporating the diaspora into the national population, and that these projects tend to follow a social contractarian logic of extending rights to expatriates in order to legitimize an extractive interest in their resources. A number of people present noted that the loose descriptor of "brain drain" is unfortunate and tends to imply that emigrants have performed a disloyalty by leaving. Alan argued that, as part of their projects to incorporate diasporas into the social, economic and political systems of the origin country, origin states tend to discard such messages in favour of celebrating expatriates as valuable members of their society. An initial challenge to policies concerning the diaspora is to find a common definition of what it is. According to the context considered this ranges from narrow statistical definitions to very wide "social/marketing", including those with a non residential interest or affinity to "New Zealand". Another question is whose diaspora is it? New Zealand's diaspora can also be other nation's diaspora, depending on how far back linkages are drawn or felt. For example, there were also questions around the meaning of 'permanent' versus 'temporary' migration, and the notion of return none of the concepts is entirely clear. How far back does one have to go to find where a person is 'originally' from, and how long does one need to be in country to be considered to have finally settled in it? New Zealand's management of its own relationships with its diaspora, and our responsibility to other nations for their diasporas – especially pacific nations – is an ongoing policy question. And given the high proportion of Maori living overseas (especially in Australia) there is an important Maori dimension unfolding.

Paul Callister