The Contributions of Immigration to Regional Demographic Change in Australia since the End of the White Australia Policy

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Abstract
In the context of countries facing low fertility and population ageing, many countries will look to immigration to address shortages in labour and reduce the effects of population decline. While the short-term effects of immigration are relatively well understood, the long-term demographic consequences of high and sustained levels of immigration are still to be determined. In Australia, the dismantling of racially discriminatory migration policies in the 1970s and introduction of the subsequent large-scale migration program provides demographers with 40 years of data to understand the short- and long-term impacts of immigration. In this paper, we highlight the major contributions that immigration has made towards demographic change across 11 geographic areas in Australia from 1981 to 2021. The analyses utilise recently reconciled demographic component data for 18 different immigrant groups and the Australia-born population by age and sex. While net international migration contributed approximately 48% of overall population growth over the 40-year period, there have also been sizeable contributions made to other demographic processes, including births, deaths, and interregional migration. This research provides new insights into both the long-term demographic effects of diverse immigration streams across state capital cities and regional areas in Australia, and the contributions made by separate immigrant groups during particular periods of time.

1. Introduction to topic and theoretical focus
In this paper, we seek to understand the effects that different streams of immigration have had on the demographic evolution of Australia, a country which has received a large amount of overseas migration since the 1950s and continues to do so. We are mainly interested in how immigrant populations differ in terms of their demographic characteristics and sources of demographic change. This is relevant because international migration is, and always has been, an important component of population change in Australia (Hugo 2014; Khoo 2002). It also underpins many of the major challenges facing contemporary Australia, including economic growth, labour force needs, housing supply, infrastructure requirements, spatial population development, immigrant integration and wellbeing, and the environment (Hugo 2009; Jupp et al. 2007; Markus et al. 2009). Twenty years ago, Khoo (2003, p. 159) stated that "the growth in ethnic diversity must be considered one of the most important transformations of Australian society during the past 30 years." Since then, immigrant populations have further grown and diversified.

The overall aim of this paper is to show how building data and analytical strategies that connect international migration flows and immigrant populations across geographic areas help us to better understand the processes and impacts of immigration, and therefore Australia's changing demography. Fundamental to this are demographic accounting systems, e.g., where a population at time $t+n$ is equal to a population at time t plus births, in-migration (from other areas in the country) and immigration minus deaths, out-migration (from other areas in the country) and emigration, where n is the width of the time interval. By being able to track populations and their entries or exits over time, a better understanding of the effects

on demographic change can be made. This information can also be used to provide evidence for assessing the effectiveness or long-term implications of migration policies.

There are three main aspects of international migration that we analyse in this paper. First, how have the sources of immigrant population change in Australia's capital cities and regional areas varied since 1981? As Australia receives a large number immigrants every year from a wide array of origins, it is important to assess not only the relative sizes of different immigrant groups but also their age and sex compositions so that their effect on society and demand for particular services (e.g., education, healthcare, employment support) across geographic areas can be better understood.

The second aspect explores how births of immigrants has contributed to demographic change for the Australia-born population since 1981, in relation to Australia-born births, deaths, interregional migration and international migration. This is important for understanding how immigration contributes to demographic change for the non-migrant population.

Third, we assess the contributions of various immigration cohorts to overall births, deaths, internal migration and international migration since 1981. Immigrants come to Australia for a variety of reasons and some groups are more likely to bring their families and stay permanently than other groups. By including immigration in a demographic accounting framework, we can assess not only how many immigrants have come to different geographic areas in Australia but also how many remained after, say, 10 or 20 years.

2. Data and methods

To do the above analyses, we harmonised the data so that the demographic events of immigration, emigration and death match up with the changing immigrant stocks as measured by the quinquennial censuses from 1981 to 2021. The methods we used to harmonise data from 1981 to 2016 are described in Raymer et al. (2020). In this paper, we update the data and harmonisation techniques so that analyses can be extended through to 2021. While these exercises are normally carried out at the national level, they are rarely conducted for subnational areas or subpopulations. In addition to better understanding the contributions of immigrant population change, our research also provides new insights into the quality of the data reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics at a subpopulation and subnational levels.

