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**A GLOBAL LABOUR MARKET:
FACTORS MOTIVATING THE SPONSORSHIP AND
TEMPORARY MIGRATION OF SKILLED WORKERS TO AUSTRALIA¹**

by

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ABSTRACT

The recruitment of skilled foreign workers is becoming increasingly important to many industrialised countries that are experiencing a shortage of skilled labour. This paper examines the factors motivating the sponsorship and temporary migration of skilled workers to Australia under the temporary business entry program, a new development in Australia's migration policy that is similar to the H-1B visa program in the United States. Drawing on the results of two surveys – one of employers that have sponsored temporary skilled workers from overseas and the other of the migrants themselves – the paper examines the contexts and reasons for the sponsorship and migration of skilled temporary workers from abroad. Based on these findings, the paper discusses the relevance of current theories of international labour migration to the present era of economic globalisation in which employers think globally about labour recruitment.

Introduction

Current theories of international labour migration tend to focus on the migration of low skilled workers from less developed countries to the industrialised countries. However, the migration of skilled labour, which can include flows from one industrialised country to another, is becoming increasingly important as many advanced countries seek skilled workers from other similar countries for a variety of reasons. Countries such as Germany, United Kingdom and United States of America now have visa programs specific for the temporary entry of highly skilled labour (Lowell 1999; Joint Standing Committee on Migration 2004). This paper examines the contexts and reasons for the sponsorship and international migration of skilled temporary workers to Australia and the type of skills that are in demand. It is based on data from two surveys, one of employers that have recruited and sponsored the temporary migration to Australia of skilled workers and the other of the skilled migrants themselves, that were conducted as part of a major research project on temporary skilled migration to Australia. Based on the findings of the data analysis, the paper discusses the relevance of current theories of international labour migration to the present era of economic globalisation where employers think globally in labour recruitment.

Temporary skilled migration to Australia

In 1996, in response to the new global economy and business groups wanting more flexible arrangements for bringing in skilled workers from overseas on a temporary basis, the Australian government introduced a new temporary business entry visa (subclass 457) that allowed employers to sponsor skilled workers for a stay of up to four years (Business Advisory Panel 1999). The new visa program involved a radical simplification of the rules and procedures governing the temporary entry of skilled workers. Employers were no longer required to demonstrate that they were unable to find a suitably qualified Australian resident to fill the position or that there was a training benefit to Australian workers. Other requirements such as medical checks of the migrant workers were also streamlined to achieve a faster visa processing time and since November 2003 both sponsorship and visa applications could be submitted online for even faster processing.

Employers that had been approved by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs were able to sponsor overseas workers in the first four major occupational groups: managers and specialist administrators, professionals, associate professionals and tradespersons. They had to pay their foreign employees on the same basis as Australian residents. There was a minimum salary threshold (currently at A\$39,100 or A\$50,775 for occupations in the information technology sector) aimed at excluding low or unskilled workers. Employers were monitored annually by the Department of Immigration for compliance with the terms of sponsorship.

The temporary business entry visa, subclass 457, is similar to the H-1B visa in the United States in that it is tied to an employer sponsor. However unlike the H-1B visa there is no restriction on the number of 457 visas that can be issued annually. The visa is renewable and there is no restriction on visa holders applying for permanent

residence. Spouses and dependent children can come to Australia with the skilled employee and spouses have full work rights in Australia.

Australia's immigration program has always emphasised permanent settlement, so the temporary migration of skilled workers is a new and important shift in migration pattern to Australia. Since the visa's introduction the temporary entry of skilled workers into Australia has increased steadily (see DIMIA 2004; Khoo et al. 2003). In 2003-04, over 40,000 visas were granted, an increase of 6 per cent from the previous year. As of June 2004, there were more than 58,000 people on this visa temporary resident in Australia (DIMIA 2005, p.73).

Compared to the vast amount of research on permanent or settler migration to Australia, there have been few studies of temporary migration. Prior to the introduction of the 457 temporary entry visa, a few studies had examined the different types of temporary movements (Sloan and Kennedy 1992), the role of temporary migrants in the labour market (Brooks et al. 1994) and Japanese workers in the tourism industry (Bell and Carr 1994). The study by Brooks et al. found that skilled temporary residents increased opportunities for Australian workers through skill transfers and economic benefits and did not disadvantage Australian workers in the labour market. More recently after the introduction of the 457 visa, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs has commissioned three studies of the impact of temporary skilled migration on government budgets and Australians' living standards (Access Economics 2002a; 2002b; 2002c). These studies have found that temporary skilled migration has positive economic effects. A similar finding was reached in studies of the US H-1B visa (Keely 1998; Martin 1999).

It is also important to understand the determinants as well as the consequences of skilled temporary migration. However, there has not been a study of the factors that motivate temporary skilled migration to Australia. The objective of this paper is to examine this issue from the perspective of both employers that have sponsored temporary skilled migrants and the migrants who have come to work in Australia to obtain a better understanding of this new pattern of international migration to Australia.

Data and methods of analysis

The paper is based on data from two surveys conducted in 2003-04 in Australia. The surveys were an integral part of a major research project on temporary skilled migration undertaken with the collaboration of the Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA). The first survey, conducted in mid-2003, was of a sample of 135 employers that had sponsored skilled temporary migrants to Australia in recent years. The second survey, conducted between November 2003 and May 2004, was of a sample of 1175 skilled temporary migrants. In both surveys, letters were mailed by DIMIA to employers and temporary migrants randomly selected from DIMIA's administrative records informing them about the research project and inviting them to participate in the surveys. A total of 295 employers and 6000 temporary migrant workers were contacted.

Survey respondents had two options for completing the survey questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire was mailed with the approach letter and respondents could complete and return it to the research team in the reply paid envelope provided. Alternatively, they could go to the survey website on the internet and complete the questionnaire online. A reminder letter was sent out one month after the first letter.

