Migration between Australia and Singapore in the 21st Century: Settlement experiences and transnational issues

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ABSTRACT

Policy changes in response to demand for skilled labour in the last two decades have influenced migration between Australia and Singapore. This study investigates Singaporean migration to Australia in the 21st Century to provide a better understanding of the patterns and motivations for migration, socio-economic outcomes, and issues relating to transnational experiences. In addition to conventional economic determinants, a transnational framework was used to provide a more holistic understanding of contemporary migration. A mixed methods approach was used to establish the nature and extent of migration and the linkages maintained by migrants with their home country. Quantitative data were obtained from two online surveys, a major one with Singaporeans in Australia, and the other in Singapore with return migrants and Australians residing there. Qualitative interviews were also carried out with respondents who were willing to participate further, and with stakeholders including government representatives.

The survey of Singaporeans in Australia found that they were drawn to the Australian lifestyle. Better employment opportunities was a major determinant for migration, particularly for males. The majority of respondents indicated that they had found suitable employment, as most were well-educated with appropriate qualifications that address skill shortages in the Australian labourforce, Students represented about one-third of the sampled population and two-thirds were permanent residents. The social lives of respondents were strongly focussed upon religious organisations, with Christianity as the main religion. Many of the younger respondents were mainly involved in social and sporting groups. In addition, the Singaporean community in Australia was shown to be tight-knit and supportive. The majority of respondents still maintained strong social linkages with Singapore and visited regularly. There were mixed perceptions on diaspora, which is interesting given the Singapore government's proactive approach in engaging diaspora populations. The study on reciprocal flows from Australia to Singapore established that return migrants were mainly students who chose to return home after study, while Australians had migrated to Singapore for employment opportunities. Many were on work contracts and had plans to return to Australia.

The Singapore government's resistance towards a dual citizenship policy is an issue that has emerged as a result of transnationalism. Given Singapore's largely uncompromising stance towards dual citizenship, respondents were more likely to become Australian citizens at a later life stage after fulfilling their personal and social commitments in Singapore. This policy also

meant that it was difficult for Australians in Singapore to obtain citizenship in Singapore while retaining Australian citizenship.

To a large extent, international migration to Australia is highly regulated and driven by policy. There is a need to consider migration in a broader sense given current uncertainties around future migration trends as a result of COVID-19, including border closures and its impact on the previously high levels of global labour mobility. Nevertheless, this study serves as a benchmark in understanding the dynamic migration system between Australia and Singapore which includes short and long-term migration flows.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

I give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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Signature and Name of Student
22 January 2021

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACMID	Australian Census Migrant Integrated Dataset
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
DEA	Digital Economy Agreement
DOS	Singapore Department of Statistics
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GCIM	Global Commission on International Migration
GDP	Global Domestic Product
ICRMW	Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MCIC	Migrants In Countries Crisis
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NPTD	National Population and Talent Division
OAD	Overseas Arrivals and Departures
OSU	Overseas Singaporean Unit
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDB	Settlement Data Base
SOL	Skilled Occupation List
SSRM	State-Specific Regional Migration Scheme
UN	United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

The global economy is increasingly characterised by large scale transnational mobility of commodities, capital, and people (Tseng *et al*. 1999). As a result of an increasingly interconnected world, the transnational movement of capital and populations has increased in scale and magnitude, with subsequent effects on the global economy and migration. Motivations for migration encompass a wide range of circumstances. In addition to economic and political factors, motivations for migration can include displacement triggered by the pressures of ongoing conflict, persecution, environmental degradation and political change (International Organisation for Migration [IOM] 2018). Such movements have economic, political, social and cultural effects on countries of origin and destination. To make better sense of migration and regulate migration more effectively, it is necessary to consider the important geographic, demographic and geopolitical variations of migration issues (IOM 2018). Australia is a migrant destination for those in search of new opportunities, with the majority migrating to Australia motivated by the search for economic opportunity, and a minority who have come to seek political asylum.

In Australia, the arrival of people from all over the world has shaped the size, structure and composition of its population (Hugo 2011). With the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, and subsequent colonisation, the Anglo-Celtics have long dominated the migrant population in Australia. After the second World War, North-Western and then Southern and Eastern Europeans came to Australia, while it was not until the 1970s with the abolishment of the White Australia Policy that prompted Asian migrants, particularly refugees from the Vietnam War, followed by migration from the Middle East and Africa. Although levels of migration have waxed and waned throughout history, at least half of Australia's current population are migrants or children of migrants (Hugo 2014). The 2020 World Migration Report established that Oceania as a region has had the highest proportion of international migrants since 2000 (IOM 2020). Hence, Australia as a nation is more influenced by migration than most countries,

and this has led to a strong research tradition to understand Australia's migrant populations and related issues.

Largely absent from the literature is the analysis on migration journeys of Singaporeans in Australia. The last study on Singaporeans in Australia was conducted in 1994, which aimed to understand the motivations of Singaporeans in Australia (Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1994). Since then, immigration policy in Australia has rapidly evolved, and with the onset of globalisation and policy reform, a variety of migrant cohorts live, work or study in Australia for a permanent or temporary duration. More recent studies on Singaporeans in Australia tend to be limited to specific cohorts, for instance, on the experiences of Singaporean international students (Tan *et al*. 2005), as part of a comparative study on Southeast Asian international students in Australia (Weiss and Ford 2010), or to fulfill other research objectives (Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1994; Gomes 2009; Howard 2014). Studies from the bilateral and cross-cultural perspectives between Australia and Singapore are limited to workplace relations among Australians and Singaporeans (Loh *et al*. 2010), on behavioural studies (Ban *et al*. 2012), and in medical research (Ingram *et al*. 2014).

Some assumptions on Singapore's migrant populations have also been made using fertility and mortality data, as well as from population policies and programs (Saw 2012). Although these sources facilitate a baseline understanding of Singaporeans in Australia, the role of technology has helped to support better integration at destination countries, while maintaining social and economic linkages to their families and societies back home (IOM 2020). This in turn has seen the evolution of the Singapore government's policies towards diaspora strategising. At the time of the study, migration flows between Australia and Singapore were at an all-time high. However, the impacts of COVID-19, including border closures, are likely to alter future migration trends, as Australian citizens and permanent residents who wish to travel interstate or overseas have been forced to travel only in exceptional circumstances, and must obtain approval prior to doing so, in addition to many repatriating Australians who have yet to return (Van Extel 2020). Nevertheless, this study serves as a benchmark to understand the dynamic migration system between Australia and Singapore at the height of international migration.

Although migration flows from Singapore have not reached the same levels in comparison to other forms of Asian and Southeast Asian migration to Australia (Raymer *et al*. 2020), the

strength of bilateral relations, agreements and cooperation, ongoing business collaborations and ease of travel have all resulted in increased migration and mobility between Australia and Singapore. Therefore, this thesis seeks to understand the reasons for migration of Singaporeans to Australia as an extension of the formal linkages shared between the two countries. The focus is on the trends and distribution of Singaporean migrants in Australia and looks at their settlement experience and transnational aspects, with some information on reverse flows to Singapore. A mixed methods approach using quantitative and qualitative data sources was used to establish the nature and extent of migration, and of its patterns and processes. Quantitative data was obtained from two online surveys, one on Singaporeans in Australia (192 respondents) and the other to include 20 return migrants and 38 Australians in Singapore. These findings were supported by follow-up interviews with key respondents from the survey, and with stakeholders including government representatives to establish interest in the diaspora population.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The overall objective of this study is to understand the patterns and processes of migration and how well migrants have settled and integrated into life in Australia. This includes establishing the reasons for Singaporean migration to Australia and the development of transnational communities. It is set within the parameters of contemporary migration following the introduction of temporary migration policies in 1996 by then Prime Minister John Howard, in line with other traditional migrant economies that had already introduced successful temporary migrant schemes. It was important for Australia to change its policies in order to compete in attracting flows of global skilled labour. The employment and social experience of Singaporeans in Australia is explored in relation to new cultures of migration, with a focus on transnationalism and reciprocal flows from Australia to Singapore. This includes a discussion on the future aspirations of migrants, including permanent settlement and citizenship, plans to return, and their views on a diaspora, which were examined in relation to stakeholders' perspectives. Through the lens of transnational movements of commodities, capital and populations, this study specifically seeks:

- To establish the trends and patterns of migration between Australia and Singapore;

- To establish the characteristics of Singaporean migrants in Australia and their settlement experiences;
- To examine how reciprocal flows from Australia to Singapore form part of the migration system between Australia and Singapore.
- To demonstrate the presence of a transnational community by examining transnational linkages maintained by migrants with their home country and any issues that arise.

To achieve these objectives, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the patterns of growth and distribution of Singaporeans in Australia?
2. What are the reasons for migration to Australia and how do the characteristics and circumstances of migrants differ by visa type?
3. What are the employment and social experiences of Singaporeans in Australia?
4. What are the transnational linkages maintained by Singaporeans in Australia?
5. What are the migration experiences of return migrants and Australians in Singapore?
6. What are Singaporean perspectives on a diaspora and the citizenship issue?

Migration between Australia and Singapore has certain unique characteristics, occurring between two economically advanced countries, one a Western and the other an Asian country. Such patterns differ from other forms of Asian migration to Australia, notably Chinese and Indian migration, where migration tends to be drawn from well-educated elite sections of the population. This thesis hypothesises that migrants were highly skilled, retaining strong commitments and regular visits to their home country. Both Singaporeans in Australia and Australians in Singapore were well-integrated at destination and worked as part of the global labourforce.

Given that migrants today maintain ties to various places and create new patterns of belonging (Wolf 2001), many countries in the last two decades have since permitted dual citizenship. However, the percentage of countries that allow dual citizenship in Asia is very low compared to other continents, which in turn restricts the development of transnational communities (Castles 2003; Sejersen 2008). There is a larger proportion of Singaporeans who live overseas which may be attributed to the government's active encouragement of Singaporeans to invest and open enterprises widely around the world (Ho and Boyle 2015; Naruse 2016). Therefore,

the implementation of dual citizenship policies in Singapore has emerged as an important issue; not only for migrants considering the adoption of foreign citizenships, but also for the government that manages the high rates of Singaporean emigration through active engagement with its diaspora.

1.3 Changes to Australia's migration program

Australia's migration program has undergone several changes since 1945. For the first half of the post-war era, global international migration was dominated by Europe to 'traditional' migration countries, including Australia (Hugo 2006a). Since the early 1990s, Australia's international migration program has been substantially transformed as a result of globalisation and Australia's response to it (Hugo 2006a). Whereas many traditionally immigrant countries have tried to control the scale and composition of immigration, Australia steadfastly continued its permanent migration intake predominantly of families until 1996 (Hugo 2014b). Even before the onset of globalisation, Australia was already one of the world's major destinations for migrants (Price 1975). However, migration in the 21st Century has seen a paradigm shift away from permanent movements to more temporary forms of migration based on skill selection (Hugo 2006a).

Although Australian migration still focusses extensively on permanent settlement (Jupp 2002; Hawthorne 2005), there was an increasing realisation that temporary migrants would have a significant impact on Australia's economy and society (Khoo *et al*. 2003). This is not only to do with migration to Australia, but also migration to Singapore from Australia, and is especially reflected in Australian cities which are more connected to the international global economic market, particularly Sydney, and increasingly, Melbourne (Sassen 2001; Hugo 2006a). There is also a growing trend in temporary migrants becoming permanent residents (Khoo *et al.* 2008). Similar to the permanent migration program, temporary skilled migration is also tied to skill shortages in the labourmarket. Those who were previously on an international student or temporary graduate visas due to their Australian qualifications often have a higher chance of getting a job, compared to an offshore applicant who had not previously lived or worked in Australia (Simmons 1999; Skeldon 2005; Hugo 2003, 2006b). This is in spite of offshore

applicants having similar or higher overseas qualifications and experience (Cebulla and Tan 2019; Tan *et al*. 2019).

