

A survey of migration of academics in Higher Education and their impact on host institutions

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ABSTRACT

Immigrant and foreign academics, from the perspective of higher education institutions, are a valuable resource that contributes significantly towards the internationalisation of higher education. While these ‘nomadic intellectuals’ are widely scrutinised when they set off from home, rarely do they seem to be appreciated or observed by their foreign hosts. This paper attempts to survey the migration of foreign academics and the impact of their move to local (host) higher education institutions, while identifying the limited literature available in this area. Three host countries namely USA, UK and Australia are examined, which have been among the top destinations for migrating academics over the past three decades. Various aspects of this migration such as the impact on teaching and learning and, academic and research cultures are discussed. A particular difficulty with defining who is a migrant academic in such research is highlighted.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education has changed considerably over the past few decades. This has been brought about by a range of new disciplines, innovative teaching styles, online learning and increasingly diverse students to name a few. While such aspects have been examined widely and thoroughly, an important little studied factor contributing to this change is the growing number of foreign, often immigrant, academics.

From the perspective of higher education institutions and universities, immigrant and foreign academics are more than just a valuable resource. They play an important role in “the broadening of perspectives on teaching, learning and scholarship, the incorporation of specific cultural and scientific skills not generally available in the host (institution) context, the building of tolerance and understanding among staff and students” as recognised by Welch (1997). With an increasing demand to operate in a global arena, host institutions are keen to attract and retain such academics who contribute towards the internationalisation of higher education, defined by Knight as the “process of integrating an international, intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of the institution” (1995).

One of the earliest observations of migration of academics, *emigrating* from one country and *immigrating* into another, is made by Dedijer (1964). His work surveys the worldwide migration of scientists since the early 1950s up until the mid 1960s and examines some of the underlying causes. It identifies Western Europe, United States, Japan and USSR (the former union of Soviet Socialist countries which included the present day Russia and almost all of the Central Asian states) as popular destinations for these scientists, a trend

that has largely continued over the decades as Zlotnik (1999) highlights, except in the case of Russia due to the subsequent political and economic situation in the country. Dedijer notes the pattern for such migration and sums it all up as “from the less-developed to the more-developed countries, from countries developing slowly to countries developing more rapidly, from small countries with developed science to large countries with developed science, and, most important, from countries with less-developed science and education policies to those with more-developed ones” (1964). Interestingly, Dedijer makes no assessment of the impact of such migration on the host institutions or societies. Moreover his work focuses specifically on scientists as researchers, engineers or physicists, and not necessarily academics involved in teaching and/or research in higher education. Neither is his analysis broken down to identify people working in different disciplines, limiting to only natural sciences, medicine and engineering as a collective group.

While the importance of immigrant and foreign academics to their host institutions is clearly recognised, the assessment of their impact on such institutions appears to be somewhat neglected, with a notable paucity for literature in this area. There is abundant research available on the impact of migration of academics on their native countries, oft known as *brain drain*, and is usually studied under the broad umbrella of *highly-skilled professionals* including medical doctors, engineers, craftsmen, (school) teachers and chefs among others. Moreover, most of such literature focuses on either the implications for official policy development for employment and immigration or, the impact of such migration on the culture and society of the host nation; refer to (Lowell, 2002), (Findlay and Stewart, 2002) for an extensive survey of this research. This makes it very difficult to filter out academics from a diverse group of professionals or, say, judge the impact on the quality of the academic rigour at a university.

The purpose of this effort is to narrow down to the relevant literature available and also examine any research that is indicative of the issue at hand. This paper attempts to critically examine the literature available on the migration of foreign academics and the impact of their move to host institutions of higher education. The paper focuses on various aspects such as the impact on teaching and learning, academic and research culture and other related issues and, in this context, examines the literature available for the USA, UK and Australia. For this purpose the literature selected was concerning what positive contributions and adverse impact were made by immigrant academics with respect to their local host institutions, including local colleagues and students; relevant literature available for the UK in this regard is notably scarce.