Completed questionnaires were received from 135 employers, yielding a response rate of 46 per cent. The survey was anonymous and collected information about the employer, their employee recruitment process, reasons for sponsoring overseas employees and their views about the sponsorship application process. The research team also conducted face-to-face interviews with ten employers to obtain a more in-depth perspective of their experiences with sponsoring workers in the temporary skilled migration program. These interviews were conducted with employers in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. The employers were from a range of industry sectors and included both large multinational companies and small local businesses.

Although the survey of employers was small and exploratory, the employers who responded appeared to be well represented in terms of location, size of business and industry sector (Table 1). The IT and communications sector had the largest number of respondents with 15 per cent of the total sample. This percentage was very close to the industry share of 16 per cent according to the Department of Immigration's administrative data on sponsorship approvals for 2000-01. There was also good representation of employers in health and community services, accommodation and restaurants, personal and other services, manufacturing, education and construction industries.

Completed questionnaires were received from 1175 temporary skilled migrants. 1101 letters were returned because the addressees were no longer at the mailing address. Some skilled temporary migrants stayed in Australia for less than a year and it was not unexpected that a significant proportion of those who were sent the survey questionnaire were no longer at their address on DIMIA's list. It was likely that the number of people who did not receive a survey questionnaire might be greater than the number of returned letters. If an estimated 2000 people contacted never received the letter sent by DIMIA, the 1175 questionnaires received would yield a response rate of about 24 per cent. The survey questionnaire was anonymous and included questions on demographic characteristics, reasons for coming to work in Australia, employment situation, family situation, housing arrangements and future migration residence intentions.

Data on the postcode of residence and industry of employment were available for the temporary migrants on DIMIA's administrative list from which the survey sample was drawn. These data were used to compare the survey respondents with all the temporary migrants who were contacted about the survey to see if there were any biases in the respondent sample in relation to location and industry of employment. This comparison shows that there was a slight under-representation of respondents living in Sydney compared with the 457 visa holders on DIMIA's administrative list, and a slight over-representation of those residing in Melbourne, Perth, regional Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. The percentage residing outside the capital cities was 15 per cent compared with 14 per cent for the temporary migrants on DIMIA's list. Thus, the sample was not at all biased toward

temporary migrants in the capital cities. Overall the survey respondents were fairly representative of the migrants on DIMIA's administrative list in terms of location of residence (see Table 1 for distribution of the migrants in the survey by location).

Comparison by industry of employment shows that there was much less representation in the survey of migrants working in personal services, property and business services and cultural and recreation services compared with the people on DIMIA's administrative list. Temporary migrants working in health and community services, construction and the restaurant industries were slightly over-represented in the survey. Representation of the other industries was good and the number of respondents in most industries was also large enough for a useful analysis by industry sector. Nearly 20 per cent of the survey respondents worked in the IT and communication industry. DIMIA's administrative data have shown that about 20 per cent of the people granted the temporary skilled visa each year are computer professionals (DIMIA 2003; 2004).

Since the survey questionnaire was in English, this might have resulted in a low rate of response from migrants whose English was not good enough to enable them to participate in the survey. However, skilled migrants are generally proficient in English. In terms of the distribution by country of citizenship as shown later, the survey respondents appeared to be fairly well distributed across the various countries known to be major sources of skilled temporary migration to Australia (see DIMIA 2004; Khoo et al. 2003). The gender composition of the migrants in the survey was also very similar to that based on DIMIA's administrative data.

Since one of the primary objectives of the research project was to examine the reasons for temporary skilled migration to Australia, both the surveys of employers and temporary skilled migrants included some specific questions on this issue. The questions to employers related to reasons why they decided to employ and sponsor skilled workers from overseas as temporary migrants; the questions to the migrants related to the reasons why they decided to come to work in Australia.

Employers were asked: "How important to you were each of the following reasons for sponsoring an overseas skilled worker?"

- The required skills are difficult to obtain in Australia.
- Sponsorship suits the company's policy of providing international experience to its employees.
- We require people at very short notice.
- Sponsored employees have a lower cost than Australian labour.
- The visa conditions provide a higher level of control over the employee.
- We need people who can train others to do the work.
- Foreign workers are more committed to the job than Australians.

For each reason, the employers were asked to indicate whether it was "Very important", "Important", "Somewhat important" or "Not at all important."

Similarly temporary skilled migrants were asked in the survey: "How important to you were each of the following reasons in deciding to work in Australia?"

- Better employment opportunity
- Higher salary

- Company transfer
- Promotion/career development
- Gain international experience
- Like Australia's lifestyle, climate
- Have relatives in Australia
- Have friends in Australia
- Intended to apply for permanent residence in Australia
- Lack of suitable employment in home country
- Dislike economic conditions in home country
- Dislike social conditions in home country
- Escape war or political situation

For each reason, the migrants were also asked to respond whether it was “Very important”, “Important”, “Somewhat important” or “Not at all important.”

A 4-point scale was used to score employers' and migrants' response to each reason: “Very important” = 4, “Important” = 3, “Somewhat important = 2, and “Not at all important” = 1. Factor analysis was undertaken to attempt to identify the main factors motivating the sponsorship and temporary migration of skilled workers from the employers' and migrants' responses to these specific reasons². Factor scores were generated for each factor extracted. Multiple classification analysis was then used to examine whether the factor scores relating to each factor motivating temporary skilled migration vary significantly with employers' characteristics such as size and industry and migrants' characteristics such as country of origin, sex, age, partnering status and occupational group³.

Characteristics of employers and skilled temporary migrants

To provide some background to the analysis of the factors motivating temporary skilled migration, we examine first the characteristics of employers and temporary skilled migrants, the type of skills imported by employers and the skill profile of migrants in the survey. Employers that sponsor skilled temporary migrants to Australia are very diverse. Besides coming from all industry sectors, they ranged from very large to very small businesses in terms of the number of people they employed (Table 1). More than one-quarter of all employers who responded to the survey employed more than 300 people. They included construction, manufacturing, mining, finance and insurance companies, education departments, universities and hospitals. Small employers employing less than 25 people included restaurants, software companies and hairdressing salons.