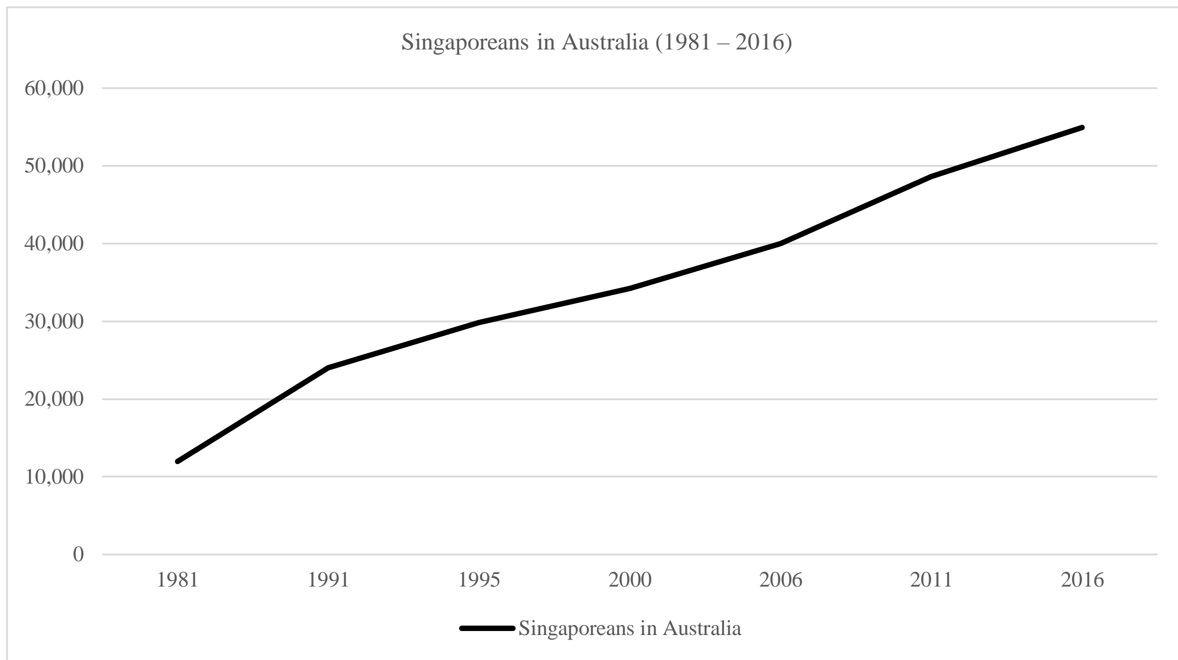
The global literature towards understanding temporary migrants and transnationalism is often discussed separately from permanent settlement (Hugo 2006a). In Australia, the two programs are distinct, however there are some aspects that can facilitate the transition of temporary migrants to permanent residency. For example, government policies in both programs identify prospective migrants using a points system and the skills shortage list which determines the occupations eligible for permanent or temporary migration to Australia (Birrell *et al*. 2001). Given that this list is evaluated each financial year, temporary migrants can apply to become permanent residents if their occupation becomes eligible for permanent residency. The micromanagement of skilled migrants is a shift from post-war migration to Australia, which was more focussed on importing labour, not necessarily skilled labour, to Australia.

1.3.1 Singaporeans in Australia

Singaporean migration to Australia had begun while Singapore was still under British rule, particularly among the Eurasian population (Lowe 2018). Like other forms of Asian migration to Australia, the relaxation of immigration restrictions throughout the late 1960s to early 1970s also allowed the entry of skilled non-Europeans without prior family ties to Australia (Hugo 2006a). As seen in Figure 1.1, there was a sizeable number of Singaporean immigrants by 1981 and migration movements continued through to 1991. However, it was not until the period between 1991 to 2011 that the Singaporean population in Australia rapidly increased (Figure 1.1). Despite slower growth from 2011 to 2016, Australia has continued to play host to one-quarter of the overseas Singaporean population (IOM 2016).

Sullivan and Gunasekaran (1989, 1992, 1994) have argued that Singaporean migration and settlement in Australia were primarily driven by economic opportunity and political stability. At the same time, Singapore had undergone rapid economic growth, which coincided with development in Australia. Despite this, the 2016 Census showed that there were 54,934 Singapore-born persons in Australia, the largest population recorded outside of Singapore (ABS 2016b).

Figure 1.1. Singaporeans in Australia, 1981–2016

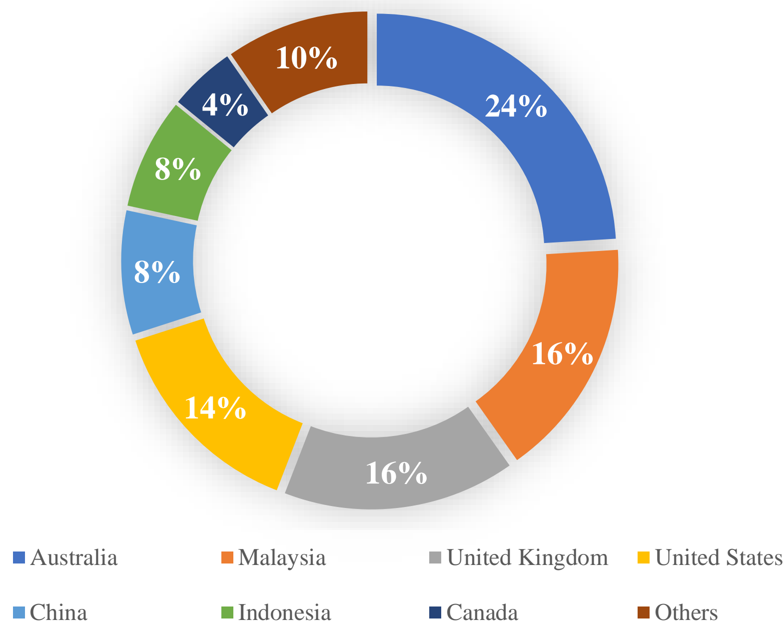


Source: Unpublished data from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2006, 2011, 2016b; Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) 2014; United Nations (UN) 2019.

Figure 1.2 demonstrates that Australia remains the most popular destination for Singaporean migrants, where nearly a quarter of all overseas Singaporeans live, with the remaining three-quarters residing in traditional destination countries such as United Kingdom (16 percent), United States (14 percent) and Canada (4 percent), as well as in neighbouring regions such as Malaysia (16 percent), China (8 percent) and Indonesia (8 percent). Therefore, according to United Nations unpublished data, 58 percent of Singaporeans living abroad reside in traditional migration destinations, while a smaller proportion reside in developing markets in neighbouring countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and China.

More recent migration to Australia may be attributed to changes in global and local contexts, and are likely to be either permanent, temporary and circular, occurring in both individual and household contexts. Although the reasons for Singaporeans living abroad are not yet fully understood, the increase in global economic integration and the increased affluence of individuals have contributed to prospective migrants considering migration as a viable option.

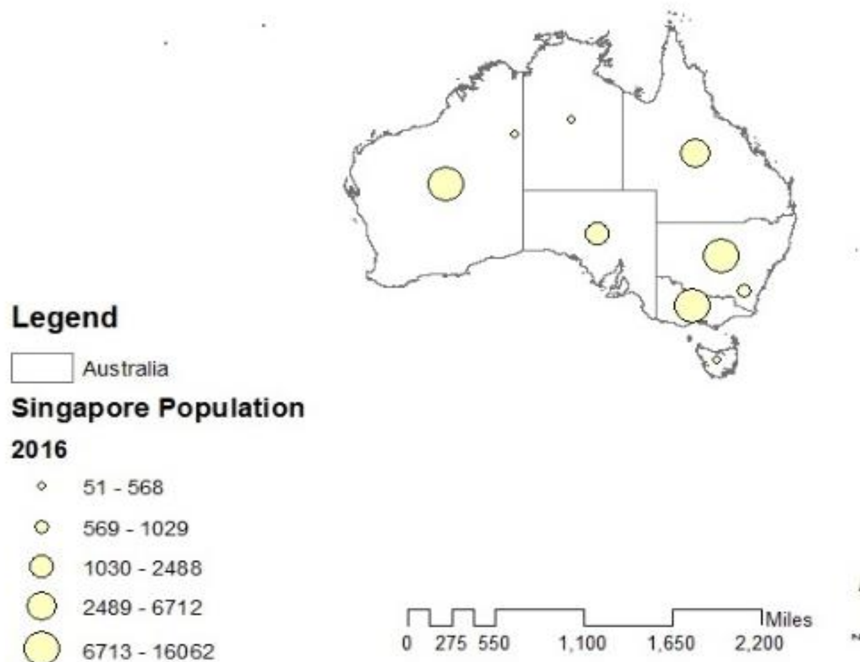
Figure 1.2. Global distribution of Singaporean migrants, 2017



Source: Unpublished data from UN 2017.

Migration policy in Australia is directed by the federal government, but state governments play an important part in the nomination process. Skilled immigrants to Australia have tended to congregate in major cities as opposed to regional and rural areas (Hugo 1999), presumably where more jobs are located. The State-Specific Regional Migration Scheme (SSRM) is an initiative of state governments to encourage migrant settlement outside major cities to promote regional and rural development (Hugo 2008). Despite this, Singaporeans in Australia still tend to congregate in Australia's main cities. In 2016, the traditional migrant destinations of New South Wales and Victoria recorded a total of 12,734 and 16,062 Singaporean migrants respectively. Similar to South Africans in Australia (Weertman 2009), it is Western Australia (not New South Wales) that was home to the largest Singaporean migrant population for several decades (ABS 2016b). Previous studies have alluded to existing networks between Perth and Singapore, and this is in part mediated by geographical proximity, including sharing the same time zone (Lee 2006). Since 2011, Victoria has become home to the largest number of Singaporeans in Australia, which is seen in Figure 1.3 (ABS 2011, 2016b).

Figure 1.3. Population distribution of Singaporeans in Australia, 2016



Source: Unpublished data from ABS 2016b.

1.3.2 Temporary migration

The temporary migration scheme was introduced in Australia in 1996 by the Howard government, so overseas workers could be recruited by Australian employers to address the shortage of skilled labour (Khoo *et al*. 2007). Such schemes were already practiced in other developed economies, such as the United States and Canada, and Australia had to do the same to compete for skilled migrants. It was not long before the cumulation of technological advancements and policy reform that Australia became perceived as a desirable migrant destination for prospective migrants looking to migrate for a permanent or temporary duration (Khoo *et al*. 2007). Not only were temporary visas much easier to acquire, those who were interested in living and working in Australia could do so without having to leave behind family and friends for an indefinite period of time.

