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Interpreting Migration Through the Prism of Reasons for Moves

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ABSTRACT

Some interpretations of migration juxtapose jobs and amenities as alternative explanations for migration and regional growth but there is substantial evidence that migrants juggle a more complex set of motivations for migration than simply the attraction of a new job or a nice place to live. Occupational opportunities, family needs, communities, and lifestyles all play competing roles when households decide to move. This has always been true for local moves but appears to be relevant in longer distance moves also. We use data from the Housing, Income, and Labour Dynamics Survey in Australia to unpack the relative role of a wide variety of responses to the question – why did you move. The paper provides evidence that while migration is clearly related to labour market opportunities, non-economic motivations including family change, lifestyle choices, and housing needs also play powerful roles in long-distance migration decisions and often come with significant economic benefits. Clearly, jobs matter but it may be that they are the context within which migration occurs rather than simply an adjustment mechanism in the labour market. Survey data confirm that most moves are not generated by jobs per se, and the distribution of gains varies considerably by gender and reason for moves. Overall, this research emphasises the complexity of modern migration decisions.

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INTRODUCTION

The research on individual moves by Bartel (1979) and Bartel and Borjas (1981) provided support for the notion that we 'move to improve' and recent studies of internal migration in Britain have confirmed the role of wages inmigration for employed men (Boheim & Taylor, 2007). These studies are part of a long-term interest in how human capital motivates migration and how households move to increase their human capital. In this conceptualization, the decision to move involves a trade-off between the immediate costs of moving and the expected future benefits (monetary and non-monetary) from gaining a job, or finding a better job. The outcome in the aggregate is that migration is a response to differences across labour markets where higher wages attract workers from regions where wages are lower (Greenwood, 1975; Shields & Shields, 1989).

But, we have known for some time that survey data on why people move do not match up neatly with the arguments about the role of jobs and the economic returns to migration. For local mobility, jobs are of course quite minor factors in the migration decision-making process and even for longer distance moves, although jobs may be the single biggest factor in the decision to move, there are other competing reasons for changing communities and labour markets (Chen and Rosenthal, 2008). That realisation has generated an ongoing debate in the economic growth literature about the role of natural amenities versus jobs in the migration process. The recent discussion and review by Partridge (2010) while recognising the role of jobs in regional growth suggests that it is natural amenities, which are a fundamental driver in the migration process. But this dualism may mask the intertwined nature of economic and non-economic factors in the migration decision. A point that has been made by Halfacree and

Boyle (1993) and more specifically in Halfacree (2004) that migration is inherently a complex process. In this study, we use survey responses to further unpack the relative role of factors in the migration decision. We also relate reasons for moves, and the actual gains achieved with the move. In this way, we provide another window on the migration process and the returns to migration more generally.

It is not surprising to think that households may be involved in a more complex decision-making process and not just reacting to the role of job opportunities in their decision to move. There are three structural changes, which have altered the decision-making playing field, and these structural changes are important for understanding just what is happening in the decision of whether to move or not.

The first of these structural changes is the increasing role of gendered migration. Women, depending on the national context, are a very large percentage of all wage earners and of migrants, and as women have entered the labour force, the decisions are no longer about a single male wage earner deciding whether to move or not, but rather are complex decision-making processes with trade-offs between two workers in the same household. As a result, women are often not tied migrants as they were in the past.

The second structural change is the development of extended family relationships in which households are linked to ageing parents and grandparents to their grandchildren. Even a few decades ago, there were simply not a very large number of three generation families. These family networks are likely to influence the kinds of decisions that households make with respect to where to work and where to live.

A third structural change is the relatively increased affluence of two worker households and the changing tendency to think about the overall family outcome and family lifestyles, which may be shifting the focus to jobs and lifestyles and environment. Family and community have always been important but the interaction in dual earner families, the increasing focus on local environments, and the trade-offs of reaching two jobs, are changing how families behave.

Given the argument that there are competing agendas in the migration decision-making process can we find evidence for those agendas in the responses to questions about reasons for moves and can we use that data to link outcomes and gains from migration. The research questions then are focused on the following: (1) what survey responses tell us about mobility and migration motivations; (2) how the economic gains from migration vary by local and long-distance moves; (3) how the economic gains vary by gender; and (4) for whom jobs matter in the migration process. These research questions are taken up in the empirical section of the paper after a contextualization, which sets the study in the broad context of previous research.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The four literatures that are relevant as background to this research are as follows: (1) the classic work on migration as an adjustment process, which at the macro level, brings labour markets into equilibrium; (2) the research on the changing labour market with the increased participation of women; (3) the research that has documented the gendered nature of migration and the role of intra family decision-making in the migration process; and (4) the research that suggests that amenities broadly play a critical role in the choices that households make. We hypothesise that all of these contexts will be reflected in the responses to questions about mobility and migration.