The employers were located in all states in Australia and in both large cities and regional areas. There was a heavy concentration in the large cities with almost 60 per cent located in Sydney alone (Table 1). As Australia's premier city, Sydney is a global city with more than 30 per cent of its population foreign-born and where many

² The factor analyses were carried out using the SPSS statistical package. The principal component method was used with varimax rotation to extract the main factors.

³ Multiple classification analysis (MCA) was used in the multivariate analysis because the objective was to compare mean scores (the dependent variable) by employers' and migrant characteristics (the independent variables) that are mostly categorical variables. The MCA was carried out using SPSS. Only a main effects model was specified.

employers think internationally in terms of labour recruitment. Multinational companies with headquarters in the US, UK or other European countries locate their office and regional headquarters in Sydney when they expand into Australia or the Asia-Pacific region. Small employers were also more likely to be located in Sydney or other large cities. About half of all migrants in the survey were resident in Sydney, but as noted earlier, 15 per cent were located in regional areas outside the main cities.

Half of all employers in the survey reported having just three or fewer temporary migrants currently working with them at the time of the survey. As expected, small employers sponsored very few temporary migrants while larger employers sponsored more. Employers in the hotel and restaurant industry tended to sponsor only a few workers. More than half of all the restaurants in the survey sponsored only one or two chefs. In contrast, employers in the health and business services industries such as hospitals and finance and insurance companies tended to sponsor larger numbers of foreign workers. One employer in the health sector sponsored over 100 employees and another employer in the finance and insurance industry sponsored more than 50 people. Ten percent of all migrants in the survey worked for small employers with less than five employees; 27 per cent worked for large employers with more than 300 employees (Table 1).

According to DIMIA's migrant stock data, the five top source countries of skilled temporary migrants were the UK, Japan, India, USA and South Africa, with UK citizens making up 30 per cent of all temporary skilled visa holders (DIMIA 2005). Among the migrants in the survey, 33 per cent were UK citizens and the five top source countries were the UK, USA, Japan, India and Ireland (Table 2). Skilled temporary migrants are more likely to come from other advanced (OECD) countries than permanent settler arrivals to Australia (Khoo et al. 2003).

The migrants were relatively young, with an average age of 35 and a median age of 33 years. Close to two-thirds of all respondents were in the prime working ages of 25-39 years. Female migrants had a younger age structure than male migrants (Table 2). Two-thirds of the survey respondents were male. This was similar to the gender ratio based on the Department of Immigration's data for all temporary migrant arrivals in recent years (Khoo et al. 2003). The percentage of males was higher for some country groups than others. Migrants from India were almost all (92 per cent) men. The percentage male was lower among migrants from Ireland (53 per cent) and Southeast Asia (51 per cent). Skilled permanent migration to Australia is also predominantly male when the principal applicants only are considered (DIMA 1997).

More than two-thirds of male migrants were married or had a partner compared with just half of female migrants. Of those migrants with a partner, over 90 per cent had brought their partner with them to Australia. Only one-third of the migrants in the survey had children and only one in four had brought children with them. About two-thirds (65 per cent) did not have any relatives in Australia. Of those who had relatives in Australia, the relatives were extended (such as uncles, aunts and cousins) rather immediately family members.

As expected the temporary migrants were generally highly qualified, with nearly 30 per cent having a post-graduate degree and over two-thirds having a Bachelor degree

or higher. Ten per cent of all migrants in the survey and 15 per cent of those with post-graduate degrees received their highest qualification in Australia.

The temporary migrants were much better qualified than Australian residents in the same occupational group who were in the work force. This was particularly so among managers and administrators (Table 3). Seventy per cent of temporary migrants in the survey who were managers or administrators had university degrees compared with just 32 per cent of Australian managers and administrators.

Skill profile of temporary migrants

Employers sponsored people with a wide variety of skills. Occupations most often stated by employers in the survey were general and specialist managers (IT, sales and marketing), IT consultants, nurses, engineers, chefs, hairdressers and tour guides. More specialised occupations included trademark attorneys, media strategists, audiologists and temple stonemasons. It was apparent from the interviews with employers that some of the people they sponsored had very specialised skills such as their overseas office employees who were knowledgeable about the computer software or equipment that the company used in its business operations or were selling to customers.

People in professional occupations made up the largest group of skilled temporary migrants, followed by managers and administrators (Table 2). For men, the largest professional occupation was computing professional and for women it was registered nurse. Chefs were the largest group among associate professionals and they were more likely to be male than female. Other occupations in demand were accountants, engineers, architects, graphic designers and illustrators, marketing and advertising professionals, human resource professionals, business and organisation analysts and teachers. Trades included metal fitters, machinists, motor mechanics, roof tilers and slaters, structural steel welders and electricians. Migrants in the survey also included a balloon pilot, a parachute rigger, a geophysicist and a ski instructor.

Most skilled temporary migrants had worked for some years in their occupation before coming to Australia. The median number of years of work experience was 5; the mean was 6.5 years. Managers and administrators had an average of 6.8 years of work experience in their previous country of residence and professionals 6.3 years before coming to work in Australia. Forty per cent had worked in another country (other than their home country) for three months or more before coming to Australia.

Factors motivating the sponsorship and temporary migration of skilled workers to Australia

Employers' reasons for sponsoring skilled temporary migrants

Figure 1 shows the percentage of employers in the survey who indicated that a given reason was important or very important to their decision to employ and sponsor a skilled person from overseas. Almost 90 per cent of employers in the survey indicated that an important reason was that the required skill was not available or difficult to obtain in Australia. A high percentage of all types of employers, regardless of size or industry sector, considered this an important reason for their employing a person from overseas and not an Australian resident. It became apparent in the interviews with

employers that sometimes the skills needed were not available because they were quite specialised skills. These specialised skills might be knowledge about and experience with the company's operations, product or equipment or it might be expertise in a foreign language, culture or craftsmanship. Employers also pointed out that some skills were difficult to find in Australia because there appeared to be a shortage of graduates in professions such as nurses, accountants and engineers. Increased migration of skilled Australians to work overseas could be contributing to a shortage of these skills. In a study of Australians living abroad, Hugo et al. (2003) found that Australians with managerial or professional skills, including engineers, nurses and teachers, were migrating in increasing numbers to work in North America, Europe, Middle East and Asia.