One particular difficulty encountered in our survey is the very definition of who is an immigrant academic. This is primarily due to a lack of critical reflection on this in the various studies that we examine. A clearer idea of the category of a group is important if one is to effectively assess their unique behaviour or more importantly determine the impact they have on other groups. Our study only serves to reveal that a homogenous definition does not exist across the breadth of this work. The difference between an immigrant and a local is defined variedly, so for example, some studies (Jacobs and Friedman, 1988) differentiate between *foreign* or *foreign-born* and *natives*, while some (Saha and Atkinson, 1978) simply distinguish as overseas or local born. Some others (Royal Society, 1987 & 1993) have classified such individuals as having lived in the host

country for particular time periods and regardless of their race or present citizenship. Admittedly, for the purposes of some of this analysis, such categorisations may have been inevitable. What is important however is to be mindful of possible exceptions, such as foreign-born individuals who may have lived in a host country way too long to be not considered as locals or citizens who are only local by birth.

The rest of this paper is organised as follows. The next section examines the literature that analyses the impact of migrating academics on universities in USA. The following two sections examine similar literature available for universities and (and the higher education sector) in the UK and Australia, respectively. The final section concludes the paper with a discussion and identifies some areas for future work.

LITERATURE ON THE IMPACT IN THE USA

For over half a century, universities in the USA have been attracting academics from all over the world. Some of this migration has been motivated by political events, such as the Holocaust, which saw a large number of Jews from Europe (Gurock, 1998), and the end of the Cold War, which saw many academics from the former socialist bloc of Eastern European countries (Woodard, 2005) migrating to USA. Explaining the exodus of British academics (mostly) to USA in the late 70s and 80s, Ryan (1989) blames Thatcherism, which he says "...is largely to blame for the indignities their profession has suffered in recent years. Tenure has been abolished. Salaries have dropped some 20 percent behind the rate of inflation...rest of the university system is in a much worse state". A better standard of living and, academic support and freedom have also been the motivation for many others from developing countries such as India and China to move to the universities in the USA (Castles, 2000). Another important source of such migrants is the large population of international students in USA, the largest in the world, where many PhD students upon completion manage to stay on and find faculty appointments. By 1993 more than 20 percent of the total faculty in the country, as Lowell (1993) highlights, was composed of foreign-born US graduates, with over half of all postdoctoral appointments since 1990 awarded to foreign-born candidates.

When it comes to significant contribution towards research and development in USA, particularly in sciences, it is needless to say immigrants have played an exceptional role; Choi (1995), and Stephan and Levin (2001) present ample evidence to support this. How many of such immigrants have been academics and how much of this contribution has had beneficial impact on the higher education in the country seems to be a question rarely raised, let alone addressed.

A variety of authors have attempted to bring to the fore the relationship between immigrant academics and the students they teach at US universities. While various studies have been done, most of the effort has narrowly focussed on the appearance and the relative perception of such individuals. Such factors have been shown to influence course uptake, dropout rates and academic performance within students. In this section we review a breadth of such work.

Jacobs and Friedman's (1988) work carries out an assessment of the achievement of students being taught under foreign teaching assistants (FTAs) and uses quantitative methods to compare their performance with the achievement of students taught under native teaching assistants (NTAs). They highlight the role of Teaching Assistants (TA) and their importance in teaching large classes of undergraduate students. TAs are mostly required to teach first or second year students, particularly for classes where they may number in hundreds and where more established faculty is devoted to senior students and more research. The motivation for Jacobs and Friedman's research comes from a number of concerns raised by students with regards to the linguistic, presentational and cultural behaviour and abilities of the FTAs, who are otherwise "assumed to be highly intelligent and extremely well qualified in their fields" and "are filling a crucial need created by a dwindling pool of American applicants (for similar roles)" (1988).

