

A Multi Sited Approach to Analysis of Destination Immigration Data: An Asia-Pacific Example

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INTRODUCTION

It is well recognised that relevant, comprehensive and timely data are required if international migration policy and practice is to be effective (Report of the Commission on International Migration Data for Development Research and Policy, 2009). In the Asia-Pacific region there has been a massive increase in the scale and complexity of international migration as both a cause and consequence of rapid economic, social and demographic transformations (Hugo and Young, 2008). However, the ability of Asia-Pacific nations to maximise the benefits accruing from this movement and ameliorate the problems has been greatly constrained by a lack of data and information to inform policy and program development (Hugo, 2009). If the potential win-win-win dividends (United Nations, 2006; GCIM, 2005; World Bank, 2006) from migration for origins and destinations as well as migrants themselves are to be delivered it is an essential precursor that a parametric improvement is achieved in the way international migration is measured, the characteristics of movers and the places they move to and from. This improvement needs to come from two areas:

1. *Improving Migration Data Collection:* The reality is that most data on international migration in the Asia-Pacific region is absent, inaccurate or incomplete so that not only do individual nations lack data on immigration and emigration but data sets of international migration maintained by international agencies are inaccurate for many countries in the region.
2. *Making Better Use of Existing Migration Data:* While there is a pressing need to initiate new migration data collections and improve migration data collection practices and methods in the region there is considerable scope for innovative and careful analysis of existing data.

The focus of the present paper is in the second area. It demonstrates that comprehensive international migration data collected at the destination end of the migration process can be utilised to shed light on migration at the origin as well as the destination. Australian international migration data are used to illustrate this.

The analysis of Australian migration data, which is some of the most comprehensive in the world, is also used to make two other arguments regarding limitations of the prevailing global migration data collection regime. Firstly, it is suggested that in both data collection and research there has been an overwhelming bias on immigration destinations and settlement and a neglect of emigration, the process of leaving and its impact in origins. Secondly, it is argued that while migration theory has moved away from a paradigm which focuses on linear, one time permanent displacements toward recognising that transnational mobility is more complex, measurement tools have retained the focus almost exclusively on permanent migration.

In the Asia-Pacific, as elsewhere, there has been a systematic bias in international migration data collection (and, indeed, research) on destinations while origins have been all but ignored. While most countries collect data on persons entering the country, few collect it on people who leave. As a result, most research focuses on what Ley and Kobayashi (2005, 112) refer to as the 'assimilation narrative' – the destination and adjustment to it rather than the origin and emigration processes and effects. Hence very few countries collect flow or stock information on emigration while a majority collect some information on inflows and immigrants. Yet the last decade has seen a significant shift in thinking about the migration and development relationship which focuses on origins. While researchers have long recognised that emigration can deliver positive development dividends to origin communities it was the net negative impact, brain drain, perspective which was dominant. More recently it has been argued that in an appropriate policy context emigration can have a net positive

effect in origins in some contexts (United Nations, 2006; World Bank, 2006; Global Commission on Migration and Development, 2005) through remittances, diaspora engagement and return migration. However, the dearth of both data and research on *emigration* and *origins* has greatly restricted the contribution which population researchers have been able to make to this important development discussion.

Secondly, the paper argues that the dominance of permanent migration in the measurement of international mobility is at odds with theoretical and policy developments in international migration. With the rapid expansion of research and policy interest in migration over the last two decades there has been a significant paradigm shift away from permanent settlement in destinations to a greater consideration of migration's impact on both origin and destination and the flows, linkages and relationships between them (Dunn, 2005; Piper [ed.], 2008). Hence more attention has been focused on non-permanent migration and on the relationship which is maintained by all immigrants with their origin country. The increased significance of non-permanent migrations globally has also seen an associated change in migration theory beginning with the work of Basch *et al.* (1994) who argued that conventional theory did not adequately capture the new reality in which migrants identify, and commit to, more than one nation state. Hence, transnational theory developed focusing more on the nature and implications of the linkages maintained by movers between origin and destination rather than only on their experience at the destination (Faist, 2000; Levitt, 2001; Dunn, 2005). These changes have invigorated migration research and considerably informed our understanding of the migration process and its effects. As Boyle (2002, 533) points out ... 'It is the high intensity of exchanges and the new modes of contact that makes this an exciting new research arena'.

Despite these developments in international migration theory there remains in much migration research and thinking an overwhelming focus on what Ley and Kobayashi (2005,

112) refer to as the ‘... narrative of departure, arrival and assimilation’. Hence the bulk of research into migration is focused on the more or less permanent settlement and adjustment of immigrants. Despite the emergence of the transnationalism paradigm most data collection, policy development and research remains destination-based, and our understanding of the impacts of migration remains biased toward destinations and permanent settlement.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION DATA COLLECTION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

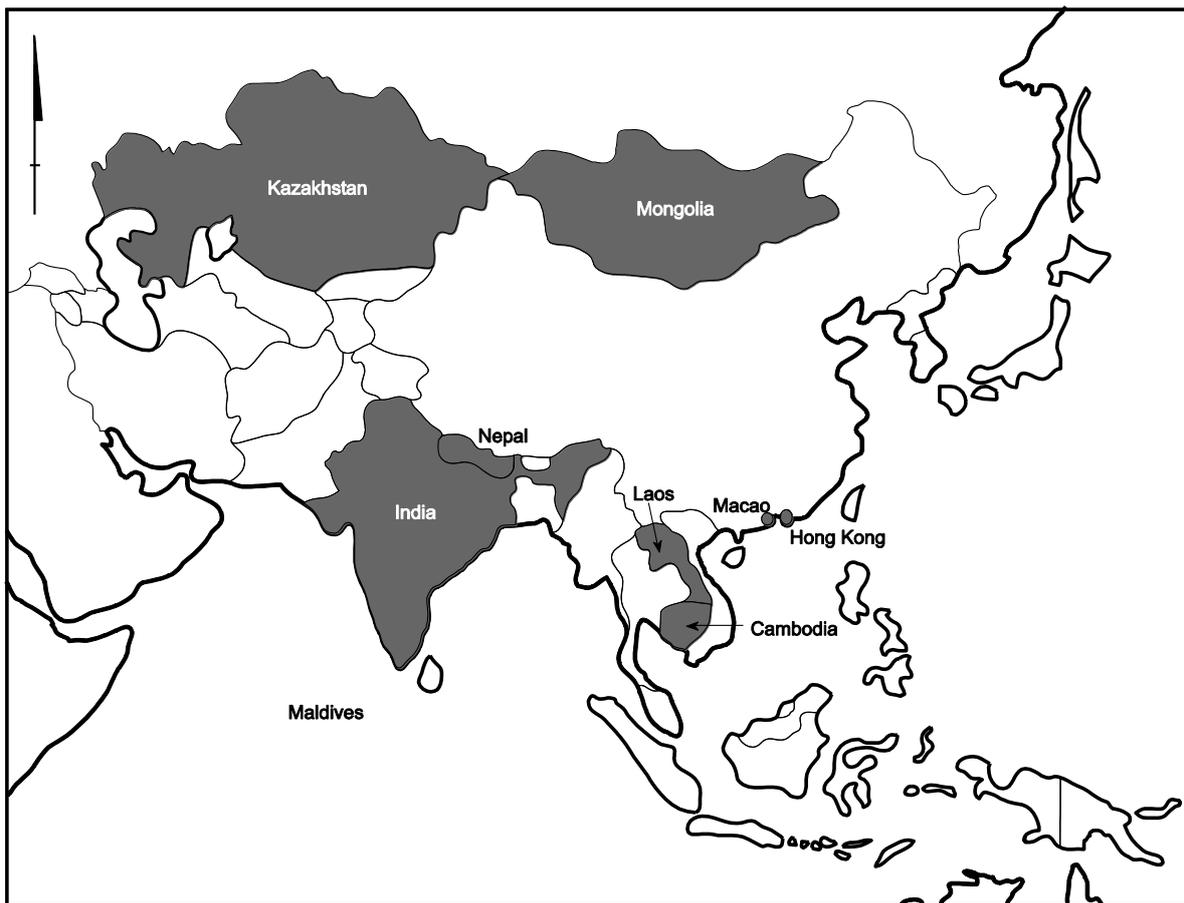
The Asia and the Pacific region has some of the world’s most significant origin countries for migration both in terms of sheer numbers (China, India, Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam) and in relation to the numbers left behind in the home country (Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Philippines). The countries vary in the extent to which they have attempted to lever this migration in order to gain benefits for development but in general there has been a failure to derive the maximum positive outcomes for development at national, regional and local levels. Lack of policy and institutional coherence certainly occurs in that development policies rarely take cognisance of the potential role of migration while migration policies are rarely conceived with the impact on development in mind.

The situation is exacerbated in these countries by a lack of relevant data to quantify the scale, composition and impact of permanent, and especially temporary, migration from low income countries. This is because of an almost universal global bias in migration data collection (and in multilateral agency data collection recommendations) toward immigration. Both censuses and border data collections are overwhelmingly oriented toward collecting information on migrants coming *into* countries while very few collect information about people who leave. No country in the region collects census data on emigration while Figure 1 shows that a majority of nations’ censuses ask respondents about their country of birth.

