

Migration and the Knowledge City: A Case Study of Global Melbourne

By
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Originality Statement

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is the original work of the author except for acknowledgement in the text, and there is no issue of invaded copyright. It has not been presented or submitted previously, in the whole or in part, for a degree or diploma in the University of Canberra or any other institution. The supervisors who supported the conceptual development of the thesis are as follows: Professor Richard Hu – Primary Supervisor and Dr. Lain Dare – Secondary Supervisor.

The publications from this thesis are listed on page vii and include two journal articles in process of publication, and a peer-reviewed conference paper. These publications were developed with the support and guidance of my supervisors. Outside my thesis, I have co-authored two conference papers on smart cities and global cities respectively. I also have published research reports based on various research projects which are listed in the publication section.

Any other contributions are acknowledged in the following section. The Human Resources Ethics Committee of the University of Canberra approved this research.

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Abstract

Rapid globalisation, the rise of a knowledge economy, and migration are reshaping contemporary cities. However, the corresponding discourses of these three concepts have been developing in parallel. There has been little scholarly dialogue between these discourses to inform effective policy-making and planning. This study bridges the global city, the knowledge city and migration discourses through the nexus of migrant knowledge workers. This synthesis of discourses informs an improved understanding of the associated urban transformations and the policy implications for contemporary cities. It was based on a case study of Melbourne, Australia, which has multiple identities of being a global city, a knowledge city and a migration city.

This study employed a mixed-methods approach using Australian census data, a survey, interviews and a content analysis of policy documents. By examining the scholarship on the global city and the knowledge city, a conceptual framework of the ‘global knowledge city’ was constructed to underpin the exploration of the nexus of concepts. This study was undertaken through three stages. First, it deconstructed the complexities of urban transformation in Melbourne through the lens of migration and measured its global capacity. Second, it measured Melbourne’s knowledge capacity, focusing on migrant knowledge workers and the knowledge economy. Third, it analysed the policy shifts of a global Melbourne over time to enhance its knowledge capacity in a transformative global economy.

This study found a clear association between Melbourne’s growing global capacity and a net gain through internal migration and skilled people from overseas. It also identified socio-economic disparities among migrants in some areas of greater Melbourne along with its rising global city status. In terms of the knowledge economy base, greater Melbourne had a higher concentration of knowledge intensive industries than the national average. There were distinct spatial patterns of clusters by ethnicity, occupations and industries of work, which were differentiated between migrant and non-migrant groups. From a policy perspective, the study highlighted the need to develop a more encompassing policy that focuses on human capital development in Melbourne. Moreover, an overarching national policy for cities and better coordination between tiers of government is critical if Melbourne is to become a leading global knowledge city.

The framework of ‘global knowledge city’ and the construct of ‘migrant knowledge workers’ proved useful in linking and analysing the contemporary urban processes explored in this study. The empirical analysis provided the most comprehensive understanding of Melbourne as a global city and as a knowledge city, and these perspectives of a city relate to migration and migrant knowledge workers. These findings, combined with the analysis of urban planning strategies, point out the importance both of diversifying the knowledge economy, attracting and retaining globally mobile talents, and of innovation-oriented urban development for a global knowledge city. These strategies are recommended not only for Melbourne but are also applicable to other cities with similar attributes.

Key Words: Migration, global cities, knowledge cities, knowledge workers, migrant knowledge workers, planning policy, Melbourne

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