It has been the accepted wisdom about migration and migration outcomes for the past several decades, beginning with Sjaastad (1962) that migration is an adjustment process, which adjusts workers to job markets and creates gains for the workers who move to new jobs and labour markets. Macro studies of inter-regional flows focused on the way in which variations in employment and wage rates predict the size of inter-regional flows (Greenwood, 1985). That a difference in wages plays a role in labour movement has received support too from studies of international migration (Hatton and Williamson, 1998). At the inter-regional level, studies of outcomes for migrants as distinct from aggregate flows established that in general mobility brings gains. The work by Bartel (1979) and Bartel and Borjas (1981) decomposed the type of move and disentangled the outcomes for younger and mature workers, and for those who quit and migrated versus those who were laid off and migrated. In

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general, they conclude that mobility pays and especially for younger migrants. More important is the finding that it is the combination of job and residential change that brings the highest returns. Using the British Household Panel data and the selection of fulltime employed younger (aged 21–29 years) men, Boheim and Taylor (2007) show that migrants who moved and changed jobs had a wage increase of more than three times those who did not move. Yankow (2003) also reports significant gains in wages for migrants in contrast to those who change jobs and do not move. Gains are more immediate for low skilled workers, whereas for higher skill workers there is a delay in income gains.

Some research using the idea of an escalator hierarchy in which moves up the urban hierarchy bring greater returns to migration and also provides support for the notion that the greatest gains are for moves to large labour markets where there are likely to be diverse opportunities. The initial studies by Fielding (1992) have been extended by studies of migrants in Canada that revealed significant gains for migrants into Toronto as compared with other destinations in the Canadian urban hierarchy (Newbold & Brown, 2011). The income gain for moves to the Toronto exceeds the gains by moving to other urban areas or by staying. Again, as in the Boheim and Taylor (2007) study, the analysis is of young employed migrants aged 20–29 years.

The research on the unemployed who move, those who are trying to enter the labour market, shows how human capital plays a role, but the research also shows that individual characteristics and choices are also relevant. The macro studies suggested a link between the migration of the unemployed and wage gains, but the micro level studies found much less consistency in the findings about the movement of the unemployed. Those who move are more likely to find jobs (Van Dijk *et al*., 1989; Westerlund, 1998) but recent studies, which account for selective effects, suggest that the gains to migration may be driven as much by the characteristics of the migrants as by the migration itself (Pekkala & Tervo, 2002; Bill & Mitchell, 2006).

Labour markets are changing and are arguably more fluid than at any time in the past. Women are now a substantial fraction of workers, and this in turn has changed the migration decision-making process. Whereas in the 1960s, about 40% of women were in the workforce, now it is closer to 60% (US Dept. of Labor, 2011). Additionally, more women are focused on career paths not simply working to supplement household income (Pattern & Parker, 2012). Still, entry and exit from the labour market is much more volatile for women and so is the nature of participation. Clark and Withers (2007) and Clark and Huang (2006) established that there is considerable job fluidity for migrants and local movers. Although we often conceptualise employment as long spells with one employer and in one occupation, the shift to a service economy has destabilised employment spells especially for women. Although long spells in employment are clearly relevant for professional workers, in fact much of the mobility in and out of the labour force is not in the professional occupations and is frequent and unstable.

The increased labour force participation of women has led to studies, which now find an important gender dimension to migration decision-making, and to the economic outcomes of migration, an outcome which is not necessarily consistent with the human capital model (Shihadeh, 1991; Halfacree, 1995). Moving does not always create gains for women (Boyle *et al*., 1999, 2001; Smits *et al*., 2003), and the negative effects of moving on women's earnings and employment are greater once a child is born (Boyle *et al*., 2003). The substantial literature on tied migration examines just how women fare when they move because a spouse relocates (Cooke, 2001, 2003). The research on family migration also found that it has different outcomes for married and unmarried women's labour market participation, and while for non-mothers, migration has only a small, short-lived impact on employment, mother's with young children experience a sizeable long-term decline in both labour force participation and employment following family migration (Cooke, 2008; Cooke *et al*., 2009). These studies provide strong evidence that gender roles (e.g. 'motherhood') are of primary importance in shaping family migration behaviour and specifically impact the way decisions are made. In particular, Cooke (2008) shows actual beliefs about gender roles have a significant part to play in the likelihood of migration and the outcomes of migration

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Not only is migration gender driven but also it is increasingly embedded in the larger context of extended family structures. Where once a household needed only to consider the household itself, now with extended life spans often the decisions about moving are also connected to the needs of elderly parents, the desires of grandparents, and a raft of familial connections (Michieln *et al*., 2008; Pettersson & Malmberg, 2009). One study has suggested that migrants were concerned as much about realigning social relationships as they were about making specific economic gains (Morrison & Clark, 2011). These last findings suggest that in the present economic organisation of society and with the changes in family structures that migration may be as much about social processes as it is about economic gains.