The only countries in the region to collect and analyse border control data on people leaving the country are mainly countries whose immigration is the dominant flow (Japan, New Zealand and Australia). The major countries of emigration do not have systematic collections and analysis of who is leaving the country on a permanent or a temporary basis.

Figure 1: Asian Countries Asking a Birthplace Question in the 2010 Round of Population Censuses

Source: United Nations Statistical Division



This represents a major barrier to the development of effective migration policy let alone effective migration and development policy in the emigration nations of Asia and the Pacific. A *sine qua non* of effective migration policy is to have accurate, timely and appropriate data relating to the scale and composition of the movements involved. The paradox is that most

emigration countries of the region can produce such data for immigration to, but not for emigration from, their country. There needs to be a *cultural change* in data collection toward one which is more appropriate to the needs of individual countries. In emigration countries the need is for information on *emigration*. This bias in data collection has had a strong impact on research. Research in the region is overwhelmingly destination based and there is a neglect of the origin perspective in that research. In the Asia-Pacific region there can be no doubt that a major barrier to the development of effective coherent migration policy is the lack of a timely, accurate and relevant database to provide the empirical grounding on which effective migration and migration and development policy can be based.

AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION DATA

Australia has been influenced by international migration more than most countries with Table 1 indicating that more than half its population is a first or second generation immigrant. As a result there has long been a strong focus in standard data collections to collect comprehensive information on international migration. Stock and flow data on migration in most countries only focus on immigration and ignore emigration and also

Table 1: Australia: A Migration Country

-
- 26 percent born overseas in 2011
 - 27 percent Australia-born with an overseas-born parent(s) in 2011
 - 908,049 persons temporarily present at 30 June 2011
 - Without postwar migration the Australian population would be less than 13 million compared with 22.6 million at present
 - There is a diaspora of almost 1 million Australians living in other countries
-

include only more or less permanent migrations (Dumont and Lemaitre, 2005; Schachter, 2006). However, Australian international migration data is an exception and is among the most comprehensive in the world. Moreover in recent years there have been significant developments which have enhanced its ability to inform policy.

With respect to migration flows, Australia's geography as an island nation facilitates effective data collection on flows into and out of the country. Modern forms of surveillance means there is little clandestine movement across its borders. All persons entering and leaving Australia are asked questions about country of birth, date of birth, gender, occupation, country of origin/destination, intended/actual length of residence in Australia (or in the case of Australians leaving, abroad) and reasons for moving. The Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship divides them into three categories according to the length of time they intend to stay in Australia for arrivals or be away from Australia for departures:

- *Short Term movers* – Australian residents and citizens whose intended stay abroad is less than 12 months and Foreign visitors whose intended stay in Australia is less than 12 months.
- *Long Term movements* – departures of Australian residents and citizens who intend to return but with the intended length of stay abroad being 12 months or more and Foreign visitors with temporary residence who intend to leave Australia but after a period of more than 12 months.
- *Permanent movements* – Australian residents and citizens (including former settlers) departing with the stated intention of residing abroad permanently. Foreigners arriving with the stated intention of remaining permanently in Australia.

Of course people's intentions do not always eventuate and they can change their minds as to the degree of permanency of their move. Osborne (2004), for example, examined

the mobility of people who indicated they left Australia 'permanently' in 1998-99. However he established that by mid 2003 some 24 percent had returned to Australia. Clearly this would be counterbalanced to some extent by those who indicated they were leaving on a long term basis but in fact changed their mind and stayed away permanently. Nevertheless the Australian data do provide a good indication of the totality of permanent and temporary migration to and from the country while in other countries the data only refer to immigration.

An additional dimension of Australian arrival/departure data is that, as from July 1998, a Personal Identifier (PID) number has been assigned to every individual moving to and from the country. This enables the movement history of individuals into and out of Australia to be traced. In the context of the present paper, data on all Asia-born individuals arriving to, and departing from Australia over the 1998-2006 period which show all the moves those individuals subsequently make were obtained. This has allowed us to construct the migration history of those individuals over the period. Hence, we can establish the extent to which permanent arrivals from Asia have returned on a permanent or temporary basis to their homeland and the extent to which they have moved to third countries.

While the main source of data used here is cross-border flow information, in passing it should be mentioned that Australia also has comprehensive migrant stock data. Table 2 shows the immigration-related questions asked at Australian censuses and indicates that a comprehensive range of questions has been asked, especially in postwar censuses. Of particular interest was the introduction from 1971 of a birthplace of parents' question which has been in each subsequent census, and the experiment with an ancestry question in 1986, 2001, 2006 and 2011. The latter has been excluded from several censuses because, although it produced a great deal of new insight into the diversity of Australia's population, it generally failed to identify third and older generations of immigrants (Khoo, 1989). The census data however on the stocks of migrants in Australia on census night but it fails to

distinguish effectively between temporary and permanent migrants and a modification of the citizenship question would make this possible.

Table 2: Immigration and Ethnicity Related Topics Included in Australian Population Censuses, 1911-2011
Source: Paice, 1990; ABS, 2006, 2011a

Topics - Persons	1911	1921	1933	1947	1954	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
Birthplace	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Birthplace of parents		*						*	*	*	*	*	*	*(1)	*	*
Year of arrival (Period of residence in Australia)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Citizenship	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*(1)	*(1)	*(2)	*	*	*	*	*
Ethnic origin/ancestry											*			*	*	*
Number of overseas residents or visitors								*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Language use		*(3)	*(4)						*(5)	*(6)	*(7)	*	*	*	*	*
Religion	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Notes:

- (1) Prior to 1976, 'nationality' rather than 'citizenship' was asked.
- (2) Since 1986 the person has been asked whether or not they were an Australian citizen.
- (3) Question asked whether the person could read and write.
- (4) Question asked whether the person could read and write a foreign language if unable to read and write English.
- (5) The 1976 census asked for 'all languages regularly used'.
- (6) In 1981 ability to speak English was asked.
- (7) Since 1986 two separate questions have been asked – Language used and ability to speak English.

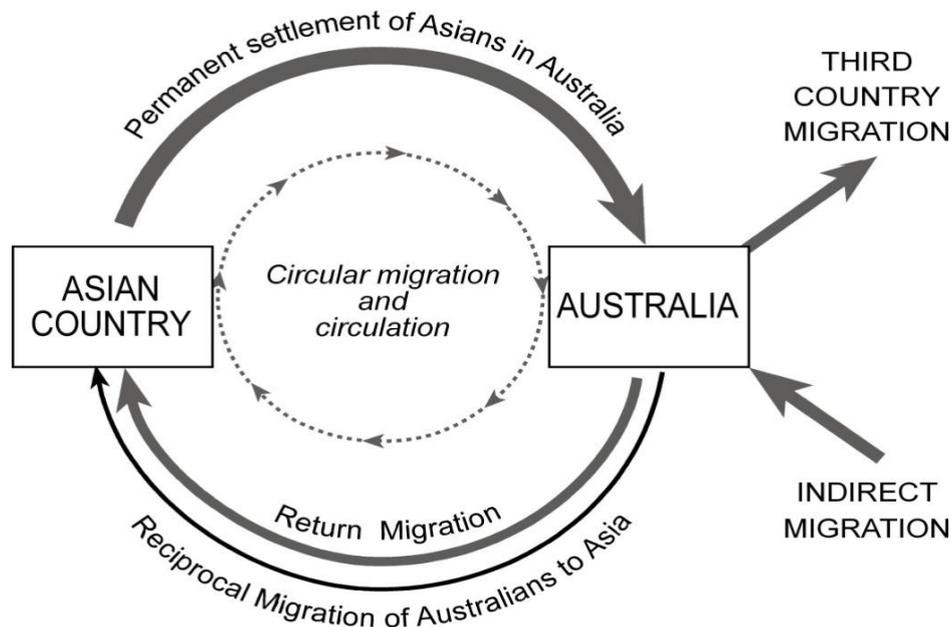
CONCEPTUALISING AUSTRALIA/ASIA-PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION SYSTEMS

In conventional analyses of international migration it is usual to dichotomise countries as being either destination/origin or sending/receiving. However as King (2002) has pointed out, such conventional dichotomies, while they have always oversimplified more complex situations, are especially inappropriate to contemporary global migration. It is more useful to consider countries in pairs for which there are movers in both directions. Figure 2 presents a

stylised model of the contemporary migration system between Australia and Asian countries.

Within this system it is possible to recognise a number of distinct structural elements:

Figure 2: A Model of the Australia/Asia-Pacific Migration System



- (a) *Permanent Settlement of Asians and Pacific Islanders in Australia:* This refers to the traditional more or less permanent movement of Asians and Pacific Islanders accepted for settlement under the Skill, Family, Refugee-Humanitarian or Special Eligibility Components of the Australian Immigration Program (DIAC, 2008a). They take out permanent residence or citizenship in Australia.
- (b) *Indirect Settlement Migration to Australia:* Some Asian and Pacific groups move initially to a third country and subsequently move to Australia. One of the main such avenues is through New Zealand where they can gain citizenship or residency and then become eligible to move to Australia under the Trans Tasman Migration Agreement (Bedford *et al.*, 2003).