4. Expected findings (in the process of being updated to include 2016-2021 data)

The immigrant population in Australia has increased by 3.763 million people between 1981 and 2016, taking into account 1.315 million deaths, 9.384 million immigrants and 4.307 million emigrants. The immigrant population change over the last three decades and a half has been concentrated in metropolises, with the largest population increase observed in Sydney (1.12 million people), followed by Melbourne (906 thousand people), Brisbane (668 thousand people) and Perth (459 thousand people). The combined population increase in these four cities accounts for roughly 85% of the total increase in the immigrant population during the 35-year period.

Changes in internal migration in the past 35 years vary substantially across regions. Among the 11 regions, Sydney has suffered the largest population loss through internal migration (164 thousand people), distantly followed by Melbourne (53 thousand people) and Remote Australia (36 thousand people). Brisbane has, meanwhile, experienced the largest population gain through internal migration (133 thousand people), with Regional Australia being a distant second (58 thousand people) and NSW Coast being a distant third (52 thousand people).

The 11 regions have all gained population through international migration since 1981, with metropolises receiving much more net international migration than the other regions.

Sydney and Melbourne are the only two regions where net international migration over the past 35 years has exceeded 1 million people. These two cities alone have captured more than 50% of the total net international migration to Australia during the 35-year period, and together with Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, captured more than 85%. Hobart has, meanwhile, received the smallest amount of net international migration, at 23 thousand people. It is also worth highlighting the correlation between immigration and emigration; that is, larger immigration to a region is usually accompanied by larger emigration from the region.

Changes in sources of growth of the immigrant population in the 11 regions from 1981-1986 to 2011-2016 are presented in Figure 1. While most of the 11 regions experienced considerable population expansion in the late 1980s and steady population change in the 1990s, metropolises, notably Sydney and Melbourne, witnessed far more rapid population growth since the turn of the century than the other regions. It is also interesting to note the variation in population growth in the 2011-2016 period among the five major capital cities. While population expansion in Sydney and Melbourne keep enlarging in the period of 2011-2016, population growth in Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth during this period has slowed down.

Immigrant population change in the five major capital cities, i.e. Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, have been predominantly driven by international migration. By contrast, immigrant population change in the other regions have been contributed by both international migration and internal migration.

