

Article history: Received 3 January 2020; Accepted 15 April 2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33182/rr.v5i1.899>

From Passport to Pennies: Theorizing the Effects of Dual Citizenship on Migrant Remittances

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Abstract

Migrant remittances are critical elements of the economic development agenda in many parts of the world. Extending dual citizenship to emigrants has been suggested as government policy to encourage and stabilize migrants' financial transfers. This article theorizes the causal relationship between passports and pennies, or between citizenship policies and transnational economic activities, such as remittances. It reads the conceptualizations from a grounded theory study on the effects of status passages related to citizenship, as well as findings from economic sociology into the micro-economic literature on the determinants of remittances. Based on a study of India's diasporic membership status, the Overseas Citizenship of India, the article shows that four principal effects - the rights, identity, naturalization and good-will effect - affect various populations differently. The conceptualizations serve to generate empirically grounded hypotheses about the relationship between economic transfers and citizenship status, as well as to understand the underlying (and sometimes competing) mechanisms.

Keywords: Migration; remittances; citizenship; developing country; economic sociology.

JEL Classification: F22, F24

Introduction

More than half of the world's 197 countries allow their nationals to retain their previous citizenship when naturalizing in another country. Another fifth of all countries recognizes dual citizenship for their emigrants under certain conditions, often with permission by the government (United Nations, 2019).¹ While there are many reasons for such practices, this is often based on the belief that such policies reinforce the institutional capacity of the government to realize its economic and political projects (FitzGerald, 2006).

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Acknowledgements: I thank Peggy Levitt, Viviana Zelitzer, Supriya Singh, and Deepak Lamba-Nieves for sharing their knowledge and for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this essay. Discussions with Dietrich Thränhardt, Thomas Straubhaar, and Uwe Hunger were essential for developing the principal effects underlying this exploration. I am indebted to participants at the Transnational Studies Initiative Seminar at Harvard University and at the International Studies Association's annual meeting for engaging discussions and feedback. I gratefully acknowledge the support of my research assistant Luz Gil. Lastly, I thank the anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments and suggestions.

¹ Or 55 and 19 percent respectively, as assessed for 2013. Vink et al. (2019)'s data suggests that in 2018, 75 percent of states in the world accept dual citizenship and allow expatriates to acquire destination country citizenship while simultaneously maintaining the citizenship of the origin country.



Private transfers by migrants to their countries of origin, remittances, often represent significant contributions to the income of migrants' families and can have important effects on economic growth in recipient communities and on macroeconomic factors in the economies of migrants' origin. In several countries they correspond to a significant share of gross domestic product and are higher than official development assistance and foreign direct investments. Even in economies that do not heavily depend on these inflows, remittances are often higher than total debt servicing payments or health care expenditures, which explains policy-makers' interest.² While critics of remittance-based economies stress that the expectations of such flows can lead to dependencies and to depopulation of certain areas,³ the recognition of remittances for the link between migration and development led to the establishment of a specific target on reducing their transaction costs in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While it is often claimed that dual citizenship may strengthen ties between migrants and their countries of origin and increase or stabilize flows of remittances,⁴ there appear to be no empirical studies on the effects of dual citizenship. Reviewing a broad range of scholarship on citizenship and migration, Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul (2008) state a need for research on the relationship between dual citizenship and its effects on migrant activities, such as remittances (p. 168). Often, the effect of diasporic membership rights is too closely conceptualized along the political rhetoric that focuses on moral obligations and the exercise of power, than on actual consequences at the individual level. As policies that attract emigrants' long-term, long-distance membership raise several questions about the migration-development nexus (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007), this article is an attempt to theorize the causal relationship between passports and pennies, or between citizenship policies and transnational economic activities, such as remittances. It reads my conceptualizations from a grounded theory study on the effects of status passages related to citizenship, as well as findings from economic sociology into the micro-economic literature on the determinants of remittances.

Indian migration, remittances, and Overseas Citizenship

India is the largest source country of emigrants. About 17.5 million persons born in India are now living abroad, followed by 12 million Mexican and 11

² For the development impact of remittances and important implications, see de la Garza and Lowell (2002); Straubhaar and Vádean (2006); Kapur (2010); Naujoks (2013); Constant and Zimmermann (2016). Clemens and Ogden (2014) provide a critical analysis of the research on the effects of remittances and suggest valuable research questions to better frame the analysis of their impacts.

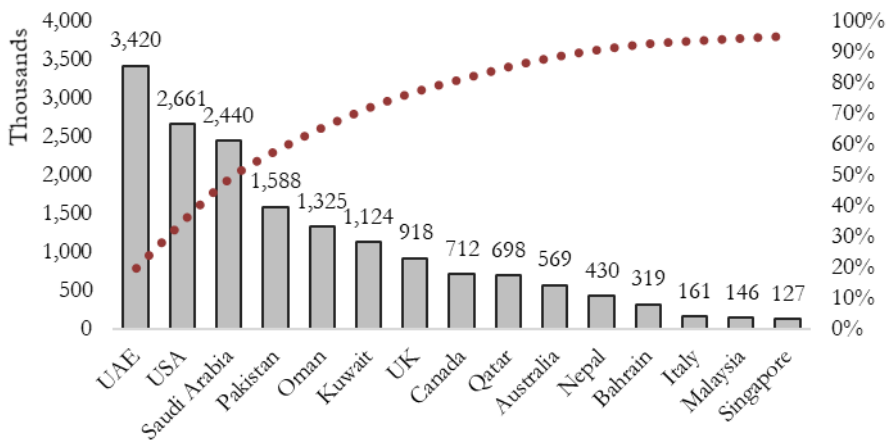
³ For details on voices critical to, and supportive of remittances, see Portes (2016).

⁴ See Schuck (2002:82); Guarnizo (2003:689); Bommers et al. (2007:54); Ratha et al. (2011:10; 148); Riddle and Nielsen (2011:245-5).



million Chinese emigrants (United Nations, 2019). While this number does not include overseas Indians who were born abroad, the Indian government estimates that in the end of 2018, there were 31 million overseas Indians, including diaspora communities of Indian origin. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of Indian emigrants across the major 15 countries of destination. These 15 countries collectively account for 95% of all Indian migrants in the world, excluding though the majority of persons of Indian origin.

Figure 1. Top 15 countries hosting Indian migrant populations (in thousands) (2019)



Source: Author's calculations, based on United Nations (2019) data.