Finally, there is an important body of work, which specifically weighs the role of amenities in the migration process. The debates about inter-regional growth and the underpinnings of that growth have been brought into sharp focus by reviews and analyses of the new economic geography and amenity migration (Partridge, 2010; Buch *et al*., 2013; Korpi *et al*., 2010). Although Partridge comes down fairly clearly on the view that growth across space is heavily driven by natural amenity underpinnings, Buch and others have a more multi factor explanation of what is occurring. Glaeser *et al*. (2001) also take a broader view of amenities that while cities were once primarily centres of employment opportunities, now successful cities are those that are also centres of consumption. As firms become more mobile, it is all about cities as centres of consumption, and by extension about high amenity cities that grow faster than low amenity cities.

To reiterate, the findings from previous research do show that employment matters, that the unemployed often still move to improve their job prospects, and professional and managerial workers move to enhance their career prospects, but beyond this there are a wide range of social outcomes, which are inter-related with migration decisions. It is unpacking the whole range of mobility motivations and the intersection of those motivations with labour market outcomes, which is at the heart of the empirical analysis in the present paper. Specifically, the analysis examines the outcomes for those who cite, job, family, lifestyle, neighbourhood as motivations and their outcomes by gender.

QUESTIONS, DATA AND METHODS

At the outset, it is important to clarify that this analysis is not about the gains to migration versus not migrating as is the case in most studies of the returns to migration. Rather our problem is to examine the amount of migration that is employment driven, and the relative gain there is from that process and the economic returns to those who move for family, housing, and non-employment motivations more generally. That is, we are interested in the relationship of outcomes and migration, and how the reasons for moves can help us understand the migration process.

The data, which are the basis for this research, are from Waves 1–10 (2001–2010) of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia survey (HILDA). We examine continuously employed movers, those who reported wages at each pair of years in the survey (unemployed movers are not part of this analysis). We analyse moves using a categorization of less than and more than 30 km. Such a move breaks local ties and represents a change in labour market. Almost all moves (more than 97%) of more than 30 k involve a job change in association with the move. We used a distance metric rather than job change as job change will include a large number of local moves with job changes.[1] We select employed men and women in the prime working ages of 21–49 years and also the period when mobility and migration is greatest without the complexity of retirement migration.

The survey is a longitudinal survey of approximately 7,600 households with about 19,900 respondents each year. The survey is modelled on and is similar to surveys in the US (the Panel Study of Income Dynamics) and the British Households Panel Survey, now the 'Understanding Society' study. In the present study, the mobility measures and variables are drawn from the adult respondent file. It is a yearly survey that began in 2001 and is ongoing. The survey in Australia not only covers a wide array of economic and labour market measures but also has detailed data on household composition and migration. Unlike most other panel surveys, the HILDA survey also collects data on perceived outcomes of residential location and satisfaction with a set of measures of employment and job satisfaction.

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The analysis relies on the standard variables used in models of migration including age, marital status, family status (presence of children), a measure of mobility and distance moved, tenure, income (hourly wages and yearly income) occupation, and employment status. Reasons for moves are grouped into larger categories from about 30 specific items coded in the survey.

In Australia, as in other countries, residential change is highly distance dependent. Most moves involve very short distances – nearly 70% of all moves are less than 10 km, involving quite local changes (Fig. 1). The mean distance moved for the 2001–2010 moves was slightly more than 11 km though with a fairly large standard deviation (16.8 K). There are a significant number of moves of more than 30 km, a distance which usually signifies a change in labour markets, and it is these moves that are of special interest to the analysis in this paper.

Our research questions, as stated earlier, are concerned to look at a set of migration motivations and link those motivations to the outcomes of local and long-distance moves and detail the way in which the economic gains from migration vary by local and long-distance moves. We are interested in how the economic gains vary by gender and when and for whom jobs specifically matter in the migration process. The use of the reasons prism provides a different perspective on the complexity of modern migration and provides an enriched interpretation of migration and the outcomes. In a sense, this approach is an update and extension of a much earlier paper, which codified work on residential mobility and migration in the context of local changes, which involved decisions about housing and long-distance moves which involved choices for occupational success (Clark and Onaka, 1983). Local moves are still housing driven but long-distance moves involve a variety of motivations.

