

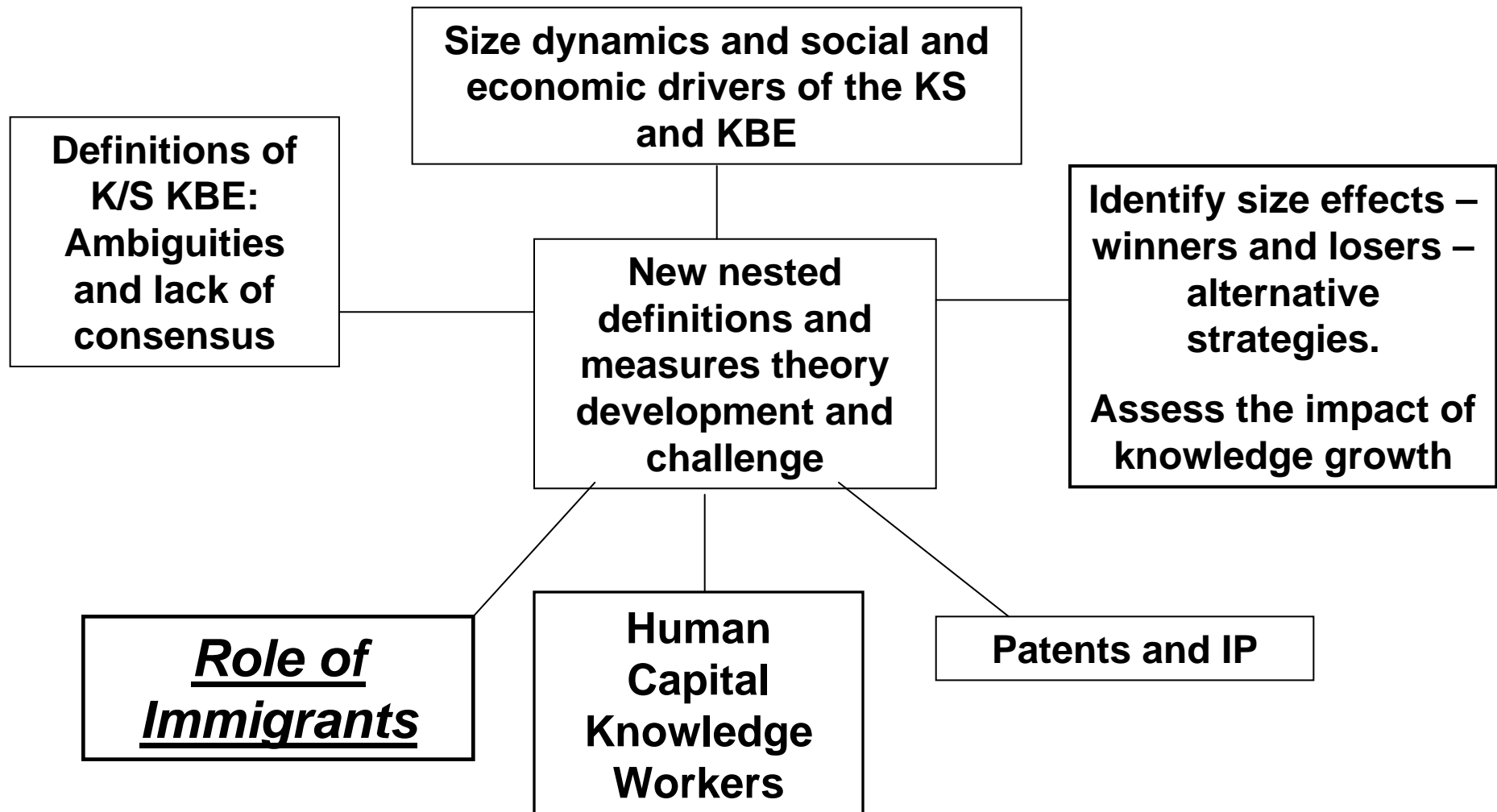
Knowledge Workers and the Changing Pattern of Global Migration: Some Experiences from New Zealand

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Research Programme 2006-8

- New Zealand Marsden Funded Project:
 - *“Winners and Losers in the Knowledge Economy/Society”*
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Research Programme 2006-8



New Zealand Context

- 1990s debates MoRST – problems with international competitiveness – “knowledge” to be a new driver of productivity and innovation
- 2000- “**Knowledge Wave**” conferences 2000 and 2003
- 2001 MoRST “**Transforming New Zealand**”
- 2002 “**Growth and Innovation Framework**”
“repositioning globally –biotech, ICT, nanotech and design and screen production”
- “**Digital Strategy**” 2004
- 2004 Advanced Network –proposed- KAREN implemented 2007
- 2006- “**Economic Transformation**” – one of Government higher level goals (sustainability, social wellbeing and national identity)

What is the Knowledge Society?