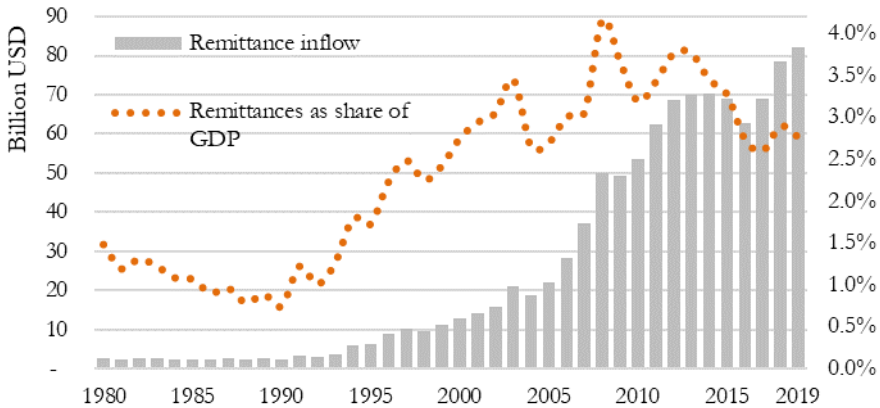
Note: The dotted line displays the cumulative share of the host countries in all Indian emigrants. Thus, the eight major host countries collectively account for 80% of the entire Indian migrant population.

For more than a decade, India has received the largest absolute amount of remittances each year. In 2019 alone, an estimated USD 82 billion was sent by Indian migrants to their families in India and the combined value of remittances in the period 2005-2019 exceeds USD 360 billion. However, given the size of the Indian economy and its growth over the past 15 years, remittances correspond to only 2.8-3.5 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (Figure 2).

This article is part of my larger endeavour to explore the effects of a special membership status in countries of origin on individual and collective activities, examining the case of India's Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI). In 2003, legislation on OCI was adopted to avoid providing full dual citizenship with an innovative status that employs the citizenship label and gives people of Indian origin without Indian citizenship the right to live and

work in India without granting them any form of political participation.⁵ The scheme became operational in 2006, and by the end of 2017, almost 3.2 million persons of Indian origin had obtained OCI status in addition to their primary citizenship (Naujoks, 2020). According to the most recent detailed data, until July 2013, almost 40 per cent of OCI cards were issued to applicants in the United States.

Figure 2. Remittance inflows into India (1980-2019) in USD billion and share of GDP



Source: World Bank

Methodology and data

Based on 50 interviews with 53 highly-skilled interviewees, this article theorizes how a diasporic state-membership status—namely, the Overseas Citizenship of India—and the acquisition of U.S. citizenship affect mechanisms and strategies of belonging, national identification, and commitment for persons of Indian descent in the U.S. Interviewees represented four membership categories, namely (1) Indian citizens; (2) US citizens with OCI status; (3) US citizens with a Person of Indian Origin card; and (4) US citizens without OCI or PIO card. Respondents were sampled through a two-step mechanism. First, a database with key socio-economic characteristics of potential interviewees was set up. Access to the field and information on potential interviewees was provided by Indian professional and cultural associations, as well as through personal contacts. In the interviews with returnees, additional suggestions originated from interviewees during the field stage in the U.S. and during the attendance of the government-organized diaspora conferences *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas*

⁵ Another, slightly more limited membership status is the Person of Indian Origin card (PIO card), available to persons of Indian origin since 1999. For more details on the privileges and limitations of OCI and the PIO card see Naujoks (2013: Ch.1, 3); and Xavier (2011).



2008 and 2009. In a second step, interviewees were selected according to their profile characteristics (theoretical sampling). 31 interviews were carried out in the U.S and 19 interviews took place in India.⁶ Twenty-two people or 41 per cent of the 53 interviewed individuals were women. The oldest interviewee was born in 1935, the youngest in 1983. Both the average and the median age of interviewees were 41. The leading methodology for gathering, conducting and analyzing interviews was *Grounded Theory* in the tradition of Corbin and Strauss (2008). In order to supplement the findings of the qualitative research, statistical analysis of American Community Survey micro data, immigration statistics, as well as several sources of naturalization data have been included in the analysis.⁷

My specific objective here is to establish an empirically grounded theory of how the existence of Overseas Citizenship of India and the status passages toward OCI affect the remittance-sending behaviour of diasporic Indians in the U.S. To the best of my knowledge, no research on such effects and the underlying mechanism currently exists. These conceptualizations and findings aim at contributing to scholarship on the determinants of remittances, country-of-origin citizenship, transnational, diaspora and population studies, and the effects of naturalization. This relates to discussions in development economics, economic sociology, transnational studies, citizenship studies, and scholarship on migration and development. The conceptualizations serve to generate empirically grounded hypotheses about the relationship between economic transfers and citizenship status, as well as to understand the underlying (and sometimes competing) mechanisms.

Generalizability: OCI, diasporic membership and dual citizenship

In the last two decades, a large number of countries have adopted certain membership policies for their emigrant and diaspora populations. In this regard, several new forms of emigrant or expatriate citizenships have emerged that combine different political and economic rights, which range from special ethnic status ‘cards,’ to nationality schemes without political rights and the recognition of full dual citizenship (Naujoks, 2020). The status of the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) that the empirical study is based on, is not full dual citizenship. However, the Indian government initially marketed OCI as ‘dual citizenship’ and my study reveals that many overseas Indians in the U.S. regard it as a worthy surrogate. Thus, at the individual level, it fulfills the function of dual citizenship, though sometimes

⁶ In the U.S., most of the interviewees were conducted in Silicon Valley, California, but also in Los Angeles, Washington DC, New York City and New Jersey.

⁷ For more details, see Naujoks (2013: Introduction and Annex).

in a limited way and not for everybody. For these reasons, to some extent, the results of this study can be generalized beyond the effects of OCI; they address the wider question of how a policy change toward the acceptance of dual citizenship by the country of origin or the introduction of a citizenship-like diasporic membership status affects remittance-sending and other development-relevant activities. This is not to say that such mechanisms are universal and similar in different contexts. The extent to which the effects of diasporic membership policies can be observed in different contexts depends chiefly on characteristics in the countries of origin and residence, as well as of the diasporic group, its composition, capacities, and aspirations (Naujoks, 2013, pp. 359–360; Naujoks, 2017).⁸

Principal Effects of Dual Citizenship

Diaspora citizenship affects development-related indicators through actual activities of diasporic individuals and collectives. Whether migrants send remittances and how much depends largely on three factors: that they can, decide to, and are allowed to, send money or undertake activities that involve such transfers. This leads to the categories of actors' *ability*, actors' *decision*, and the *permissibility* of actions.