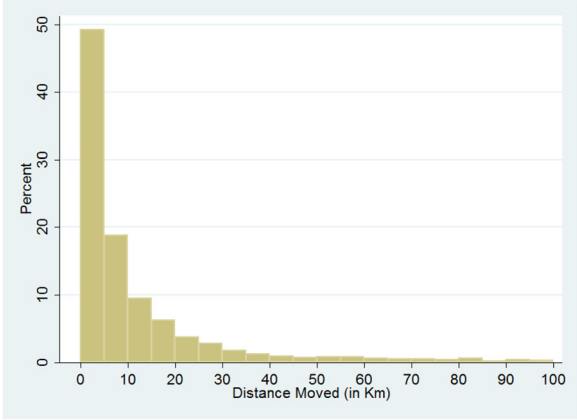

Figure 1. The distance distribution of moves less than 100 k for moves between 2001–2010 (the diagram represents the moves up to 100 k).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Reasons for Moves

The underlying drive to change houses and relocate between communities is part of a strong desire that all individuals have to improve their position in the world whether it is across neighbourhoods in the same city or between quite distant metropolitan areas. As we know from other research and the previous figure, most moves are short distance, and a great majority of the origins and destinations are quite local. In the current HILDA data, about three quarters of all moves are less than 30 k. For these local moves, 93% of men and 94% of women reported their primary reason for moving was related to housing family and neighbourhood, which confirms previous findings (Tables 1 and 2). Only about 6% in each case indicated that a work-related reason was important for their local moves, and of those, nearly all reported that they were moving to be closer to the job. The latter reason, of course, is well documented and supported in the literature on commuting and job location. Residence moves, that is, moves for larger or smaller housing, for better quality housing or a move to ownership, dominate the non-employment reasons, but it is important to note that family neighbourhood and lifestyle all play important roles in local choices and those reasons have become more prominent since the Clark and Onaka (1983) paper of three decades ago. Overall, more than a 10th of all moves are involuntary related to evictions and housing demolition and moves into or out of public housing, again an increase over time.

With changing family structures, the increase in two worker households and the changing organisation of labour markets, we show that while jobs still matter for longer distance moves here there are other forces at work. It is notable that even when a job change occurs as is the case

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Table 1. Men ages 21–49 years reasons for moving by reason and distance.

	Moved <30 k		Moved 30 k+		Moved between metro areas	
Reason	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
All employment	224	6.6	485	43.9	81	34.2
New Job	28	.8	205	18.6	26	11.0
Nearer work	174	5.1	121	11.0	23	9.7
Work transfer	12	.4	125	11.3	29	12.2
Other work	10	.3	34	3.1	3	1.0
All non-employment	3,163	93.4	619	56.1	156	65.8
Residence	1,505	44.4	118	10.7	39	16.5
Family	476	14.1	129	11.7	29	12.2
Neighbourhood	335	9.9	138	12.5	40	16.9
Lifestyle	168	5.0	137	12.4	23	9.7
Involuntary	424	12.5	23	2.0	6	2.5
Other	255	7.5	74	6.7	19	8.0
	3387		1104			

Source: Data from '*HILDA – Release 10*', Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

Table 2. Women ages 21–49 years reasons for moving by motivation and distance.

	Moved <30 k		Moved 30 k+		Moved between metro areas	
Reason	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
All employment	185	6.0	282	31.7	39	22.0
New Job	14	.5	125	14.0	17	9.6
Nearer work	156	5.1	82	9.2	15	8.5
Work transfer	9	.3	50	5.6	7	4.0
Other work	6	.2	25	2.8	0	0
All non-employment	2877	94.0	608	68.3	138	78.0
Residence	1382	45.1	103	11.6	34	19.2
Family	470	15.3	146	16.4	36	20.3
Neighbourhood	297	9.7	142	16.0	24	13.6
Lifestyle	157	5.1	135	15.2	24	13.6
Involuntary	353	11.5	14	1.6	3	1.7
Other	218	7.1	68	7.6	17	9.6
	3062		890			

Source: Data from '*HILDA – Release 10*', Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

for nearly all long-distance moves, the movers themselves often identify other underlying factors, which suggests that the job is the context within which the changes occurs rather than the driving force in the decision. The decomposition of the detailed data on moves in the HILDA survey shows that employment, residence, neighbourhood, family and life style all play roles in the complex decisions to change locations; they vary across the distance moved (Tables 1 and 2).

Still, the story for longer distance moves, broadly speaking between labour market areas, reflects the much greater importance of jobs. Nearly 44% of men but a smaller 32% of women identify the job is the basic underlying force in creating their move. This leaves 56% in the case of men and 68% in the case of women reporting a non-job reason for their relocation. The outcome speaks to the issue, which is at the heart of understanding, why migration occurs. Jobs are a necessary part of the relocation process (recall that approximately 97% of all moves over 30 k change jobs) but are not necessarily the primary motivation in selecting one location over another. Unlike the short distance moves, which are dominated by the choice of a residence, in the case of moves

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of more than 30 k ,the reasons are spread relatively evenly across reasons related to the house, the family, lifestyle, and connections to the neighbourhood.