The need for people to train other employees was mentioned by almost 60 per cent of all employers in the survey as an important reason for sponsoring people from overseas. Small employers and those in the restaurant and manufacturing sectors were more likely to indicate this. Forty per cent of employers indicated that sponsorship suited the company's policy. This was particularly the case for multinational companies. The vast majority of skilled temporary migrants sponsored by multinational companies interviewed were intra-company transfers and moving people around the companies' offices in different countries was sometimes part of their strategy to assist their staff to gain experience by working on company projects in different countries. One of the multinational IT companies that was interviewed which marketed a specialised software had sponsored software consultants from their overseas office to come to help with specific implementation of the software that might take between six months and two years and to train Australian staff. The company had also sent their Australian staff to its US headquarters.

Other reasons indicating that foreign employees presented certain advantages to employers, such as a greater degree of control or lower costs, were considered important by only a small minority of employers. Lower costs were considered by the vast majority of employers to be not an important factor in their employing migrants. Employers emphasised in the survey that it was usually more costly and took a longer time to sponsor an overseas employee than to employ an Australian resident. They had to pay the sponsorship and visa application fees and often the sponsored employee's airfare to Australia.

Some reasons showed significant correlation with one another. Employers saying that the required skills were difficult to find were also likely to indicate that they needed people to train others. Employers who indicated that it was less costly to sponsor foreign workers than employ an Australian resident were also more likely to respond that the temporary visa conditions provided them with a higher level of control over their foreign employees and that these employees were more committed to the job.

Factor analysis of the seven reasons identified two main factors motivating employers to sponsor and employ skilled migrants (Table 4). The two factors together accounted for 54 per cent of the total variance in the data. The first, which accounted for 32 per cent of the total variance, was related to the perceived advantages of hiring migrants. The four reasons that loaded significantly on this factor were (1) visa conditions provide a higher degree of control, (2) foreign workers were more committed to the job, (3) sponsored employees had lower cost and (4) sponsorship suits company

policy. This factor was relevant to a minority of employers in the survey with 48 per cent of employers indicating at least one of the four reasons and just 6 per cent indicating all four as important to them. The second factor, which accounted for 22 per cent of the total variance in the data, was a skills shortage. The three reasons loading significantly on this factor were (1) the need for people to train others, (2) required skills were difficult to find and (3) requiring people at very short notice. This factor was by far the major one motivating employers to sponsor skilled people from overseas. Over 90 per cent of employers indicated at least one of the three reasons loading on this factor as important to them and 18 per cent indicated all three reasons as important in their decision to sponsor skilled migrants as employees.

For each of the two factors identified, a score was calculated for each employer according to their responses to the component reasons that make up that factor. The factor scores have a mean of zero. Thus a positive score indicated that the employer was more likely than average to be motivated by that factor and a negative score indicated that the employer was less likely to be motivated by that factor.

Table 5 examined the factor scores by employers' industry sector and size to see which type of employers were more likely to be motivated by each of the two factors identified. There was a significant negative relation between size of employer and factor 1 scores, with smaller employers more likely to cite the advantages of foreign workers as important in their decision to sponsor. Differences by industry were not significant although employers in the construction, agricultural, utilities and transport sectors had above average scores even after controlling for employer size in multiple classification analysis.

There was no significant difference in factor 2 scores by size or industry of employer. The issue of skills shortage was equally important to all types of employers in their decision to sponsor workers from overseas. Interviews with employers show that they have a global view of labour recruitment, particularly when faced with some difficulty in finding the skills they need locally (Khoo et al. 2004). While this is understandable for multinational companies with global operations, many small businesses and public sector institutions such as hospitals and education departments are also using the same strategy to obtain skilled labour that they say are in short supply in Australia.

Temporary skilled migrants' reasons for coming to work in Australia

The reasons stated by employers for sponsoring skilled migrants give an indication of the demand factors motivating temporary skilled migration. The reasons given by migrants provide some insight into the factors determining the supply of skilled temporary migrant labour to Australia.

Table 6 shows the percentage of migrants in the survey who indicated that the given reason was important or very important in their decision to come to work in Australia. The first four reasons are "pull" factors that attract migrants to come to Australia that are not related to their employment. The next five reasons are "pull" factors that are all employment-related, although "to gain international experience" may apply more broadly beyond employment. The last four reasons are "push" factors that are associated with negative aspects of the country of origin that may contribute to the person's decision to leave and work in another country.

Table 6 showed that "pull" factors were more important than "push" factors to skilled temporary migrants in their decision to come to work in Australia. The most often stated reason was a liking for Australia's lifestyle and climate, indicated by 84 per cent of all migrants in the survey.

The next three reasons in order of importance or popularity were employment-related: to gain international experience, promotion/career development and better employment opportunities. They were followed by the intention to apply for permanent residence, indicated by 60 per cent of the survey respondents. A high salary was next, indicated by 41 per cent of respondents, and company transfer was indicated by 33 per cent of respondents. "Push" factors were indicated by only a minority of respondents. Similarly, relatives and friends were important reasons for less than one-third of all respondents.

Table 6 also showed that a higher percentage of men than women indicated company transfer as an important reason and a higher percentage of women than men indicated having friends in Australia and international experience. Otherwise there was very little difference between male and female migrants in their reasons for coming to work in Australia.