For the assessment of how diasporic membership statuses accomplish their remittance increasing consequences, in this section, I differentiate between four principal effects, namely the *rights* effect, the *identity* effect, the *naturalization* effect and the *good-will* effect. These effects are not specific to remittances but apply to a broader set of behavioural and attitudinal categories. This section thus serves as the theoretical foundation for applying the effects to established research on the determinants of remittances in the next section, in which I will shift the focus from general mechanisms to the concrete consequences of the principal effects.⁹

The rights effect

The rights effect is based on the fact that the overseas citizenship of India, like dual citizenship or any diasporic membership status, grants its holder certain privileges, such as the right to live and work in the country. Thus, OCI affects the legal permissibility of a certain action or transaction that may affect remittance behaviour, such as owning real estate, investing, conducting business or returning. In this regard, it is important to examine

8 There might not be one diasporic 'group' but a multitude of fractions, individuals and organizations with different relationships to each other (diasporic-ethnic dimension), to the state (diasporic-civic dimension) and to the people (or certain communities) in the country of origin (diasporic-national dimension) (Naujoks 2010b). Koinova (2018) spells out the importance of specific positionalities of different diaspora communities and what this means for engagement in their country of origin.

9 For an in-depth elaboration of these effects, see Naujoks (Ch.4–7).



which actions are legally restricted, to what extent legal limitations are enforced and how this affects actual projects of diasporic involvement. For this reason, it is important to understand the implications of formal rules for the conduct of individuals.

However, legal limitations are not only relevant to the objective permissibility. Expected (not necessarily existing) legal limitations and uncertainties already limit the process of decision-making. Thus, apart from entitling the holder to privileges that he or she would otherwise not have, the overseas citizenship status affects the expectation of, and thus, the decisions taken by diasporic actors. Further, people can be expected to better process relevant information when they are conscious of their legal entitlement.¹⁰

Additionally, there may be practical hurdles in using given privileges. Since it is not easy for many individuals and small-scale enterprises to obtain legal security, a single official status that says that certain (or all) actions and interactions are possible is worth much in terms of face value, as it decreases legal uncertainty. A special status reduces the actual and expected cost of an operation through exemptions from formal requirements and by serving as official proof of being entitled.

In summary, the *rights effect* contains three sub-principles. Dual or diaspora citizenship as the conferral of privileges may affect development-related activities by (a) actually *enabling* overseas citizens by granting special privileges, (b) affecting *expectations about privileges* in the decision-making process, and (c) *easing* the transaction process and reducing costs and risks. I will discuss the concrete implications for remittances in the next section.

The identity effect

The second principal effect of OCI relates to that status' consequences for questions of identification and belonging—assembled in the *identity effect*. There is a rich body of research dealing with the question of 'national' and 'ethnic identity,' including contributions from the field of sociology, social identity theory, anthropology, cultural studies, as well as social and ethnic psychology.¹¹ Drawing on the theoretical framework of the above-mentioned research traditions, it is particularly important to address concrete ways how dual citizenship, or here OCI, affects *ethnic self-categorization* and *commitment*.¹² Grounded in my empirical study and an

¹⁰ This argument draws on the effect of prior knowledge to increase the ability to process information as observed by social psychology (Herr 1989).

¹¹ See Portes and Rumbaut (2001); Barth (1969); Tajfel and Turner (1986); Jenkins (1997); Phinney (2004); Ashmore, Deaux and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004).

¹² For a discussion of these concepts, see Naujoks (2010; 2013: Ch. 4).

extensive review of existing research, I theorize that a stronger identification with and attachment to India increases actions in favour of and interactions with the country.

A membership status like OCI can affect diasporic identification in many ways. The strongest effect of dual legal status, such as U.S. citizenship plus OCI, can be expected from the perceived right to call oneself a ‘citizen of both countries.’ The formal status of belonging to India that is given by OCI not only allows individuals to internally self-label themselves as ‘Indian,’ it also constitutes an argumentative tool and a reminder in the process of external identity negotiation. In addition, second-plus generation immigrants find it easier to identify themselves as ‘Indians.’ In fact, while it has been argued that there are limits to transnational engagement by children of transnational parents (Alba & Nee, 2003; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf & Waters, 2004; Levitt, 2009; Zhou & Bankston, 2016, Chapter 6) posit that second-generation immigrants can retain transnational ties that go beyond symbolic identification if they are raised in a transnational social field. While learning social practices and social repertoires may be the main driver for engaging in transnational activities, my study shows that with overseas citizenship second-plus generation Indian Americans have a direct relationship with the country of their ancestors and grow up knowing about their dual status. This may be regarded as the *perpetuation function* of OCI, i.e., it perpetuates (or extends) ethnic, national and civic self-identification and commitment to the next generation (Naujoks, 2013, pp. 231–233). Furthermore, OCI affects diasporic-national and diasporic-civic attachment by giving overseas Indians who return to India for short- or long-term stays the feeling of being ‘Indian in India,’ i.e., of not feeling alienated and excluded, but rather as still being part of it. As we will see below, this affects remittance behaviour.

The naturalization effect

Naujoks’ (2012) calculations confirm the finding from several other studies¹³ that the availability of dual citizenship, or here OCI, leads to higher naturalization rates in the country of residence.¹⁴ Depending on the metric used, since the availability of OCI, the naturalization rate of Indian immigrants in the U.S. grew stronger than that of the chosen comparison

¹³ See Jones-Correa (2001); Woodrow-Lafield et al. (2004); Mazzolari (2009); Böcker and Thränhardt (2006); Thränhardt (2008); Faist and Gerdes (2008); Naujoks (2009).

¹⁴ Naujoks (2012) analyzes three distinct rates based on different data sets, namely: (1) annual admissions of legal permanent residents and naturalizations seven years later; (2) naturalizations of the resident population eligible for naturalization; and (3) naturalization of specific immigrant cohorts. In order to isolate effects specific to the country of origin from general factors in the U.S., the analysis juxtaposes the development of naturalization rates for Indian, or India-born, immigrants with the respective rates for all Asian immigrants and for all immigrants as comparison groups.



groups by 2 to 13 percentage points, indicating a significant naturalization increasing effect of OCI.