For the subset of moves across large cities, jobs are important but surprisingly they play a smaller role for both men and women. This speaks to the complex issue of how people decide to move and reiterates the real questions, which underlie any policy focus on migration and jobs especially if policy decisions about creating jobs are involved. Naturally, work transfers and new jobs play an important role as might be expected, an important role, but more so for men than women. Notably for men, the residence and neighbourhood were primary, whereas for women, again as expected, family and the residence were the most important decision-making factors in their choice of moving across metropolitan areas. That family reasons account for almost a fifth of all motivations for women, stresses the role of social relationships and extended family links – to be nearer friends and family – was one of the important sub-codes listed within the family category.

The question arises how should these reports of relocation motivations be interpreted? Clearly, jobs remain important, especially for male employed workers as more than one and a half times as many men as women reported an employment reason. But what we can see in the reports is a reflection of the issues we raised in the literature review, that now family, lifestyle, and community/neighbourhood (the urban environment) are weighted about the same as moving nearer to work or work transfer, and only slightly smaller than the proportion who report that the new job was a primary motivation. For women, the neighbourhood family and lifestyle were more important as factors generating moves than even a new job. Clearly, these findings support the views of gendered decision-making and the importance of social relationships more broadly.

The Returns to Migration by Distance and Reason for Move

To examine the returns to migration, the study considers hourly wages before and after the move in adjusted dollars. Clearly, we have argued that the return to a move is more than an economic one but at the same time how do we measure the move outcome? Do moves, which are in fact not motivated by jobs per se, also generate sustainable economic returns? Do they in fact provide evidence that the job is the context for the move?

Our primary concern is with longer distance moves but we report the results for moves under 30 k where jobs are essentially not a factor in the relocation decision. We do this because the results reveal interesting variations about the returns from these local relocations (even though less than 8% of all moves less than 30 k changed jobs as well as moving). Of those who moved and gave a job reason, almost 85% indicated that their job involved moving nearer to their work, a predicted outcome of the work/residence distance trade-off (Table 3). These movers have a small dollar loss between 3 and 6% in hourly wages as a result of the move. All of the non-employment reasons were associated with changes in hourly wages, averaging less than a dollar, and only reaching substantially over a dollar for a residence explanation for residential relocation.

The major concern and the centre of the analysis is the question of what happens across the motivations for long-distance moves. What are the returns to migration across job and non-job explanations for moves, which involved changing jobs and labour markets (Table 4)? Both men and women who move for new jobs make the highest dollar and percentage gains. All longer distance moves, both those who move nearer to work and those who have work transfers also make dollar and percentage gains. At this level is a clear indication that jobs matter, and those who indicate that they both moved for job and changed jobs make significant gains, reiterating the value of explaining these changes in the context of human capital. At the same time, we have to recall that these moves are only 30 to 40% of all longer distance moves.

It is the range of outcomes across the non-job motivations, which allow us to enrich our understanding of non-employment motivations in-migration. For men, the residence and neighbourhoods generate significant economic returns with the job change even though that was not the primary motivation. Clearly, even though the move involves changing labour markets, the job was only a part of the complex decision to move. We know from other research that these moves may involve trade-offs – between employment per se and costs of living, across inter-relationships

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Table 3. Changes in hourly wages for moves (adjusted $) by reason for moves <30 k *n* small sample size.

	Men				Women			
Reason	Hourly wage before	Hourly wage after	Change in wages	% Change	Hourly wage before	Hourly wage after	Change in wages	% Change
Employment								
New Job	25.6	24.8	−.9	−3.5	*n*	*n*	*n*	
Nearer work	28.3	26.6	−1.7	−6.0	28.3	26.6	−1.7	−6.0
Work transfer	*n*	*n*	*n*		*n*	*n*	*n*	
Other work	*n*	*n*	*n*		*n*	*n*	*n*	
Non-employment								
Residence	28.0	29.6	1.6	5.7	25.1	25.3	.2	.8
Family	26.2	27.3	1.1	4.2	22.4	23.7	1.3	5.8
Neighbourhood	28.4	28.7	.3	1.1	26.4	24.6	−1.8	−6.8
Lifestyle	28.0	28.1	.1	.4	25.7	25.9	.2	.8
Involuntary	24.3	25.4	1.1	4.5	23.1	23.2	.2	.9
Other	30.4	29.8	−.7	−2.3	28.1	26.7	−1.4	−5.0

Source: Data from '*HILDA–Release 10*', Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

Table 4. Changes in hourly wages for moves (adjusted $) by reason for moves 30 k+ *n* small sample size.