There was more variation by country or region of origin in the reasons for coming to work in Australia. About 90 per cent of the British, Irish and Japanese indicated that Australia's lifestyle was an important reason. But much lower percentages of Canadian, Chinese and Indian migrants indicated this reason. Better employment opportunities were important for 97 per cent of Southeast Asians and nearly 90 per cent of Indians and migrants from Other regions (Other South Asia, Other Africa, Middle East and Pacific Islands) but only 50 per cent of British and Americans. A higher salary was important to just 18 per cent of the British and 25 per cent of Americans but 89 per cent of Southeast Asians and 78 per cent of Indian migrants. About half of all Americans and Koreans came on company transfer compared with just 15 per cent of the Irish and 11 per cent of South Africans. Over 80 per cent of South Africans and Koreans and about 75 per cent of Southeast Asians came with the intention of applying for permanent residence compared with just 40 per cent of Canadians and Americans and 50 per cent of the Irish. Migrants from South Africa and Other regions were more likely to indicate the importance of "push" factors, particularly a dislike of economic and social conditions in the country of origin and to escape war or political situation.

Some reasons also show differences by occupational group. More than 50 per cent of managers indicated company transfer compared to 30 per cent or less of other occupational groups. Associate professionals and people in trade occupations were more likely to indicate the importance of relatives in Australia, intention to apply for permanent residence and "push" reasons than other migrants, although these differences could also be related to their country of origin.

Correlations were observed between the reasons. The employment-related reasons were significantly correlated with one another. Individuals who indicated better employment opportunities as an important reason were also likely to indicate higher salary or promotion/career development as another important reason for coming to

work in Australia. There was also some correlation between higher salary, promotion/career development and company transfer and between having friends or relatives in Australia and intention to apply for permanent residence. Finally, all the “push” factor reasons were correlated with one another. Significantly a liking for Australia’s lifestyle was not highly correlated with the other reasons because most migrants had rated it as an important reason.

A factor analysis of the 13 reasons identified four main factors (Table 7). The four factors together accounted for 63 per cent of the total variance in the data. The first factor was largely a combination of the last four reasons, all related to negative conditions in the country of origin or the “push” factors. There was moderate loading from the variables on better employment opportunities and higher salary, indicating that some people citing “push” factors were also likely to specify these two reasons. This factor accounted for 22 per cent of the total variance in the data. The second factor accounted for 19 per cent of the total variance in the data and was employment-related, a combination of better employment opportunities, higher salary, promotion or career development, company transfer and international experience. The third factor might be labelled ‘kin and social networks with an intention to permanent residence’ and accounted for 13 per cent of the total variance. Factor 4 was made up primarily of the reason, “a liking for Australia’s lifestyle, climate....” although intention to apply for permanent residence and international experience also loaded moderately on this factor. This factor accounted for just 9 per cent of the total variance, showing there was less variation among migrants in relation to this factor compared with the others.

An examination of the scores generated for each of the four factors showed that the mean score varied significantly by country of origin and occupational groups. The mean score for factor 3 also varied by sex and the mean score for factor 4 by partnering status. Table 8 shows the adjusted deviations from the mean score for the four factors by country of origin, occupational group, sex (for factor 3 mean scores) and partnering status (for factor 4 mean scores) obtained in multiple classification analysis after adjusting for the effects of the other covariates in the analysis. As noted earlier, the factor scores have a mean of zero. Thus a positive deviation from the mean implied that migrants with that characteristic were more likely than average to be motivated by that factor and a negative deviation from the mean implied that migrants with that characteristic was less likely to be motivated by that factor.

The factor scores showed that migrants from South Africa, Other regions and Southeast Asia were the most likely to cite the negative situation in their home country for coming to work in Australia even after adjusting for differences by occupational group.⁴ As expected, from the negative deviations from the mean score, “push” factors were not at all important to migrants from the western industrialised countries in Europe and North America.

Differences in the mean score for “push” factors were also observed by occupational category, even after controlling for the differences by country of origin. Negative conditions in the home country were more important to migrants in trade occupations

⁴ Differences by age and sex were not significant and these two variables were dropped from the final multiple classification analysis since controlling for them made no difference to the mean scores by country of origin and occupation.

and were the least likely to be important to migrants in managerial occupations. Differences by sex, age or partnering status on the "push" factor mean score were insignificant.

The second factor, which was employment-related, was particularly important to skilled migrants from Asia, especially India and Other regions. It is not surprising that migrants from these less developed regions would be attracted to Australia because the employment opportunities and conditions were better in Australia. This factor was not so important to migrants from Europe, North America or South Africa, as shown by their negative deviations from the mean score, indicating that migrants from those places were not particularly motivated to come to work in Australia because of better employment opportunities or higher salaries. Employment conditions in their country of origin are likely to be just as good or better.

Migrants in trade occupations were also less likely than other migrants to indicate that this factor was important to them. There were no significant differences in the mean scores for this factor by age, sex or partnering status.

The third factor was related to kin and social networks and permanent residence intention. Again there were significant differences in the mean factor score by country of origin and occupational group. This factor was more important to migrants from Asia and Other regions than to migrants from Europe, North America or South Africa and to migrants in associate professional or trade occupations than those in managerial or professional occupations. The difference by sex was also significant for this factor; it was more important to female than male migrants.

Finally, factor 4 which was primarily about Australia's lifestyle also varied by country of origin and occupational group. The difference by partnering status was significant for this factor but differences by sex and age were not significant. In contrast to the other three factors, this factor was more important to migrants from UK, Ireland and the rest of Europe and less important to migrants from the less developed countries. The largest negative deviations from the mean were observed for migrants from India, followed by migrants from Southeast Asia and China. Australia's lifestyle was not so important to Canadians. Perhaps there are similarities in the lifestyle of the two countries. Unpartnered migrants were more likely than partnered migrants to consider the lifestyle factor as important.