Since the introduction of the temporary migration program to Australia, there have been questions on the effectiveness of temporary migration programs that assume temporary

migrants will return home. Depending on which factors are at play, it is likely that some temporary migrants will decide that they would like to remain longer, even indefinitely. Khoo *et al*. (2008) in a study found that temporary migrants from developing countries and regions were more likely to apply for permanent residency compared with those from developed countries and regions. Across the board, the most popular reason given for becoming a permanent resident in Australia was enjoyment of the Australian lifestyle and its benefits. This was consistent with an earlier survey of permanent migrants which indicated that the Australian lifestyle was an important reason for their migration (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs [DIMIA] 2002).

Khoo *et al*. (2008) also found that rather than being driven by their unhappiness at home, or in getting better jobs or higher salaries in Australia, or better opportunities for their children, skilled migrants from developed countries were more likely to apply for permanent residence because they were attracted to the lifestyle in Australia. Overall, it was found that temporary migrants were more likely to apply, or have an intention to apply for permanent residency, suggesting that temporary migration does facilitate permanent residence (Khoo *et al*. 2008).

1.3.3 International students

The temporary migration scheme also facilitated the start of international education in Australia, linking international student mobility with skilled migration policy (Ziguras and Law 2006; Robertson 2013). By structuring international education as a pathway to skilled migration, Australia is one of the few countries in the world that has explicitly linked international graduates with skilled migration, where preferential treatment is given to migrants that had completed a degree in Australia (Robertson 2013). Being young, Australian qualified, with a high standard of English-language proficiency, and familiarity with Australian culture and environment, graduates of Australian tertiary education easily meet the criteria for assessing prospective migrants (Hawthorne 2005; Lester 2005). Moreover, international students themselves contribute to the labour force, since most are employed in casual positions while studying (Lester 2005). When student migrants are preferentially considered in skilled migration, this in turn fuels the demand for Australian higher education (Tan and Hugo 2017).

At present, there are four main migration streams that offer migrants the opportunity to live in Australia for a permanent duration. These include the skilled, family, special eligibility and humanitarian streams, and Singaporeans in Australia are typically concentrated among the skilled and family visa streams.

Table 1.1 presents the distribution of Singaporeans in Australia by permanent and temporary applicants. The number of total applicants in Victoria was slightly higher than in Western Australia, with slight differences in visa type represented among applicants. Victoria was home to a higher number of permanent migrants and students, while a higher number of family visa holders was represented in Western Australia. This corresponds with the observation that Singaporeans had historically resided in Western Australia and were more established (ABS 2016b). Interestingly, Queensland was a popular destination for students, while New South Wales although a traditional destination for migrants, was less popular among Singaporeans.

Table 1.1. Distribution of Singaporeans in Australia by permanent and temporary applicants, 2016

State	Permanent (*N*=20,031)		Temporary (*N*=7,097)			
	Skilled	Family	Student	Skilled	Bridging	Other
Victoria	5,665	1,219	2,005	184	144	138
Western Australia	5,216	1,154	913	144	97	118
New South Wales	2,504	879	956	221	72	64
Queensland	1,433	507	1,049	71	23	50
South Australia	796	158	368	21	4	18
ACT	232	58	146	0	4	10
Tasmania	85	48	214	7	10	4
Northern Territory	55	21	0	5	0	0
Total	15,985	4,046	5,660	668	366	403

Source: Unpublished data from Australian Census Migrant Integrated Dataset (ACMID) 2016.

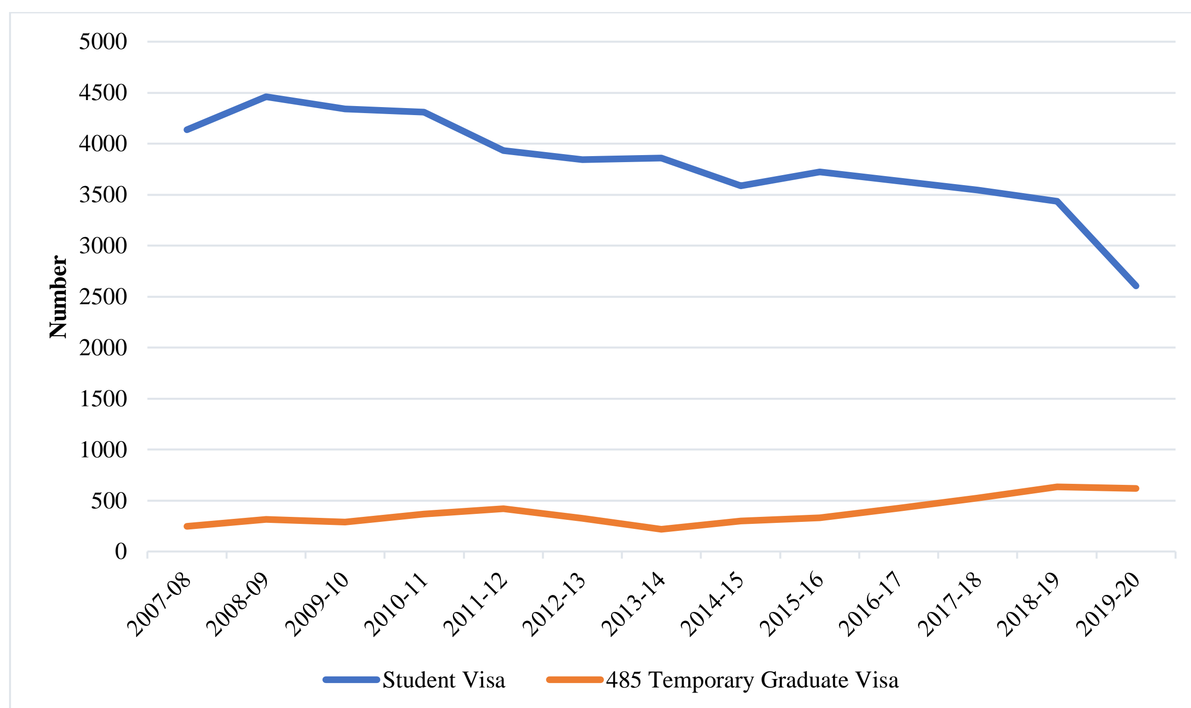
Temporary migrant visas include working holiday makers, international students, skilled temporary residents and other temporary residents. The Australian migration program still reflects its origins in permanent settlement, but has more recently focussed on accommodating short-term visitors and skilled temporary migrants, both of whom contribute to large, revenue generating industries. Unlike permanent migration, there are no targets or caps on temporary

visas. As such, temporary migration has exceeded permanent migration in Australia in recent years (Khoo 2010). Slightly more than half of the 54,934 Singapore-born population of Australia are Australian citizens (ABS 2016b), and Table 1.1 indicates that the remaining 20,031 were permanent migrants, and 7,097 temporary migrants. Therefore, two-thirds of Singaporean migrants come to Australia on permanent visas, while the remaining one-third of temporary migrants are mainly students.

Figure 1.4 presents the proportion of Singaporean student migrants and temporary graduate visa holders in Australia. Singaporean temporary migrants are mostly students and it was observed that the number of student visa holders waxed and waned between 2007–2019. There was a sharp decrease in the number of student migrants in the past year as a result of the COVID-19 induced border closures, and at this stage, it is unclear whether the number of international students to Australia will resume to normal levels after the borders are reopened. On the other hand, the number of temporary graduate visa holders was about ten percent of the total number of student migrants each year up until 2019, when the proportion of student migrants decreased. Despite the border closures, the number of temporary graduate visa holders remained relatively constant, as those who were eligible had applied for the visa onshore. This process reaffirms the concept of 'designer migrants' proposed by Ziguras and Law (2006).

Given that the lives and everyday practices of student migrants are far more varied than that of a skilled temporary worker, researchers have suggested that a transnational approach must be used to understand the future aspirations of international students (Hawthorne 2010a; 2010b; Tan and Hugo 2017). Interestingly, Tan and Hugo (2017) found that for Chinese and Indian students (the two largest source countries for international students globally and in Australia), the intention of whether to stay or to leave after their studies is usually formed even before students arrive in Australia. Hence, how Singaporean students compare to the mobility patterns of student migrants from other countries must be understood in the context of temporary migration literature. Similar to the transition from temporary migration to permanent residence, their country of origin, and broader lifetime mobility aspirations, can motivate the desire for permanent settlement in Australia (Tan and Hugo 2017).

Figure 1.4. Singaporean Student Visa and 485 Temporary Graduate Visa holders, 2007–2020



Source: Unpublished data from DIBP 2007–2020.

1.4 Reciprocal flows from Australia to Singapore

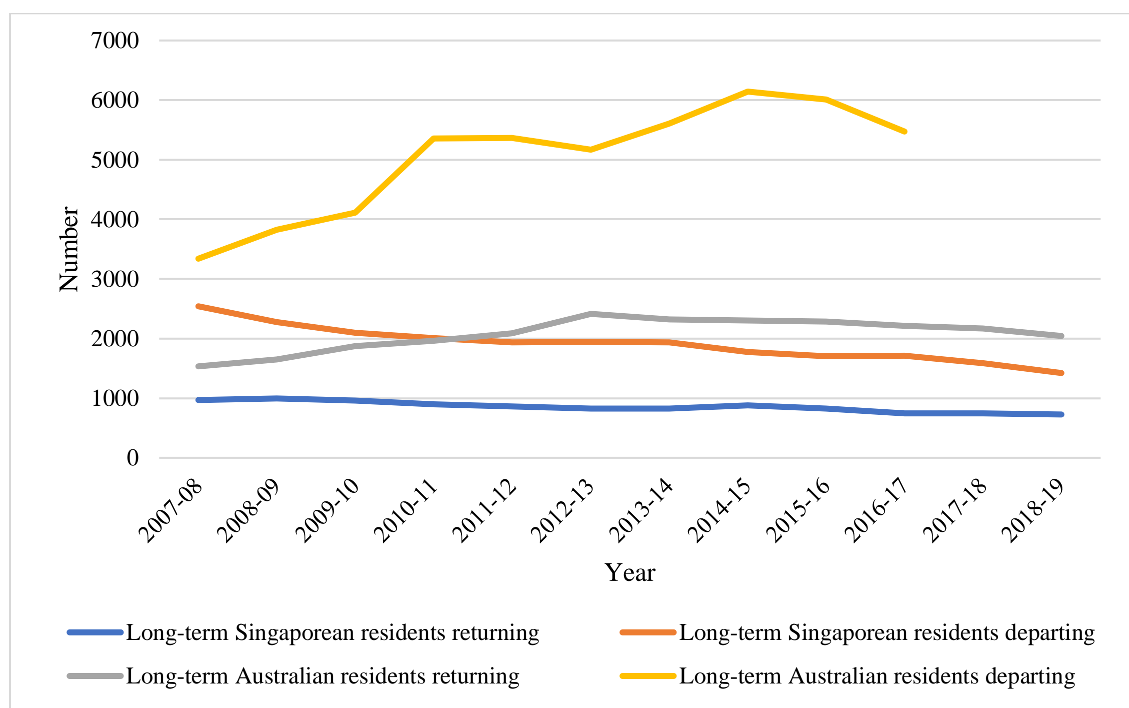
As well as an increase in the number of Singaporean migrants to Australia, there has been an increase in reciprocal flows from Australia to Singapore (IOM 2016). It is difficult to ascertain the number of return migrants to Singapore using secondary data alone, in part due to the transnational nature of migration. Nevertheless, the Overseas Arrivals and Departures (OAD) database reported on the number of border crossings to and from Australia between 2007–2019.

Figure 1.5 presents the trends on permanent returns and departures among Singaporean and Australian residents. Permanent departures refer to those who state that they are leaving permanently, and have stayed overseas for at least 12 out of 16 months. This may include Singaporeans returning home, or Australians who have decided to migrate to Singapore, drawn by economic and labour opportunities.

