

TRANSNATIONALISM:
Labor Migration in a Globalized
World

Global Migration

- According to the IOM 3% of the world population are migrant workers. Given that the world population is 6.7 billion (2008), this is the equivalent of 200 million persons. This number is increasing by 2.3 million per year.
- International migrants accounted for 8.7% of the population in developed countries vs. 1.5% in developing countries.
- The 1990s witnessed the largest influx of immigrants during any period in American history.
- From 2000-2006, immigration accounted for approximately 45% of the change in the U.S.'s population. Immigrants represent over 12% of all U.S. residents (36 million persons).

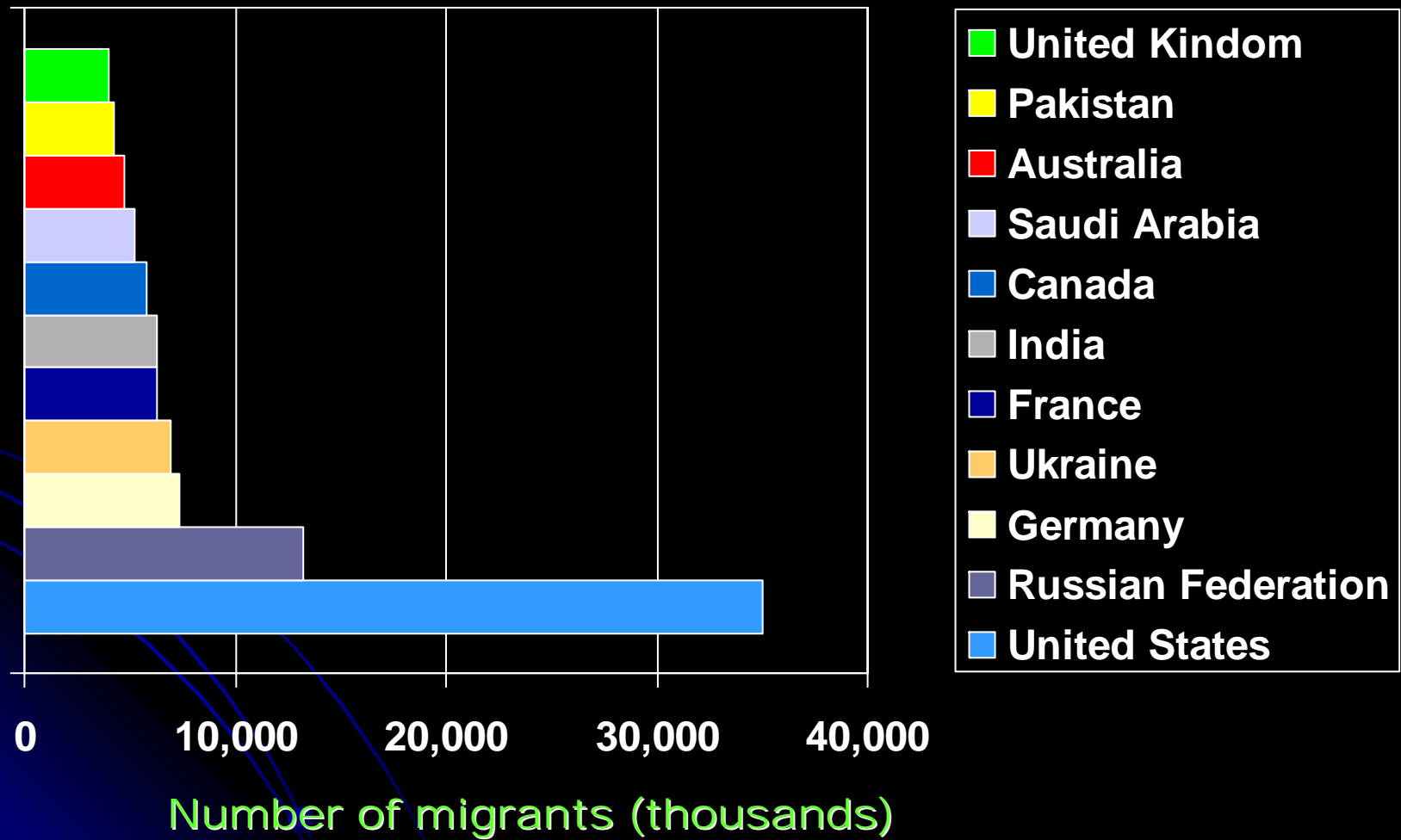
Global Migration Trends



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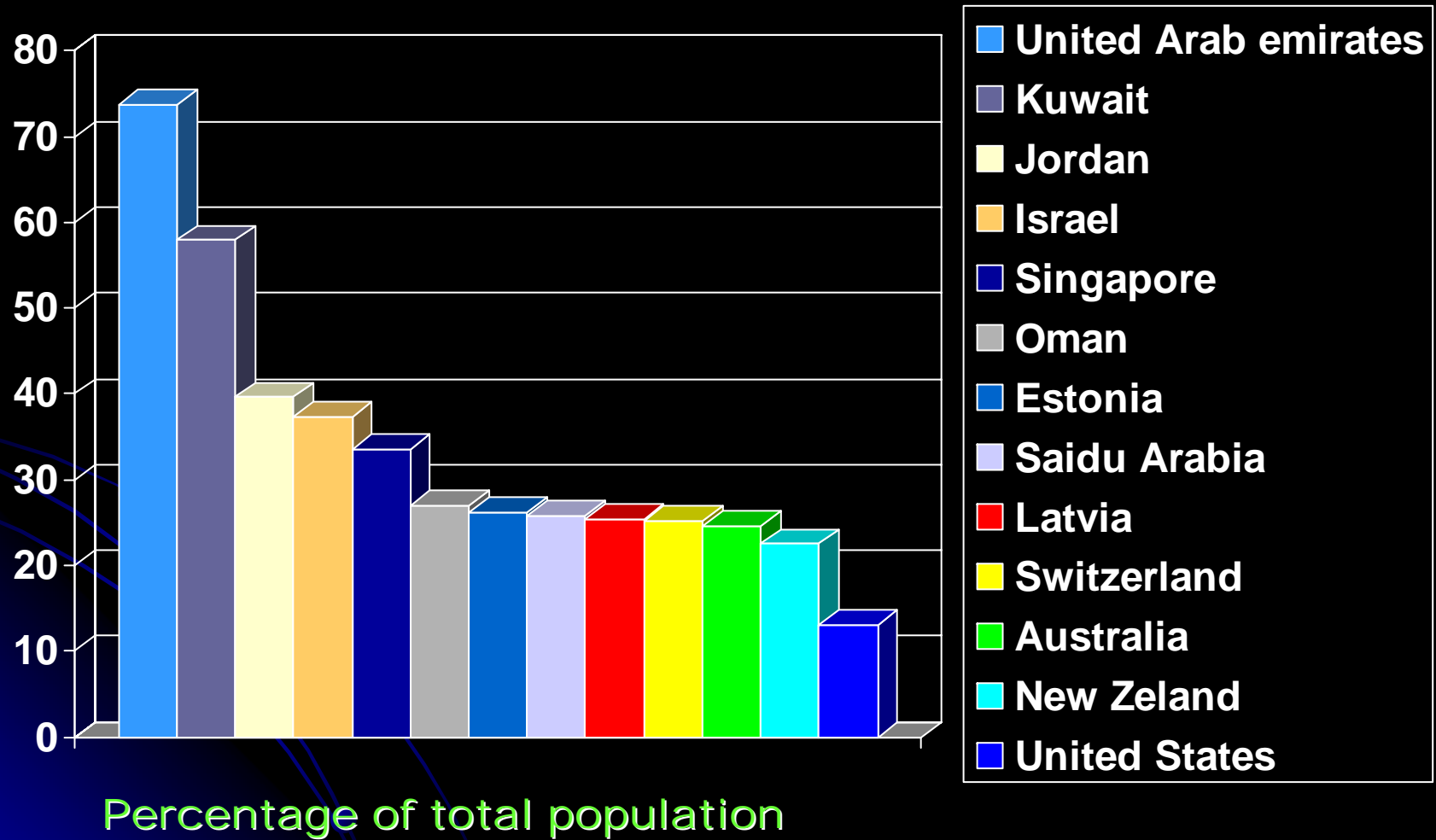
Countries with the largest international migrant stock, 2000

Source: United Nations, International Migration 2002 Data Set



Countries with the highest percentage of international migrant stock in total population, 2000

Source: United Nations, International Migration 2002 Data Set





Robert Gauthier, LA Times 5/1/2006

Region of Birth of Employed Foreign-Born Workers in 2005

Mexico and Central America- 37%

Asia- 26%

Europe- 12%

Caribbean- 9%

South America- 7%

Other Areas- 8%

U.S Census Bureau, 2005

IMMIGRATION DEBATE

- **POLARIZATION:**

- Amnesty Vs. No Amnesty for Illegals
- Closed Borders Vs. Open Borders
- Integration Vs. Deportation
- Global Fortress Vs. Global Magnet

- **The challenge:**

- How to manage the current and future flow of migrants in a way that is realistic, workable and fair to both migrants and native-born Americans.