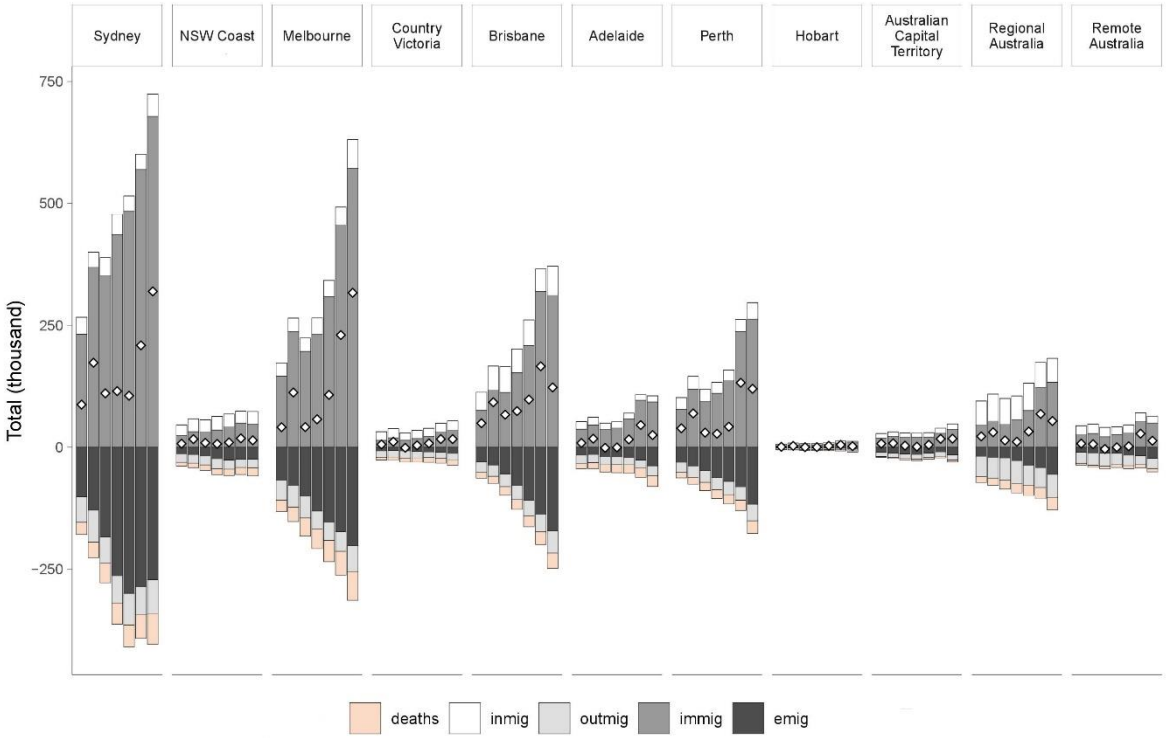

Figure 1. Changes in sources of growth of the immigrant population by region, 1981-1986 to 2011-2016 (to be updated to 2021)

The sources of growth for the Australian population in the 11 regions from 1981-1986 to 2011-2016 are presented in Figure 2.

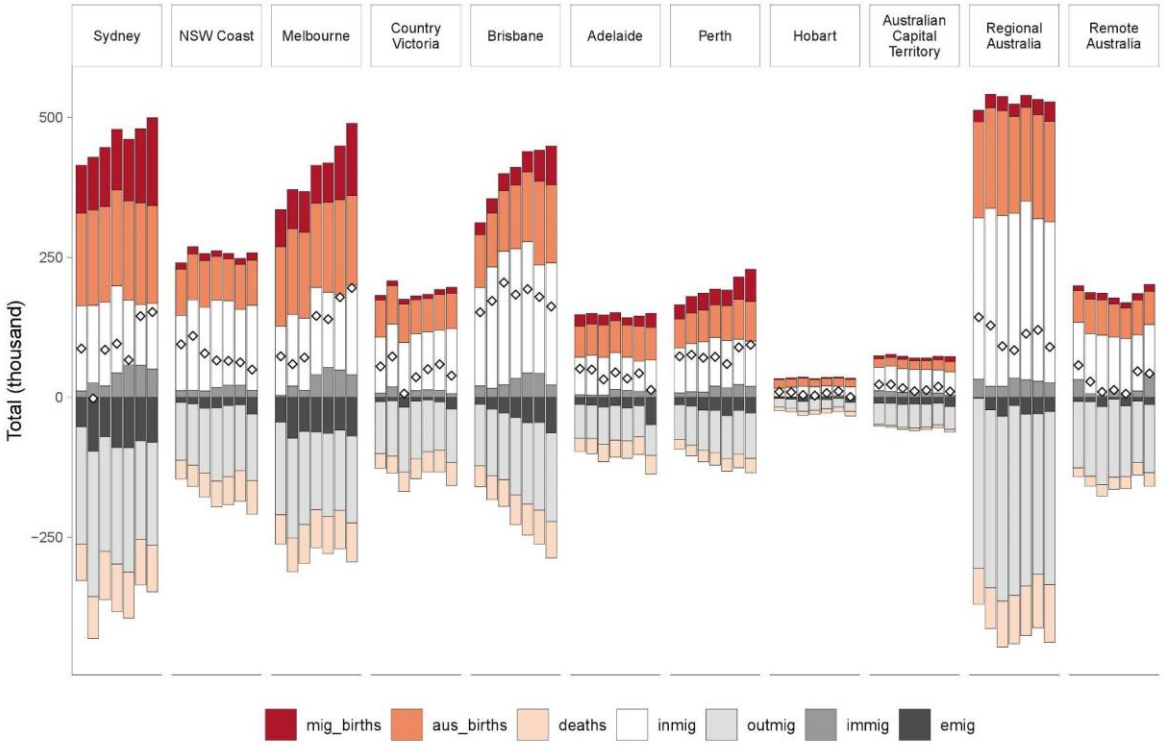

Figure 2. Changes in sources of growth of the Australian population by region, 1981-1986 to 2011-2016

The remainder of the study will examine birthplace-specific immigrant contributions to population growth, births and deaths, internal migration, and overseas migration in Australia from 1981 to 2021. The birthplaces of interest include Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, South-Eastern Europe, North Africa and Middle East, China, North-Eastern Asia and India.

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