From 2007 to 2019, the number of Singaporeans in Australia returning to Singapore stayed about the same, experiencing only a slight decline. On the other hand, there was a sharper

decline in the number of Singaporeans departing Australia permanently during this time, coinciding with the increase in the number of Singaporeans in Australia from 2006 onwards (Figure 1.1). Among Australians, there was an initial increase in the number of Australians returning to Australia from 2007 to 2013, which slowly tapered off from 2014 as Singapore was no longer seen as a hardship posting. This may have led to the decline of migration flows among those who could not negotiate expatriate packages. Similar ebbs and flows were also seen among Australians departing for Singapore. However, since 1 July 2017, Australian departures are no longer collected from those leaving, so it is impossible to determine with more recent data where Australians are departing to and why.

Figure 1.5. Permanent returns and departures among Singaporean and Australian residents, 2007–2019



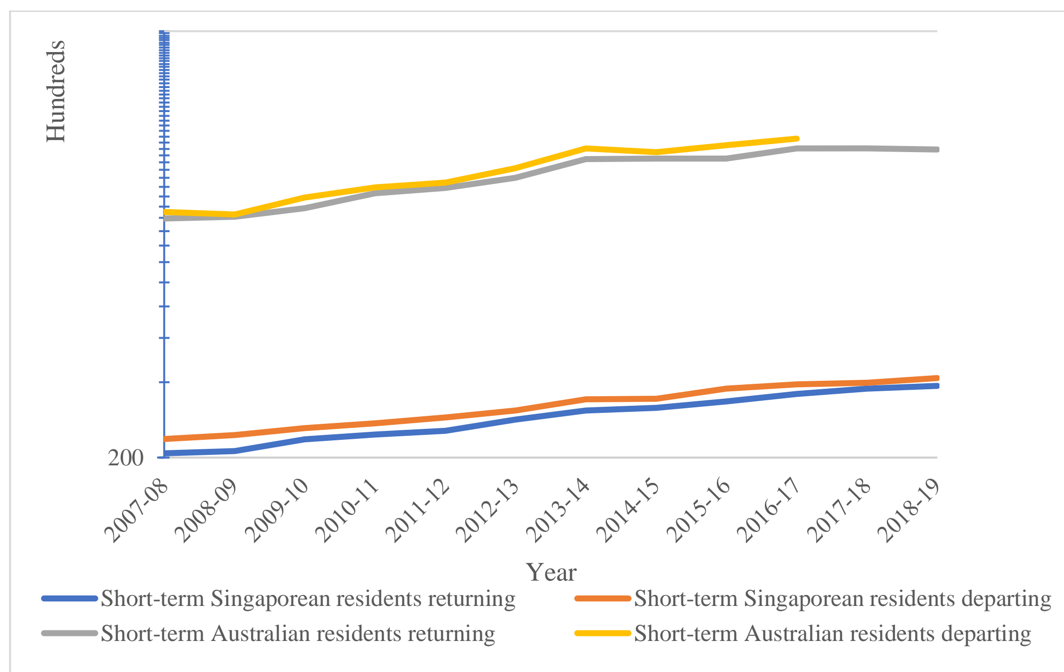
Source: Unpublished data from OAD 2007–2019.

The top five destinations for permanent departures include New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States of America, Singapore and Canada, with Singapore emerging as the fourth country where people departed to permanently (ABS 2010). When comparing the years 2004 and 2010, the top destinations for those departing Australia permanently remained almost the same, while the number of permanent departures to Singapore doubled (ABS 2010). This

suggests that there are common features in patterns of migration and mobility among the highly skilled, and the increase in the number of Singaporeans in Australia coincides with permanent departures from Australia.

Figure 1.6 presents the temporary returns and departures among Singaporean and Australian residents. Given Singapore's geographical proximity to Australia and its position as a global city, it is not surprising to find that the total movement of Australians far outweighs Singaporeans. The increase in the number of returns among both groups coincides with the increase in departures, evidencing short-term migration flows between the two countries in addition to more permanent flows (Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.6. Temporary returns and departures among Singaporean and Australian residents, 2007–2019



Source: Unpublished data from OAD 2007–2019.

Like other migrant countries, the composition of migrants in Singapore is driven by the economy and public policy. Australia has always been considered a traditional source country for skilled temporary migrants to Singapore, other skilled migrant populations, including those from the United States, Britain, France, Japan and South Korea, were initially more prominent (Yeoh and Lin 2012). A number of studies have recorded an increase in the number of migrants

from Australia, and of such flows directed towards Asia (Hugo 1994; Hugo *et al*. 2003). This population may also include the children of Singaporeans in Australia who have since returned, as the internationalisation of many highly skilled regional and national labour markets has given rise to the outflow of Australia-born people on a long-term basis (Hugo 1994). In the case of Australia and Singapore, it is likely that such international boundaries overlap, but whether or not the outflow of return migrants and Australians in Singapore is on a long-term temporary or permanent basis cannot be determined using secondary data alone.

According to 2017 UN stock data, there were 71,106 Australians in Singapore including visitors, which was the largest migrant group from a traditional source country of skilled professionals. Australians in Singapore were also the second largest migrant group in Singapore, after Malaysian migrants, of which there were 81,109 including visitors. The number of Australians was almost twice the number of British migrants (46,300), followed by 35,549 American migrants. Although there are many Chinese migrants in Singapore, the majority of them would have already obtained permanent residency or citizenship in Singapore, and unlike Malaysian, Australian, British or American migrants, do not feature as foreigners who are on contracts in Singapore.

Recent migrants to Singapore, including return migrants, are not necessarily welcomed by the existing population (Ortmann 2009). Even after demonstrating their commitment to Singapore by obtaining Singapore citizenship, which is challenging to acquire (Jones 2012), new migrants may not be socially recognised as part of the Singaporean community. In response to Singapore's aggressive skilled migration policies, those who grew up in Singapore actively try to distinguish themselves from foreigners who migrated to Singapore, as well as Singaporeans who grew up overseas. The normalisation of negative experiences, such as growing up in a rigorous education system, as well as compulsory military training for men, have been established as critical contributors to the Singaporean identity (Ortmann 2009). For Singaporean parents who have chosen to migrate to spare their children of the 'cruel' and 'relentless' competition propagated by Singapore's highly elitist educational system, such families are often perceived by the local population as not having an authentic national identity (Tan and Goh 2011, p. 621).

Researchers have suggested that the callous execution of the government's foreign talent policy is a reflection of the state's loss of faith in the economic capabilities of those left behind, and their reluctance to reproduce (Verweij and Pelizzo 2009). As opposed to natural increase, the increase in the resident population is the result of a series of robust migration policies that revolve around 'foreign talent' and 'foreign worker' (Jones 2012, p. 327). Foreign talent refers to highly skilled expats, while foreign worker refers to those working in the construction or domestic work industries, forming a short-term labour pool that is easily repatriated (Jones 2012). Although both are foreigners who initially enter Singapore on temporary visas, foreign workers are not given the option to apply for permanent residency, so their residence in Singapore is always temporary (Yeoh 2006; Yeoh and Lin 2012). On the other hand, foreign talents generally have a clearer pathway to permanent residency, and are increasingly encouraged to apply. Given the high salaries on offer and the many attractions of a city lifestyle, Singapore has managed to attract foreign talents to replace the many Singaporeans who reside overseas. Not all foreign talents are given offers for citizenship and permanent residency, as migrants from non-Caucasian backgrounds are preferred to ensure the continuity of Singapore's multi-ethnic identity constructed from its second independence in 1965 (Ho 2006; Yeoh and Lin 2012).

1.5 Thesis organisation

The first chapter provides an overview of the thesis and introduces the objectives and research questions. It also outlines the nature and extent of Singaporean migration to Australia, including the temporary migration scheme and addresses the international student population in Australia, as well as reciprocal flows from Australia to Singapore.

Chapter 2 establishes the changes in Australia's migration policy that facilitated migration and multicultural settlement in Australia. It then discusses the complex relationship between Singapore and its overseas population, and examines the dual citizenship policy in both countries.

Chapter 3 discusses the theories that relate to traditional and neoclassical approaches to migration. It addresses labour migration with reference to historical development and neoclassical theory and explains why the trends in contemporary migration have evolved since

the industrial-era. It considers a number of theories that have emerged as a result and how they relate to this study. The chapter concludes with a commentary that understanding labour and skilled migration in the contemporary era involves relating migration as part of the broader phenomenon of economic and social mobility.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology used in this study. It considers the literature around quantitative and qualitative methods and discusses the approach used in this study, highlighting the complexities of social research and the need for a scientific method of inquiry in order to link social patterns to social meanings. The chapter describes how data were collected, the sample response and characteristics of the sampled population, and identifies potential study limitations.

Chapter 5 considers the employment experience of Singaporeans in Australia using data obtained from an online survey of individuals in Australia. It begins by examining the reasons for migration in relation to gender and migrant profiles. Given that better employment opportunities are an important aspect of settlement experiences, the chapter evaluates respondents' labourforce participation and socio-economic outcomes in relation to other migrant groups in Australia, and to the broader Australian population.

Chapter 6 continues the analysis of Singaporeans in Australia by examining the social connections and transnational linkages of respondents. It begins by examining the pre-move contacts of respondents in relation to gender and visa type. The differences between permanent and temporary migrants are examined in relation to migrant networks, including social commitments in Australia, the Singaporean community in Australia, economic and social linkages with Singapore, future plans in Australia and visits to Singapore.

Chapter 7 investigates respondents' perspectives on being part of a broader Singaporean diaspora and compares their views to the diaspora strategies put in place by the Singapore government. Building on the analysis of Singaporeans in Australia, the study on reciprocal flows from Australia to Singapore identifies two distinct groups of respondents, 1) return migrants and 2) Australians in Singapore, and demonstrates evidence of a migration system between the two countries. The settlement aspirations of respondents are explored in relation

to current and future plans, which brings about the issue of citizenship and the development of transnational communities.

Chapter 8 discusses findings with an evaluation of Singaporeans in Australia in the context of government policy and practice and study objectives. The thesis addresses study limitations, further avenues for research, and closes with a final word on contemporary migration and future trends that are considerably altered as a result of Australia's policies to contain the spread of COVID-19, including border closures.

CHAPTER 2

MIGRATION POLICY AND PRACTICE IN AUSTRALIA AND SINGAPORE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines bilateral relations between Australia and Singapore in the context of technology advancements and global economic integration, both of which have contributed to several waves of transnational movement in contemporary migration. Historically, several changes to Australia's migration policies have also facilitated the movements of Singaporeans in Australia. These include: 1) the abolishment of the White Australia Policy, 2) introduction of Australia's multicultural policy, and most recently, 3) the temporary migration scheme, all of which have altered the scale and composition of migrant intakes in Australia. The analysis on migration practice between permanent and temporary cohorts reveal some differences in migrant profiles, as reflected in the journeys undertaken by migrants to live, work and study in Australia. The chapter subsequently introduces diaspora strategising as a new form of public policy, and discusses Singapore's strategies. Although Singaporean migration to Australia has occurred for several decades, the policy discourse reveals a complex relationship between the Singapore government and its overseas population.