Since OCI increases naturalizations of Indians in the U.S., it creates a group of OCI-induced naturalizers. Provided that naturalization *per se* leads to certain consequences, these consequences become indirect effects of overseas citizenship. Thus, the naturalization effect of OCI lies in the actual consequences of OCI-induced naturalizations. Immigrants' naturalization affects categories of identification with and commitment to the country of residence, first, through the status passage toward citizenship, which includes the naturalization process, second, through the fact that individuals are U.S. citizens, and third, by ceasing to be (full) Indian citizens. It bears mention that this is not a theoretical statement but grounded in the analysis of the interview data (Naujoks, 2013, Chapter 6). Having citizenship in the country of residence can be seen as one important legal and discursive resource in the formation process of identifications. Becoming a citizen thus affects self-categorization and commitment toward greater identification with that country. New citizens have and perceive duties in their country of citizenship, such as contributing to local charity organizations and political causes.

On the other hand, naturalization *per se* leads to a higher income and the extra income is referred to as 'naturalization premium'.¹⁵ This can positively affect both the ethnic Indian community in the U.S. and development-related interactions with India. Thus, changes in behavioural consequences that can be associated with categories such as identification and attachment should not be regarded as a simple withdrawal from one country because of a change in the membership status. The change of the membership status can affect certain responsibilities, self-identification and external identification, which call for action, and this could have an impact on the interaction with the country of origin. This could underlie claims that the integration into the host society leads to fewer remittances (Constant & Massey, 2002, p. 28; DeSipio, 2000; Orozco *et al.*, 2005, p. 58), as I will discuss in the next section.

The good-will effect

The effect of diasporic citizenship policies is not only the effect of a certain legal position, of legal benefits and of status passages. The communication

¹⁵ Chiswick (1978); Bratsberg *et al.* (2002); Akbari (2007) confirm such a naturalization premium in the U.S., Steinhardt (2008) in Germany and Bevelander and Pendakur (2012) in Canada and Sweden. However, Scott (2006) cannot find such a premium in Sweden. For an overview, see Steinhardt, Straubhaar and Wedemeier (2010:9–10). Peters, Schmeets & Vink (2019) show that in the Netherlands, naturalization confers a one-time boost in earnings, particularly for migrants from economically less developed countries and unemployed migrants.

about a status and the process of its adoption *per se* matter to a significant extent.¹⁶ In this regard, institutional configurations, policy philosophies and paradigms affect the diaspora's national incorporation.

OCI matters not only to its takers, but also to those who are not interested in the status either because they are politically involved and do not want to have any kind of dual status or because they are happy with a long-term visitor's visa in India (Naujoks, 2013, Chapter 7). However, in principle, all diasporic actors feel that they are officially seen as something special, and that their contributions to India are valued and appreciated. In this regard, OCI is interpreted as a message that India listens to the diaspora's demands, acknowledges their contributions, and recognizes their dual status.

The good-will effect strengthens confidence and trust, which in turn enhance economic and other engagement by facilitating cooperation. Interview data, general observations and theoretical deductions prompt the propositions that in the presence of the demand for dual citizenship by the diaspora, the adoption of OCI is a *signal* that the Indian homeland listens to and acknowledges them. The availability of OCI generates *general happiness* because the Indian state recognizes overseas Indians, *trust* from diasporic Indians toward the Indian government and, in turn, *trustworthiness* on the part of the diaspora.

Principal Effects and Diasporic Groups

Before we turn to the analysis of how the four principal effects influence remittance-sending behaviour, it is necessary to distinguish between several groups that are important for the subsequent analysis. As mentioned above, the degree to which overseas Indians indulge in development-relevant activities depends largely on the (a) actors' *ability*, (b) actors' *decision*, and (c) *permissibility* of actions. While all effects have some influence on the decision-making-process, only the naturalization effect can affect diasporic *ability* by increasing the income of naturalized Indian-Americans. The good-will effect and the identity effect particularly affect the *motivational* side of the interactional equation. The rights effect also has meaning for the permissibility of certain actions and interactions.

In order to analytically assess the different effects of the OCI status, six different groups can be discerned, which might be affected differently by the principal and action effects.

¹⁶ Several scholars argue that the rationale behind the adoption of special membership statuses is that this will flatter and appease the diaspora and produce good-will relationships (Goldring 1998; Fitzgerald 2006; Gamlen 2019).



Old cases (Old) comprise those who naturalized before OCI was adopted and for whom the availability of OCI could not have played a role in the process of settling down in the U.S.

Second-plus generation Indian-Americans (2+G) are descendants of immigrants who by virtue of their birth in the United States have U.S. citizenship.

Certain naturalizers (Cert) are those who naturalize after OCI being available, but who would have taken U.S. citizenship in any case.

OCI-induced naturalizers (OInd) are individuals who choose to take U.S. citizenship because of OCI, but who live in the U.S.

Return naturalizers (Ret) are persons who take U.S. citizenship because of OCI, but for the sole purpose of returning to India.¹⁷

Affected non-takers (AffNT) refers to diasporic Indians in the U.S., both Indian and U.S. citizens, who do not take OCI, but who are still affected by its availability through the good-will effect.

These diasporic groups are affected differently by the principal effects. Table 1 gives an overview of which principal effect has an effect on which of the six diasporic groups. Both the conferment of special privileges under the *rights effect* and the facilitating role of OCI on diasporic identification under the *identity effect* may have an effect on old cases, second-plus generation Indian-Americans and certain naturalizers, i.e. on all those who, without OCI, would have had only U.S. citizenship, whose interactions in India (and their expectations of these) would have been legally limited and who would not have had the ‘right to say they are Indian citizens.’

The increased naturalization due to the availability of OCI may lead to (1) more identification with the U.S., (2) more activism and advocacy potential in U.S. politics, (3) an increased income and (4) for return naturalizers, return migration to India (*naturalization effect*). Aspects (2) and (3) predominantly concern OCI-induced naturalizers.