Robert Gauthier, LA Times 5/1/2006

Looking at immigration and immigrants through different theoretical lenses

- **Traditional view:**

- Immigration as one-way discrete movement.
 - Assimilation perspective
 - Previous immigration flows

- **Transnational perspective**

- Immigration as a dynamic process.
 - Multiple belonging and loyalties.
 - The globalization process and the new immigrant flows.

What is transnationalism?

- “...the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multiple-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Bash et. al. 1993). At the heart of the transnational approach to international migration is the argument that current restructuring of global capital produces a new set of political, economic and social relations between sending communities and government and citizens abroad.

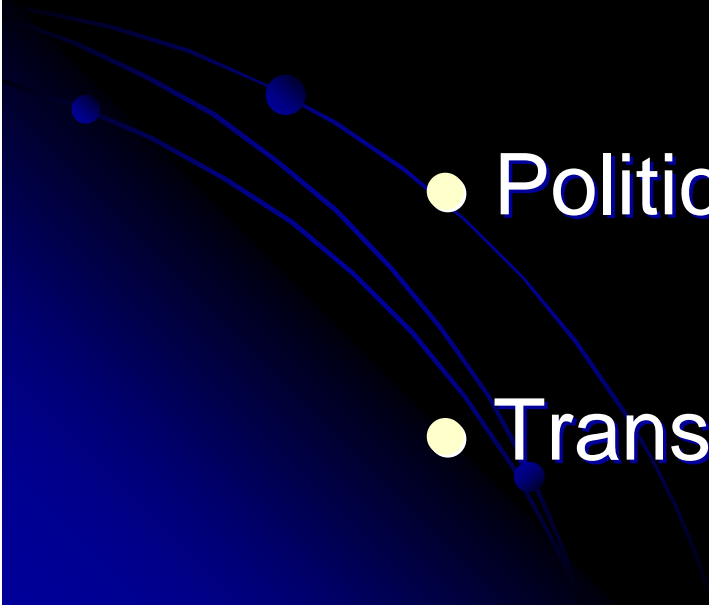
Transnational perspective

- In a transnational perspective, migration is conceptualized as an ongoing process through which ideas, resources and people change location and develop meaning in multiple locations, suggesting that by retaining social, cultural and economic links with various locations and contexts, people can surmount the impediments traditionally associated with long-distance international migration. The emphasis is on the fact that migrants remain heavily involved in the life of their country of origin even though they no longer live there. Transnational social relations thus allow migrants to develop and maintain multiple relations in more than one nation state.

Transnational Citizenship

- Political community for migrant workers:
 - Ways of belonging
 - Ways of being
 - Rights and obligations
 - Political participation and representation
- 

Transnational political participation

- Dual nationality for migrants
 - Right to vote abroad
 - Political representation
 - Transnational political process
- 

- **About 40 million** Americans are eligible for dual citizenship in another country, usually because of family ties. Legally, dual citizenship is more feasible than ever. This change began in 1967 when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down U.S. laws forbidding dual citizenship. It has gained momentum over the past decade as countries have changed their laws to allow citizens, former citizens, their children and even grandchildren and great grandchildren to carry more than one passport.
- Currently 93 countries allow some form of dual citizenship.
- In 1998 Mexico changed its law to allow Mexican nationals and their children to be dual citizens of Mexico and their adopted countries. India changed its law in 2004. South Korea is considering doing the same.

Citizen of the world?

Here's a snapshot of some of the countries that extend dual citizenship to Americans

India: Former Indian citizens and their children can apply for "overseas citizenship" and keep U.S. citizenship.

[More information](#)

Ireland: Anyone with a parent born in Ireland is a citizen. Anyone with an Irish parent, even if not born in Ireland, can become a citizen.

[More information](#)

Greece: One of your parents must be a citizen, but you can register them. For example, if your great-grandfather was born in Greece, you could become a citizen by first registering your grandfather/grandmother, then registering your father/mother.