- (c) *Return Migration:* Involving previous settlers in a more or less permanent return to their Asia-Pacific homeland after a period in Australia. This is sometimes referred to in Australia as settler loss (Hugo, 1994).
- (d) *Third Country Migration:* Involving a more or less permanent migration of settlers from Asia and the Pacific to a third country destination after a period of residence in Australia. This is referred to in some contexts as remigration.
- (e) *Reciprocal Migration:* Involving a more or less permanent relocation of Australians to an Asian or Pacific country. These flows are usually smaller in size than the flows in the opposite direction.
- (f) *Circular Migration:* Involving long term, but temporary, migration of Asia-Pacific people to Australia and Australians to Asia and the Pacific. The main groups are students and long term temporary business migrants. These are people who will spend more than a year at the destination but always with the intention to return. They take out temporary residency in Australia.
- (g) *Circulation:* Involving shorter term movements from Asian countries to Australia and from Australia to Asian countries.

The picture presented in Figure 2 belies the conventional depiction of Asia-Pacific/Australia migration as a south-north, more or less permanent, flow. It conveys the real complexity of the regional international migration system. Before moving on to examine some of these elements of complexity, however, it is necessary to mention a further element of complexity in this system. This refers to *transitions* which individual migrants make between the various types of movement. Each of the flows depicted in Figure 2 should not be seen as being totally separate from the others. Table 3 lists some of these transitions. Individual migrants' first move may be followed by one or more other moves of that type or of other types. A student may become a permanent migrant at the destination –from here

they then circulate back to their original home nation. These transitions may be associated with different stages of the individual's life cycle. Moreover they may also be part of an individual's migration strategy. Hence Biao (2004) found that some Indians moving to

Table 3: Key Transitions in Asia-Pacific/Australian Immigration

Original Status in Australia	Transition Made
Permanent migrants	- Return permanently to homeland - Circulate to homeland from base in Australia Move to a third country
Temporary migrants	- Change from temporary to permanent residency
Return migrants	- Circulate back to Australia temporarily after they return to their homeland

Australia as information technology professionals did so with the eventual intention of subsequently moving to the United States or the United Kingdom. Hence Tan (2011) has found among students from China that their decision to study in South Australia in many cases was predicated on the fact that on graduation they could apply for permanent residency in Australia. Again, a degree of complexity which contrasts to the conventional conceptualisation of south-north migration.

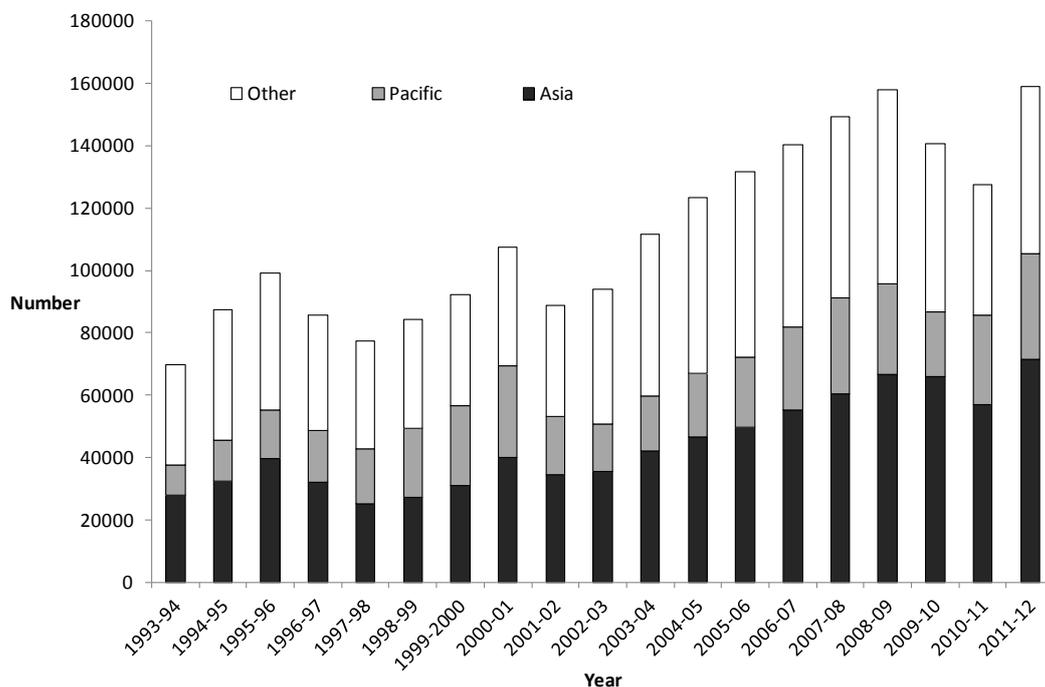
MEASURING ELEMENTS OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC/AUSTRALIA MIGRATION SYSTEM

Inflows

The Australian international migration flow data means that it allows the complexity of the Asia-Pacific migration system to be quantified. Since the abolition of the last vestiges of the infamous White Australia Policy in the 1950s, there has been an increase in permanent

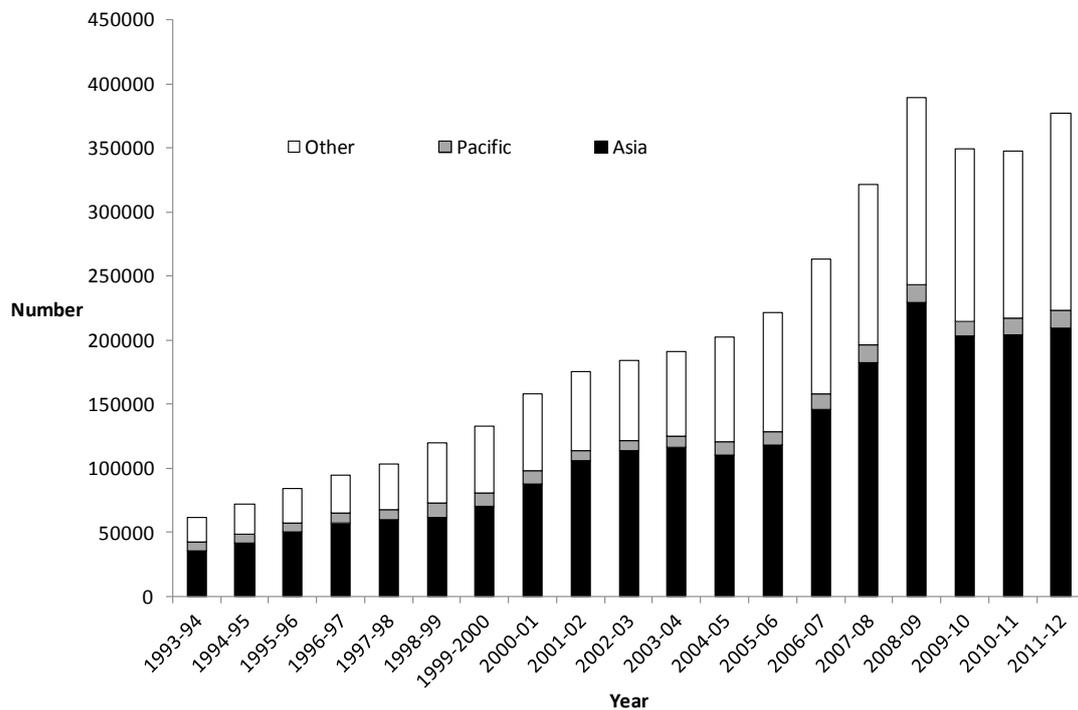
settlement of Asians and Pacific Islanders in Australia. There has been a permanent settler immigration of 711,694 Asians and 53,161 Pacific Islanders (minus New Zealand) to Australia over the 1993-2010 period comprising 41.6 percent of the total 1.84 million settler arrivals over those seventeen years. The annual numbers fluctuated between 27,967 in 1997-98 and 70,239 in 2008-09 but a general upward trajectory is evident in the last few years. The relative significance of the five Asia-Pacific sub-regions has fluctuated over the period with South Asians recording the most rapid increase in recent years. Asia-Pacific countries account for seven of the ten top birthplace countries of migrant settlers over the 1993-2010 period with the largest numbers being from China (152,745), India (130,694), Philippines (69,552), Vietnam (47,946), Malaysia, (38,214), Sri Lanka (37,189) and Indonesia (36,742) in Asia, and Fiji (27,771), Papua New Guinea (2,945), Samoa (13,346), Tonga (3,877) and Cook Islands (2,795) in the Pacific. Figure 3 shows how the numbers of permanent settlers arriving from the Asia-Pacific has increased over the last two decades.