Conclusions and theoretical implications

This study has shown that there are at least four main factors motivating skilled migration from the migrants' perspective and two main factors from employers' perspective. A small number of employers were motivated by the perception that there were some advantages - in terms of work commitment, control and cost - in employing foreign workers. However, for most employers, the sponsorship of temporary skilled migrants was motivated by their difficulty in finding the required skills in the domestic labour market. Many employers operating in today's global economy also regularly rotate their managerial and professional staff among their offices in various countries, as a professional development strategy and also to work on specific projects that require their specialised skills or corporate knowledge. Australia's connectedness to the global economy, its robust economic growth of the

last decade, the need to keep up with technological change and the increasing migration of skilled Australians for overseas employment have all contributed to a demand for skilled labour that is not being met by the domestic labour market.

The reasons indicated by skilled temporary migrants for coming to work in Australia showed the importance of both economic and non-economic factors in motivating skilled labour migration. The importance of economic and employment-related factors in skilled labour migration from the less developed regions was to be expected. However, social networks were also important for some migrants and, significantly, more important for female than male migrants. "Push" factors often related to the social or political conditions in the country of origin were also important for a small number of skilled migrants coming from countries in Africa. Most surprising, however, was the pervasive importance of Australia's lifestyle as a factor motivating the temporary migration of skilled people to Australia. Perhaps it was not so surprising that migrants from other advanced economies were the most likely to indicate this reason for coming to work in Australia since there were no compelling social or economic reasons for their migration. Most of these people had no difficulty finding employment in their own country and conditions of employment and living standards there are similar to if not better than in Australia. Associated with the lifestyle factor was also the issue of gaining international experience. Is the importance of lifestyle reasons unique to the international migration of skilled workers to Australia? There is a need for similar research to be conducted in other countries that are also the destination for skilled migrants in order to observe whether Australia is unique in this respect.

The findings of this study on the factors motivating skilled temporary migration have provided empirical support for some of the current theories of international migration, but they have also pointed to some inadequacies. The finding that better employment opportunities and higher salary were important reasons for many skilled migrants from developing regions was consistent with the neo-classical economic theory of international migration. Similarly the finding that kin and social networks were important for some migrants and that they tended to be associated with permanent residence intention provides support for the facilitating role of networks in international movements. However, the importance of lifestyle factors in the temporary migration of skilled workers, particularly from advanced economies, and the role of social and political conditions in the country of origin acting as "push" factors in skilled labour migration had not been addressed adequately in current theoretical arguments on international migration.

Most current theories of international migration describe low skilled migration from less developed to more advanced economies (see Massey et al. 1993). They have not dwelled very much on employers' demand for foreign workers with specialised skills and knowledge in today's global economy and the role of lifestyle factors in the migration of skilled workers between economically advanced countries. The world systems theory comes closest in describing the pattern of highly skilled migration discussed in this paper, with its argument that "international migration follows the political and economic organisation of an expanding global market..." (Massey et al. 1993: 447). However, much of its theoretical arguments are still related to geographic mobility from developing regions or within those regions.

There is scope for extending current theories of international migration to address more comprehensively the international migration of skilled labour in today's global economy and the role of non-economic factors. There is an increasing demand for specialised and skilled labour arising from technology change and economic growth and a global outlook in labour recruitment among employers across a range of industry sectors. The ease of international communication and travel, the rise of the services sector in advanced economies and the spread of multinational companies and their policy of international transfer of managerial and professional staff have given rise to a post-modern pattern of international mobility of people with specialised skills that may become more important in the next few decades as the demand increases in more countries for such people.

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Table 1. Employers and migrants in the survey by location and size and industry of employer.

| Location | Employers | | Migrants | |
|---|------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| | Number | % | Number | % |
| Sydney | 79 | 58.5 | 552 | 47.0 |
| Melbourne | 20 | 14.8 | 261 | 22.2 |
| Brisbane | 12 | 8.9 | 52 | 4.4 |
| Adelaide | 4 | 3.0 | 32 | 2.7 |
| Perth | 5 | 3.7 | 78 | 6.6 |
| Other | 15 | 11.1 | 200 | 17.0 |
| No. of people employed by company/organisation | | | | |
| <5 | 5 | 3.7 | 122 | 10.4 |
| 5-24 | 33 | 24.4 | 302 | 25.7 |
| 25-99 | 34 | 25.2 | 247 | 21.0 |
| 100-299 | 25 | 18.5 | 161 | 13.7 |
| 300+ | 36 | 26.7 | 318 | 27.1 |
| Don't know/Not stated | 2 | 1.5 | 25 | 2.2 |
| Industry of employment | | | | |
| Agriculture | 1 | 0.1 | 37 | 3.1 |
| Mining | 4 | 3.0 | 40 | 3.4 |
| Manufacturing | 9 | 6.7 | 123 | 10.5 |
| Construction | 9 | 6.7 | 74 | 6.3 |
| Electricity etc | 1 | 0.1 | 15 | 1.3 |
| Transport and storage | 8 | 5.9 | 26 | 2.2 |
| Health and community services | 15 | 11.1 | 152 | 12.9 |
| Accommodation, café and restaurant | 17 | 12.6 | 91 | 7.7 |
| Cultural and recreation | 2 | 1.5 | 28 | 2.4 |
| IT and Communication | 20 | 14.8 | 222 | 18.9 |
| Property and business services | 6 | 4.4 | 49 | 4.2 |
| Finance and insurance | 6 | 4.4 | 96 | 8.2 |
| Education | 9 | 6.7 | 43 | 3.7 |
| Personal services | 14 | 10.4 | 51 | 4.3 |
| Retail trade | 6 | 4.4 | 40 | 3.4 |
| Wholesale trade | 6 | 4.4 | 39 | 3.3 |
| Gov administration | 0 | 0 | 19 | 1.6 |
| Not classified | 2 | 1.5 | 30 | 2.6 |
| Total | 135 | 100 | 1175 | 100 |

Sources: Survey of employers and survey of temporary skilled migrants.