Jacobs and Friedman (1988) take a sample of students enrolled on five of the first year Mathematics and Business courses and survey their experiences of the FTAs compared with NTAs teaching on these courses. They also monitor the grades of the students enrolled in courses taught by FTAs and compare their performances with students on similar courses taught by NTAs. Their work concludes with an overwhelming endorsement of the FTAs' efficacy, "as far as student performance on final course examination is concerned, foreign TAs are just as effective in teaching undergraduates as native TAs. Students' final examination scores in sections taught by FTAs did not differ significantly from the scores in sections taught by NTAs".

Jacobs and Friedman (1988) do reveal some interesting insights into students' perception of FTAs. There is some evidence that students may prefer to enrol in classes taught by NTAs than by FTAs where they have a choice. The authors identify a particular course where "there was a significantly higher number of drop-outs from the sections taught by foreign TAs...than from sections taught by native speakers". They highlight, however, that among other courses surveyed, this is the first "course most students take...(that) represents the students' first exposure to foreign instructors, and hence more frustration is evidenced".

One aspect of FTAs' abilities that does raise concern in Jacobs and Friedman's work is the FTAs' linguistic abilities (1988). Their analysis when "focused on only the FTAs it was found that their English proficiency was an important factor affecting both student achievement and the ratings they received from students". They show the comparative advantage that NTAs hold in this regard and affirm "the NTAs received significantly higher ratings on the...English language ability". This concern is also raised by Bailey (1983) who identifies this problem categorically and says "The relationship between these two groups (students and foreign TAs) is complicated because, while the non-native English-speaking TAs are assumed to be competent in their disciplines, they have, to varying degrees, less than perfect control of English...consequently, the interaction between non-native English-speaking teaching assistants and their students is sometimes problematic. The communication difficulties engendered by this situation have been collectively labelled the 'foreign TA problem'".

Borjas (2000) presents a survey of the impact of FTAs on the achievement of undergraduate students, using a quantitative analysis similarly linear to Jacobs and

Friedman's (1988) analysis. His work is "based on the academic performance of students in one class in one field at one public university" (2000) and concludes "the assessment of the class preparation of foreign-born TAs (is) favourable: there is almost no difference between native- and foreign-born TAs" (2000). While the author makes no further contribution to our understanding of this issue, he attempts to highlight a trend in student achievement along social and cultural lines and states "it is instructive to examine the interaction between the nativity status of the TA and the nativity status of the undergraduate student" and finds "that most of the foreign-born undergraduates were of Asian origin... casual observation indicated that most of the foreign-born TAs were also of Asian origin. The evidence suggests that foreign-born graduate students (TAs) do not have an adverse impact on the academic achievement of undergraduate students who are 'like them' – perhaps both in terms of language and culture – but do have an adverse impact on undergraduates who are sufficiently different" (2000).

Observe that there are several limitations to the kind of analyses undertaken by Jacobs and Friedman (1988) and Borjas (2000). First, the categorisation of TAs into simply 'foreign' and 'native' makes it difficult to know whether any adverse impact on the performance of students is down to their linguistic or cultural abilities. A 'foreign' TA may originate from a country such as Canada or Britain where English is their first language or, may even have had extensive experience of speaking the language in the USA. Similarly a 'foreign' TA may have been brought up and lived in the USA long enough to have brought down any cultural barriers. Conversely, a 'native' TA may lack the linguistic aptitude required for teaching. Such simplistic categorisations therefore are rather crude and make no assessment of individuals' relevant skills and competence, which include the often innate abilities attributed to effective teaching. Secondly, such analysis also overlooks other factors contributing to students' performance such as (faculty) disciplinary cultures, entry requirements for students and, pre-entry aptitude and preparedness of students. One doubts whether a similar survey conducted in *Ivy League*¹ institutions, which attract some of the most talented students from around the world, would yield similar results. Finally, such analysis also fails to take into account the national and cultural (and possibly even linguistic) differences between the students enrolled under the TAs. Such factors are likely to have a considerable impact on the students' performance. A controlled study ought to be mindful of such abilities before and after the completion of a course under the TAs, particularly if students of widely varying abilities are enrolled on the course; only then is a careful assessment of the different TAs' teaching efficacy possible.