2.2 Global migration context

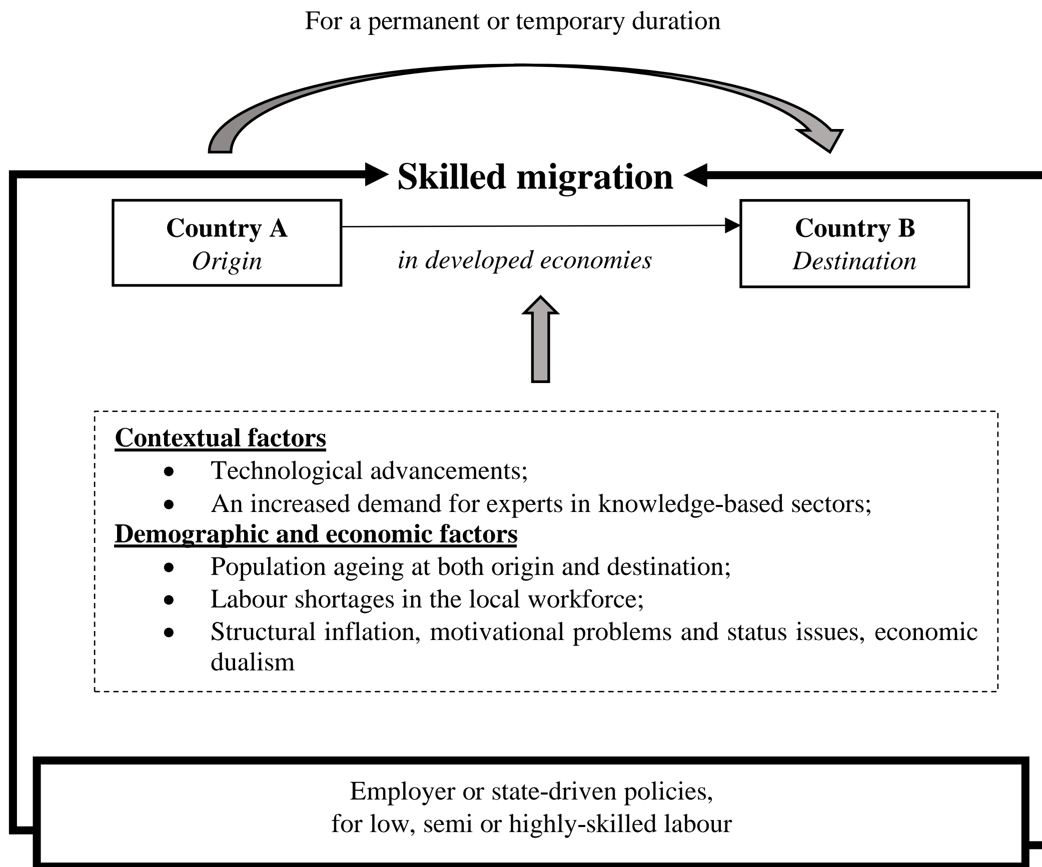
Economic growth, globalisation and the advent of the knowledge economy have given rise to an increased demand for highly skilled workers in many developed countries, especially for professions that lie within the information technology and management sectors (Castles *et al*. 2003). From the 1990s, international migration has become a mechanism for the recruitment of such specialised labour, both temporary and permanent, across a range of industry sectors. Such flows occur at local, regional, national and global levels, and their acceleration has led to the blurring of boundaries between domestic and global affairs (Sassen 2007; Faulconbridge and Beaverstock 2009; Fauclonbridge and Muzio 2012).

There is a rich and diverse body of literature that discusses the costs and effects of globalisation, most of which point towards the observation that migration processes are intrinsically affected by globalisation. Technological advancements have facilitated an increase in information and connectivity. This not only enables the formation of social and economic networks, but also sustains and stimulates flows of economic trade and population movement and facilitates the exchange of goods, customs, culture and other practices (Held *et al.* 1999; Castles and Miller 2003; Dicken 2003). The process and impacts of such exchanges can be examined in more detail using a transnational lens, and the ideas of transnational connectivity in the context of international migration are relevant now and are likely to remain so (IOM 2018).

International division of labour has been previously restricted to highly skilled industries, and transnational companies and recruitment agencies were dominant in facilitating international migration. Today, governments have become equally or more instrumental in the recruitment of skilled workers (OECD 2002). A large majority of the literature has focussed on the economic implications of migration (Lucas 2005; Hatton and Williamson 2006). Since then, the process of skilled migration has been accelerated by regional integration, with regional and global trade regimes crucial in managing skilled migrants' mobility. Some member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), especially traditional recipients of migrants, started to implement policies in the 1980s to facilitate the recruitment of skilled migrant labour. Australia, while initially slower than its OECD counterparts to adopt this approach, did so from the mid-1990s (Hugo 1999).

In addition to the demography of labour supply, Massey *et al.* (1993) explained that the demand for immigrant labour in advanced industrial societies was motivated by structural inflation, motivational problems and status issues and economic dualism. In addition to fertility and mortality, migration plays a key role in influencing population composition within the trilogy of demographic processes (Hugo 2015). The issues associated with an ageing population, coupled with shortages in the local workforce intensify the global competition for skilled workers. Figure 2.1 summarises how the dominance of the knowledge economy, coupled with the interplay of private-public partnerships, have fuelled skilled labour migration between developed countries.

Figure 2.1. A framework on skilled migration between developed countries



Source: Adapted from Massey *et al*. (1993).

It was observed that the relationship between migration and development is often associated with free and open trade, as well as population movement (Skeldon 2008; Bakewell 2012). Historically, the debates on migration and development have often swung from one extreme to the other (Miracle and Berry 1970; Kearney 1986; Appleyard 1989). In contemporary migration, links between migration and development have been largely ignored until recently (De Haas 2010, 2012). The incorporation of migration into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has meant that migration is no longer seen as a consequence of the lack of development (IOM 2018). Nevertheless, within the international spatial division of labour, migration for the purpose of development is enabled by institutions. Both the state and employers in the private sector have become instrumental in the recruitment of skilled temporary migrants to meet market needs (Iredale 2001; Krissman 2005). Modern examples exemplify development as a key driver for migration, as data have shown that the initial onset

of economic growth in destination countries is related to the rise in national outmigration rates in origin countries (Chiswick and Hatton 2003).

From a global migration perspective, a number of studies have demonstrated that remittances, one of the main economic outcomes of migration, have had positive impacts on the lives of migrants and their home communities (Adams 2003; Scalabrin and Graham Fitzgerald 2016) as they support microeconomic development (Taylor 1999). Such habits when practiced regularly and *en masse* have been shown to increase the standard of living within origin communities, and some countries have incorporated remittances as part of their national development policy (Adelman and Taylor 1990; Burney 1989). Unlike other Asian contexts where remittances are a primary source of revenue, remittances from Singaporean migrants may benefit individual households but generally have less significance to the broader Singaporean economy.

There is increased recognition that the effective management of movement across borders requires international cooperation to address the complex drivers and processes involved. Institutional frameworks and mechanisms, such as the 2016 United Nations (UN) High-level Meeting on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, have allowed for key actors to participate in dialogues on the political and environmental aspects of migration as displacement. However, there is less convergence around international movements related to labour and services. Some of the more recent laws include the 1990 Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) and the 1994 General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). These frameworks, managed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) members respectively, demonstrate the varying levels of cooperation expected by UN member states to ensure the fair treatment of migrant workers and family members in destination countries. This means that the experiences of migrant workers may vary depending on the nature of their work, their employers, and practices that uphold the rights of migrant workers within host societies.

2.3 History of Australia's migration policy

Between the 1880s and 1960s, Australia deliberately insulated itself from the broader geographical region through the White Australia Policy (Willard 1967). This policy was officially known as the restrictive migration act which sought to preserve the racial supremacy of English-speaking and Germanic cultures, and was supported by sophisticated scientific theorists who stood on the conservative side of Australian politics (Price 1974). Two main objectives underpinned this policy, the first being the exclusion of non-European migrants, and the second, an assimilationist model to create an ethnically homogeneous society (Jupp 1995). The non-Europeans living in Australia, particularly the Aboriginal population were expected to die out, with those of mixed race now forming the majority and had to assimilate into the existing dominant cultures (Jupp 1995). Apart from specific policies that allowed temporary workers and students of non-European descent into Australia, migration restrictions were very effective in insulating Australia from its neighbours in the Asia-Pacific (London 1970).

In addition to the economic alienation and restrictions that arose from the White Australia Policy, an important factor that led to the diminished support of the White Australia Policy was the successful integration of large numbers of non-English speaking Europeans from mass migration programs launched in 1947 to accommodate displaced persons in Europe post World War II (Jupp 1995). Not only did state governments gradually move away from assimilationist policies toward multicultural approaches of integration, the support for cultural homogeny started to erode when migrants from the Middle East and Turkey started to come to Australia. Hence, pressures to change the policy occurred between 1966 and 1973, and policies on racial exclusion and migrant assimilation were slowly abolished with minimal resistance by both Liberal and Labor governments (Jupp 1995).

2.3.1 White Australia Policy

Following the federation of the self-governing colonies in 1901, the White Australia Policy was introduced based on its origins from the late nineteenth century on ideas about nation and race; the phenomenon on British race patriotism that emerged from the colonies was similar to other responses at the time (Jordan 2018). As introduced by then Deputy Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, preserving Australia's 'unity of race' was a key priority, as well as preventing the

country from being overrun by 'the coloured races which surround us, and are inclined to invade our shores' (Deakin 1901). Hence, the policy was produced at a time where Australia perceived itself as a colony of Greater Britain (Seeley 1883), but due to its geopolitical proximity, encapsulated a deep sense of vulnerability shared by many Australians at the time (Jordan 2018). Moreover, from a socio-economic perspective, the White Australia Policy was a reflection on the ideals regarding the Australian way of life (Eggert 2011). Not only was the White Australia Policy entrenched in safeguarding Australia's social and economic welfare, it was also important to preserve the homogeneous character of the community and its common way of life.

It was not until the critical years from 1964–1967 that Australia's migration policy started to evolve. Researchers Brawley (1966) and Tavan (2005) have looked closely at the decision to liberalise the policy, and have suggested that one of the reasons for the liberalising of Australia's foreign policy was because the newly appointed Prime Minister, Harold Holt, was particularly keen to make his mark in terms of Australia's foreign policy.

> "Australia's increasing involvement in Asian developments, the rapid growth of our trade with Asian countries, our participation on a larger scale in an increasing number of aid projects in the area… the expansion of our military effort, the scale of diplomatic contact, and the growth of tourism to and from the countries of Asia" (Holt 1966).

Such considerations alluded to the international pressures directed towards Australia during the 1960s, which occurred alongside the declining credibility of Britishness in Australia (Brawley 1966). The historic introduction of Australia's multicultural policy occurred in conjunction with the changes that took place in Canada and the United States, but in opposition to Britain, who was faced with mounting migration from the Commonwealth (Freeman and Jupp 1992). The orthodoxies that had previously dictated the White Australia Policy eventually weakened, allowing foreign policy considerations to take precedence in an era where relations with its newly independent neighbours were developing, and it was not long before Australian diplomats realised that the White Australia Policy remained a major impediment to closer cultural understanding (Jordan 2018).

Although the White Australia Policy was eventually abolished in 1973 under Whitlam's Labor government, the numbers of Asian migration in the context of Australia's overall migration programme were, in fact, miniscule (Jordan 2005, 2018). The subject of race was still very

much intertwined in the public discourse. Despite Asian migrants being the minority, many continued to participate in nation building, as activists, community leaders and business owners (Loy-Wilson 2014; Liu *et al*. 2019).