[More information](#)

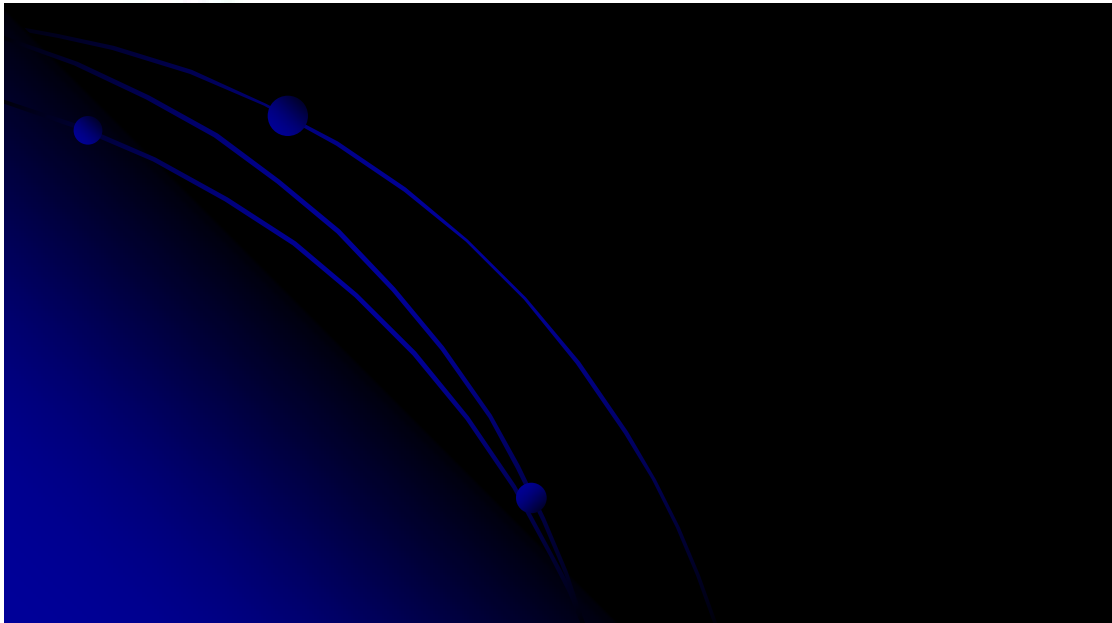
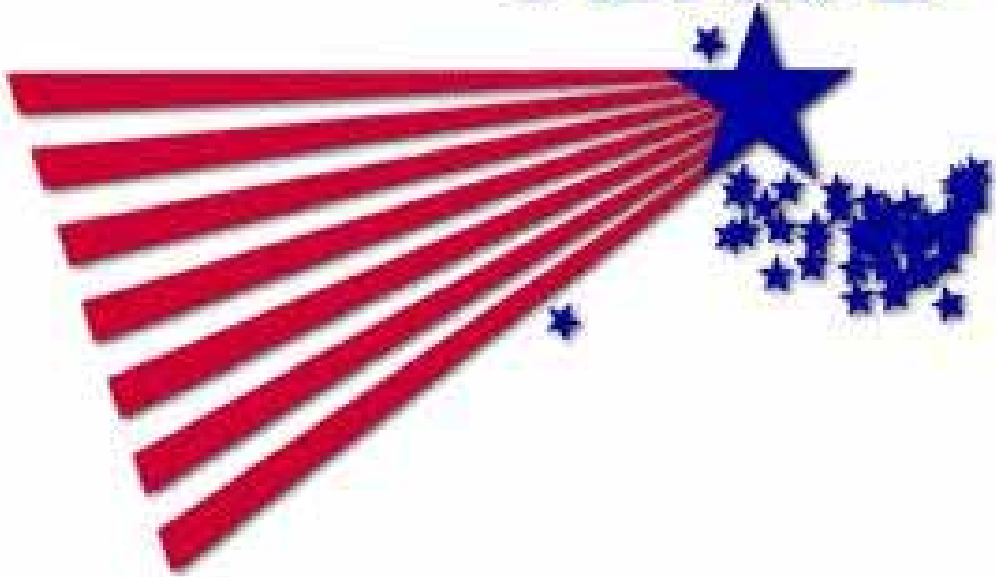
Mexico: Until 1996, Mexicans lost their citizenship when they became citizens elsewhere. Now, dual citizenship is allowed if you or your parents were born in Mexico.

[More information](#)

Italy: If one of your parents was an Italian citizen at the time of your birth or one of your grandparents was at the time of one of your parent's birth, you can apply for Italian citizenship.

[More information](#)

DEMOCRATS ABROAD





Leonel Antonio Fernández Reyna politician who served as president of the Dominican Republic (1996–2000; 2004– 2008) grew up in the Lower East of New York City.



