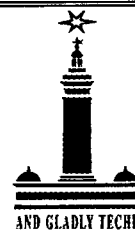


MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

School of Economic and Financial Studies



**ACTUARIAL STUDIES
AND
DEMOGRAPHY**

Research Papers

**OVERSEAS MOBILITY INTENTIONS OF
SYDNEY STUDENTS**

Nick Parr and Magdalena Mok

Research Paper No. 0010/95
ISBN No. 1 86408 110 4
September 1995

nparr@efs.mq.edu.au
School of Economic and Financial Studies
Macquarie University
Sydney NSW 2109 Australia

OVERSEAS MOBILITY INTENTIONS OF SYDNEY STUDENTS

Nick Parr and Magdalena Mok

Abstract

This paper examines how likely young Australians consider it they will go overseas on a permanent or long-term basis, using data from a large survey of Year 11 students in Sydney. We find that those who perceive their having a high likelihood of going overseas include females, higher socioeconomic status groups and first and second generation migrants.

Introduction

This paper examines how likely young Australians consider it they will go overseas on a permanent or long-term basis, using data from a survey of Year 11 students conducted in Sydney in 1993. Out-migration from Australia has been the subject of a number of studies¹, but so far none has focused on the migration intentions of the 16-18 year old age group.

Data

The data on students' perceptions of their future mobility were collected as part of a wider study on the educational values of secondary school students. A number of the schools which participated in the study opted to administer a shorter version of the questionnaire which excluded the questions on future mobility. In total 2615 Year 11 students participated in the

study, but only 1074 were interviewed about their future mobility. A disproportionately high number of the students who were interviewed on their future mobility were female (74.5%). This reflects the low propensity of all-male schools (indeed none agreed to participate in the study) and the high propensity of all-female schools to agree to participate in the study and to opt for the longer version of the questionnaire. One in four of the students (24.0%) had been born overseas, with Viet Nam (3.8%) and Hong Kong (3.5%) being the most common of the fifty overseas countries in which students were born. More than half the fathers of the students (51.8%) had been born overseas, with their most common overseas countries of birth being the Lebanon (8.6%) and the United Kingdom (7.0%). Just under half (47.8%) of the students' mothers were born overseas, with the Lebanon (8.3%) and the United Kingdom (6.6%) being the most common overseas countries of birth for mothers. That more of the fathers of the students were born overseas than were their mothers reflects that until recently a majority of Australian immigrants were male. The high percentage of second generation Lebanese in the sample reflects both that a majority (approximately three-quarters) of Lebanese-born Australians live in Sydney² and the high fertility rates of the Lebanese-born in the mid 1970s³.

More than half the students had at least one relative living overseas. These relatives were most commonly cousins, uncles and aunts. The countries in which students most commonly had relatives were the United States (11.7% of the students who responded to the questions on future mobility had one or more relatives there), the United Kingdom (11.5%), the Lebanon (6.6%),

and Hong Kong/China (5.5%). It is particularly noteworthy that more than fifteen times as many students had relatives living in the United States than were born there or had one or both of their parents born there⁴.

Results

Students were asked if they thought it was likely they would go to live in another country during the next two years. Of the 1035 students who responded to this question, only 2.4% (25 students) were certain they would live abroad in the next two years, while another 12.3% (127 students) thought it probable they would do so. Among the 152 students considering it probable or certain they would go overseas the most commonly mentioned destinations were in Europe (40.7%) and in North America (30.0%), with the U.K. (15.3%) and the U.S.A. (25.3%) being the most commonly mentioned individual countries. Only a small proportion (9.9%) of the students who were likely to go overseas stated a destination in Eastern or South-Eastern Asia, while 9.3% stated a destination in the Middle East. The more common reasons given for the choice of destination included visiting relatives (24.6% gave this reason), learning about other cultures and languages (21.8%), studying (15.5%), holidaying/"to see the country" (12.0%), employment (11.2%) and "it's a nice place" (9.9%). Under half (45.9%) of those intending to go overseas intended to travel with one or more other family members, over a third (37.7%) intended to travel alone, while the rest (16.3%) intended to

travel with friends.

The likelihood of a student going to live abroad in the next two years varies between subgroups of the population (see Table 1). Females are more likely to intend going overseas in the near future than are males. This finding is consistent with that in recent years the majority of extended working holidaymakers have been female⁵. Females were more likely to give "visiting relatives", "learning about other cultures/languages" and "to study" as reasons for their choice of destination, while males had a higher propensity to give "for a holiday" and "it's a nice place" type responses.

A student's socioeconomic background affects their likelihood of going overseas. Students with fathers in managerial, professional, paraprofessional or white collar occupations are more likely than those with fathers in blue collar occupations or fathers who are unemployed to intend going overseas. Persons in more highly skilled occupations are disproportionately represented among emigrants from Australia⁶. However, students with fathers in more highly skilled occupations have not only a higher likelihood of going overseas with their families but also a higher likelihood of going alone or with friends. The greater likelihood of students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds going overseas independently of their parents could reflect their placing a greater value on experiences such as extended working holidays and overseas study, their having greater self-confidence and their having greater financial resources.