Figure 3: Australia: Settler Arrivals by Birthplace, 1993-94 to 2011-12
Source: DIAC unpublished data



However, the permanent settlement program only reflects a part of Asia-Pacific migration to Australia. Perhaps the most striking change in Australian immigration over the last decade has been the increased non-permanent immigration of workers (Hugo, 1999). Before the mid 1990s, Australia's immigration policy had eschewed temporary worker migration in favour of an overwhelming focus on permanent settlement. This is reflected in the number of long term arrivals of foreigners as is reflected in Figure 4 which indicates that Asia has been an important source of such arrivals.

Figure 4: Australia: Long Term Visitor Arrivals by Birthplace, 1993-94 to 2011-12
Source: DIAC unpublished data

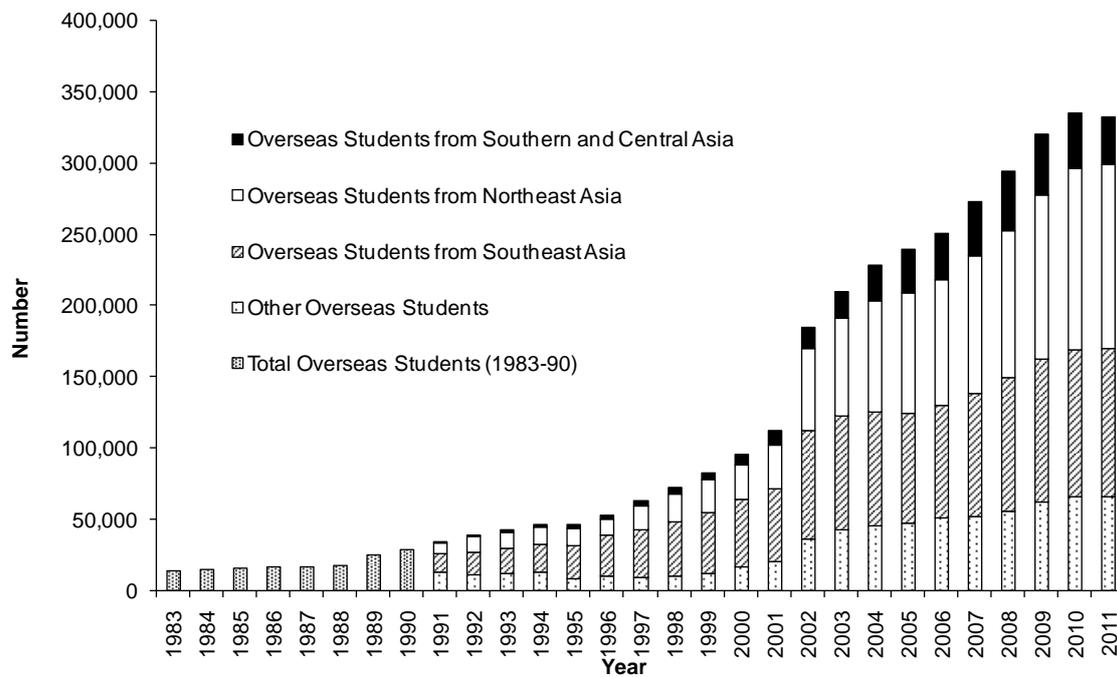


One of the largest categories of skilled temporary residents with the right to work are foreign students and Figure 5 shows that there has been a rapid increase in the number of foreigners moving to Australia to study and Asians have made up around three quarters of them. In 2010 there were 469,619 people on student visas in Australia and over three

quarters were from Asia. Of the largest ten countries of origin, eight are Asian –India (15 percent), China (27 percent), Korea (16 percent), Malaysia (5 percent), Vietnam and Thailand (4 percent) and Indonesia and Nepal (3 percent).

Figure 5: Overseas Students in Australian Universities, 1983-2011

Source: DEEWR, *Students: Selected Higher Education Statistics*, various issues



In December 2010 there were 116,012 persons on 457¹ – Business Long Stay Visas resident in Australia (a 2.6 percent decrease over the previous year). Asia-Pacific countries are not as prominent as among students but they account for 39.7 percent of the 457 population and of the top ten origin nations four are Asian (India – 11.7 percent, Philippines – 9.0 percent, China – 4.2 percent and Japan – 2.3 percent).

While Australia has excellent flow data on temporary migration it has failed to develop a question for the population census which allows the stock of temporary migrants at

¹ This visa category is analogous to the HB1 visa in the United States.

a single point in time to be determined. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (2012) has developed a methodology to estimate the stock from the flow data and Figure 6 shows the rapid growth and significance of persons temporarily present in Australia. This temporary population at any one time represents about 5 percent of the total resident population and has considerable effects on housing and labour markets. Yet, examining these impacts is made very difficult because of the lack of information about the group. Inclusion of an appropriate way of identifying them in the census is an important priority for the 2016 enumeration. One approach may be to modify the existing question on citizenship to include the basis of residence. Perhaps along the following lines:

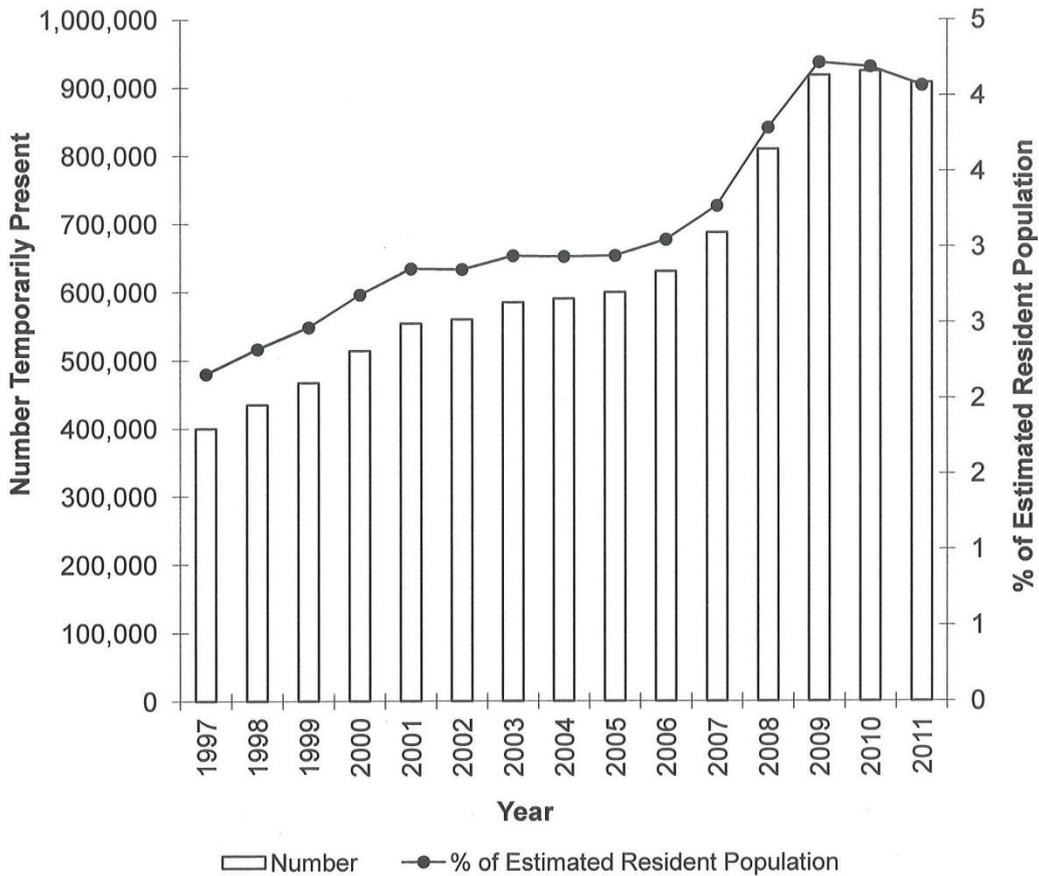
- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| What is your current residence status? | |
| - Australian citizen | |
| - Dual citizen | |
| - Australian permanent resident, citizen of another country | |
| - Australian temporary resident | |
| Visa type | - student |
| | - 457 |
| | - working holiday maker |
| | - bridging |
| - Australian visitor | - tourist |
| | - business |
| | - other |

An important emerging feature of Australian immigration is the strong nexus which has developed between temporary migration on the one hand and permanent settlement on the other. Since around 2000 the proportion of persons granted permanent residence as settlers who are made up of 'onshore' candidates, people already in Australia on some form of temporary visa, has increased to reach 32.1 percent in 2009-10. In this context it can be observed that Asia-Pacific migrants make the transition from temporary to permanent residence greater than other birthplace groups. In 2009-10 they made up a higher proportion

of onshore migrants (54.9 percent) than of offshore arrivals (52.8 percent). Hence, as Australia moves more toward a system whereby a large proportion of settlers initially enter

Figure 6: Australia: Persons Temporarily Present, Number and as a Percentage of Total Estimated Resident Population, 1997-2011

Source: DIAC *Population Flows: Immigration Aspects and Immigration Update*, various issues and ABS *Australian Demographic Statistics*, various issues