	Men				Women			
Reason	Hourly wage before	Hourly wage after	Change in wages	% Change	Hourly wage before	Hourly wage after	Change in wages	% Change
Employment								
New Job	26.3	29.5	3.2*	12.2	23.6	26.7	3.1*	13.1
Nearer work	28.6	30.0	1.4	4.9	26.2	28.0	1.8	6.3
Work transfer	29.9	31.5	1.6*	5.4	27.2	27.9	.7	2.6
Other work	22.9	23.2	.3	1.3	25.2	22.8	−2.4	−9.5
Non-employment								
Residence	26.6	28.0	1.4	5.3	24.4	26.1	1.7	7.0
Family	25.3	26.2	.8	3.2	24.2	26.7	2.5*	10.3
Neighbourhood	27.1	29.7	2.6*	9.6	24.2	24.5	.3	1.2
Lifestyle	26.1	26.8	.7	2.7	24.5	26.6	2.1*	8.6
Involuntary	*n*	*n*	*n*		*n*	*n*	*n*	
Other	24.7	27.5	2.8*	11.3	22.8	26.2	3.4*	14.9

*Significant at least .05.
Source: Data from '*HILDA–Release 10*', Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

with family, and community links and the data here supports an argument of complex decision-making.[2] The large gains for 'other' reasons also emphasises that the job was a context not the driver in the relocation. Clearly, these results emphasise the way in which jobs and occupations are fitted into the decision-making process, which frequently involves intersections with family needs, lifestyle aims, and a host of not-easily classified motivations to relocate.

The Role of Gender

There is still a tendency in studies of the returns to migration to focus on men in their prime working age as in the Boheim and Taylor (2007) study, for example. But as women are nearly half of the workforce and are significant players in the decision to move either on their own or in families, their responses to the question of gains from migration are equally relevant to understanding migration outcomes. They, like men, are assumed

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to move to increase their human capital. Following the arguments of Cooke (2008) about the role of marriage inmigration, Table 5 shows the returns in hourly wages for employment reasons for married and unmarried women. The large gains across employment are driven almost entirely by the gains to unmarried women. In fact, the changes in wages for married women who move nearer to work or make a work transfer and other work decisions are all negative. This finding is consistent with other data, which emphasises the negative effects on spouses who make regional moves. It also hints at the tied spouse literature. The negative values for other work for unmarried women are likely to be younger women changing careers, although the data is based on small sample sizes. Overall, the negative returns for those who report other work reasons reflects a complex set of work-related reasons, being let go, resigning, and moving with spouse.

Finally, Table 6 examines the wage returns for men and women who move to and across large cities. Here, we see the significant gains generated by employment, across the board for women, almost all of whom are unmarried. New job, nearer work, and work transfer generate significant hourly changes in wages, and we can also note that the hourly wages are significantly higher for these movers as compared with all movers over 30 k. The hourly wages are also higher for those identifying work reasons than for those identify non-employment reasons. Still, moving to or between the major metropolitan areas generates greater returns both for those who identify work reasons and those who identify lifestyle and family. We can read these results as support for the urban amenities argument (if we assume that neighbourhood and lifestyle are elements of urban amenities) that Glaeser and others are making about the underlying logic of regional migration. Thus, for men in the prime working ages (21–49 years), migrants who change jobs but who indicated their primary reason for moving was neighbourhood or lifestyle have returns, which are as large as those generated from moving nearer to work and, greater than those who indicate the logic was a new job.

Models of Migration Outcomes – how do Jobs Matter?

To provide a formal assessment of the role of motivations in long-distance migration, we compute a series of logit regression models, which (a) relate job motivations to a set of family characteristics – tenure, education, and occupation; and (b) examine associations of all reasons and wage returns with these same social and economic characteristics.

For the model of job motivations, we choose only those who said they moved for a new job or a job transfer. This removes those who identified commuting or job loss so that we have a nearly 'pure' measure of job motivations. The results provide an important window on the links between migration and motivation. Although the age squared coefficient is only marginally significant at the .10 level, it does reiterate that older workers are much less likely to move, and as we know from other research, families, and owners are less likely to move in any event. The negative associations with job motivations confirm these outcomes. More years of education and professional occupations are associated with specifying a job motivation for the move. It is the young and

Table 5. Changes in hourly wages for job moves (adjusted $) by reason for moves 30 k+ for married and unmarried women *n* small sample size.