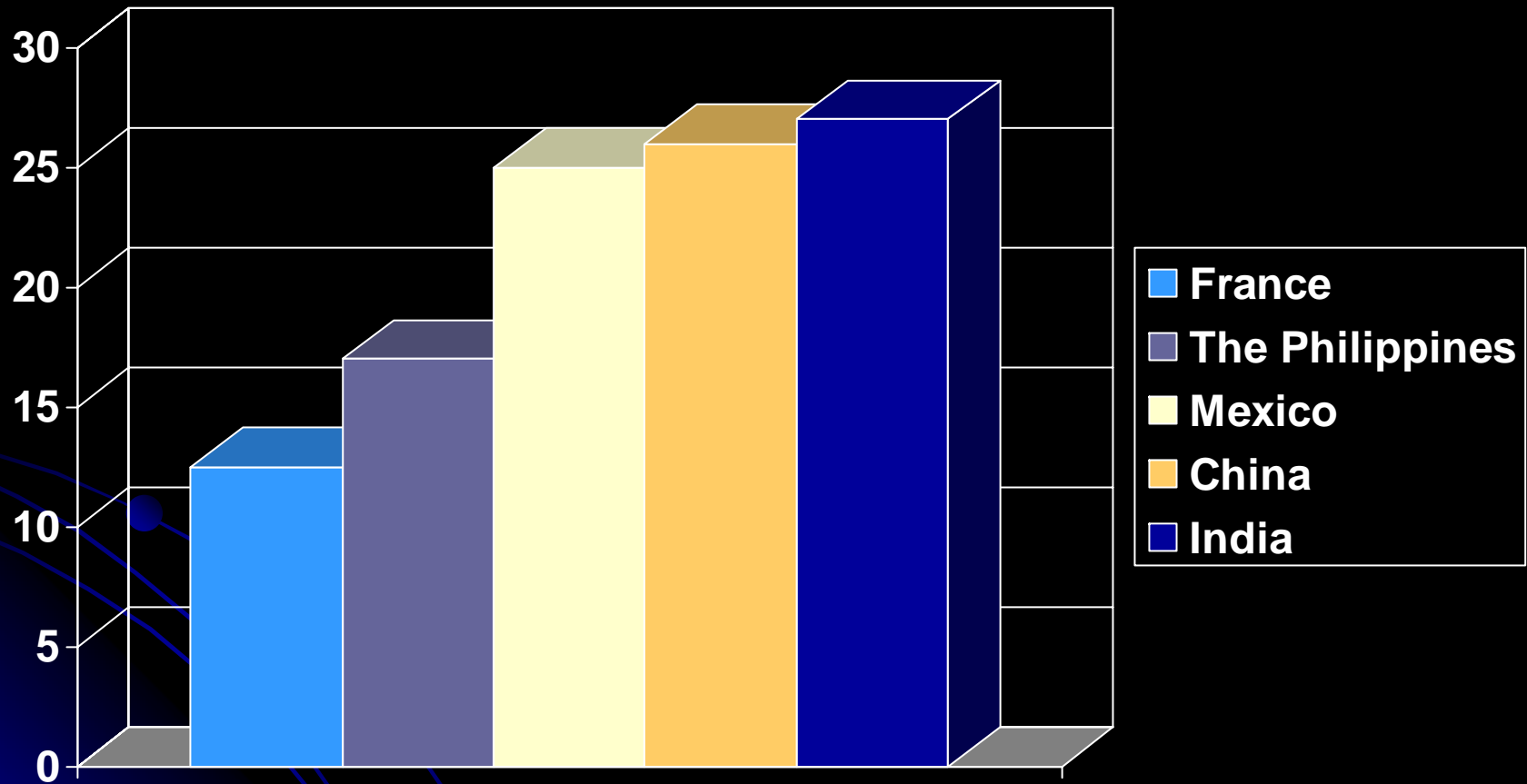
The highly publicized transnational political campaign of Mexican migrant Andrés Bermúdez, who was elected mayor of Jerez, Zacatecas (2002-2006) and to Congress as Federal Representative (2007-2011).