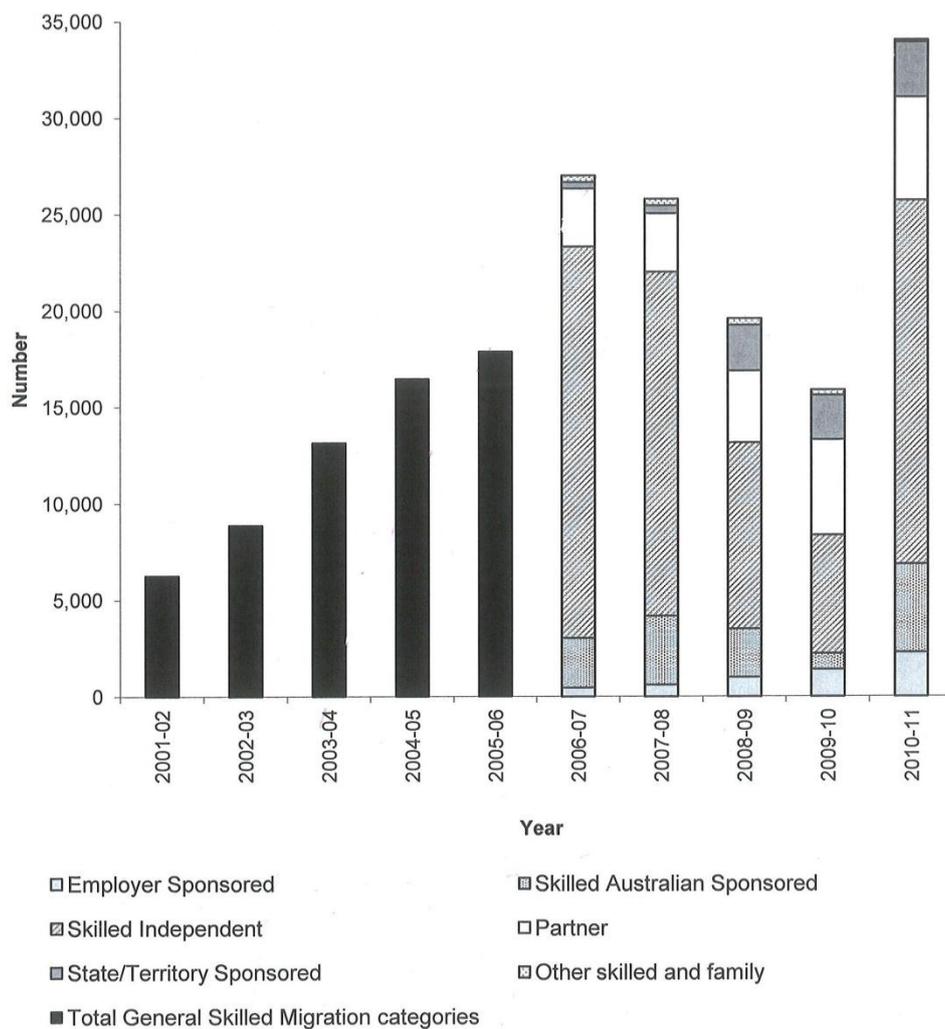
the country as temporary migrants of one kind or another (as is already the case in New Zealand and the United States) this new pattern is stronger among Asia-Pacific migrants than among immigrants from other regions. Over the 2002-10 period, almost a third of all Asia-Pacific permanent additions to the Australian population were onshore settlers.

Students have been an especially important element in the group transitioning between temporary and permanent residence. This phenomenon of ‘designer migration’

(Simmons, 1999) involving ‘student’s recruitment with a specific view towards longer term or permanent settlement’ (Vertovec, 2002, 13) is one which is now widespread in destination countries. Figure 7 shows how in Australia these transitions have become of greater importance.

Figure 7: Australia: Migration Program Visa Grants to Student Visa Holders, 2001-02 to 2010-11

Source: DIAC *Population Flows: Immigration Aspects*, various issues; DIAC, 2012

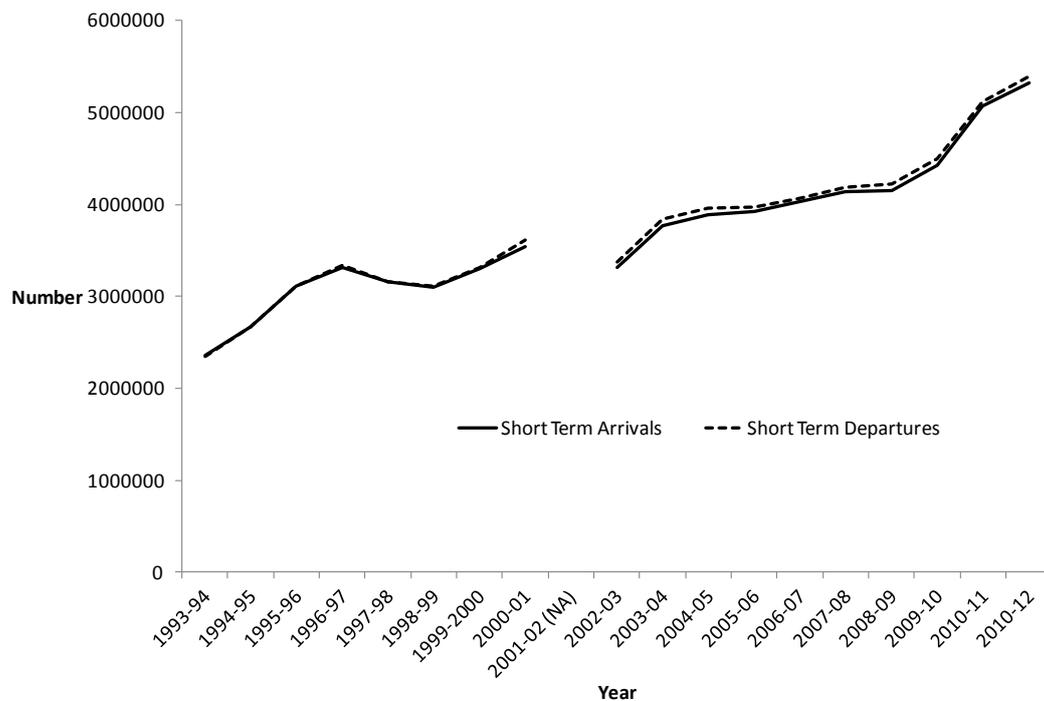


Thus far we have considered only migrations involving stays in Australia of longer than one year but there also has been a substantial increase in short term (involving a stay of

less than one year) movement from Asia to Australia. This is evident in Figure 8 which indicates there are now around half a million such moves into Australia each year. It is important to stress that this movement has significant economic impacts and implications.

Figure 8: Australia: Short Term Arrivals and Departures of Total Asia and Pacific-Born Persons, 1993-94 to 2011-12

Source: DIAC unpublished data



This is shown in Table 4 which indicates the reasons given by Asia-Pacific-born persons visiting Australia on a short-term basis. From an economic perspective the importance of Asian tourism to Australia is evident despite the high Australian dollar. Tourism in 2011 was the third largest earner of foreign exchange in Australia.² However, the significant percentage moving to carry out business or study indicates that there are other economic dimensions to the movement. In 2012 the Australian government produced a report on

² Receipts from overseas students is the fourth.

‘Australia in the Asian Century’ (Australian Government, 2012) which argued that Australia’s engagement with the dynamic Asian region is fundamental to the nation’s future prosperity, sustainability and security, and:

‘To seize these opportunities, Australia must create deeper connections with Asia to broaden the flow of ideas and acquire new knowledge and capabilities’
(Australian Government, 2012, 8).

Table 4: Australia: Asia-Born Short Term Visitor Arrivals by Reason for Travel, 2011-12

Source: DIAC, unpublished data

Reason	Short Term Visitor Arrivals	Percent
Exhibition	5,924	0.2
Convention/Conference	73,433	3.1
Business	208,291	8.7
Visiting Friends/Relatives	450,368	18.8
Holiday	1,211,684	50.7
Employment	84,065	3.5
Education	248,860	10.4
Other	108,310	4.5
Total (excl. NS)	2,390,937	100.0

Clearly the scale, diversity and complexity of people movements demonstrated by the migration flow data is both a major existing conduit ‘hardwiring’ Australia into the region as well as offering a range of potential possibilities for developing these connections.

MOVEMENT FROM AUSTRALIA TO ASIA

Clearly, there has been a significant increase in the inflow of both permanent and temporary migrants from the Asia-Pacific to Australia. However, a major element in this

international migration system is the counterflow. As Dumont and Lemaitre (2005) have pointed out, these flows are significantly under-estimated in size and influence by analysts and policy makers largely because there is little or no data relating to them. On the one hand, destination nations rarely collect information on who leaves the country and concentrate only on immigration, on the other, source countries have little data on immigration, especially immigrants who are citizens returning after a sojourn abroad. Australian data is an exception since information is collected on all who leave the nation and can provide some insights into this flow. Table 5 provides data on permanent departures from Australia to Asia-Pacific countries over the 1994-2006 period and these are divided into two groups:

- (a) The foreign-born who mainly represent *return migration* and *third country migration* of former settlers (61.0 percent of the migrants from Australia to Asia).
- (b) The Australia-born who are partly the Australia-born children of those returnees but who are predominantly Australian citizens of long standing moving for one reason or another to an Asian country (39.0 percent) as the reciprocal migration referred to earlier.

