



# DIASPORAS AND MOBILITY ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND ASIA

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Crawford School for Public Policy, ANU

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## Diasporas as special case of human mobility

- ‘Diaspora’: the spreading of people from one original country to other countries.
- Increased salience of diaspora activity (ie, moving back and forth between home and host countries) since late 20<sup>th</sup> century due to improved communications
- Diasporas are particularly inclined towards ‘transnational living’ and exemplify the ‘web of transnational inter-dependencies and circulatory flows’ characteristic of human mobility in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Collard 2015)
- Source: Collard, J. (2015) *From Mass Migration to Mass Mobility: Conceptualising Human Mobility in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Concept Paper. Department of Immigration and Border Protection. Canberra.

# Role of Asian diasporas in Australia

- Australia's increased economic involvement with China and India coincides with significant increase of Chinese and Indian populations in Australia
- Activities of Chinese and Indian diasporas are crucial, but undervalued factor in harnessing bilateral and multilateral relationships between Australia and China/India
- To appreciate contribution of diasporas we need to focus not just on the national dimension (eg settlement and integration), but on their dynamic attachments, networks and connectivities.
- Diaspora mobilities should be not understood as a linear process of migration between 'home' and 'host' country, but as circular movements within a transnational space.

## Example: transnational mobility in global research sector

Australia's research workforce:

- 38.1% was born overseas (total workforce: 27%)
- 40% of these were born in Asia
- Between 2001 and 2006, increase of Asia-born researchers by 29.5%

Source: Hugo, G. (2014) 'The role of international migration in Australia's research workforce', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 23 (1): 27-54.

# Australia's research training system

30% of all postgrad researchers were international students (2014 data)  
Higher in STEM disciplines:

- Engineering 54.2%
- Information Technology 51.5%
- Agriculture & Environmental 45.6%
- Natural and Physical Sciences 36%

- Students from China were the largest cohort (20.7% of all STEM postgrad students)
- Far fewer students from India and South Korea come to Australia, compared with numbers going to the United States.

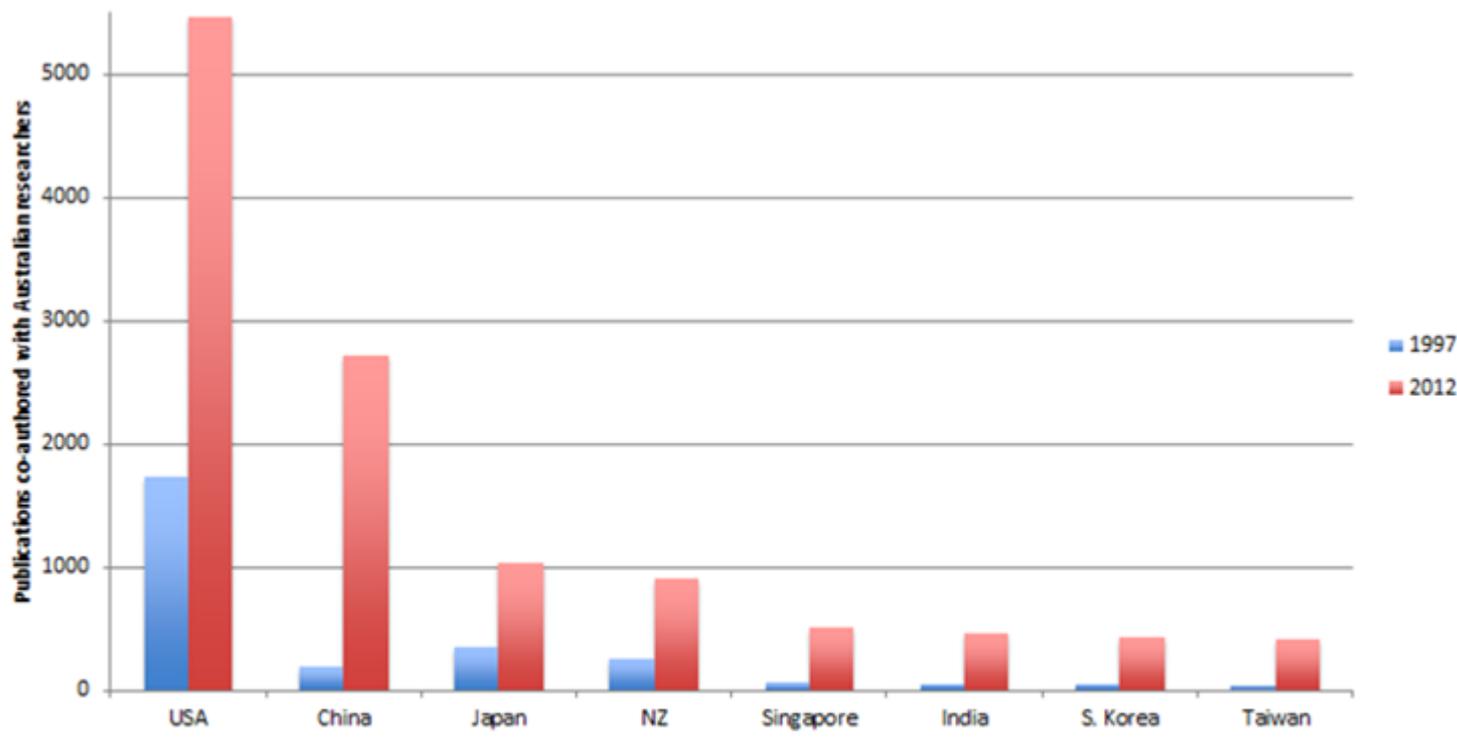
Source: Department of Education and Training (2015) *Research Snapshot: International Students studying Science, technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in Australian Higher Education Institutions*.  
<https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/Research-Snapshots/Documents/STEM%202014.pdf>