Transnational economic participation

- Remittances sent by migrants globally: 338 billion dollars in 2007
- More than 200 million people are migrant workers world-wide
- Further global economic integration

Top remittance recipients by country, 2007

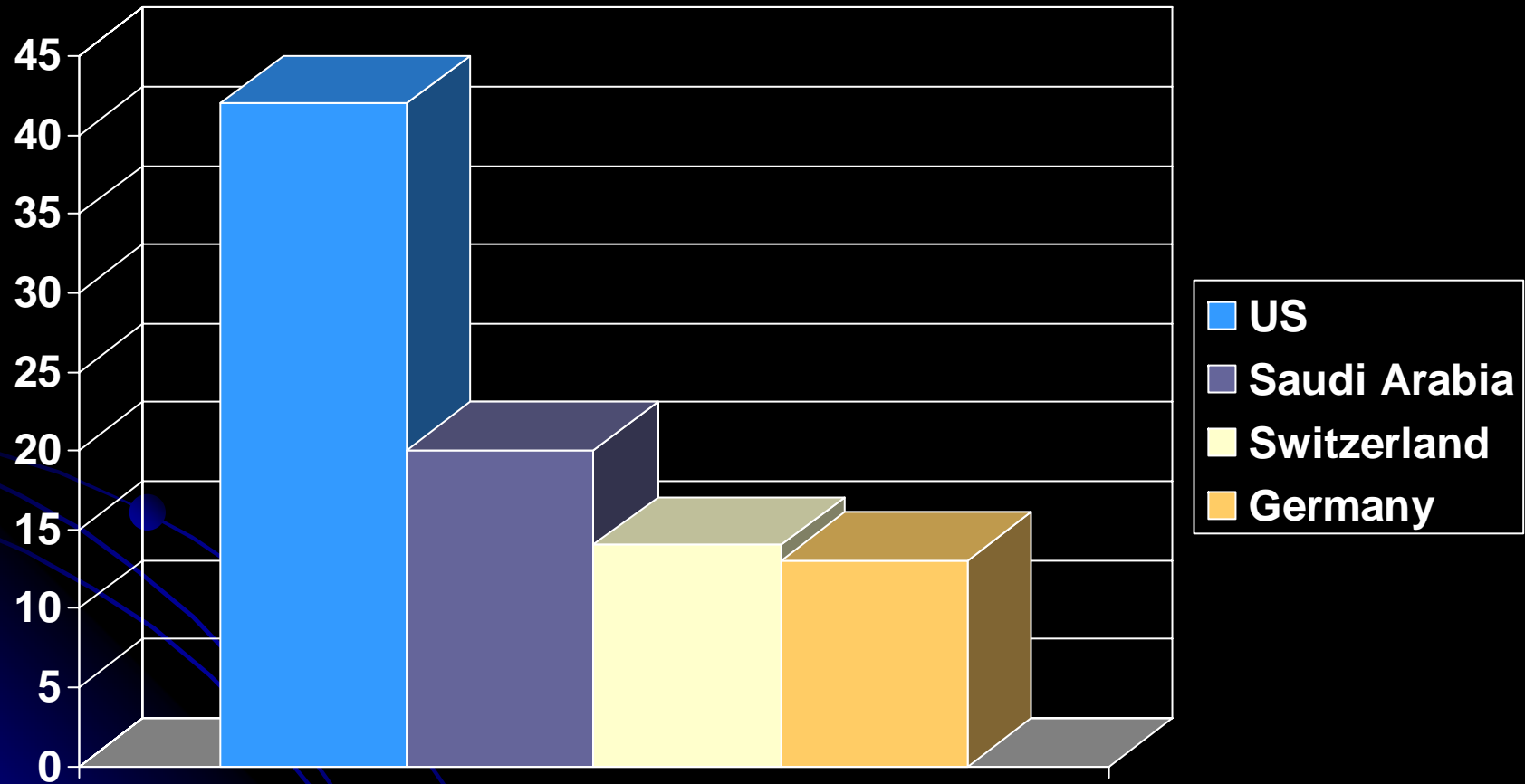
Source: World Bank, March 2008



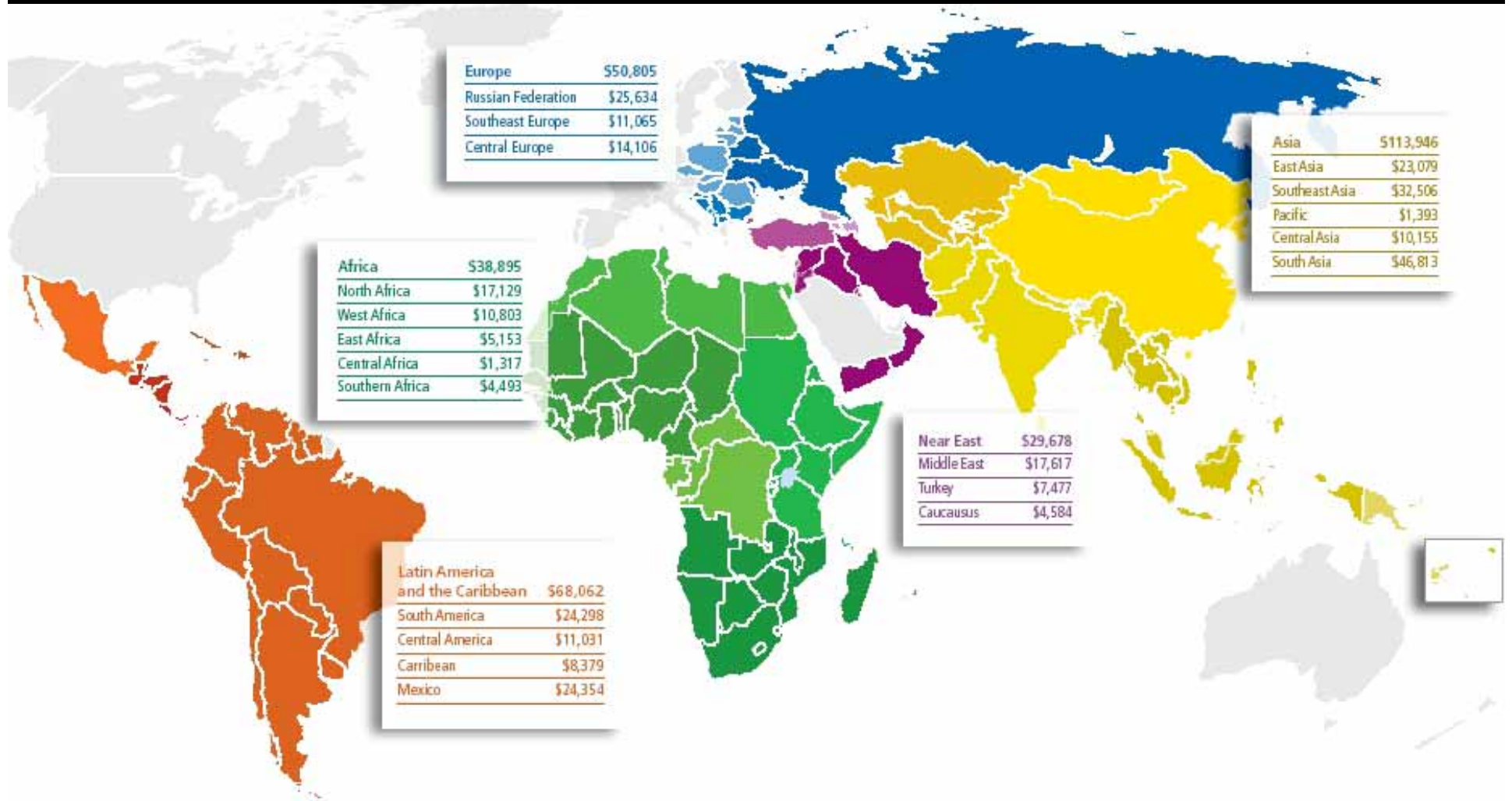
Remittances in billions of dollars

Top remittance source

Source: World Bank, March 2008



Remittances in billion



Total Remittances to Developing Countries: US\$301 billion

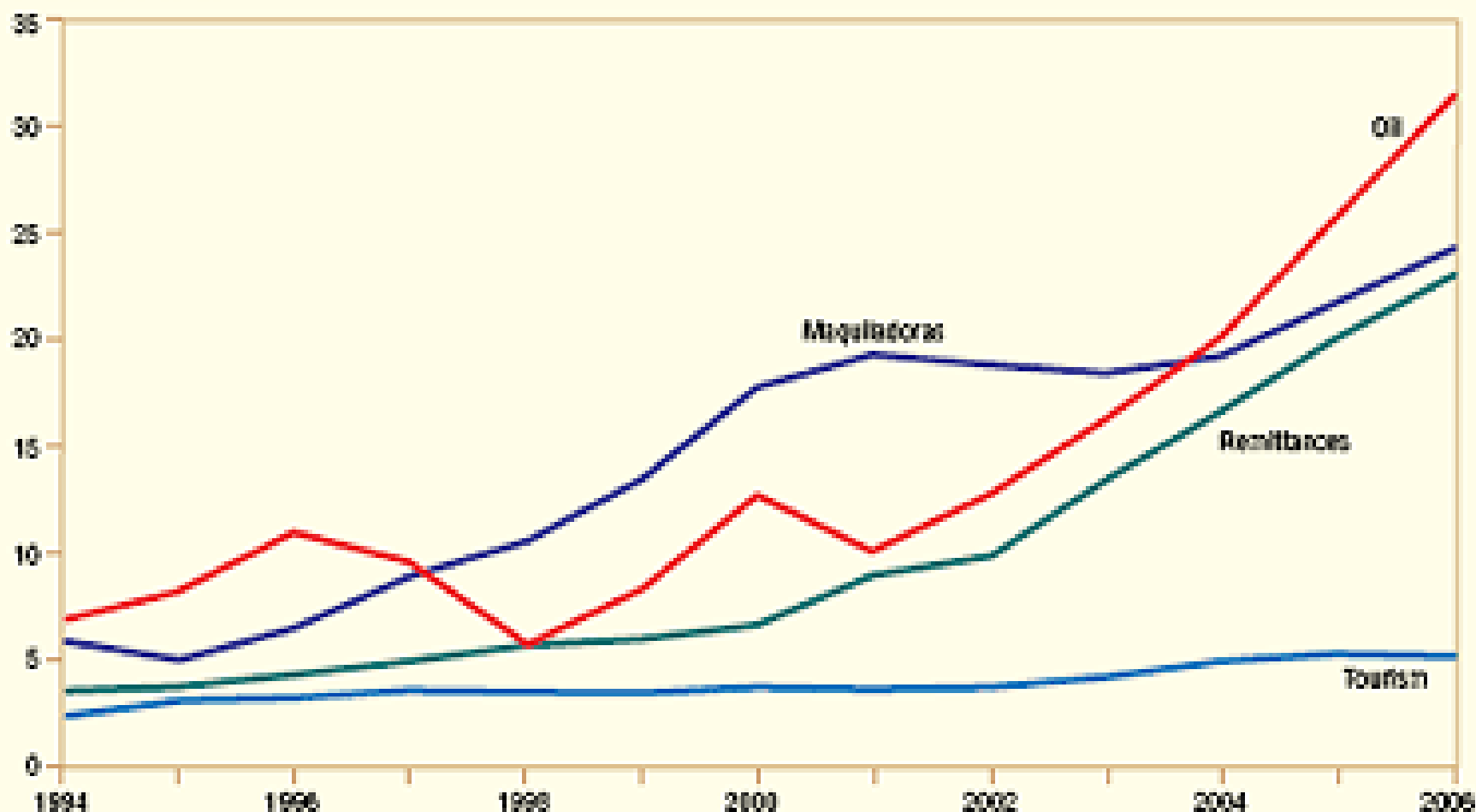
The US-Mexico Integration Migration

- **Migration:** Mexicans constitute 29.5 percent of all foreign born in the United States, by far the largest group. The Philippines and India follow with about four percent each.
- **Undocumented:** As of March 2006, the estimated unauthorized population in the United States was 11.5 to 12 million, of which 4.5 to 6 million entered legally with inspection and 6 to 7 million entered illegally without inspection.