It was during this time that the Fraser Liberal coalition government opened its doors and offered relocation assistance to political refugees from the Vietnam War, which Neumann (2015) described as unprecedented. Before 1977, without any proper refugee policy, responses to the imminent arrival of Vietnamese boat people were ad hoc and varied, reflecting migration concerns about the racial make-up of the Australian population rather than humanitarianism (Neumann 2015). This was followed soon after by the migration of more than 200,000 Asian migrants (including some 10,000 Singaporeans), and almost 86,000 refugees – 56,000 of which were Vietnam War refugees, and approximately 30,000 civil war refugees from Lebanon who were resettled in Sydney between 1975 and 1990 (ABS 2016b). Even though the White Australia Policy had been gradually dismantled over several successive governments beforehand, it was not until the Fraser government that multiracial migration to Australia increased. In just a short span of 15 years, the social and cultural landscape of Australia was transformed. The increase in the number of non-European and non-Christian migrants to Australia over time led to the diminishing of the racial and religious connotations that had been established during the White Australia Policy. However, as a result of the mandatory detention system of asylum seekers implemented by the Keating government in the early 1990s, refugees that came after the resettlement of Vietnamese boat peoples did not experience the same level of humanitarianism (Mares 2001).

2.3.2 Australia's multicultural policy

From the mid-1960s, Australia's commitment to create an inclusive multicultural society was articulated through a series of national mandates (Brawley 1966; Tavan 2005). Australia, alongside other western democracies in 1966, symbolised their commitment through the signing of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Keddie 2014). By the time the White Australia Policy was completely abolished in 1973, the term 'multiculturalism' had been introduced to Australia. There was the increasing recognition of the hardships that migrants faced in settlement, especially for those that could not speak English. Migrant groups were encouraged to maintain their cultures within

mainstream institutions, and budgets were allocated to meet the needs of new migrants and their communities (Keddie 2014).

The politics around migrant identities and cultural recognition that emerged from the Whitlam era has continued to define Australian multiculturalism today (Jayasuriya 2002). However, the dilemma unfolds since Australia's multiculturalism model focusses on recognising and preserving symbolic aspects of ethnic minorities, yet minimising the adverse effects of cultural differences and division (Fleras 2009). Such effects were particularly highlighted after the events of 9/11, and there has been more emphasis since then to minimise cultural diversity (Fleras 2009).

For Australia, minimising cultural diversity has been manifested in a number of policies since the early 1980s. Under the Fraser government in 1979, the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs was established, with the aim to support cultural awareness and appreciation, promoting an assimilation model of tolerance, harmony and social cohesion within the frameworks of the nation's legal and political structures (Keddie 2014). Subsequent policy papers that emerged after 1979 included the 1982 paper, 'Multiculturalism for all Australians', and the launch of the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia in 1989 by the Hawke government, both of which continued to focus on an ethnic rights model of multiculturalism to a citizenship model (Babacan 2006; Fleras 2009). These policies coincided with an increased rate of Asian and Middle East migration to Australia, which soon resulted in the perception that multiculturalism in Australia could pose a huge threat on Australian nationhood and culture (Koleth 2010).

Given the level of public distrust and confusion that arose from multiculturalism in Australia, the Howard government's 'One Australia' focussed predominantly on integration — 'loyalty to Australia, her institutions, values, and traditions transcends loyalty to any other set of values anywhere in the world' (Koleth 2010, p. 10). There was also the revision on becoming a citizen in Australia, where the new citizenship test aimed at integration and cohesion (Keddie 2014). Additionally, as a result of the terrorism witnessed both in Australian and overseas, integration initiatives in Australia were particularly focussed on supporting Australian Muslim communities (Babacan 2006; Fleras 2009; Koleth 2010).

Therefore, the abolishment of the White Australia Policy has given rise to a society consisting of majority and minority groups. The many iterations of Australia's multiculturalism policy

that have emerged since the mid-1960s have resulted in the view that multicultural policy is most effective when focussed on political autonomy and difference (Keddie 2014). Multiculturalism today focusses on the principle of democratic pluralism, supporting the full participation of minority groups to allow for equal representation of all Australians.

2.4 Economic partnerships between Australia and Singapore

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was founded by former Prime Minister of Australia, Bob Hawke, in 1990 to promote open trade and practical economic cooperation across its twelve founding members, which included Australia and Singapore. Cross-national flows of labour and capital have long been acknowledged as central to the structure and growth of the broader global economy, and strengthened links between increased mobility and economic liberalisation have given rise to the formation of global networks (Massey 1984; Held *et al*. 1999; Portes *et al*. 1999; Castles and Miller 2003; Sassen 2007). Since the formation of the APEC network in 1990, the APEC membership has continued to grow, and by 1998, the Cooperation consisted of 21 member economies. To facilitate free and open trade and investment among member countries, eligible business travellers in APEC member countries can apply for and obtain a Business Travel Card.

The economic geography of the Asia-Pacific region is complex and is exacerbated by differences in culture, ethnicity, politics and religion. Both Australia and Singapore have ageing populations, and Australia is growing at a higher rate of 1.8 percent per annum in comparison to 0.8 percent in Singapore (2019–2020). Prior to 2016, Singapore's growth rate fluctuated between 2.18 percent (1985–1990) to 2.92 percent (1995–2000). Australia's population on 18 January 2021 was approximately 25,742,607 (ABS 2021), representing approximately 0.33 percent of the world's total population. Under the highest assumptions of fertility and migration, the growth rate of the population aged 65 years and over and is expected to be three times higher than that aged between 15 and 64 years of age in the period up to 2031 (ABS 2013b). The net migration component of Australia's annual population in 2017 was 63.2 percent, much higher than that of natural increase (36.8 percent) (ABS 2017).

In comparison, Singapore's population on 16 January 2021 was approximately 5,875,921, equivalent to 0.07 percent of the total world population (Singapore Population 2021). However,

due to political sensitivities, the actual numbers of high and low skilled migrant workers has never been released to the public (Low 1995), therefore the proportion of annual population growth due to net migration in Singapore is unavailable. Although international migration has reached unprecedented scale and diversity in the last decade, the data collection of migrant stocks and flows remain limited in most Asian countries (Hugo 2006c). Hence, Singapore, like many Asian countries, has not included relevant international migration questions in population censuses despite the flows in international migration posing significant implications on the political, economic, social and demographic aspects of the nation.

Recent developments in multi-country partnerships have contributed to increased mobility between Australia and Singapore. Both countries are signatories to several multilateral agreements, including the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership, ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement, East Asia Summit and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Bilateral ties between the two countries have also been evaluated in recent years, including the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2016 which aims to strengthen cooperation on innovation, science, education and defence, enchancing cultural relationships through tourism and establishing a reciprocal work and holiday maker programme (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DFAT] 2018). Although the decision to regulate population mobility through a bottom-up approach may seem like a logical solution to leverage on population mobility between the two countries, the number of Singaporeans on working holiday visas is still limited in comparison to temporary migrants as a whole (ACMID 2016). Despite discussions about strategies for developing and sharing human resources, there is little mobility to date that is related to government policy, rather, most movement is initiated and organised by employers (Iredale 2003).

More recent economic partnerships between Australia and Singapore demonstrate the close bilateral relationship shared by the two countries. This includes the Digital Economy Agreement (DEA) signed between Australia and Singapore on 6 August 2020, upgrading pre-existing digital trade agreements found within the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement (DFAT 2020). Another Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on 26 October 2020 aims to advance corporation on low-emissions technology and solutions, sharing technical knowledge

and experience, and collaborate on the development of new technologies to reduce emissions (Media Release 2020).

In light of the COVID-19 border closures and the formation of bilateral ‘travel bubbles’, Singapore has opened up its borders to visitors from Australia from 8 October 2020 (Olle 2020). In addition to Singapore’s ‘green-lane’ corridors which are typically reserved for essential business and government travel, those who travel from Australia tend to include visitors and returning travellers. However, given the ongoing border closures in Australia, it is unclear at this stage how many have actually been able to undertake international travel between the two countries.

2.5 Migration of Singaporeans to Australia over time

It was not long after Singapore became independent for the second time on 9 August 1965 that individuals and families commenced their migration journeys to Australia. Despite the consistent increase in the number of Singaporeans in Australia, the actual population size never came close to any of the larger migrant populations, in part due to the lack of incentives provided by the Australian government. As a result of nation-building in Singapore, minority communities started to perceive Singapore’s future as ‘leading to a Chinese Singapore rather than a Singaporean Singapore’ (Barth 2017, p. 156), and the first Singaporeans to migrate to Australia or New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s were Singaporeans of Eurasian descent (Lowe 2018).

Soon after the White Australia Policy was abolished in 1973, more Singaporeans of non-Eurasian descent began their migration journeys to Australia, and by 1981, there were approximately 10,000 Singaporeans in Australia. It was also during this time where migrants were expected to assimilate into Australian society, and the racial undertones in assimilation meant that Singaporeans found racism and discrimination to be the worst aspects of living in Australia (Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1994). Such sentiments were exacerbated when the then leader of the Opposition, John Howard, suggested that migration be restricted to the ‘culturally harmonious’ (Ray 1988). His suggestion received criticism from national and international leaders, which resulted in the sacking of John Howard as leader of the Liberal Party (Ray 1988).

This put an end to the migration debate, but not without serious repercussions which damaged Australia's reputation among its Asian neighbours (Ray 1988).

The number of Singaporeans in Australia continued to increase through the 1990s and 2000s, with Singaporean migration to Australia occurring at unprecedented rates (ABS 2016b). It was also during this time where the Anglo-Celtic proportion of Australia's population dropped by 20 percent, with the foreign-born population making up one-quarter of Australia's population (Brown 2006). As a result of the changes in ethnic composition, it was not long before Australia's multicultural policies encouraged integration over assimilation, giving rise to migrant cultures that have preserved their cultural identity whilst integrating into Australia's existing political and social frameworks (Brown 2006).

Historically, Singaporeans in Australia have only comprised a small proportion of Southeast Asian migrants (ABS 2016b). The study by Sullivan and Gunasekaran (1994) found that three-quarters of Singaporean migrants to Australia were male, well-established in their careers and well-educated, who were also ethnically Chinese, Christian and spoke English at home (Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1994). Since then, the socio-demographic composition of Singaporeans in Australia has evolved to include minorities – females and non-Chinese of Malay, Indian, and Sikh ancestry, each with their own cultural norms and religious affiliations (ABS 2016b).

Understanding the reasons for past migration and permanent settlement outside of Singapore is critical to understanding contemporary migration where Singaporean emigrants may be motivated by a myriad of factors that are both economic and social (Saw 2012). Historically, the literature concerning international migration, and permanent migration in particular, was attributed to neoclassical principles and, in particular, the push-pull framework. However, this framework has since been superseded by evidence suggesting that migration decisions are influenced by a number of factors (De Haas 2011). In some instances, contemporary migration, facilitated by increased technological advancements and travel affordability, may even be attributed to the age-old reason for migration – adventure.