Borjas's (2000) survey is of particular concern as it unnecessarily plays up the nationality of the teaching staff (and students) in the general discourse. His observation of the achievement of students who are of the same origin as the foreign-born TAs may only be considered as an attempt to highlight a bias in the judgment of foreign-born academics and unreasonably manifesting a doubt in the academic integrity and abilities of such TAs. Commenting on the labour market impact of highly-skilled immigration, Borjas (2005) concludes that a "10 percent immigration-induced increase in the supply of doctorates lowers the wage of competing workers by about 3 percent". A survey of other related work by the author shows that his findings are representative of his overtly critical and discouraging view of the highly-skilled immigration into USA.

Borjas's (2005) concerns over the impact of such migration on the labour market are echoed by Lowell (2001), who analyses this issue specifically in the context of the academic labour market. Lowell (2001) narrows her attention down to a class of highly-skilled temporary resident workers (under the popular H-1B visa scheme in USA) and notes how easy it has been (due to the immigration policies, see (Myers, 1990)) for such workers to stay on permanently. Such an arrangement then allows the local employers, which includes universities, to employ foreign temporary workers instead of ethnic minorities already settled in the country. Analysing this in the context of science and engineering (S&E) graduates, Lowell states "Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans with an S&E education were less likely than immigrants and native-born Whites to find S&E employment. Minority natives are, thus, more likely to experience occupational mismatch and the indication is that employers differentiate between individuals not once they are hired, but well before. One implication is that a ready supply of immigrants and native White men are at the top of the hiring-queue at least when supply is able to meet demand" (2001). This may have implications on further incentives or wage differentials for academic recruitment from the minority communities, as Lowell notes "the striking under representation of Blacks and Hispanics discourages their entry into the professions, and that the foreign-born, who are often temporary workers at the highest skill levels, disrupt incentives to stimulate the latent supply of minority professionals" (2001).

A somewhat misplaced assumption underlying Lowell's (2001) analysis is derived from the belief that academic labour markets are similar to corporate or industrial labour markets, working on the principals of supply and demand of labour. Most academic appointments are not organised as simple skill-to-skill role-match appointments. There are other considerations that come into play such as a more selective appointment regime in terms of qualifications and experience, academic associations and attachments, peer-to-peer social networks based on research interests and, more importantly, tenure systems; such mechanisms mainly discourage short-term temporary appointments. In her conclusion Lowell acknowledges this while citing "field research on temporary workers in San Francisco and Houston did not find undue competition with temporary workers in the academic labor market at the level of instructor or professor in the sciences, possibly because of the highly selective hiring process at that level" (2001).

Lowell's (2001) suggestion that foreign-born workers may adversely affect the inclusion of workers from ethnic minorities is somewhat difficult to assess. In terms of higher education, there is a growing need to diversify university campuses, so as to say, to attract members of a more diverse society. Foreign and immigrant academics may just help stimulate the attraction of minorities to universities. Turner realises the importance of this when stating "diversification of the professoriate may create more opportunities for communities of colour to participate in knowledge production" (2000). Milem concurs with this and states "... (faculty of colour) are more likely to use active pedagogical techniques, which have been shown to improve student learning. In addition, their teaching methods tend to encourage students to interact with peers from different backgrounds through class discussions, collaborative learning, and group projects. And many engage in service-related activities and scholarship that addresses issue of race, ethnicity, and gender" (2000).

In summary, there is abundant literature on the impact of immigration on the labour market in the USA and the formulation of immigration policy as a result. Most of this work is either on low-skilled and highly-skilled immigrants, or, on immigrants from the Latin American countries coming through the 2100 mile long US-Mexican border. The literature available is limited to a few specific aspects such as the performance of students and wage differential issues. At a time when the country finds itself amidst increasing calls for “loosening the country's laws on immigration” (Archibold, 2006) and its university campuses are crying out for intellectual diversity (Waxman, 2005; Fund, 2004), such efforts are needed to understand the beneficial role, or otherwise, immigrant academics could potentially play. Moreover, the universities have to look beyond linguistic and perception factors to appreciate the diversity of pedagogic cultures that immigrant academics bring with them, not to forget what local communities and the American society at large gain from it.