It is shown in the table that the permanent outflow from Australia over the study period is a third the size of the inflow although its significance varies from nation to nation.

The migration of the overseas-born from Australia to Asia-Pacific destinations is predominantly return migration. Some striking differences between countries in the extent of return migration is in evidence, but there are interesting contrasts between the three Asian regional groupings of countries. Hence there have been 56,136 return migrants to North East Asian countries – equivalent to 38.3 percent of arrivals suggesting a return rate of over one in three immigrants. Most important here are Hong Kong returnees which is part of a wider pattern of circulation of Hong Kong immigrants to Australia with their homeland involving

Table 5: Australia: Asian Country of Origin, Permanent Arrivals and Permanent Departures (Overseas and Australia-Born), 1994-95 to 2005-06

Source: DIAC Overseas Arrivals and Departures, unpublished data

Country of Origin	Settler Arrivals	Permanent Departures Overseas born	Permanent Departures Australia born	Permanent Departures	Permanent Departures as percent of Settler Arrivals
South East Asia					
Mainland					
Burma (Myanmar)	2,027	43	66	109	5.4
Cambodia	5,493	346	219	565	10.3
Laos	478	145	120	265	55.4
Thailand	15,075	3,193	3,341	6,534	43.3
Vietnam	26,946	4,627	1,554	6,181	22.9
Maritime SE Asia					
Brunei	1,378	499	981	1,480	107.4
East Timor	92	80	88	168	182.6
Indonesia	28,686	5,573	4,447	10,020	34.9
Malaysia	29,214	3,085	3,187	6,272	21.5
Philippines	38,639	1,816	1,233	3,049	7.9
Singapore	43,394	9,114	13,547	22,661	52.2
Total South East Asia	191,422	28,521	28,783	57,304	29.9
North East Asia					
Chinese Asia					
China	75,563	16,144	5,130	21,274	28.2
Hong Kong	37,797	26,660	12,967	39,627	104.8
Macau	681	219	233	452	66.4
Mongolia	35	15	28	43	122.9
Taiwan	14,194	6,604	848	7,452	52.5
Japan and the Koreas					
Japan	8,757	3,592	4,525	8,117	92.7
Korea, Dem People' Rep	10	1	0	1	10.0
Korea, Rep of	9,712	2,901	777	3,678	37.9
Total North East Asia	146,749	56,136	24,508	80,644	55.0
Southern Asia					
Bangladesh	4,838	81	36	117	2.4
Bhutan	4	2	0	2	50.0
India	44,097	856	571	1,427	3.2
Maldives	34	28	82	110	323.5
Nepal	940	8	22	30	3.2
Pakistan	14,484	193	95	288	2.0
Sri Lanka	14,064	304	140	444	3.2
Afghanistan	1,372	32	27	59	4.3
Total Southern Asia	79,833	1,504	973	2,477	3.1
TOTAL ASIA	418,004	86,161	54,264	140,425	33.6
Pacific					
Norfolk Island	68	430	1258	1688	2482.4
New Caledonia	211	316	267	583	276.3
Papua New Guinea	3413	1283	3315	4598	134.7
Solomon Islands	418	198	457	655	156.7
Vanuatu	340	447	1352	1799	529.1
Guam	41	36	131	167	407.3
Kiribati	76	27	71	98	128.9
Nauru	64	57	89	146	228.1
Cook Islands	544	303	147	450	82.7
Fiji	19377	1253	1491	2744	14.2
French Polynesia	61	57	52	109	178.7
Samoa	1496	939	435	1374	91.8
Tonga	1321	633	343	976	73.9
Tuvalu	90	3	12	15	16.7
Other Pacific (not incl NZ)	63	35	69	104	165.1
Total Pacific	27583	6017	9489	15506	56.2

Note Pacific Countries are for 1994-95 to 2006-07

'astronauting' (Pe Pua *et al.*, 1996). It also is associated with significant numbers of Hong Kongers taking out Australian citizenship before the 1997 handover to China (Skeldon, 1994) and significant numbers subsequently returning to China. Similar patterns have been observed and analysed in Canada (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005). There is also a substantial return migration to Japan which is a longstanding feature of Australian-Asian migration (Hugo, 1994) with many Japanese coming to Australia on long term company transfer with the intention of returning home on completion of that assignment (Iguchi, 2008). Perhaps more surprising in Table 5 is the large proportion of Chinese and, to a lesser extent South Koreans, who have returned home. With 75,563 permanent arrivals between 1994 and 2006 the China-born have been the largest Asian-Australian migration flow. However, despite the relative recency of the large China flows the return flow is substantial, equivalent to 21.4 percent of the inflow. For South Koreans it is 29.9 percent. It is clear from fieldwork that this reflects a considerable extent of bilocality with many Chinese and South Korea origin Australians maintaining work, family and housing in both countries and are circulating between them.

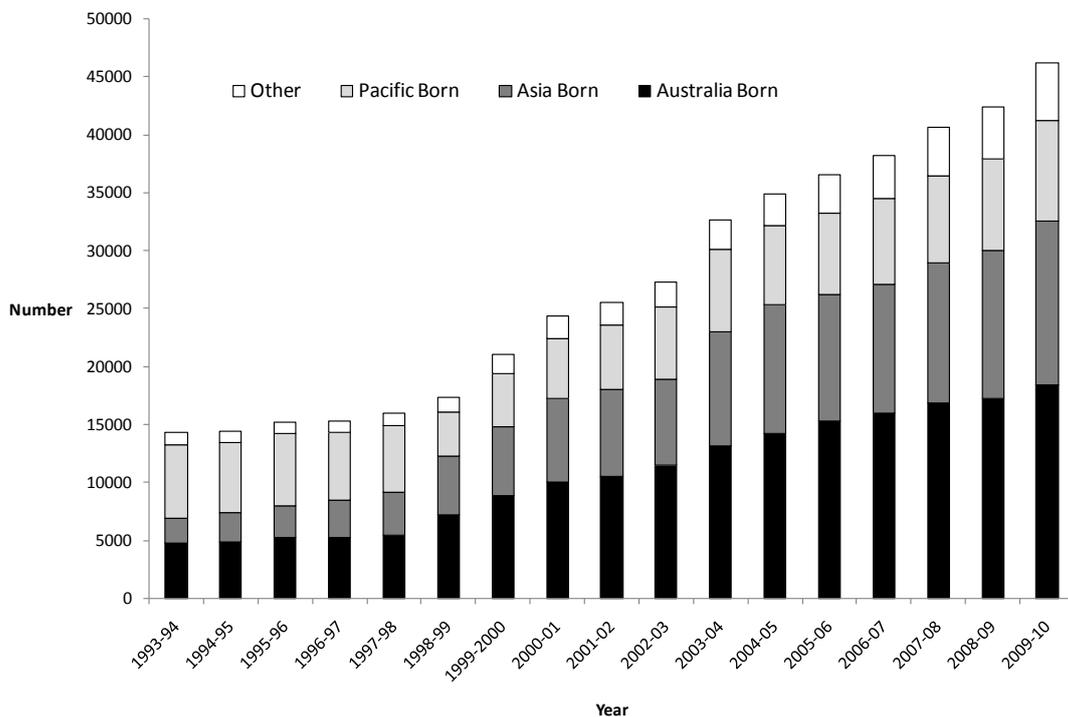
For Southeast Asia overall the amount of return migration has been somewhat less – equivalent to 14.9 percent of the inflow. It nevertheless has been significant, especially in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. Even for Vietnam a significant backflow is a recent phenomenon. Much of the Vietnamese migration to Australia was refugee-humanitarian migrants which occurred in the first 15 years following reunification in 1975 (Viviani, 1996) and was characterised at that time by a very low rate of return migration (Hugo, 1994). However, it is apparent that with *doi moi* and the opening of the Vietnamese economy that an increasing number of Vietnamese-Australians have returned to their birthplace and taken advantage of the liberalisation of the economy to invest and set up businesses.

Perhaps the most striking figures are for South Asia where rates of return are extremely low, especially for India where there have been 51.5 immigrants for every returnee. This may be partly a function of the recency of much of the South Asian, especially Indian, immigration to Australia but it still contrasts greatly with the China flows which also are mainly quite recent.

For Pacific countries there are more permanent departures from Australia than arrivals into Australia. This partly reflects the fact that many Pacific origin arrivals come to Australia via New Zealand. It is important to note, however, that for the largest origin country, Fiji, there is a very small outflow. The data hence do show that there is a significant north to south flow of skilled workers from Australia to the Asia-Pacific region. The substantial increase which has occurred over the last 15 years in both the return flow of Asians as well as the flow of Australians than people to Asia is depicted in Figure 9. Hence while the

Figure 9: Australia: Permanent Departures of Australia, Asia and Pacific Born to Asia and Pacific Regions, 1993-94 to 2009-10

Source: DIAC unpublished data



dominant permanent flow in the Asia-Australia migration system is toward Australia, there is a smaller but nevertheless significant counterflow. Table 6 shows that over the 1993-2008 period over half a million Asians settled in Australia but that a sixth returned to Asia and there were 72,773 Australia-born persons who moved permanently to Asia. Hence, the net migration gain was 389,786 representing a migration efficiency percentage of 53.3, i.e. it takes two immigrants to get a net migration gain of a migrant.