2.6 The global rise of diaspora institutions

Globally, there were observations which reflected that migrants continued to interact with their home countries. Such interactions were economic, social and in some instances, political. Migration researchers from the early to mid–2000s began to suggest a paradigm shift in migration theory (De Haas 2010; Gamlen 2014a; Smith and King 2012). This also coincided with the Singapore government's shift in its rhetoric towards migrants. As Singapore continued to benefit from globalisation through the introduction of its foreign talent policy, migration became considered less of a threat to the nation-state because the processes of globalisation facilitated transnational interactions between migrants and their home countries. Where migration had historically been viewed as 'brain drain', the transnational approach alluded to a more positive outlook on migration. The migration literature on 'brain drain' has evolved to suggest that migrants did not just leave their home countries never to return, rather, they interacted regularly with family members back home by sending remittances, attending family events, celebrating cultural festivals, and in some cases, eventually return. Such interactions have only intensified with technological advancements, with increased physical and virtual accessibility to family and friends back home (Jackson 1990; Dwyer *et al*. 1993; Castles 2002; Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Hugo 2006).

The evidence of transnational ties has given rise to a sense of renewed optimism among countries that lost a significant proportion of their more educated and skilled population to migration. Given changing patterns of mobility in recent years, diaspora strategising has emerged as a new field of public policy, especially in countries with high levels of migration (Gamlen 2008; Newland 2010). Similar to the approach of other advanced economies such as Scotland and Ireland, the Singapore government has situated its diaspora strategy within a knowledge-based framework (Ho and Boyle 2015). Studies have demonstrated the positive socio-economic outcomes that emerge from diaspora knowledge networks which have helped to strengthen transnational linkages and facilitate cross-border information transfer (Larner 2007; Turpin *et al*. 2008; Ragazzi 2009; Mullings 2012).

The migration-development nexus has traditionally been interpreted within an economic framework, namely remittances (Lucas 2005; Hatton and Williamson 2006; Skeldon 2008; De Haas 2010, 2012; Bakewell 2012). Although there is empirical evidence to demonstrate the

economic impacts that have emerged as a result of the acceleration and intensification of global flows, the evidence merely points towards remittances as an indicator for economic development (Skeldon 2008; Faist *et al*. 2011; De Hass 2012; Gamlen 2014a). Migrants' contributions have led to positive economic outcomes in destination and origin countries. The amount redirected by migrants back to origin doubled from US$24 billion in 1990 to US$59 billion in 2000; in 2015, worldwide remittance flows were estimated to have exceeded US$601 billion (De Haas 2012; Scalabrin and Graham Fitzgerald 2016). Multiple studies have shown the positive correlation between the rise in national outmigration rates and the initial onset of economic growth in destination countries (e.g. Burney 1989; Adelman and Taylor 1990; Chiswick and Hatton 2003). However, the rapid increase may be attributed to improved methods in monitoring monetary flows, and migration itself should not be seen as a substitute for good economic policy (De Haas 2012).

2.6.1 Singapore as a nation state

Singapore gained independence from Britain in 1963 and became a state of Malaysia. However, racial tensions and disagreements over ethnic and religious rights resulted in the decision to leave the Federation of Malaysia, and Singapore became independent again on 9 August 1965. Then Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, pledged, 'from the ashes of that fire, we are building a new community', a community based on equal and shared opportunities 'regardless of race, language, and religion' (Lee 1965). At the time, the concept of Singapore as a nation-state was non-existent, and a number of literary events point toward heightened anxieties to do with Singapore's lack of nationhood (Hill 1995). The 'birth of Singapore' as a nation was famously and frequently referred to as a 'traumatic birth of Singapore as an independent nation' (Goh 2006, p. 27).

As observed by Jones (2012), Lee's vision quickly became the main method of governance for Singapore — the *sui generis* nature of Singapore's economic and social policy model relied heavily on government representatives to orchestrate society both economically and socially. Singapore became a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation which strived to become a strong competitor in the global economy.

Mr Philip Yeo, the longest serving minister on Singapore's Economic Development Board (EDB), stated that:

> "Singapore is dependent on the global market… what I wanted was to provide a home for multinationals, a place for them to operate" (Peh 2017, p. 99).

By the 1990s, together with Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea, Singapore became one of the 'Asian Tigers', a term coined to refer to the four most developed economies in Asia (excluding Japan), and it was not long after, that Singapore achieved first world economic status. Singapore has since been ranked the third wealthiest country in the world by GDP per capita (PPP) (World Bank 2020), reflecting a unified and globally viable nation, reflected in education, housing and social policies (World Bank 2020). As a city that prides itself as a global economic hub, the rapid advancement of communication technology and travel affordability has significantly impacted the way that Singapore and its industries continue to relate to the global audience.

At the time of Singapore's founding, its population comprised three main races– Chinese, Malay and Indian. Minority ethnicities including Eurasians were also represented and grouped together in an 'other' racial category. Fifty-five years since its independence, the population of Singapore has increased by four times from 1.6 million in 1965 to 5.87 million in 2020 (Singapore Department of Statistics [DOS] 2020). A declining birth rate, shrinking labour force due to the ageing population and increased emigration has resulted in the development of a robust and targeted migration program to maintain its labourforce. It is estimated that out of the 5.87 million who live in Singapore, 4 million are Singaporean citizens or permanent residents and the remainder foreigners (Population Trends 2019). There have been attempts to recruit permanent migrants from China to retain the Chinese majority in Singapore, while the service and construction industries are dominated by temporary migrant workers from the Philippines and Bangladesh. The population composition in Singapore has become more diverse as a result of such policies (Chua 2003; Saw 2012). However, the true extent of diversity among Singapore's population is limited as requests to release the scale and composition of migrants in Singapore have generally gone unanswered, and there have been concerns of undocumented migration among Singapore's temporary migrant population (Low 1995).

English was also chosen as Singapore's official working language because it was regarded as an ethnically neutral language (Lowe 2018). This allowed Singaporeans equal access to education and labourforce regardless of race, language or religion. The use of English as the main working language facilitated Singapore's access to a global audience, which not only enhanced the country's attractiveness in terms of global competitiveness, but also of economic mobility and migration. More recently, the combination of the strong politico-historical narrative, economic growth of the nation and increased spending power of individuals have seen an increase in the percentage of the Singaporean population living overseas (National Population and Talent Division [NPTD] 2016). In the decade preceding 2016, it was found that there was a 24 percent increase in the number of Singaporean citizens with a registered foreign address. This included those who had been away for six months or more in the preceding twelve months (NPTD 2016). Hence, relative to the Singaporean stock population, it was estimated that for every fifteen Singaporeans, one lives overseas, and according to the 2012 Population in Brief publication, the majority of those were between the ages of 20 and 35 Between 2007 and 2011, Some 1,200 Singaporeans renounced their citizenship (NPTD 2016), about which the Singapore government has expressed apprehension.

2.6.2 Government perspectives on the Singaporean diaspora

Despite the number of Singaporeans living abroad today, emigration has not always been seen as a viable option, in part due to the dominant, negative attitudes towards migrants, clouded by a sense of national patriotism. Migrating from Singapore was historically viewed as a destabilising force to the collective fabric, as Singapore, with no natural resources, had to rely solely on its population for economic development. To discourage Singaporeans from migrating, there were pervasive arguments of 'brain drain' presented in the city-state's censored print media (Yap 1994, 1999), and the difficulties that Singaporean migrants faced at destination, such as discrimination and racism (Seow 1998), but there were no explicit restrictions placed on those who chose to migrate. Nevertheless, there were anxieties around Singaporeans leaving (Wee 1993), and the issue of Singaporeans residing overseas was first addressed in 1987 by then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

> "There is no way in Singapore to prevent you from leaving. Nobody is going to stop you. If you feel you have a better life in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, America, good luck to you. We

> feel we can get a Canadian or Australian to come to Singapore and work, or a Malaysian, or a Thai, or an Indonesian" (Lee 1987).

The period between 1991 and 2001 witnessed the fall and recovery of countries affected by the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis. In the period leading up to this crisis, 'a select band of East and Southeast Asian countries experienced perhaps the most rapid and sustained period of growth in human history', 'never before had so many people been plucked out of poverty over such a short space of time' (Rigg 2002, p. 137). It did not take long before many of the countries in South-East Asia recovered from the recession, and a general sense of optimism about the region's growth prospects was soon renewed. Although the majority of Southeast Asian economies struggled to reposition themselves after the financial crisis, Singapore's use of globalisation to improve its economic status and position facilitated the country's adaptation not only towards attracting, but benefitting from FDI with ASEAN and APEC networks (Pritchard 2006). The country's successful repositioning as an Asia-Pacific hub continued to facilitate international labour movements to Singapore, but it was also during this period of time that the rate of Singaporean migration to Australia peaked. In 2003, then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong referred to Singaporeans residing abroad as 'quitters'.

> "Fair-weather Singaporeans will run away whenever the country runs in to stormy weather. I call them 'quitters' … Look in the mirror and ask, am I a 'stayer' or a 'quitter'? Am I a fair-weather Singaporean or an all-weather Singaporean?" (Goh 2003).

Singaporean migration to Australia was sustained even after Singapore's economic recovery. During the Global Financial Crisis, Singapore was one of many countries severely affected by the GFC, becoming the first Asian nation to fall into recession, while Australia managed to recover through its fiscal response (Brain 2010; Sanchita 2010). The strong trade and financial linkages of Singapore's economy with the rest of the world meant that Singapore was not completely insulated from the crisis, but managed to recover only because the country's banks and financial system were well-capitalised and collectively produced an overall healthy account position (Sanchita 2010). Trade between Singapore and other developed countries was affected by the large debt accumulated by predominantly the United States, which was further exacerbated by the low levels of inter-country trade occurring among ASEAN countries (Simarmata 2013). Migration flows from Singapore to traditional destination countries were sustained throughout this period, enhancing the stigma that Singaporeans who migrated were disloyal, leaving the country only after benefitting from its economic progress. This reinforced

the stigma surrounding prospective migrants and those who were already living abroad (Lowe 2018).

Despite this, there have been conscious efforts made to reimagine migrants as 'transnational citizens', 'a distinctive form of the cosmopolitan ethic suited to its current position in the world of international trade' (Harvey 2005, p. 86). The ideal Singaporean is viewed as an individual motivated by an economic imperative, using a global outlook to navigate the urban space (Naruse 2016). As such, the term 'Overseas Singaporean' was first coined in a government policy document in 1999.

> "The Singaporean of the 21st century is a cosmopolitan Singaporean, one who is familiar with global trends and lifestyles and feels comfortable working and living in Singapore as well as overseas… They must be encouraged to explore foreign languages, literature, geography, history and cultures throughout their school years, so that they will grow up 'world ready', able to plug-and-play with confidence in the global economy" (Singapore 21 Committee 1999, p. 45).

Not only has migration become a more socially accepted option, the younger, highly skilled population tend to consider traditional destination countries in order to replicate their parents' standard of living (Verweij and Pelizzo 2009). In a 2012 poll of 2,000 Singaporeans, more than half (56 percent) of respondents indicated that they would migrate if given the opportunity (Hooi 2012). A separate study demonstrated that economic and social reasons were the main considerations for migration for Singaporeans under 35 years (Verweij and Pelizzo 2009).

Populist Singaporeans have attributed this to the government's migration policy, which has given rise to the rising cost of living, increased job competition and suppressed wages (Lowe 2018). These factors go on to propagate the existing view of 'being treated as a second-class citizen in my own home' (Lim 2014, p. 33), where younger Singaporeans and the middle class have felt that their lifestyle have since become far less attainable with the intake and retention of highly skilled foreign talents. More specifically, long working hours and low wages as a result of Singapore's aggressive foreign talent policy, and housing policies that prevented unmarried singles under 35 years from entering the public housing market, where approximately 80 percent of the population reside, have contributed to growing dissatisfaction with Singapore's economic and social conditions (Verweij and Pelizzo 2009).