- “While there is general agreement on the appropriateness of the expression (Knowledge Societies), the same cannot be said of the content. **Which types of knowledge are we talking about?** “ (UNESCO 2005 5)
- **ICTs** are best considered as tools or facilitators which may substitute under certain conditions for other means of knowledge creation in innovative societies. These technologies do not create the transformations in society by themselves; they are designed and implemented by people in their social, economic and technological contexts” (UN 1997).

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Knowledge Based Economies

- “What does it mean to speak of the 'knowledge economy' however?”
- At the outset, it must be said that ***there is no coherent definition*** (emphasis added), let alone theoretical concept, of this term: it is at best a widely-used metaphor, rather than a clear concept. The OECD has spoken of knowledge-based economies in very general terms, as meaning “**those which are directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information**”. (Smith p 6-7)

Information v Knowledge-based

- Key point...
- Distinction between “Information” (primarily ICT capital-based) and “Knowledge” (Human capital-based)- definitions and implications

Human capital

- Development of the idea of human capital
 - Key issue in transformation of **Information** into **Knowledge** is 'human interaction'
 - Distinctions between "tacit" and 'codified" knowledge
 - Data → Information → Knowledge → Wisdom
→ Opinion
 - **But What is a 'knowledge worker'?**

Knowledge Workers Needed for KBE

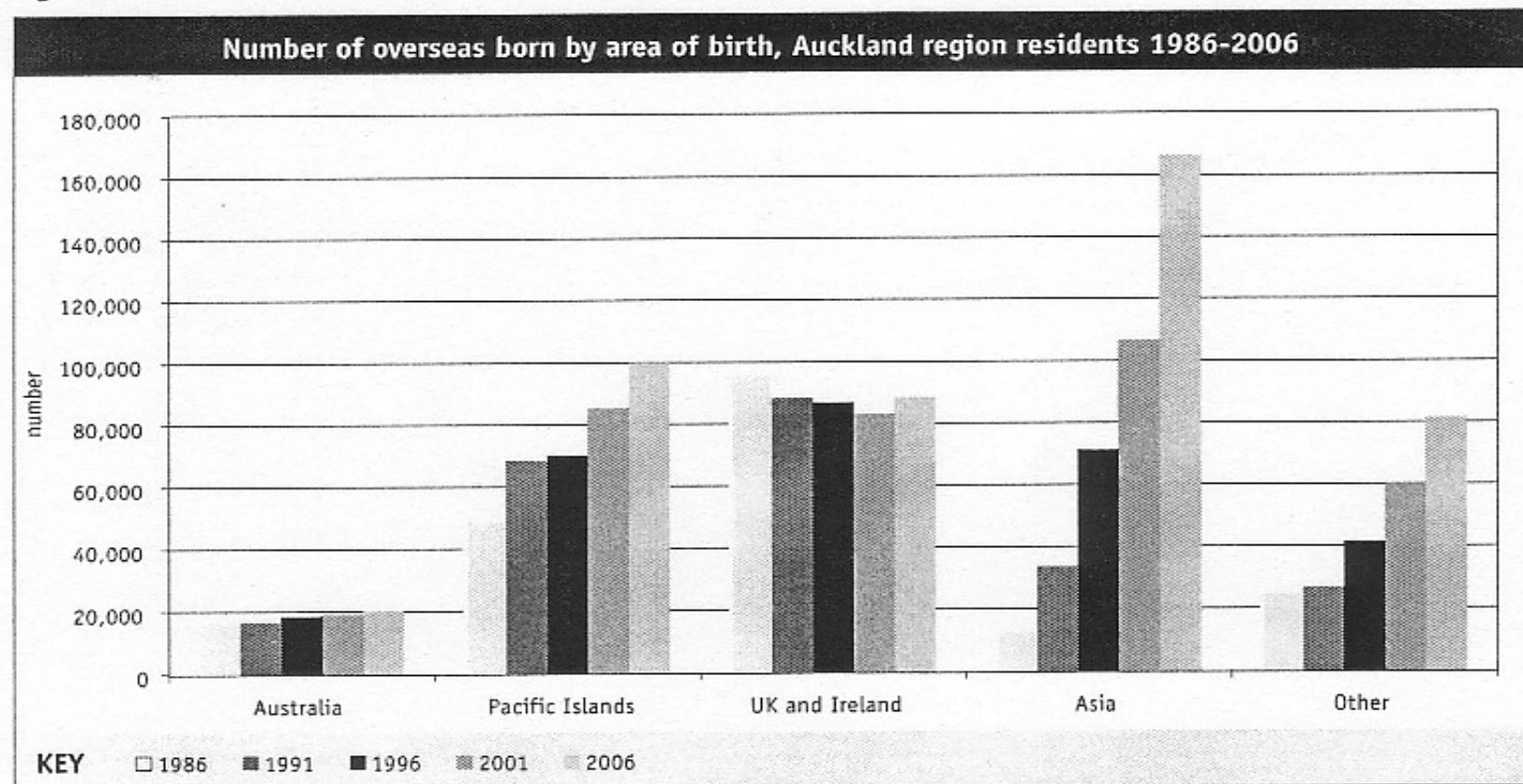
- Rise of focus on skills and the need for knowledge workers
- What is a knowledge worker?
- Machlup (1962) Drucker (1969) Bell (1973) use the term in their writings about economic and societal change
- Significance of *manual workers* would decline-
- *knowledge workers* would be more central
- **Advanced economies sought to expand their “knowledge workers via migration”**