Table 2. Characteristics of skilled temporary migrants in the survey

| | Men | Women | Total |
|---|-----|-------|-------|
| | % | % | % |
| Age group | | | |
| <25 | 4 | 8 | 5 |
| 25-29 | 20 | 33 | 24 |
| 30-34 | 29 | 30 | 29 |
| 35-39 | 18 | 15 | 17 |
| 40-49 | 13 | 9 | 11 |
| 50+ | 8 | 3 | 6 |
| Not stated | 9 | 3 | 8 |
| Martial status | | | |
| % with spouse/partner | 69 | 51 | 63 |
| % with partner in Australia, if partnered | 92 | 93 | 93 |
| Country/region of origin | | | |
| UK | 31 | 38 | 33 |
| Ireland | 4 | 8 | 6 |
| Other Europe | 14 | 10 | 13 |
| Southeast Asia | 6 | 11 | 7 |
| China ¹ | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| Japan | 7 | 8 | 7 |
| Korea | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| India | 8 | 2 | 6 |
| Canada | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| USA | 9 | 5 | 8 |
| South Africa | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Other regions ² | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Highest qualification | | | |
| Higher degree | 30 | 26 | 29 |
| Bachelor degree | 34 | 37 | 35 |
| Diploma/certificate | 26 | 31 | 27 |
| Trade qualification | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| No post-school qualification | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Occupational group | | | |
| Managers and administrators | 30 | 17 | 26 |
| Professionals | 40 | 57 | 46 |
| Associate professionals | 15 | 12 | 14 |
| Trades | 8 | 3 | 6 |
| Other | 6 | 11 | 7 |
| Number of respondents | | | |
| | 787 | 388 | 1175 |

1. Includes Hong Kong and Taiwan

2. Includes Middle East, Other South Asia, Other America, Pacific islands, Other Africa

Table 3. Highest qualification of migrants compared with employed persons aged 15-64 in Australia 2004, by occupational group.

| Highest qualification | Managers, administrators | Professionals | Associate professionals | Trades |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|--------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Skilled temporary migrants | | | | |
| Post-graduate degree | 33.2 | 34.8 | 15.0 | 10.0 |
| Bachelor degree | 36.9 | 40.6 | 24.4 | 8.6 |
| Technical cert./diploma | 26.2 | 22.0 | 50.0 | 72.8 |
| None | 3.3 | 2.6 | 10.6 | 8.6 |
| Employed persons aged 15-64 | | | | |
| Post-graduate degree | 10.2 | 22.3 | 5.4 | 0.4 |
| Bachelor degree | 21.7 | 46.0 | 15.5 | 2.5 |
| Technical cert./diploma | 35.2 | 20.6 | 43.5 | 64.6 |
| None | 32.0 | 10.5 | 34.7 | 31.3 |

Sources: 457s Survey; ABS 2004.

Table 4. Results of factor analysis of employers' reasons for sponsoring skilled foreign workers for temporary migration to Australia

| Reason | Rotation component matrix | |
|---|---------------------------|----------|
| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
| Required skills difficult to obtain in Aust. | -0.401 | 0.698 |
| Sponsorship suits company policy | 0.577 | 0.224 |
| Require people at very short notice | 0.445 | 0.541 |
| Sponsored employees have a lower cost. | 0.645 | -0.157 |
| Visa conditions provide a higher level of control | 0.740 | 0.145 |
| Need people who can train others | 0.249 | 0.796 |
| Foreign workers more committed to the job | 0.724 | 0.080 |
| % of variance explained | 32.0 | 21.6 |

Table 5. Factor scores relating to employers' reasons for sponsoring skilled migrants by employers' size and industry

| | Factor 1 score | Factor 2 score |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| No. of people employed by company/organisation | | |
| <5 | 1.640 | 0.274 |
| 5-24 | 0.425 | 0.081 |
| 25-99 | -0.084 | -0.109 |
| 100-299 | -0.224 | -0.209 |
| 300+ | -0.328 | -0.141 |
| Industry of employment | | |
| Agriculture | 0.650 | 0.845 |
| Mining | -0.166 | 0.212 |
| Manufacturing | -0.187 | 0.597 |
| Construction | 0.765 | 0.025 |
| Electricity etc | 0.516 | 0.695 |
| Transport and storage | 0.382 | -0.362 |
| Health and community services | -0.333 | -0.263 |
| Accommodation, café and restaurant | 0.210 | 0.300 |
| Cultural and recreation | -0.879 | -1.118 |
| IT and Communication | 0.137 | -0.018 |
| Property and business services | -0.250 | -0.248 |
| Finance and insurance | 0.098 | 0.058 |
| Education | 0.109 | -0.467 |
| Personal services | 0.046 | 0.067 |
| Retail trade | -0.138 | 0.132 |
| Wholesale trade | -0.525 | 0.057 |

Note: Scores have a mean of zero. The scores shown have been adjusted by multiple classification analysis for size and industry of employer.

Differences in Factor 1 scores by size of employer significant on F-test (F= 5.522, df=4, Sig.=0.000)

Differences in Factor 1 scores by industry of employer not significant on F-test (F= 0.985, df=15, Sig.=0.476)

Differences in Factor 2 scores by size and industry of employer not significant.

(F= .022 and .715 respectively)

Table 6. Percentage of skilled temporary migrants indicating the reason was important for their coming to work in Australia