Although I find that identification with more than one state and society is no zero-sum game, and thus the increased identification with the U.S. does not need to lead to a decreased identification (and interaction) with India as a country or the Indian people, this might be the case for some individuals. I still assume that the overall effect of the naturalization effect on both groups of OCI-induced Naturalizer and Return Naturalizers is positive. The

¹⁷ For the analysis of the effects of OCI, this group contains only persons whose ‘return naturalizations’ are OCI-induced. Return naturalizers who would have naturalized in any case are a special sub-category of ‘certain naturalizers,’ and are not dealt with in detail here.

good-will effect extends to all groups, most notably, it might also affects non-takers (AffNT).

Table 1. Principal Effects and Diasporic Groups

Diasporic Groups Principal Effects	Old Cases	Second-plus Generation	Certain Naturalizers	OCI-induced Naturalizer	Return Naturalizers	Affected Non-takers
Rights effect	●	●	●			
Identity effect	●	●	●			
Naturalization effect				●	●	
Good-will effect	●	●	●	●	●	●

Note: ● indicates a development effect of the respective principal effect (left column) on the respective group (header row).

I would like to stress that these groups are analytical categories in the sense of ideal types. For example, a person naturalizing in order to return to India might not end up moving back or, after several years in India, re-migrates to the U.S., where he or she has permanent, secure status. Thus, the person would later fall into the OCI-induced naturalizer category.

Dual Citizenship and Remittances

After having outlined the overarching components of how transitions in citizenship status can affect behaviour, this section will apply the four principal effects to migrants’ decisions to remit. Guarnizo (2003) stresses that by granting special rights to migrants, the country of origin can play an important role in promoting migrants’ integration into national development, including through the steady flow of remittances (p. 689). The question is, however, whether, why and how far a special right like OCI can lead to steadier and increased flows of remittances. In order to answer this question, we have to discern several actions that are often looked upon together, especially from a macro perspective. Further, we have to understand the decision to remit in order to see what the scope of OCI is. Despite a large body of literature on the determinants of remittances, there is little certainty about the actual drivers for sending private transfers. As a matter of fact, remittance behaviour varies significantly across source regions, and family ties, size and structure as well as value systems play an important role. The microeconomic approach to determine what affects



remittances is to assess the decision of those who remit in a utility-maximization approach. For this purpose, a utility function and individual utility values incorporate a variety of possible factors in the decision-making process.¹⁸

Carling (2014) reminds us that remitting is not a one-sided activity but a two-sided transaction process that also involves agency from the receivers of such transfers (pp. S228-S229). Based on a review of ethnographic research on remittance transactions he conceptualizes what he calls ‘remittances scripts’, that is, socially recognized structures of expectations for specific types of situations. This recognizes that economic transactions are embedded in social meaning and related to constructing relationships and belonging (Singh, Cabraal & Robertson, 2010; Tilly & Zelizer, 2006). While I agree that the typically employed micro-economic framework is a simplification of the involved processes and that research should advance our understanding of the different scripts, their determinants and effects, I will use the established framework as a reference to discuss the potential impact of diaspora citizenship on remittance. However, I will consider the social perspective of remittance transfers in the discussion of specific determinants.

Motives and motivations for sending remittances have been constructed as altruism (Becker, 1974), self-interest and mixed forms, discussed as tempered altruism or enlightened self-interest (Lucas & Stark, 1985; Stark, 2009). Self-interest driven remittances might be motivated by attempts to consolidate one’s claim to inherit (Bernheim *et al.*, 1985; Stark, 2009) or to oblige family members to take care of migrant-owned assets at home (Lucas & Stark, 1985; Stark, 2009; Rapoport & Docquier, 2005, p. 13; Vădean, 2007, p. 3). As Straubhaar and Vădean (2006) point out, macroeconomic factors in the host and home countries, such as interest rates, exchange rates, inflation, and relative rates of return on different financial and real assets may affect migrants’ decision to remit in the framework of their portfolio management (p. 148). These factors are, however, not discussed here as citizenship status does not appear to be relevant in this regard.

Reviewing the literature on the determinants of remittances, Rapoport and Docquier (2005) discern four individualistic motives—namely altruism, exchange, inheritance, and a strategic motive—and two types of familial agreements—namely remitting due to informal intrafamilial co-insurance arrangements and migration as investment with a ‘loan’ that has to be paid back by the migrant. The strategic motive involves the argument that

¹⁸ Factors affecting the development of remittances at the macro level, such as the number of migrants, fluctuations in the exchange rate and other factors, are not discussed here.

migrants send payments to ‘bribe’ low skilled co-citizens to remain at home (Stark, 1995, Chapter 4; 2009; Rapoport & Docquier, 2005, pp. 16-19). Table 2 provides an overview of these motives and the observable variables affecting the remittance-sending behaviour.

It is extremely difficult to discriminate between competing theories of remittances because truly discriminative tests with quantitative data have to rely on additional variables for which details are often not available (Rapoport & Docquier, 2005, p. 5). Further, qualitative studies have not sufficiently shown which sending motive prevails, under which circumstances and to what extent. Carling’s (2014) conceptualizations of different scenarios with competing obligations, motives, and interests are only the start for more in-depth research on the prevalence of different modes and scripts. However, it is not my objective to decide what underlying reason drives remittances. Straubhaar and Vădean (2006) stress that microeconomic empirical studies provide useful descriptive evidence (p. 145). And while ethnographic accounts highlight that these decisions are embedded in larger relational, material, and emotional structures, they also confirm the existence of several of these motives. Thus, in spite of the notorious limitations, findings from microeconomic literature indicate some observable factors and their (possible) effect on remittance-sending behaviour.

Table 2. Determinants of Remitting

Explanatory Variables	Individual motives			Strategic motive	Familial arrangements	
	Altruism	Exchange	Inheritance		Insurance	Investment
Migrant’s income	>0	>0	>0	>0	nde*	>0
Migrant’s education	nde	<0*	nde	>0	nde	>0*
Time since arrival	≤ 0	nde	nde	≤ 0	nde	nde
Distance from family	≤ 0	nde	<0	nde	nde	>0

Source: Rapoport and Docquier (2005:39, Table 2).