	Married women				Unmarried women			
Reason	Hourly wage before	Hourly wage after	Change in wages	% Change	Hourly wage before	Hourly wage after	Change in wages	% Change
Employment								
New Job	26.0	26.9	.9	3.5	23.2	26.7	3.5*	15.1
Nearer work	31.9	31.3	−.6	−1.9	24.3	26.9	2.6	10.7
Work transfer	32.6	29.7	−2.9*	−8.9	23.9	26.8	2.9*	12.1
Other work	23.8	22.6	−1.2	−5.0	26.0	22.9	−3.1*	−11.9

*Significant at least .05.

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Table 6. Changes in hourly wages for moves (adjusted $) by reason for moves between Metropolitan areas *n* small sample size.

	Men				Women			
Reason	Hourly wage before	Hourly wage after	Change in wages	% Change	Hourly wage before	Hourly wage after	Change in wages	% Change
Employment								
New Job	36.4	38.8	2.4	6.6	29.6	34.1	4.5*	15.2
Nearer work	27.7	32.8	5.1*	18.4	36.1	44.8	8.7	24.1
Work transfer	31.6	33.4	1.8	5.7	25.4	32.2	6.8	26.8
Other work	*n*	*n*	*n*		*n*	*n*	*n*	
Non-employment								
Residence	27.0	30.2	3.2*	11.9	24.5	22.6	−1.6	−6.5
Family	28.4	29.7	1.3	4.6	23.6	27.5	4.0*	16.9
Neighbourhood	27.1	30.9	3.8*	14.0	24.4	24.0	−.4	16.4
Lifestyle	26.8	31.9	5.0*	18.7	26.6	24.5	−2.2	8.3
Involuntary	*n*	*n*	*n*		*n*	*n*	*n*	
Other	28.2	35.1	6.9*	24.5	23.9	25.5	1.7	7.1

*Significant at least .05.

the skilled that are moving for jobs – fulfilling our discussion that it is the skilled who are likely to be focused on improving their human capital (Table 7).

To further explore the impact of reason for moves and the interaction with economic outcomes, we compute logit regressions of the move for job reasons and for non-job reasons following Dixon (2003). However, we extend the analyses in the Dixon study by examining more detailed divisions of the non-job reasons, including residence, family, neighbourhood, and lifestyle reasons for long-distance migration. The associations across the job and non-job reasons confirm what we identified in the tables of reasons for moves and the links with economic gains. Owners play the standard role, they are less likely to move a long distance for a job, but they do for a residence change. Women and families identify with family, neighbourhood, and lifestyle motivations.

Table 7. Logit regression of probability of moving for new job and job transfer (all moves over 30 k).

Moved for job (new job/job transfer)-Yes/No	Coeff.	*z*	$P > \|z\|$
Age	.1008	1.64	.101
Age (squared)	−.0016	−1.81	.070
Female	−.1500	−1.14	.256
Family with children	**−.7061**	**−6.33**	**.000**
Married	.1733	1.34	.180
Divorced	.2205	.93	.351
Owner	**−.8692**	**−6.87**	**.000**
Education – hs certificate	−.0199	−.05	.964
Education – advanced diploma	.1659	1.26	.209
Education – graduate (BA+)	**.4441**	**3.14**	**.002**
Occupation – sales workforce	.0919	.48	.629
Occupation – service	.3889	1.91	.056
Occupation – technical/trade	.0226	.12	.908
Occupation – professional	**.6186**	**3.59**	**.000**
Country of birth	**−.5228**	**−2.61**	**.009**
Constant	−2.2862	−2.31	.021

Pseudo $R^2 = 0.0638$, $n = 2032$.
Country of birth is Australia and other English speaking.

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Table 8. Logit regression of associations of reason for move with wage change controlling for family status, tenure, education, and occupational status.