Table 6: Australia: Permanent Migration In and Out, 1993-94 to 2007-08
Source: DIAC unpublished data

Asia-born moving to Australia	560,111
Asia-born moving from Australia to Asia	97,552
Australia-born moving from Australia to Asia	72,773
Net migration	389,786

A further element in the complexity of the migration relationship between Australia and Asia is the movement of Asians to Australia on a permanent basis and then subsequently moving permanently elsewhere as ‘third country migration’. Biao (2004, 164) has explained:

‘In the international migration of the highly skilled ‘brain bypass’ has become a new phenomenon. The term refers to the movement of skilled migrants from the South to countries such as Canada and Australia, where using experience acquired in those countries as leverage, they then move onto other countries, particularly the USA’.

Biao (2004) found that there is a significant pattern among Indian Information Technology immigrants who study and settle in Australia, gain permanent residence and then migrate to the United States. He explains that the immigrants have complex strategies which involves them assessing they have a greater chance of migration to the USA from Australia

than from India. Moreover, their Australian permanent residence status can serve as an insurance backup should they not be successful in the USA or in a downturn of the USA IT economy.

Table 7: Australia: Permanent Departures of Asia-Born According to Whether They Return to Their Birthplace or a Different Country 1993-2007

Source: DIAC unpublished data

Country of Birth	Arrivals	Departures	Percentage Returning to Country of Birth	Ratio of Arrivals to Departures
China	107,339	25,919	57.4	4.1
India	82,447	3,631	22.0	22.7
Singapore	19,354	3,075	53.0	6.3
Hong Kong	30,227	20,700	84.6	1.5
Philippines	51,540	3,395	44.5	15.2
Malaysia	27,881	5,350	34.4	5.2
Vietnam	39,351	8,874	57.1	4.4
Indonesia	31,768	6,359	74.6	5.0
Taiwan	18,073	8,350	80.3	2.2
Burma	5,977	277	10.5	21.6
Cambodia	9,618	1,013	29.1	9.5
Laos	465	173	28.0	2.7
Thailand	13,171	2,517	74.8	5.2
Japan	8,456	2,864	77.8	3.0
South Korea	14,802	3,811	74.9	3.9
Bangladesh	8,665	228	25.4	38.0
Nepal	2,250	37	8.1	60.8
Pakistan	12,163	520	31.3	23.4
Sri Lanka	25,052	1,285	24.0	19.5
Afghanistan	13,643	254	12.2	53.7

Table 7 shows the proportions of departures of Asian birthplace groups from Australia over the 1993-2007 period that were directed toward the country of birth. Again there are

some striking inter country differences. The South Asia: East Asia contrast is apparent. Among East Asian countries not only are the ratios of immigrants to emigrants much smaller and the outflows more substantial but the proportions that are returning to their birthplace are considerably greater. This is apparent in the two largest countries of origin – China and India. Table 7 shows that of the 25,919 China-born Australian residents who indicated they were leaving Australia permanently, 57.4 percent returned to China. Moreover more than another quarter went to Hong Kong SAR. This pattern was observed by Zweig and Han (2007) to also apply for the China-born leaving the USA and Canada.

CIRCULATION BETWEEN AUSTRALIA TO ASIA

In the literature on return migration and its impact on development in origin countries is almost totally focused on permanent return. Yet non-permanent return can also impinge upon development. Returnees can not only bring with them money and equipment but also new ideas and new ways of doing things. It is apparent that settlement of Asian groups has resulted in an upswing of *non-permanent* return migration out of Australia. Figures 10 and 11 show how long term and short term movement from Australia to Asian countries has greatly increased in recent years. Moreover it is apparent that the Asian-born have been an important component in that temporary movement out of Australia. Clearly the permanent settlement of Asians in Australia is creating a significant temporary flow back to countries of origin in which former settlers are an important component. This is especially the case in long term movement in which the overseas-born make up an increasing majority of the flow from Australia to Asia.

The special data set created using the personal identifiers of all persons moving into and out of Australia allow us to establish the extent to which this temporary movement out of Australia into Asia involves former settlers. Table 8 shows the average number of return

trips made into and out of Australia over the 1998-2006 period by different Asian birthplace groups. They are differentiated according to their visa status granted by the Department of

Figure 10: Australia: Long Term Departures to Asia of Australia and Overseas-Born, 1993-94 to 2007-08

Source: DIAC unpublished data

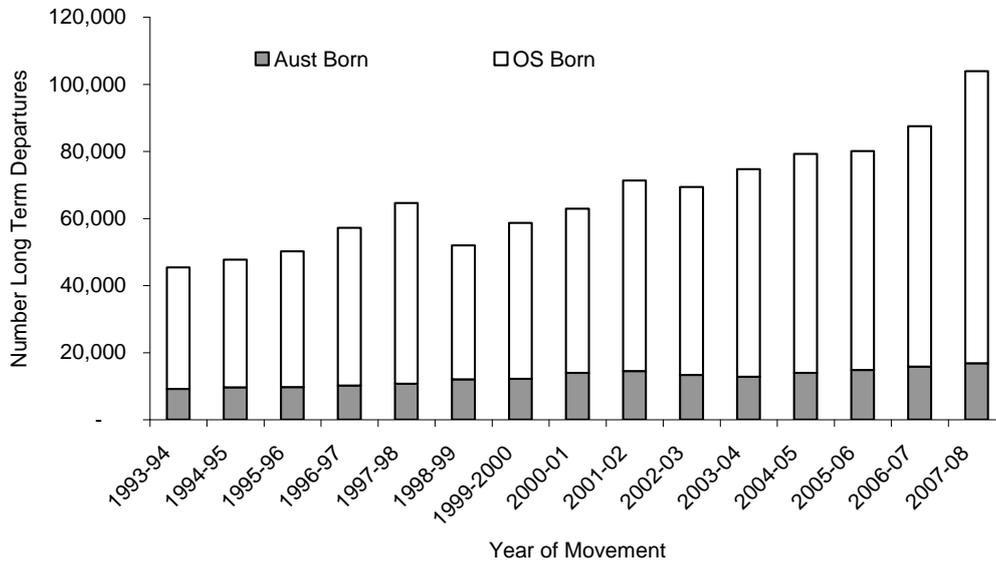
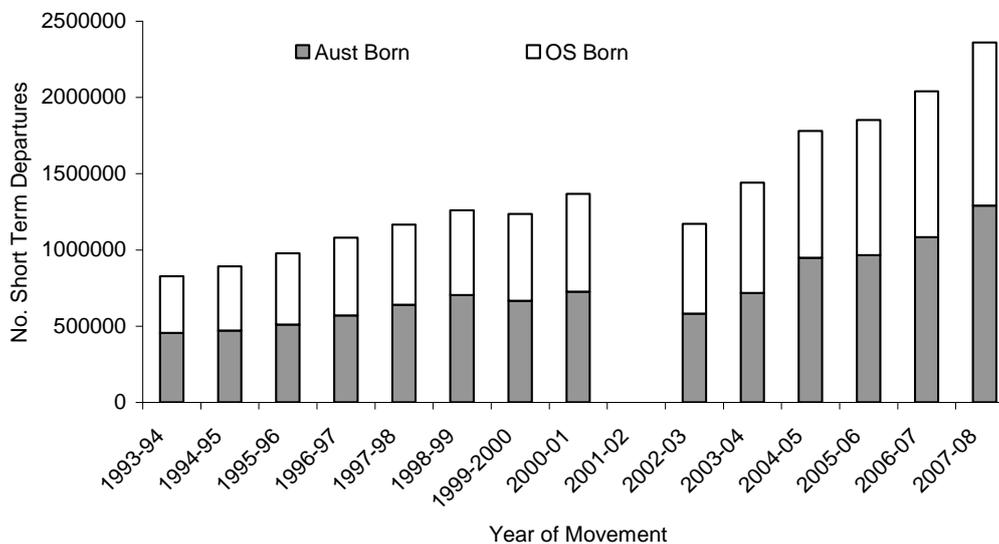


Figure 11: Australia: Short Term Resident Departures to Asia of Australia and Overseas-Born, 1993-94 to 2007-08

Source: DIAC unpublished data



Note: Data not available for 2001-02

Table 8: Australia: Country of Birth by Type of Movement: Average Number of Return Trips by Asia-Born Individuals, 1998-2006 Type of Movement
 Source: Special data set received by DIAC