LITERATURE ON THE IMPACT IN THE UK

UK has long been a major destination for migrants, both economic and political, from all over the world. People from the New Commonwealth² since the 1950s and the European Union more recently, form a substantial part of such immigrants (Constantine, 1999). The growth of the higher education and research sector in recent years and an open, meritocratic academic culture has attracted many academics and research from outside the country. Moreover, foreign students account for as high as 10 percent of the students enrolled in advanced research programmes in the UK, and serve to be an important source of recruitment for teaching and research in the country's universities (Tremblay, 2005). Despite of this no serious assessment of the interaction between immigrant academics and their host institutions is made. The bulk of such work comes from the Royal Society, an academic of science for the country, and the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), an independent think-tank concerned with higher education policy matters. We examine their contribution, what little is of relevance here, in the rest of this section.

One of the earliest assessments of such immigration is carried out by the Science and Engineering Policy Studies Unit (SEPSU)³ in their report of 1987 (Royal Society, 1987), and a subsequent report in 1993 (Royal Society, 1993); earlier reports had only looked at outward emigration. The remit of the SEPSU reports were limited to the academics and researchers working in the science and engineering disciplines, more specifically, biochemistry, chemistry, earth science, electrical engineering and physics. The SEPSU reports give an interesting insight into the immigration patterns of foreign academics coming into the UK and the strengthening research in the university sector as a result, reporting that “...intellectual exchange is vital if the UK is to retain the excellence and vigour of its science and engineering base” (1993).

The latter of the SEPSU reports, which surveyed annual migration from 1984 up until 1992, found that 68 percent of the foreign academics (and researchers) coming into the UK are regarded as ‘outstanding’ as per the Heads of Departments (HoDs) surveyed. One other important characteristic was the age group of these immigrants, where about 89 percent were less than 39 years of age. Furthermore, of the total non-British academics coming in

some 23 percent took up a long term post while the rest took up a short term post (of less than three years). Attached to these characteristics of quality and age are expectations of a contributive attitude and a progressive work ethic, bearing favourably on the role such immigrants have been playing in the higher education in UK. The SEPSU report acknowledges this for the departments and research groups surveyed as "...some of their best post-doctoral research assistants staff came from overseas – Europe, China, Japan and others – and that such staff now formed a significant part of a research group's overall capabilities" (1993). Leaders of some of the research groups surveyed went further to highlight a real need for foreign researchers as one of them claimed "I am actively trying to encourage suitable qualified and motivated research students and post-docs to join us particularly from the EC countries, primarily because the UK does not produce sufficient good people to work in my field" and another one followed "I recruit about 70% of my research group from outside England".

In a recent report commissioned by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI)⁴, Sastry analyses data available on the migration of academic staff by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)⁵ and terms the inflow of foreign academics into the UK as "...the most benign form of migration imaginable, offering the benefits of improved international contacts without the disbenefits caused by the loss of key staff at unpredictable moments...(it) should make policymakers more sanguine about the effect of current levels of migration on the UK Higher Education sector" (2005). Not only then are foreign academics key to building professional networks, but they help to do this without a necessary loss of existing faculty for this purpose. Sastry's (2005) analysis is also clearly pitched at the concerned policy makers; it makes no further observations on the impact of such migration.

Note that the SEPSU reports (Royal Society, 1987 & 1993) and Sastry's (2005) work do not conclude on the quality or merit of immigrant academics, as it merely conveys the perceptions that senior academics hold regarding such academics. Such perceptions, however, held by HoDs and leaders of research groups in the case of the SEPSU reports, are an important indicator of the efficiency and reputation of academics coming into UK. Undoubtedly, given a research-oriented profile, immigrant academics are likely to add more to the tally of research publications and esteem. While generally this is favourable, it may not necessarily be in many cases. For such activity to benefit host institutions the individuals' research interests should align with the institutional/departmental goals and only then a critical mass of like-minded researchers is to result in a collectively productive environment. Failing such both creative output and funding provisions are likely to be affected.