	Reason for move									
	Job		**Residence**		**Family**		**Neighhd**		**Lifestyle**	
	Coeff.	*z*	Coeff.	*z*	Coeff.	*z*	Coeff.	*z*	Coeff.	*z*
Age	.0583	.84	.0275	.30	.0736	.92	.1185	1.40	.0268	.33
Age (squared)	−.0010	−.97	−.0007	−.52	−.0005	−.39	−.0017	1.38	.0001	.05
Female	**−.7314**	**−5.79**	.1907	1.14	**.5637**	**3.76**	**.4895**	**3.29**	**.3736**	**2.49**
Family with children	−.0259	−.19	−.2519	−1.28	**−.6212**	**−3.41**	**.3532**	**2.12**	−.1218	−.71
Married	.2278	1.58	.1954	−.76	.1714	−1.02	.5337	1.78	−.0228	−.14
Divorced	.1761	.67	.5788	1.77	**−.7637**	**−2.49**	−.5330	−1.67	.0789	.29
Owner	**−.8186**	**−5.91**	**1.4723**	**9.17**	−.1922	−1.20	.2296	1.55	−.1804	−1.15
Education – hs	−.1998	−.39	−.4454	−.58	.8870	1.88	.9297	1.90	**1.0439**	**2.23**
Education – Dip.	.2455	1.62	−.0421	−.22	−.0038	−.02	.2402	1.37	.1082	.63
Education – (BA+)	**.3907**	**2.45**	**−.4813**	**−2.25**	−.2527	−1.33	.0381	.20	−.1998	−1.03
Occupation – sales	.0058	.03	.0072	.03	−.0856	−.36	−.0646	−.26	.0988	.40
Occupation – service	.3582	1.50	−.5486	−1.56	−.3165	−1.16	−.2467	−.86	−.3534	−1.21
Occupation – trade	−.0428	−.19	.1635	.57	**−.5403**	**−1.94**	.0455	.17	.1523	.58
Occupation – prof.	**.5509**	**2.68**	.0720	.27	**−.4749**	**−2.02**	−.2747	−1.12	−.2030	−.84
Country of birth	−.3764	−1.73	.2081	.77	.1109	.46	.1807	.75	.3330	1.46
Wage change	−.0014	−1.12	.0008	.47	.0006	.28	.0003	.18	.0002	.11
Constant	−1.4776	−1.32	−2.2963	−1.53	**−2.9304**	**−2.24**	**−3.9231**	**−2.84**	−2.4609	−1.87

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This second set of logit models also includes the change in hourly wages as one of the associated variables. As expected from our argument that the decision to move is a complex evaluation of competing motivations, there is no significant association with wages and motivation across the non-job reasons. For job reasons, there is a .26 probability that job motivation and a wage return are related but again little statistical strength in the relationship. Simply put, because non-job reasons also have wage gains, there is no simple relationship between motivation and outcome. Recall that nearly all the households and individuals who move more than 30 k also change jobs.

The models provide important findings that reinforce our conceptual argument outlined in the introduction and literature review. There, we argued that labour markets are changing, social contexts are more complex than three or four decades ago, and women's participation in the labour market is altering the decision-making around migration. The models show that women are motivated by family, community, and lifestyle reasons, and the complexity of family motivations is reflected in the positive associations for women in general but negative for women with children and the divorced. That is, divorced individuals do not identify family motivations as part of their mobility behaviour (Table 8). There is a positive coefficient for families with children and neighbourhood motivations, an outcome we would expect given the role of women as the primary caregivers. Housing motivations are related to tenure even for long-distance moves. We are clearly picking up the complexity of the social processes underlying mobility decision-making. On the one hand, job choices and moves are constrained by the fabric of locality, family connections, and place. But, on the other hand, for those who have social (family and lifestyle) and housing reasons to move these do not necessarily constrain long-distance migration.

CONCLUSIONS

Evaluating the outcomes of mobility with respect to the reasons for moves and comparing pre-move and post-move outcomes provide support for the proposition that households do move to improve economically or in social terms. In this sense, the long-term concern with gains from migration is relevant and useful. At the same time, this research documents in greater detail than previously that moving to improve is a multidimensional process. Jobs per se are only one of the driving forces in relocation choice although they are the context within which moves occur. There is considerable variation in the proportional gains and both job movers and non-job movers make gains. This is the support for the notion of mobility as context within which economic migration occurs rather than a simple migration generator.

The results do provide some support for the studies, which have been emphasising that amenities (neighbourhoods and lifestyles in this study) broadly speaking are a dimension of migration behaviour. Still, there is no consensus on what amenities are (sometimes they are categorised as natural amenities at other times social contexts) nor how they actually influence migration. We prefer to emphasise that the decision is clearly multidimensional now and more complex than it was three decades ago when mobility seemed to be more directly related to either housing decisions or job decisions. As the study supports a previous finding that significant numbers of longer distance movers were motivated by reasons related to the character of the destination neighbourhoods, and the residences within and lifestyles provided by them (Shields & Wooden, 2003), it would suggest a greater policy emphasis on overall neighbourhood design and renewal in addition to job creation when attempting to promote in-migration and city growth.

The HILDA data provided us with an opportunity to extend the models of residential mobility motivations and tease apart the particular reasons individuals move. This data set provides yet more evidence that although job change and income gains are enablers of moves, they are only a part of the migration process. Social processes, neighbourhood characteristics, and lifestyle are important forces in the migration process and are, in *combination* with employment opportunities, the underpinning of changing places. In the end, migrants move when they have the choice to enhance residential and neighbourhood satisfaction and improve their overall lifestyle including their occupational satisfaction.

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NOTES

(1) Nor did we want to exclude movers between labour markets who did not change jobs.
(2) Obviously, such a decision as moving is complex but previously it has been difficult to document the underlying structures.

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