*Notes: nde = no direct effect (after controlling for migrants’ and/or recipients’ incomes). * Remarkable prediction. Other explanatory variables included by Rapoport and Docquier (2005) are omitted here. These include the number of migrants’ heirs, recipient’s long run income, adverse short run shocks in recipients’ income, recipient’s assets.*

Focusing on factors that may be influenced by diasporic citizenship statuses, the following variables may affect the propensity to remit or the amount remitted: (1) Migrants’ income; (2) shift in utility function and values; (3) family reunification; (4) attachment; (5) return plans; (6) assets held in the country of origin; and (7) intentions to inherit. The following discussion



relies on both, arguments at the individual micro level and—to a lesser extent—on effects from changing macro factors related to OCI.

Remittance sending norms

Increasingly, scholars shift the focus from remitters' unilateral decisions to recognize the agency of recipients and social norms that play a key role in shaping these transactions. Page and Mercer (2012) argue that diaspora communities can be conceptualized as 'communities of practice' in which actions are conceptualized as part of a wider social system. Garip, Eskici and Snyder (2014) find for internal migrants in Thailand that the number of remitters in the household and the share of remitters from migrants' village of origin both increase the propensity that a migrant remits. Among other reasons, this could be connected to specific remittance norms that are established in certain communities. Carling (2014) emphasizes the socially-constructed moralities of transnationalism that are connected to portraying money transfers as morally virtuous (pp. S250-S251). He points to efforts by governments, private sector actors and researchers to foster the role of migrants as remitters. Carling (2014) concludes, "Transnational communities, corporate marketing strategies, and the dominant policy discourse thus underwrite the same message: Good migrants remit" (p. S251).

As India's official government communication clearly linked the granting of membership rights to the recognition of significant remittances and the expectation diasporic citizenship would lead to even more remittances and diaspora investments (Naujoks, 2010a), it could be argued that these narratives reinforce existing remittance sending norms. It is safe to assume that no migrant will remit money because the government asks him or her to do so. However, the centrality of diasporic citizenship in the government's diaspora communication strategy and the related media reports may be able to support the social construction of good, remitting migrants as the norm. Especially considering India's history of portraying emigrants as traitors who would not contribute to development and the subsequent paradigmatic turn toward the pride paradigm of emigrants could generate such effects. This can be conceptualized as a particular dimension of the good-will effect discussed above. It has been argued that adoption of certain legal regimes for a specific group may lead to a *moral obligation* of that group in an analogy of the contract principle of reciprocity or in terms of Mauss' (2002 [1954]) gift theory, according to which receiving a gift leads to the obligation to give a return gift (Naujoks, 2013, p. 301). This in turn, could lead to increased perceived moral duties of diasporic actors.

While these norms are generally not explicitly discussed, and less so their genesis, it would be interesting to explore to what extent official communication shapes the accepted narratives and norms, where household members staying behind use these normative arguments in negotiating transactions, and where individuals and groups internalize the respective expectations and behaviour. While this argument is not based on my empirical study and needs further validation, it seems plausible to assume a remittance-norm enhancing effect of diaspora citizenship, which in turn affects the remittance transaction process.

Income, utility values and remittances

Summarizing the determinants of remittances, Chami et al. (2008) state that income is recognized as the primary determinant of the capacity to remit (pp. 10–11). Both theoretical literature and empirical studies show that migrants' income level positively affects the amount remitted, i.e., the more migrants earn, the higher the absolute amount of their remittances (Lucas & Stark, 1985; Straubhaar & Vădean, 2006, p. 145).¹⁹ As discussed above, the recognition of a diaspora citizenship status leads to the naturalization of people who otherwise would not have become U.S. citizens (OCI-induced naturalizers). We have also seen that naturalization *per se* may lead to a higher income. Thus, for OCI-induced naturalizers, a remittance-increasing naturalization effect might be observed. This presupposes, however, that the naturalization premium is not insignificant and that it is not outweighed by other naturalization-induced budget reallocations, such as for U.S. community involvement, that reduce the amount allocated for remittances to the country of origin. In fact, the change of citizenship may lead to a shift in the personal utility value attributed to factors in the respective utility maximization function. Obtaining U.S. citizenship may lead to a shift in the long-term perspective, and thus may lead to increased utility of consumption in the U.S., such as buying a house, decreasing the marginal utility of remitting. Shamsuddin and DeVoretz (1998) and Vădean (2007) find that home ownership in the country of residence decreases remittances (p. 19). Based on a longitudinal survey of Immigrants in Canada, Kuuire et al. (2016) find that participation in remittance has negative consequences for homeownership over time. However, DeVoretz and Vădean (2007) state that no such substitution effect can be found in Canada (pp. 25–27). Further, my interviews show that ethnic-Indian U.S. citizens feel a strong obligation to contribute to charitable causes in the U.S. and in their

¹⁹ While the absolute amount increases with income growth, the remitted share of their income decreases (DeSipio 2000; Orozco et al. 2005). However, from the perspective of the source country and community, we are not that much concerned with what percentage of a person's income is remitted, but rather with the total inflow of remittances.



communities of residence. This again may increase the marginal utility of an expense in the U.S. at the cost of remittances to India.

Family unification and remittances

Another effect of OCI originates in the effect of increased naturalization and thus regards only OCI-induced naturalizers. US citizens (as citizens in most countries) have better opportunities to sponsor family members who wish to immigrate to the U.S. If increased naturalization leads to increased family migration to the country of residence, the effect on remittance flows cannot be predicted unambiguously.

Generally, a larger number of migrants leads to greater flows of remittances. As Niimi and Özden (2006) argue from a macroeconomic perspective, rising overall migration levels may lead to a decrease in the amount of money sent home per migrant, which might be explained partly with the effect of family reunification (p. 13). However, in the case of increased migration due to family reunification, one might want to discern the migration of dependent relatives and others. One robust finding of Vădean's (2007) study of remittances from Germany is that each additional parent or grandparent abroad increased the probability to remit by 3.7 per cent and the amount remitted by 21.9 per cent. This is backed by Naval and Hussain's (2008) observations on family ties and structures, rebutting that in South Asia, including in India, families live jointly and have close relations, and are obliged to have responsibilities (pp. 185–186). Sociological research confirms that generally, Indians feel a strong moral responsibility to care for parents and grandparents (Chekki, 1996; Shah, 1998, pp. 155–156). This, in turn, affects remittance flows. DeVoretz and Vădean (2007) observe that remittances increase when a spouse is living outside the household and Faini (2006) expects decreasing aggregated remittance flows when migrants reunite with their closest family members to whom they tended to remit relatively more (pp. 22–23).²⁰ On the other hand, the increased migration of siblings and their spouses might increase remittance flows due to a higher household income and additional dependent relatives at home. A higher number of relatives abroad may also increase family remittances due to increased competition, especially to secure individuals' claim to inheritance (Massey & Basem, 1992; Roberts & Morris, 2003).²¹

²⁰ DeVoretz and Vădean (2007:22–4) add, however, that the remittance pattern for Asian immigrant households remains relatively flat over their whole life cycle at about 4 percent of total expenditures. They believe that this is due to the fact that for Asians, the extended family plays an important role in their social life, and number of the extended family members living outside the household is more stable over lifetime.