Given that UK has a large and growing higher education sector, there seems to be only little evidence of any concerted efforts to analyse this phenomenon. Perhaps most notably, there is no effort to assess the teaching and pedagogic impact that such individuals stand to offer to the students in the country's higher education system. Of interest here would be an assessment of what diverse personal and professional characteristics impact on the local students' learning and performance.

LITERATURE ON THE IMPACT IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian higher education system takes pride in being one of the most internationalised systems of its kind, particularly with regards to academics working in it (Welch, 2002). According to an International Survey of the Academic Profession⁶, by 1996 nearly 20 percent of the academic staff working in Australia have earned their highest degree from another country; this was as four times as high for those working in the USA and UK (Welch, 1997). There is strong evidence of a historical trend of foreign academics or migrants in the country's higher education system as Baker et al (1993) highlight. They show that over 41 percent of all new academic recruits in 1986 were born in UK and Ireland, 22 percent were born in Asia and 22 percent were born in North America (they go on to show an increase in such recruitment from Asia and North America in subsequent years). Baker et al's (1993) work is preceded by Saha and Klovdahl's survey of academic recruitment from 1961 up until 1974, which shows that "approximately 40 percent of appointees to academic positions in Australian universities came from overseas" (1979).

Saha and Atkinson (1978) analyse the participation and impact of migrant academics at the University of Sydney. Their work is the lone effort available for Australian higher education. They attempt to "examine the extent to which migrant and Australian-born academics differ with respect to interactional, attitudinal and performance characteristics" and base their analysis on in-depth interviews with 140 permanent full-time academics over 35 percent of which are foreign. Their work unravels some very interesting characteristics of migrant academics and the role they play at this host institution.

Saha and Atkinson (1978) find that "overseas-born academics are more likely to have a PhD and occupy higher ranks...not due to longevity or seniority, but rather to other career-related factors" and "the largest concentration...is found in the science faculty". Moreover they "come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and are slightly older than the Australian-born". In terms of academic performance they "are more oriented to professional activities...have published more books and articles, and are more likely to hold membership in professional societies". They do however seem to "participate less in university-oriented activities...less likely to attend Faculty meetings and to participate in local professional society meetings". They also gave "smaller numbers than their Australian counterparts" when asked how many of their colleagues they knew well. This does raise concern whether their lack of participation in the host institution may hinder their ability to teach or communicate effectively. This is alleviated by the response to the question of the number of students known well, to which there are no differences between migrant or local academics. The authors infer that "migrant status does not affect contacts with students...neither does it impair the exercise of teaching responsibilities" (1978).

Excellence in academic research, attached to such academics' international status and experience, is also supported by Welch who states "In Australia, the participation rate in international professional societies by peripatetic staff was .69 compared with .49 for indigenous staff, while the rate for publication overseas varied similarly – from .59 for the former group of staff to 0.39 in the latter" (1997).

Saha and Atkinson's (1978) work is an interesting attempt at catching a glimpse of foreign academics at a host institution. The feasibility of in-depth interviews as a research method

for such research and the size of the sample of 140 academics make their analysis interesting and valuable, albeit limited to a single institution. It highlights their professional characteristics and the role they play in the particular academic environment of the University of Sydney. An indication of the impact made by such academics is highlighted by their comparatively large number of academic publications and is also supported by Welch (1997). While the rate of academic publications is widely accepted as a good indicator of academic and intellectual health, it is not necessarily revealing of a positive impact. It is difficult to judge, for example, the citation impact⁷ of such publications or, whether these publications contribute to the overall research goals of the respective departments. The authors also express a concern over foreign academics' lack of participation in the university activities, suggesting that the time spent on working and writing publications may be the offsetting factor.