New Zealand Migration Policies

- 1987 *Immigration Act* radically changed criteria for migrant entry into NZ – move from source countries to individual characteristics especially age, education levels and or work experience and ability to bring in investment capital
- 1991 these attributes quantified through the introduction of a points system
- Created much greater diversity in terms of country or origin of the migrants – significant growth of SE Asian population including from, Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China

Auckland Asian Immigration

Figure 1



Auckland Asian Immigration

- Large proportion of migrants who arrived between 2001 and 2006
- PR China:
 - **1986-1996 population grew from 4497-19521**
 - **1996-2006 to 78117.**
 - **Very high proportion located in Auckland**
- India
- S Korea
- Most of this was between 2001-2003 when the English language criteria was strengthened
- Hong Kong mostly prior to handover to China 1997
- Taiwan and Malaysia arrived in 1990s

Knowledge and Skills and integration in NZ

- Poor match between skills and jobs obtained in NZ
- Most migrants required time to adapt to NZ labour market – not a simple translation of skills and work in NZ
- **Over time**, number working in higher occupational groupings **increased**
- Difficulties linked to difference between explicit – formal knowledge and tacit knowledge

Case Study of Chinese Migrants

- Among the fourteen interviewees, four came to New Zealand as students and then received residence approvals under the skilled and business category and ten entered as skilled migrants.
- For the ‘previously students’, receiving tertiary education and gaining formal knowledge were their basic motive for transnational mobility.
- Pre-immigration qualifications, such as a university degree and relevant work experiences, were crucial factors for them to be granted residence.
 - Their potential for contributing to the wealth of the nation was assumed to be embodied in their human capital assessed through their formal education.
- Possessed “cultural capital” gained from Chinese university experience and inherited from either their family backgrounds or drawn from intellectual traditions revitalised shortly after the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

Case Study of Chinese Migrants

- **For the participants, a shared set of understandings on specialised knowledge was formed by:**
 - **The experience of intellectuals working in humanities during the Cultural Revolution;**
 - **The revitalisation of science and technology in the Deng Xiaoping era;**
 - **The demand for English language skills as a result of economic reforms**

Case Study of Chinese Migrants

- **When they came to New Zealand, they faced a completely different intellectual culture that was seen in:**
 - Educational practices which adopted an approach of “rigorous eclecticism” as the underpinning philosophy of curriculum documents (Clark 2004).
- The differences in the practice of higher education suggested that the “tacit knowledge” gained in the Chinese context would not easily support them in their career pursuit in New Zealand

Role of social networks

- All those interviewed mentioned the importance of direct and indirect social ties in their decision to emigrate and settle in New Zealand.
- For those who entered New Zealand as skilled migrants: Relatives and friends appeared to be the most trustworthy information channels. Such social ties, through which they shared and learnt about migration, effectively facilitated and supported the flow of knowledge and information about how to apply for moving to and finding their own way in New Zealand. They turned to their relatives and friends rather than consultant companies to get information and advice was favoured.

Impediments to settlement and integration

- Difficulties faced by those interviewed in the settlement process show that tacit knowledge conditioned the way they accessed explicit knowledge in New Zealand.
- They did not regard the English language as the major barrier for them to settle-in.
- **Instead, the lack of information and knowledge on New Zealand's society**

Impediments to settlement and integration

- Immigration policy changes over the last twenty years have been towards an emphasis on
 - **personal merit and skills rather than country of origin to attract talent from the global labour market.**
- Data reviewed here shows that understanding the different forms of knowledge (formal and tacit) is crucial to appreciating how knowledge is acquired and deployed in the international migration process.

Some of the key features/issues that arise in the KBE are:

- The Information Economy has typically focused upon ICTs
 - The economic and social impacts of genetic engineering, and nanotechnology have typically not been established.
- Measuring the extent/effects of the KBE can occur either directly (physical/monetary values of its effects – both positive and negative) and/or indirectly via the *consequences* of the growth of knowledge effects for example, on work practices, employment patterns, social inclusion, health/wellbeing/crime/surveillance, environmental and especially energy use consequences etc

Some of the key features/issues that arise in the KBE are:

- Skilled (human) capital; semi- or unskilled (human) capital; physical capital (including ICTs) are **complements** in the KBE
- Knowledge represented in codified qualifications only part of indicators of knowledge
- Knowledge debates/policies privilege “science” over ‘culture’ and forget about complementarity of ‘other skills’
- **Knowledge embodied in human capital is mobile, but perhaps not as much as is assumed in theory – role of social networks and local institutional knowledge**