In general, students born overseas are more likely to go

overseas than are Australian-born students. However, the Vietnamese-born are a notable exception. The lack of inclination to return movement among this group could reflect the unhappy circumstances which motivated their migration from Viet Nam⁷. Another factor would be that only a minority (41.0% of the students responding to the questions on future mobility) of the Vietnamese-born still have relatives in Viet Nam (a substantial number have relatives in the United States⁸) and hence fewer would return to be with relatives. Furthermore, high levels of unemployment and lower standards of living in this ethnic group⁹ create financial obstacles to overseas travel both to Viet Nam and other countries. Whilst students born in parts of Asia other than Viet Nam are more likely to go overseas than are the Australian-born, they are noticeably less likely to do so than are their European-born counterparts.

Whilst second generation migrants are not as likely to go overseas as first generation migrants, they are more likely to go overseas than are those of with Australian-born parents. Second generation Europeans are more likely to go overseas than second generation Asians. Visiting relatives is a far more common reason for going overseas among first or second generation migrants than among those with Australian-born parents, for obvious reasons. Also of note is that the proportion of students intending to go overseas whose father was born overseas is slightly higher than that for students whose mother was born overseas, a finding which reflects the greater proportion of European-born among the distribution of overseas-born fathers.

The data strongly suggest the likelihood of going overseas is linked to having relatives living abroad and also to the type of relatives living abroad. Those with immediate family overseas (i.e. parents and/or siblings) are the most likely to go overseas, whilst those with uncles and/or aunts overseas are notably more likely to go overseas than are those with grandparents overseas.

There is a marked correlation between location of relatives and the intended destination. Almost all those (85.7%) intending to go to the Middle East have relatives there. Over a third (35.7%) of those intending to go to the United Kingdom have relatives there, and over a fifth (21.1%) of those intending to go to the United States had relatives there. This latter finding reflects that many more of the students have relatives living in the United States than were born there or had parents born there.

Summary

Our study shows that among year eleven students in Sydney those who perceive their having a high likelihood of going overseas include females, higher socioeconomic status groups and the overseas born, and that the principal destinations for young, prospective departures are the United Kingdom and the United States. The actual future movements of this group may differ from those they currently consider likely. However, all of these patterns are consistent with those shown by the national-level patterns of emigration¹⁰. Our finding that students who are second generation migrants have a higher likelihood of departing than those with Australian-born parents could indicate that a

disproportionate number of Australian-born permanent and long-term departures will be second generation migrants. The strongest correlation found in our study is that between a perceived likelihood of departure overseas permanently or long term and the presence of relatives overseas. Of particular note are the significant differences between the distribution of the overseas residences of the students' relatives and the distributions of the overseas countries of birth of the students and their parents, particularly that the United States is far more important as a country of residence for relatives¹¹.

Table 1: Percentage of Students Certain or Probable to Go Overseas to Live in the Next Two Years; by Background Characteristics.

Background Characteristic	Percent Certain or Probable to Go Overseas	N
All Students	14.7	1035
Sex		
Male	11.6	258
Female	15.7	773
Father's Occupation		
Professional/Managerial	16.8	429
Paraprofessional/White Collar	16.0	169
Blue Collar	12.4	234
Unemployed	13.6	44
Birthplace		
Australia	13.2	790
All Overseas	19.6	245
Hong Kong/China	12.8	39
Vietnam	2.6	39
Other East/South East Asia	15.2	46
Europe	26.5	34
Birthplace of Father		
Australia	11.4	499
All Overseas	17.7	536
Hong Kong/China	12.2	57
Viet Nam	2.9	37
Other East/South East Asia	14.8	61
Lebanon	17.1	88
Greece	22.7	22
Italy	12.9	31
United Kingdom	17.8	73
Other European	22.4	67
Birthplace of Mother		
Australia	13.4	543
All Overseas	16.1	492
Hong Kong/China	10.2	49
Viet Nam	2.9	35
Other East/South East Asia	14.7	68
Lebanon	15.1	86
Greece	21.1	19
Italy	22.7	22
United Kingdom	16.4	67
Other Europe	24.0	50
Relatives Overseas		
Mother/Father	29.2	24
Brother/Sister(s)	30.4	23
Grandparent(s)	22.9	48
Uncle/Aunt(s)	25.6	90
Cousin(s)	18.9	111

Endnotes

- (1)for a review see Hugo, G. (1994). *The Economic Implications of Outmigration from Australia*.AGPS, Canberra.
- (2)BIR (1990). *Community Profiles: Lebanon Born*.AGPS, Canberra.
- (3)Yusuf, F. (1986). Ethnic Differences in Australian Fertility.*Journal of Clinical Reproduction and Fertility*.Vol. 4, pp107-116.
- (4)Parr, N.J. and Mok, M. (1995). Family Linkages Between Australia, the United States and Canada. *Demoz*. No. 38 pp29-30.
- (5)Hugo, op. cit pp73-77.
- (6)Hugo, op. cit. pp79-87.
- (7)Hugo, op. cit. p60.
- (8)Parr and Mok, op. cit.
- (9)BIPR (1994). *Community Profiles: 1991 Census Viet Nam Born*.AGPS, Canberra.
- (10)BIPR (1994).*Emigration 1992-93*.Statistical Report No.9. AGPS, Canberra.
- (11)Parr and Mok, op. cit. (1995) show that the Asian-born have the highest probability of having a relative in the United States. Hence, the high proportion of students with relatives in there is partly a reflection of there being sizeable numbers of Asain-born students in the sample.