- **Border:** In FY 2004, there were 1,139,282 apprehensions of immigrants on the southern border.
- Of the approximately 11,000 Border Patrol agents, 89 percent work along the US-Mexico border.

Chart 1

Remittances Rank Third in Foreign-Exchange Earnings for Mexico

Billions of U.S. dollars



SOURCES: Banco de Mexico; Secretaria de Hacienda y Credito Publico; Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática.

The US-Mexico Integration Trade

- The United States is Mexico's **largest trading partner**, and Mexico is the United States' second-largest trading partner.
- In 2005, Mexico **imported** more than US\$101 billion in merchandise from just 17 US states.
- There are more than 2,700 **maquiladoras** in Mexican border states.
- Currently, there are 74.8 miles of **fence** along the US-Mexico border, mostly in California and Texas.



Trade Through
Laredo, TX:
(all surface modes)

\$67.2 billion
north to U.S.

\$50.7 billion
south to Mexico

(Sept. 2006 - Sept. 2007)
Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Transnational Labor Citizenship

- **Jennifer Gordon** has recently proposed that a way out of the immigration debate would be to build institutions that conform to current realities of immigration but lessen its ills of overexploitation and victimization.
- She proposes to link the right to immigrate not to a job offer from an employer but to membership in a cross-border organization or a **transnational union**.

- Migrants could **work legally**, but only after agreeing not to undercut other workers by accepting substandard pay or job conditions.
- The **Transnational Union** would enforce the agreement and protect members' rights here in the U.S. and in their countries of origin
- **The Goal:** To bring the bottom up, not by shutting immigrants out, but by organizing them before they come.



Rick Loomis, LA Times 5/1/06

- **The result:** Transnational Labor Citizens supporting their families and the American economy while at the same time overcoming the current conditions that foster under-the-table exploitation.