Saha and Atkinson also recognise the importance of academics and their impact on the intellectual make up of a society as "academics are specifically engaged in the education of specialists and elites, and thus have much potential influence upon the intellectual ideological life of a country" (1978). They examine the potential impact of immigrant academics in this context and find the migrant academic community to be "more prone to consider themselves left-wing oriented, profess a stronger commitment to research, and are more in favour of academic freedom and autonomy. They appear slightly more committed to an academic career in that they are less attracted to other occupation outside academia". This is an important observation and shows the immigrant academics are perceived to be both academically and intellectually more ambitious and independent. Combined with political leaning and ideological beliefs however this may cause opposition against such academics and be seen to have an adverse impact as Newman (2004) highlights, and also as in the case of Edward Said (1935-2003), the well-known Jerusalem-born Palestinian and a professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University (New York), whose well-known advocacy for the Palestinian cause earned him many enemies (Ruthven, 2003).

While Saha and Atkinson's (1978) work makes a very important contribution to the issue at hand from an Australian perspective, note that the country has experienced considerable change in the last three decades. Huge inward immigration, a growing higher education sector, a rising body of university students many of whom are international, and a changing political and social climate makes the Australian society a very different place today. This brings with it an imperative to revisit what contributions immigrant academics have made over the years to local universities and institutions. Set apart from the Anglo-American context, Australia also provides us with a somewhat unique opportunity to study this phenomenon in a different setting. While the USA and UK have always experienced immigration for over hundreds of years, Australia has only recently opened its borders and looked outward. The local cultural and social makeup is also somewhat different, with strong influences from East Asia.

CONCLUSION

An attempt to survey the literature on foreign academics and their impact on host institutions reveals a real dearth of appropriate research and a particular data famine when it comes to any relevant statistics and case studies in this area. While these 'nomadic intellectuals' are widely scrutinised when they set off from home, rarely do they seem to be appreciated or observed by their foreign hosts. A variety of factors make it difficult to judge such impact. Attempts to analyse and compare professional performance for local and immigrant tutors, for example, are simply not viable. Disciplinary differences, varying student abilities, teacher training provision and perception problems play a critical role, and hence cannot be discounted for any such analysis to be even worthy of merit. Perception is not only a problem for students but also for local colleagues. Academics arriving into local institutions are likely to be seen as taking local jobs, increasing competition and winning an undeserved share of research funds. This makes it very difficult to rely on peer review for judging performance. Such a process is likely to be biased and therefore unhelpful for such purposes.

Note that the term impact is repeatedly used in this paper largely to refer to the potential benefits or otherwise immigrant academics bring. Any attempts to define and discuss such a notion are almost conspicuously absent from the literature. Understandably the term causes considerable unease about its meanings, imperative therefore is the need to substantiate the notion and make it explicit. This study only serves to highlight the variations of level at which such impact is examined; the literature from the USA has largely focused on the linguistic elements of immigrant academics whereas Saha and Atkinson's work from Australia has delved into considerable detail analysing cultural and social characteristics of such academics. Yet both manage to relate such characteristics to student performance at host institutions in a very direct manner. In the case of the UK there is very little evidence available to suggest what clear impact such individuals make.

Perhaps the best way forward is to redress the entire issue of what academic and research competence means. Once established this could be tied to individual and institutional notions of progress and prestige. A matrix of tasks and skills that emerges could then provide an effective way to judge an individual's ability to match as many of them. Admittedly this could vary widely from theoretical research to patents to industrial linkages and to economic gains. This depends on scholarly and institutional status that a society aspires to. Essentially, how valuable is an outsider eventually depends on what values do the insiders hold.