# From brain drain/gain to brain circulation

- Both sending and receiving countries can benefit from the work of research diasporas
- ‘Brain circulation’ can take place through international research collaboration
- 67% of Chinese diaspora researchers in Australia collaborate with colleagues in China
- 60% of Indian diaspora researchers in Australia collaborate with colleagues in India
- Vast majority of these diaspora researchers say their cultural background is a benefit.

- Source: Ang, I. , Y. Tambiah & P. Mar (2015) *Smart Engagement with Asia: Leveraging Language, Research and Culture*. Report for the Australian Council of Learned Academies. <http://acola.org.au/index.php/projects/securing-australia-s-future/project-3>

## Partners on Australia's internationally co-authored papers, 1997 and 2012

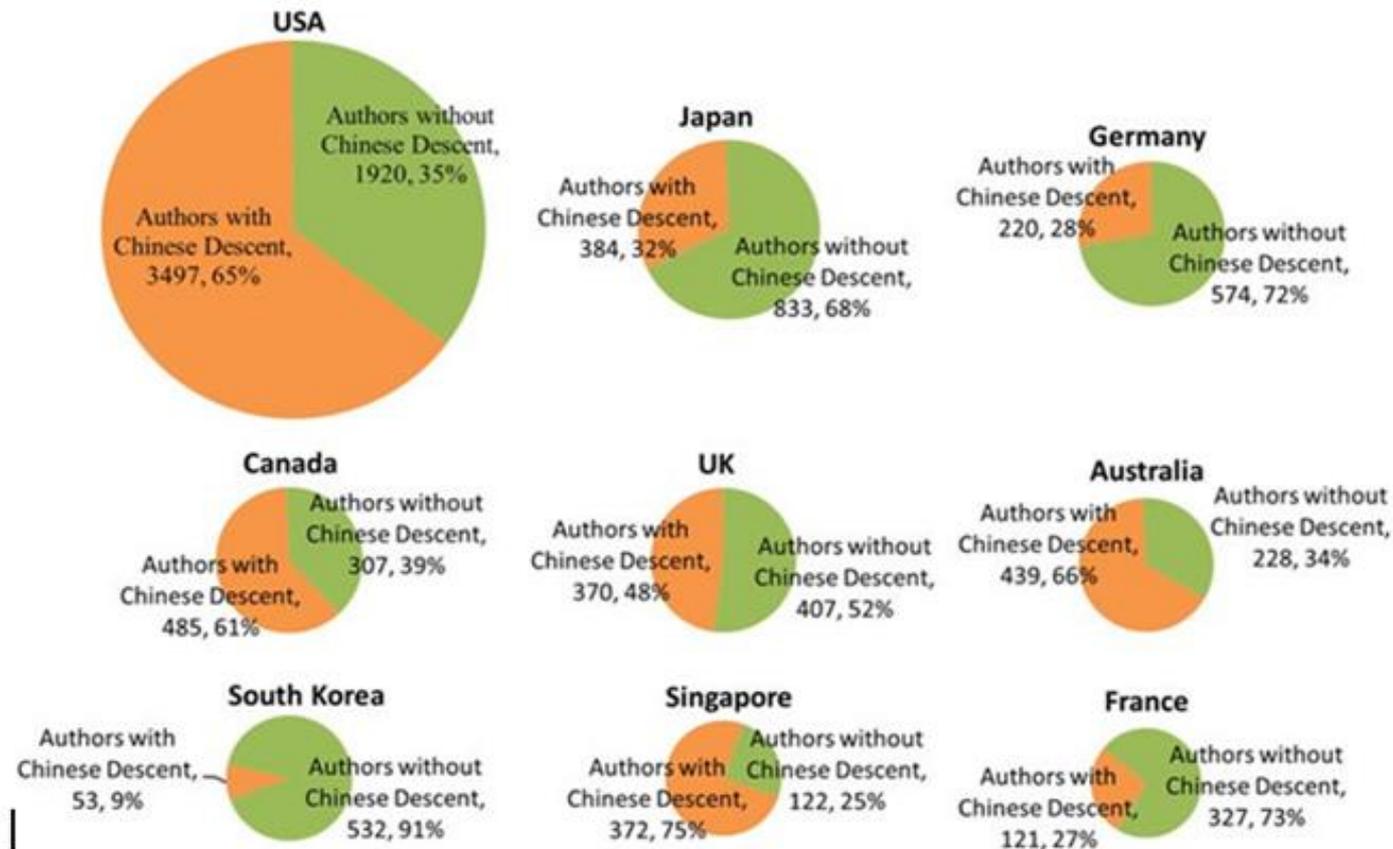


Source: Barlow, T. (2014) Australian Research Collaboration with Asia. [A report for the Australian Council of Learned Academies.](http://acola.org.au/PDF/SAF03/3%20research%20collaboration.pdf)  
<http://acola.org.au/PDF/SAF03/3%20research%20collaboration.pdf>

# Australian research collaboration with Asia

- In the 15 years between 1997 and 2012 collaboration between Australian and Chinese researchers (measured through the number of jointly authored papers) has risen more than 11 times
- Collaboration with the US has also risen sharply, but that with other countries has remained at relatively low level (see previous slide)
- Why is this? Does it perhaps have something to do with a ‘Chinese diaspora effect’?

# Proportion of co-authors with Chinese descent



Source: Wang, X. et al (2013) 'International scientific collaboration of China: collaborating countries, institutions and individuals', *Scientometrics*, 95 (3): 885-894. Size of pie charts indicates volume of publications.

## Chinese diaspora effect:

- Australian research seems to rely more on Chinese diaspora researchers for collaboration with China
- 66% of Australian papers co-authored with researchers in China was produced by Australian Chinese diaspora researchers, compared with only 28% in Germany, 32% in Japan and 48% in the UK
- This suggests that Australian researchers of *non*-Chinese background are not as strongly engaged with China as they could be
- If this is also the case in other sectors (eg business or the cultural sector), then it points to a relative disconnect between Australia and China despite the enormous rise in global Chinese diaspora mobility.