²¹ Examining remittance behavior of internal migrants in Thailand, Garip, Eskici and Snyder (2014) explore whether a higher number of migrant siblings and migrant household members increases the likelihood of remitting. They find that the number of remitters in the household and the share of remitters from migrants'

In order to determine the influence of the diasporic citizenship status, it is sufficient to assess how many of those who would not have naturalized in the absence of OCI subsequently sponsor their parents or grandparents to join them in the U.S. and thus remit less money home. My interviews have shown that those who plan to bring their parents or family to the U.S. naturalize in any case, irrespective of the availability of a status like OCI. Family reunification is a strong naturalization motivation for those affected. From my qualitative research, I thus assume that only a few of the OCI-induced naturalizers will sponsor their dependent family members. If (not dependent) family members, such as siblings, are sponsored, this may in fact lead to an increase in private transfers if the latter start sending money to their own dependent family members.²²

Attachment and remittances

Several scholars claim that integration into the host society leads to fewer remittances to the country of origin (Constant & Massey 2002, p. 28; DeSipio, 2000; Orozco *et al.*, 2005, p. 58). Bauböck (2003) goes so far as to speculate that remittances flows will stop “with family reunification and full integration in the receiving country” (p. 709). As argued above, the observation that remittance flows decrease over time might be a function of increasing responsibilities in the host country that come with increasing incorporation into the social and political fabric of the host society. De Haas (2009) reports that Morocco originally opposed the full integration of its citizens abroad because it feared fewer remittances (p. 45). When this policy, however, seemed not to meet the expected result, the country successfully encouraged dual citizenship and integration with an increase in remittances. This reminds us not to oversimplify and deduce too readily from bland assumptions that are not grounded in sound empirical evidence. This is especially true for our understanding of the relationship between migrants’ integration and attachment and the effect on remittance-sending behaviour. Thus, Carling (2014) emphasizes the importance of emotional and relational elements in remittance transactions.

In empirical remittance studies, migrants’ attachment is generally modeled as a time-discount factor assuming that the longer migrants are away from their homeland the less is their attachment and in turn, their remittances. Thus, it is generally assumed, that attachment decreases over time (Straubhaar & Vădean, 2006, p. 145). Obviously, this time-related perspective of attachment is an oversimplification of the complex issue that

village of origin both increase the propensity that a migrant remits, while the share of remitters in the sibling network has no impact.

²² If increased family reunification leads to elevated levels of emigration from the country of origin, then we have to ask for the development effect caused by the newly emigrated.



can be explained by the fact that periods of time are easily observable in panel data and thus, can be tested in empirical studies. Without going too much into the psychology of attachment, the following effects of OCI on homeland attachment can be discerned.

The *identity effect* introduced above helps migrants to identify themselves as 'Indians' after having become U.S. citizens. This diminishes tendencies of losing attachment due to acculturation in the U.S. As described in Naujoks (2013, Chapter 5) and claimed in the literature for the case of dual citizenship, a citizenship-like status is likely to keep migrants in an active, attached mode, not in a culturally-preserved, detached mode. In fact, an active tie, as opposed to any cultural or nostalgic attachment, may have effects on remittance-sending behaviour. This effect may be particularly strong for those who acquire U.S. citizenship afresh (certain naturalizers). But old cases and second-generation Indian-Americans may also benefit from this identity effect. If the good-will effect has an impact on attachment and remittances has to be explored by future research. In this context, the social norms about remittance behaviour and the importance of policy statements fueling such norms discussed earlier bear special interest.

Return plans and remittances

It is often sustained that migrants with a perspective of temporary migration remit more than those with permanent emigration plans (Rapoport & Docquier, 2005; Straubhaar & Vădean, 2006). Bauböck (2003) states that remittances are maximized if migrants move back and forth, or if they stay for good, but retain a strong 'myth of return' (p. 709). Vădean (2007) finds that the idea of return to the home country has observable positive effects both on the probability to remit and the amount remitted (pp. 19–20), which is confirmed by de Ferranti and Ody (2009, p. 68). My research does not show, nor can one assume, that overseas citizenship is a decisive factor in migrants' assessment of their migration as temporary or permanent.²³ However, OCI may serve as a reminder of the 'myth of return.' Those who plan to move back to India at some point may be encouraged by a status that gives them full flexibility and the option to return to India whenever they want.

In theory, the *naturalization effect* could lead to greater absorption in the American mainstream and thus to cementing a permanent migration vision. The conducted interviews show, however, that this is not necessarily the

²³ This question is distinct from the issue (dealt with below) of whether OCI affects return migration. At this point, we are asking only whether the OCI status affects migrants' consideration of whether their migration is permanent or not.

case. Naturalized individuals still consider moving back to India and the majority of returnees interviewed in my study had, in fact, U.S. citizenship.

Assets in India and remittances

One hypothesis on remittance-sending determinants is that migrants will remit more money to their families at home if they have (more) assets in the home country. The money remitted serves as a ‘fee’ for the asset management services provided by the family (Lucas & Stark, 1985; Rapoport & Docquier, 2005, p.13; Vădean, 2007, p. 3; Stark, 2009). Strong anecdotal evidence, such as the discussions at the special seminar on “property-related issues of overseas Indians” at the government-organized, annual diaspora conference *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* 2010, suggests that difficulties in managing real estate in India are perceived as major problems by the overseas Indian community. This illustrates the need to provide some kind of compensation for family members who take care of diasporic real estate issues. As argued above, the *rights effect* may indeed lead to increased acquisition of real property in India, which needs particular maintenance by the migrants’ family.²⁴ This in turn may lead to higher remittance flows for old cases, second-plus generation Indian-Americans and certain naturalizers.