A particular difficulty encountered in analysing the various literatures for the purpose of this paper is to do with the very definition of an immigrant academic. Who is an immigrant academic? Is it someone who has permanently immigrated into the country or, is it someone who is employed in a host institution for a definite period of time? This also raises the question of who is not an immigrant academic. Saha and Atkinson's (1978) work sets apart the two groups as of overseas origin and Australian-born. How does this classify someone who was born outside Australia, but was brought up and qualified in Australia and is a citizen of the country? The SEPSU reports (Royal Society, 1987 & 1993) define immigrant academics as those who have come from outside and are foreign (non-British

citizens). The reports exclude those who are British citizens and are either returning to UK after a long period of time or, are born and raised outside the UK but have acquired British citizenship recently. This means an experienced foreign academic who migrates to the UK at the age of 38, for example, and becomes a British citizen, would not be classified as an immigrant. Depending on where they have emigrated from, cultural and linguistic factors are likely to play a bigger role for such individuals when compared to a younger individual migrating from a country culturally similar to the UK and where English is the first language, such as Australia, New Zealand or the USA. Jacobs and Friedman (1988) and Borjas (2000 & 2005) equally fail to uncover such factors when crudely terming their observed groups as simply foreign and native.

This indeed also raises ethical challenges to researching such issues. A major concern is to do with equality and diversity within this profession. What if an adverse assessment of foreign academics with regards to their performance or political leaning makes them subject to bias and unfair treatment in an academic community? What if such an assessment is pursued along the lines of race or ethnicity in such a community? Borjas's (2000) work is a case in point. Such a focus may result in unfair discrimination and might even serve to deter equal opportunities. Another major concern of course is such an assessment itself. How is positive or negative impact measured? Are satisfied students or research publications the only measure of performance of academics? Different universities in different societies are likely to view these factors quite differently.

Given that most of the literature in this paper is either limited to a single institution or focussed on some particular aspect of this phenomenon, there is an imperative need for further research. Both Jacobs and Friedman (1988), and Saha and Atkinson (1978) use cross-sectional studies to analyse the impact of immigrant academics. Longitudinal studies are needed to ascertain this impact over a considerable period of time taking into account the impact of their research and its dissemination and, their reputation on host institutions. Such efforts could certainly prove useful for comparative analyses to judge how such migration impacts differently in different countries? A much higher proportion of foreign and immigrant academics coming to Australia compared to the UK, for example, warrants a thorough examination of the consequent teaching and research standards and the general academic culture. These two countries could be of particular significance for the purposes of such research given their social, cultural and linguistic commonalities. Is a higher proportion coming to Australia a result of a migrant push that makes a conscious choice or, an extensive recruitment drive and a more aggressive immigration policy? Of interest here also would be to determine the various factors in the respective countries that facilitate, or otherwise, a productive environment for academics with an internationally diverse experience to thrive.

Richardson and McKenna recommend "a study of the value accorded to international experience by managers and recruiters in higher education" (2002). In this era of change in higher education, there is undoubtedly a real need to understand how effective and important is the influence of academics with international perspectives and diverse approaches in institutions of higher education.

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¹ Ivy League refers to the eight of the top private institutions of higher education in the USA. Consistently placed in the top twenty universities in the country, these institutions are known for their academic excellence, selectivity in admissions and a reputation for social elitism. They include Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Harvard University, Princeton University, University of Pennsylvania and Yale University.

² New Commonwealth, term more commonly used in the 1960s and 1970s, refers to the Commonwealth of Nations. It is an association of 53 independent sovereign states, almost all of which are former territories of the British Empire, and is headed by Queen Elizabeth II.

³ No longer in existences; formerly funded by The Royal Society and The Fellowship of Engineering. The Royal Society is the independent scientific academy of the UK dedicated to promoting excellence in science. The Fellowship of Engineering, now known as The Royal Academy of Engineering, is the national academy for engineering of the UK to promote excellence in the science, art and practice of engineering.

⁴ HEPI was established in 1992 with the aim of raising issues, stimulating discussions and disseminating research on policy issues in higher education in the UK.

⁵ HESA was established in 1993 by the UK higher education institutions as the central source for the collection and publication of higher education statistics in the country.

⁶ The International Survey of the Academic Profession was conducted in 1996 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

⁷ Citation impact is a count of the number of citations (or 'references to') to an academic article. Often used as a measure of the impact an article has had within its particular field. If an article is widely read and cited, it is an indication that article has had influence with other researchers and research within the field.