| | Like Aust.'s lifestyle, etc. | Relatives in Aust. | Friends in Aust. | Apply for perm. res. | Better job opportunities | Higher salary | Promotion/ career dev. | Gain int'l. experience | Company transfer | Lack suitable employment | Dislike ec. conditions | Dislike soc. conditions | Escape war/ political sit. |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| All respondents | 84 | 19 | 32 | 60 | 62 | 41 | 64 | 76 | 33 | 18 | 24 | 24 | 10 |
| Male | 84 | 18 | 27 | 59 | 62 | 41 | 65 | 74 | 37 | 19 | 24 | 26 | 10 |
| Female | 83 | 20 | 41 | 61 | 62 | 40 | 61 | 81 | 25 | 15 | 25 | 20 | 10 |
| <i>Country/region of origin</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| UK | 89 | 16 | 32 | 57 | 50 | 18 | 54 | 65 | 30 | 6 | 16 | 21 | 3 |
| Ireland | 91 | 16 | 37 | 50 | 55 | 33 | 64 | 69 | 15 | 9 | 14 | 14 | 5 |
| Other Europe | 77 | 14 | 26 | 52 | 48 | 36 | 54 | 75 | 34 | 21 | 24 | 16 | 4 |
| South East Asia | 80 | 31 | 40 | 74 | 97 | 89 | 79 | 91 | 34 | 40 | 45 | 33 | 21 |
| China | 67 | 23 | 43 | 64 | 73 | 71 | 88 | 93 | 44 | 25 | 29 | 29 | 7 |
| Japan | 90 | 22 | 49 | 68 | 70 | 42 | 70 | 90 | 38 | 22 | 26 | 31 | 7 |
| Korea | 81 | 42 | 27 | 83 | 83 | 67 | 85 | 81 | 55 | 24 | 24 | 40 | 3 |
| India | 73 | 16 | 21 | 61 | 87 | 78 | 81 | 87 | 39 | 20 | 17 | 10 | 10 |
| Canada | 67 | 8 | 23 | 42 | 60 | 35 | 66 | 76 | 28 | 20 | 10 | 5 | 0 |
| USA | 84 | 7 | 24 | 39 | 49 | 25 | 61 | 76 | 48 | 4 | 7 | 12 | 6 |
| South Africa | 88 | 18 | 20 | 83 | 67 | 44 | 63 | 78 | 11 | 42 | 65 | 71 | 57 |
| Other regions | 84 | 39 | 30 | 74 | 88 | 77 | 80 | 91 | 25 | 38 | 59 | 43 | 43 |
| <i>Occupational group</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Managers | 80 | 14 | 26 | 52 | 57 | 35 | 69 | 71 | 51 | 11 | 18 | 20 | 9 |
| Professionals | 85 | 15 | 28 | 57 | 60 | 37 | 59 | 75 | 26 | 15 | 22 | 22 | 8 |
| Associate professionals | 86 | 29 | 38 | 71 | 71 | 55 | 75 | 85 | 30 | 27 | 32 | 28 | 13 |
| Tradespersons | 83 | 37 | 41 | 78 | 75 | 54 | 65 | 75 | 18 | 39 | 49 | 45 | 19 |
| Others | 82 | 22 | 52 | 64 | 68 | 41 | 59 | 80 | 32 | 21 | 50 | 25 | 9 |

Table 7. Results of factor analysis of migrants' reasons for coming to work in Australia.

| Reason | Rotation component matrix | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 |
| Better employment opportunity | 0.300 | 0.720 | 0.202 | -0.028 |
| Higher salary | 0.316 | 0.677 | 0.250 | -0.159 |
| Company transfer | -0.080 | 0.524 | -0.146 | -0.187 |
| Promotion/career development | 0.015 | 0.831 | 0.023 | -0.050 |
| Gain international experience | 0.009 | 0.685 | -0.040 | 0.326 |
| Like Australia's lifestyle, climate ... | 0.050 | -0.036 | 0.096 | 0.877 |
| Have relatives in Australia | 0.179 | 0.008 | 0.742 | -0.167 |
| Have friends in Australia | -0.033 | 0.038 | 0.798 | 0.198 |
| Intended to apply for permanent residence | 0.313 | 0.069 | 0.525 | 0.349 |
| Lack of suitable employment in home country | 0.706 | 0.235 | 0.208 | -0.141 |
| Dislike economic conditions in home country | 0.851 | 0.100 | 0.134 | 0.054 |
| Dislike social conditions in home country | 0.825 | -0.020 | 0.006 | 0.214 |
| Escape war or political situation | 0.757 | 0.035 | 0.056 | -0.002 |
| % of variance explained | 21.6 | 19.1 | 12.8 | 9.2 |

Table 8. Factor scores on migrants' reasons for coming to work in Australia by migrants' characteristics (adjusted for covariates by multiple classification analysis)

| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>Sex</i> | | | | |
| Male | ns | ns | -0.075 | ns |
| Female | ns | ns | 0.157 | ns |
| <i>Country/region of origin</i> | | | | |
| UK | -0.259 | -0.340 | -0.046 | 0.233 |
| Ireland | -0.348 | -0.192 | 0.117 | 0.245 |
| Other Europe | -0.130 | -0.126 | -0.134 | 0.093 |
| South East Asia | 0.526 | 0.604 | 0.378 | -0.373 |
| China | 0.284 | 0.538 | 0.295 | -0.446 |
| Japan | 0.046 | 0.174 | 0.160 | 0.081 |
| Korea | 0.232 | 0.439 | 0.333 | -0.262 |
| India | -0.096 | 0.807 | 0.026 | -0.510 |
| Canada | -0.396 | -0.040 | -0.250 | -0.364 |
| USA | -0.413 | -0.020 | -0.320 | 0.022 |
| South Africa | 1.603 | -0.352 | -0.281 | 0.228 |
| Other regions | 0.988 | 0.422 | 0.205 | -0.135 |
| <i>Occupational group</i> | | | | |
| Managers | -0.127 | 0.151 | -0.124 | -0.178 |
| Professionals | -0.027 | 0.099 | -0.086 | 0.075 |
| Associate professionals | 0.105 | 0.075 | 0.284 | 0.087 |
| Tradespersons | 0.536 | -0.122 | 0.396 | 0.026 |
| Others | -0.003 | 0.057 | 0.153 | -0.010 |
| <i>Marital status</i> | | | | |
| Partnered | ns | ns | ns | -0.079 |
| Not partnered | ns | ns | ns | 0.136 |
| R ² | 0.273 | 0.149 | 0.094 | 0.089 |
| Number of respondents | 1066 | 1066 | 1066 | 1062 |

ns= differences in factor scores by this variable were not significant and the variable was not included in the multiple classification analysis.

Figure 1. Employers' reasons for sponsoring skilled temporary migrants