Vădean (2007) finds an observable effect of the citizenship status on remitting behaviour for migrants in Germany. Based on a utility maximization model in which the main determinants of sending remittances are the income of the migrants’ household, the consumption of the household including those in the country of origin and the amount of assets held by the migrant, both in the country of origin and of residence, Vădean examines the effect of three statuses migrants may have. First, migrants may have the citizenship of the country of origin plus a visa status in the host country. Second, they might be naturalized citizens of the host country only or third, they might have dual citizenship. The citizenship status is assumed to affect transfer costs for the allocation of assets. That means, while dual citizens as well as migrants with home country citizenship and visa have no significant transaction costs for assets in their country of origin, those who are mono-citizens of the host country do (pp. 7–8). Thus, for the latter, Vădean’s model predicts fewer assets in the home country and a reduction in remittances for services related to asset maintenance. Or vice versa, dual citizenship will increase the amount of assets held in the home country, leading in turn, to a rise in its marginal utility as derived from maintenance

²⁴ The right to acquire real estate in India is not tied to OCI. However, such status eases the process and decreases certain risks. Most importantly, the wide-spread idea that you need diasporic citizenship in order to acquire real property has an important impact on the involved decisions.



service (p. 9). Vădean empirically confirms his prediction that dual citizenship has a positive effect on remittances, under the condition that real estate market restrictions in the home country are in place for foreign citizens (p. 21).²⁵

Bequest and remittances

Assuming that some individuals may have an incentive to remit money to their families in order to ascertain their inheritance, the perceived *rights effect* of OCI may have positive effects on the propensity to remit. Under Indian law, inheritance rights are not affected by the loss of Indian citizenship. However, on the one hand, the conducted interviews show that a significant number of Indian-Americans believe (erroneously) that OCI is necessary for inheriting real estate. On the other hand, it might well be that the OCI status is regarded only as a reassurance and a means to waterproof one's rights. This point is however theoretical as the analysis of my qualitative data does not reveal a strategic bequest motive. On OCI-induced naturalizers, i.e., those who without OCI status would not have acquired U.S. citizenship, one could assume a slight negative effect deriving from the consideration that OCI is not full Indian citizenship and that this knowledge might make inheritance aspirations more insecure. It appears, however, that this effect is negligible. Both the "asset fee" for taking care of migrants' property and the bequest scenario can be affected by social norms on sending remittances. The stronger norms about "good migrants remit" are established, the higher the likelihood that migrants' relatives back home expect certain compensations, which in turn may increase the probability of sending money home, as well as the amount and frequency of such payments.

Conclusions

The effects of OCI on remittances are summarized in Table 3. Assessing the total effect of diasporic citizenship on remittances, it can be concluded that the effect on OCI-induced naturalizers is not unequivocal. Positive income and family reunification effects have to be weighed against negative effects deriving from an increased utility of assets and consumption in the U.S., reduced return plans and active attachment due to an identity effect connected to naturalization.

Remittance-increasing effects are expected for old cases, second-generation Indian-Americans and those who would have naturalized in any case. These groups encompass the vast majority of the Indian-American community. The *rights effect* affects remittance sending behaviour for these groups

²⁵ Based on panel data from Germany, this is only true for the Balkans (Vădean 2007).

through the facilitation of (future) return plans, the assets held in India and possibly, by influencing incentives to inherit. The *identity effect* is likely to increase remittances by positive effects on diasporic attachment and return plans. The rights effect and the identity effect of OCI can be expected to be particularly strong, whereas the *good-will effect* cannot be considered as too pronounced unless we consider the effect on remittance sending norms. In sum, dual citizenship can positively affect remittance behaviour in many ways.

Table 3. Principal Effects and Remittance Behaviour

Determinants of Remittances	Rights Effect	Identity Effect	Naturalization Effect	Good-will effect
Income			OInd ⁺	
Shift in utility function			OInd ⁻	
Family reunification			OInd ^{+/-?}	
Attachment	(Old, 2+G, Cert) ⁺	(Old, 2+G, Cert) ⁺	OInd ⁻	(all groups) ⁺ ?
Return plans	(Old, 2+G, Cert) ⁺	(Old, 2+G, Cert) ⁺	OInd ⁻	
Assets held in India	(Old, 2+G, Cert) ⁺			
Intentions to inherit	(Old, 2+G, Cert) ⁺		OInd ^{-?}	
Shift in remittance norms				(all groups) ⁺
TOTAL EFFECT	(Old, 2+G, Cert)⁺	(Old, 2+G, Cert)⁺	OInd^{+/-}	(all groups)⁺?

Notes: 1) “+” indicates a positive, “-” a negative effect of the respective principal effect (rights, identity, naturalization and goodwill effect) on the determinants of remittances for the respective group. A question mark indicates that the existence of an effect though theoretically possible appears doubtful.

2) The letters correspond to the following groups:

Old: Old cases 2+G: Second-plus generation Indian-Americans

Cert: Certain naturalizers

OInd: OCI-induced naturalizers

Ret: Return naturalizers

AffNT: Affected non-takers

For more information on these groups, see the explanation in the text.

When empirically assessing the net effect, we have to explore a set of key factors. First, how large are the different groups? For populations with a large proportion of people who have already naturalized (old cases) and with fewer recent migration (potential certain or dual-citizenship induced naturalizers) the effects play out differently than for diaspora communities with a different composition. How established are normative patterns of naturalizing that affect the scope for the naturalization increasing effect of dual citizenship? Importantly, what are the socioeconomic, political, and relational conditions for potential return migration and real estate acquisition that shape remittance behaviour? Quantitative analysis that tries to test these relations should consider that my elaborations regard foremost



the amount remitted. However, these mechanisms may also affect the propensity to remit, which given the limitations of existing data is often the focus of statistical analysis.

Although the mechanisms described here are based on my empirical study of highly skilled Indians in the United States (and those who relocated back to India), I believe that the findings are applicable to wide range of groups. Future research may explore in detail what characteristics in the countries of origin and residence, as well as what composition, capacities, and aspirations of diasporic populations shape the concrete impact of such membership status. The rising numbers of countries that tolerate dual citizenship or that introduce diasporic membership statuses provide an opportunity to expand and test these mechanisms and advance our understanding of the causal relationship between legal statuses and rights, multiple and multi-layered social identifications, and transnational economic activities.

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