Birthplace of Mover	Status of Mover					
	Settler	Visitor	Resident	Visitor	Resident	Resident
	Arrival	Arrival	Return	Departure	Temporary Departure	Permanent Departure
Average Number of Return Trips						
Burma (Myanmar)	1.0	3.6	5.8	4.4	5.9	4.1
Cambodia	1.3	4.8	4.0	5.2	4.0	4.1
Laos	1.2	3.2	5.2	3.5	5.6	4.3
Thailand	2.4	4.9	5.9	5.3	6.2	5.0
Vietnam	1.4	3.9	4.7	4.4	4.8	4.3
Brunei Darussalam	4.1	7.3	8.8	7.6	9.1	7.3
Indonesia	4.8	6.1	10.5	6.4	10.3	9.2
Malaysia	4.0	5.9	9.4	6.1	9.4	6.9
Philippines	1.5	3.9	4.8	4.7	5.0	4.1
Singapore	3.7	6.4	10.2	6.5	10.2	5.9
China	2.4	4.4	6.2	4.8	6.1	5.9
Hong Kong	3.5	5.4	6.4	5.6	6.7	5.1
Macau	3.2	5.1	6.2	5.3	6.4	4.8
Mongolia	1.6	2.5	4.7	3.1	4.4	0.0
Taiwan	5.1	5.8	8.7	6.0	8.9	8.0
Japan	4.0	5.4	8.3	5.6	8.5	6.3
Bangladesh	1.7	2.4	4.1	3.1	4.0	3.4
Bhutan	1.3	1.7	3.7	2.0	3.8	0.0
India	1.9	3.7	5.7	4.7	5.5	4.6
Maldives	2.6	4.6	13.0	5.0	12.1	0.0
Nepal	1.6	2.2	5.1	3.2	4.9	5.1
Pakistan	1.6	3.5	5.0	4.3	4.9	4.5
Sri Lanka	1.9	3.8	6.2	4.7	6.2	6.2
Afghanistan	0.6	2.2	2.4	3.3	2.3	3.4
Korea	2.5	3.7	7.5	4.2	7.5	6.4

Immigration and Citizenship. To take China born persons for example the data in the table can be interpreted as follows:

- China-born settler arrivals had made an average 2.4 return trips to Australia in the period before coming to settle.
- China-born visitors had made an average 4.4 trips per person.
- China born residents of Australia made an average 6.4 return trips during the reference period.

This clearly shows both that there is considerable circulation between Australia and Asian contexts of former settlers and also that there are significant numbers of China-born – based in China who circulate frequently to Australia. In both cases the potential for significant development impacts in China are considerable.

The rates of resident return are especially high for those born in Singapore, Indonesia, Taiwan, Japan, Korea and Malaysia indicating a high level of business interaction with their homelands by Australian-based immigrants from these countries. Clearly immigrant Asians set up very active circuits of movement between Asian countries and Australia. Obviously a significant amount of this movement is family based visitation. However it is also apparent that much of the movement involves other motives. A study of Chinese academics in Australia (Hugo, 2005) showed clearly that almost all maintained strong linkages with Chinese Universities with joint research projects, regular teaching stints in China and knowledge exchange being substantial. These circuits already are powerful conduits for the flow of money, goods and expertise into origin countries. Perhaps more importantly, they have the potential for becoming even more significant channel to facilitate development in an appropriate policy setting.

The long term arrival/departure information for Australia do not include information on the reasons for movement but this is available for short term movement.³ Table 9 shows the dominance of motivations of visiting friends and relatives among the Australian Asia-born residents making short term visits back into Asia. This indicates that in 2007-08 there were 709,410 short term visits made by Australians who were born in Asia. Of these 31.8 percent were for holidays and 49.1 percent were to visit family and friends. It is undoubtedly the case however that many of the half who nominate visiting family and friends as their main reason for travel, actually in this visit:

³ i.e. for temporary movers in which the intended length of stay is less than 12 months.

- Combined it also with business activity.
- In their interaction with friends, and to a lesser extent family, passed on knowledge and information gained in Australia.

Table 9: Australia: Asia-Born Short Term Resident Departures by Country of Destination (Asia) by Reason for Travel, 2007-08

Source: DIAC unpublished data

Reason for Travel	Number	Percent
Exhibition	888	0.1
Convention/conference	10,072	1.5
Business	80,004	11.8
Visiting friends/relatives	332,834	49.1
Holiday	215,176	31.8
Employment	15,617	2.3
Education	5,393	0.8
Other	17,661	2.6
Not stated	31,766	
Total	709,410	100.0

This notwithstanding one in five of Asia-born Australians visiting Asia did so for a reason *other* than to visit family or friends or to holiday. Hence it is apparent that short term home visiting of this group is already a significant mechanism of business activity and knowledge transfer. Moreover Table 10 shows that there is considerable variation between Asian countries in the extent to which return visiting is associated with business and other non-holiday family visitation. The table indicates that in the largest single destination, China, 29.1 percent of all visitors had motives other than to holiday or visit family and friends. Similarly high proportions applied in other East Asian destinations as well as Singapore and Brunei. The proportions were lower in South Asia and in other countries which were sources of refugee migrants to Australia.

Table 10: Australia: Asia-Born Residents Making Short Term Visits to Asia by Country of Destination and Reason, 2007-08

Country of Destination	Total Number of Visits	Percent Not Visiting Family/Friends Holiday
Burma	2,094	11.4
Cambodia	7,644	10.1
Laos	1,226	6.7
Thailand	32,289	13.4
Vietnam	57,896	11.5
Brunei	2,153	31.3
Indonesia	45,051	26.7
Malaysia	67,640	22.9
Philippines	45,377	15.8
Singapore	57,126	34.6
East Timor	1,231	62.3
China	124,423	29.1
Hong Kong SAR	86,956	25.3
Macao SAR	2,139	27.3
Taiwan	26,919	21.7
Japan	32,260	22.4
Korea	19,477	31.9
Bangladesh	6,562	12.6
India	64,311	14.8
Maldives	146	10.3
Nepal	1,784	7.2
Pakistan	8,270	14.8
Sri Lanka	15,227	15.7
Afghanistan	919	7.7
Total	709,414	19.1

CONCLUSION

The Australian international migration flow data analysed here have demonstrated conclusively that the Asia-Pacific/Australia migration system is characterised by a high degree of complexity and circularity. This stands in sharp distinction to the conventional depiction of this system being seen largely as ‘south-north migration’ where, at least

implicitly, it is assumed that the overwhelming dominant pattern is of permanent redistribution of highly skilled people from poorer countries of Asia and the Pacific to better-off Australia. While the explosion of this myth of south-north migration is important for the Australian case the only difference between it and most other OECD ‘destinations’ of south-north migration is the fact that it has a more comprehensive data collection system which allows the inherent circularity and complexity in the system to be quantified. Australia is not a special case; such patterns are characteristic of south-north migration in most cases but the data limitations conceal it. It is argued here that circularity, reciprocity and complexity are structural features of the Asia-Pacific/Australia migration system – they are not peripheral or ephemeral. The material analysed here point to a pressing need to on the one hand reconceptualise the whole concept of south-north migration so that it recognises the fundamental complexity of the population flows which are involved. On the other it also points to the urgency of improving our migration data collection systems which in many countries remain grounded on the outmoded settlement migration model and are biased toward migration receiving countries and considerations.

Another of the striking findings regarding Asia-Pacific/Australia international migration relates to the substantial blurring between permanent and non-permanent migration. It is apparent that categorising international movers as permanent or temporary is becoming increasingly problematical. It has long been the case that this dimension of mobility is more appropriately conceptualised as a continuum than as a binary dichotomy but the overlap has increased in recent times. Many ways in which permanent and temporary migration are linked have been demonstrated in the Asia-Pacific/Australia case. These include:

- Persons arriving in Australia as temporary migrants (e.g. students, temporary business migrants) becoming permanent residents of Australia.

- Persons arriving as permanent settlers in Australia but subsequently returning to their homeland or on to a third nation on a permanent basis.
- Persons arriving as permanent settlers in Australia but then returning to their homeland on a temporary basis, in many cases frequently travelling between Australia and their Asian homeland. Hence there is an important connection between permanent and temporary movement.
- Enhanced flows of Australians to Asia, not only returnees but also it is apparent that the linkages fostered by permanent settlement migration have led to enhanced flows of tourists, business people and others into Asia.

There are important implications which flow from the data analysed here for the ongoing discussion regarding migration and development and especially for the potential of so-called south-north movements having positive development outcomes for origin countries. The paper has demonstrated considerably that permanent displacement of Asia-Pacific-born people to Australia is only one part of a complex migration system which involves important flows in the opposite direction. These reciprocal, circular and return flows involving not only natives of the origin country but also Australians raise a number of questions in the context of reducing poverty and encouraging economic development in Asia-Pacific nations.

1. To what extent can origin countries use these flows to generate flows of knowledge, finance, goods and people which will benefit origin communities?
2. To what extent can Australia in its migration, development assistance and other policies use these migrations to facilitate positive development outcomes in Asia-Pacific origins as well as Australia? (Hugo, 2012).

The detailed analysis of the movement flows between Asia-Pacific countries in Australia not only insists that the common understanding of south-north migration must be

reconceptualised but also opens up the potential for migration policy to become more 'development friendly'.

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