2.6.3 Current diaspora strategies

There has been a pendulum swing in attitudes towards Singaporeans residing abroad, as the government established the Overseas Singaporean Unit (OSU) in 2006 to initiate and maintain connections with Singaporeans residing overseas. This gave rise to an official discourse to engage with overseas Singaporeans, and provided a platform that created a carefully crafted public image of the Overseas Singaporean, reminiscent of the citizenship ideals articulated in the 1999 report (Naruse 2016). Current attitudes toward overseas Singaporeans have shifted towards being more positive, a shift from times past where questions were placed on the loyalty of Singaporeans who have migrated.

Although Singapore achieved first world status in 1995, and had a history of playing host to a number of expatriate populations, it was only around 15 years ago that the rhetoric towards Singaporeans residing abroad shifted to place more emphasis on attracting and retaining foreign talent to Singapore, which was required to sustain the country's economic capabilities. The government's decision to utilise a pragmatic approach to replace its migrant population was a reflection of Lee's original sentiments in 1987. Rather than focussing on the 'brain drain', Singapore shifted its focus towards recruiting foreign talents and foreign workers to make up for the decline in productivity for specific industries. As Singaporeans continued to migrate elsewhere, many residing overseas on a permanent basis, foreign talents were given opportunities for permanent residency, and citizenship.

The changing patterns of mobility in recent years has meant that diaspora strategising has emerged as a new field of public policy, especially in countries with high levels of migration, in the hope that sustained interactions with diaspora populations can help to facilitate national development (Newland 2010; De Haas 2012; Gamlen 2014b, 2019). In contrast to emerging Asian economies such as China and India that have leveraged on diaspora networks to advance their developmental status through remittances, the Singapore government have brought in a range of efforts to keep in touch with the overseas Singaporean population and communities. Under the purview of the Prime Minister's Office, the OSU was set up in 2006 to promote a collective 'soft power' approach to diaspora engagement (Ho and Boyle 2015, p. 172). To date, the OSU has employed five government representatives distributed across five cities: New York, San Francisco, London, Shanghai and Melbourne, to maintain networks with overseas

communities. Activities include the organising of regular 1) professional networking events and 2) a 'Singapore Day' event to commemorate the cultural and social ties unique to Singaporeans (Overseas Singaporean Unit 2017). Although the objectives of such engagement are far more implicit as compared to economic indicators for development, Phelps (2009) has suggested that strengthening the links between the local economy and extraterritoriality may help to facilitate innovations in the fields of science and technology.

As diaspora-led development has grown to dominate the views of policymakers, state-led diasporic interactions have sidelined the activities of independent stakeholders and other non-governmental organisations (Ho and Boyle 2015). In addition, the lack of firm theoretical bases to diaspora-centred development has resulted in an inconsistent, and opportunistic approach to diaspora management. Some welcome the state's initiatives as a way to stay connected to their homeland, while others hold a more sceptical view of the state using its resources to influence and manage the lives of overseas Singaporeans (Ho 2009).

The perceived centralisation of diaspora policy is one reason that has been attributed to the lack of reciprocity of overseas Singaporeans toward engagement efforts, which has in turn, restricted interactions and international cooperation (Ho 2009; Ho and Boyle 2015). Moreover, there appears to be a lack of clarity among overseas Singaporeans on what the OSU actually does. This may be exacerbated by structural issues, as the number of government representatives employed in each city is limited, and not proportionate to the size of Singaporeans residing abroad. The largest overseas Singaporean population resides in Australia (24 percent), with one government representative employed to manage this population. On the other hand, the United States is home to 14 percent of the overseas Singaporean population, yet has two government representatives based in different cities. Moreover, it is difficult to predict how many of those currently living and working abroad will decide not to return (Jones 2012).

Although the events coordinated by the OSU is free-of-charge and accessible to all Singaporeans abroad, there are questions as to whether such initiatives to stimulate a sense of community and national identity amongst overseas Singaporeans actually encourage connectivity to Singapore (Ho and Boyle 2015). Since then, the Singapore government has recognised that there is a need to engage overseas Singaporeans beyond knowledge

mobilisation. Going beyond transient professionals as a key member of the globally mobile knowledge community, the Institute of Policy Studies launched a study in May 2017 that sought to understand Singaporeans living abroad, their concerns while doing so, and the current levels of engagement with Singapore and Singaporeans (Institute of Policy Studies 2017). Hence, the call for response from overseas Singaporeans who have migrated for personal, rather than professional reasons, may signal a shift in the economic-driven approach to diaspora engagement.

2.6.4 Dual citizenship

Citizenship has always been a contested concept, as reflected in the numerous developments and debates that occur both on the global and national levels. Where citizenship had been described as 'an international filing system, a mechanism for allocating persons to states' (Brubaker 1992, p. 31), dual citizenship by definition 'breaks with the segmentary logic of the classic nation-state' (Joppke 2003, p. 441), where individuals should only belong to one state at a time. The concept of citizenship rests on two principles: equality sought after by members of society, and a normative understanding of who are appropriate members of society (Brandt and Layton-Henry 2001). In a context where there is a growing number of migrants living transnational lives, such developments arising from globalisation threaten the notion that the state, nation, territory and polity are all parts of one cohesive entity. Migrants today maintain ties to various places and create new patterns of belonging (Wolf 2001), and the case of Singaporeans in Australia is no exception.

Global developments in dual citizenship legislation have implied that there are significant changes to the way that citizenship is conceptualised. Results have shown that dual citizenship has become increasingly accepted in many countries, particularly in the last 20 years. It appears that countries in certain regions are more likely to allow dual citizenship over others, and the percentage of countries that allow dual citizenship in Asia is very low compared to other continents (Sejersen 2008). The Singapore government has remained steadfast in not allowing dual citizenship, in spite of the sustained increase of the number of Singaporeans living overseas, and the number of migrants residing in Singapore. Many have had to renounce their Singaporean citizenship to take up citizenship in their country of destination, or remain as permanent residents despite having lived there for many decades. Children born to the

Singaporean diaspora may still consider Singapore their natal country but are not allowed to participate in citizenship activities. Therefore, Ho (2011) has suggested that the exclusion approach used in regulating diasporas, including the strict definitions placed on types of engagement with Singaporeans residing overseas, may have exacerbated existing scepticism towards the Singapore government.

On the other hand, Australia legalised dual citizenship in 2002, ensuring that those who have left Australia could still maintain formal ties to their home country. Prior to that, dual citizenship in Australia was allowed under certain conditions. With the exception of Australia's political leaders, the majority of Australians in recent years have benefitted from calling two countries home. Given that both Australian and Singapore citizenship laws focus on *jus sanguinis* traditions, with Australia modifying its citizenship laws from *jus soli* in August 20, 1986, and Singapore adapting from *jus soli* in its Constitution to citizenship by registration, the two countries have similar practices as citizenship is acquired mainly through their parents or ancestors (Martin 2002). Where both countries have tighter citizenship legislations, Australia's increased permissiveness toward dual citizenship is a result of increased international trade, migration trends, globalisation and diversification of communication channels, international commerce and the increased incidence of cross-national marriages to enable naturalisation of spouses and children in *jus sanguinis* traditions (Martin 2002).

Thus, globalisation and its processes have affected both the incidences and practical nature of dual citizenship. For Peter Schuck (2002, p. 65), 'modern transportation and communication technology have made residence and effective participation in two policies easier than ever, converting many 'technical' dual nationals into functional ones'. The prohibition of dual citizenship in Singapore is a contentious issue as many have had to renounce their Singapore citizenship despite still having strong emotional and familial ties to their country of birth. The long-term settlement of migrants from Singapore's foreign talent policy is also prevented because migrants may not want to give up their citizenship from their country of birth to become naturalised Singapore citizens. Similar to the fears expressed by the Singapore government toward emigration, the main concern on dual citizenship is to do with the allegiance of dual citizens during times of national crisis, after having benefitted from Singapore's economic growth and prosperity (Wong and Waterworth 2004). Paulo (2018) argued that the Singapore government may be open to the possibility of dual citizenship in the

future, but have not yet seen the local and global demand to justify the need for constitutional change.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that the bilateral relations between Australia and Singapore are ongoing and comprehensive. Both countries collaborate on a number of economic, social, environmental and political aspects, and this has led to the exchange of ideas, skills and labour between the two countries. Throughout history, changes to migration policy in Australia, including the abolishment of the White Australia Policy, has facilitated the increase in Singaporean migration to Australia. Moreover, the introduction of temporary migration policies in 1996 signalled the start of an increase in long and short-term arrivals from Singapore. Indeed, arrival and departure data to Australia and to Singapore reveal the policy changes that have defined contemporary migration between the two countries.

Australia remains the most popular destination for Singaporeans residing overseas, with almost one-quarter of all overseas Singaporeans residing in Australia. Up to half of all Singaporeans in Australia have migrated in the last 20 years, and such movements have occurred despite mixed political and public opinions in Singapore. As a result of the White Australia Policy, Singaporean Eurasians were the first ethnic group to migrate to Australia, and multicultural policies following the abolishment of the White Australia Policy soon facilitated the migration of Singaporeans from diverse backgrounds, including Singaporean Chinese, Malay and Indian migration to Australia. Hence, the different ethnicities of Singaporeans residing in Australia reflects Australia's multicultural policies, although Singaporean Chinese migrants form the majority of Singaporeans in Australia.

More recently, Singapore's decision to regulate its overseas population is consistent with global movements and the international community's mission for diaspora strategising as a new form of public policy. Some countries, including Australia, have argued that granting dual citizenship can help to maintain diaspora populations and transnational communities. However, Singapore faces the dilemma of not allowing dual citizenship, yet the government faces a strong mandate to maintain and coordinate transnational networks with Singaporeans all over the world. Given that the largest overseas Singaporean population resides in Australia, the concept

of a diaspora identity and the maintenance of diaspora networks may be understood in the study of Singaporeans in Australia.

CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF MIGRATION LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theories relating to traditional and neoclassical approaches to migration. Throughout history, the extent of labour migration has continued to increase in both scale and magnitude, but in a way that has deviated from the traditional neoclassical approach. A number of theories have arisen in response to the trends on contemporary forms of migration, some of which are examined in detail. By identifying the propositions, assumptions, and hypothesis derived from each perspective, the discussion begins with a focus on the causes, rather than the consequences, of international migration. The determinants of migration, according to industrial-era theories, provide a starting point for analysis which are then reviewed in reference to the social and economic realities of contemporary migration. The policies by which migrants adapt to and are incorporated within receiving societies is dependent on the effectiveness and efficacy of each policy as well as to labour supply and demand. Therefore, the reasons for migration for Singaporeans in Australia, socio-economic outcomes, and migrants' linkages in Australia and in Singapore, is best evaluated using a combination of frameworks that addresses this context.

3.2 The modern history of migration

Like many birds, but unlike most other animals, humans are a migratory species. The initial spread of human beings to all corners of the earth from sub-Saharan Africa is evidence of this (Davis 1974). Examination of movement in other historical eras further indicate the propensity for both men and women to engage in geographical mobility, and although the drivers of movement can differ, movement is almost always directed by some level of material improvement (Ravenstein 1885; Turner 1961; Grigg 1997; Bakewell 2012). Human migration is rooted in specific historical conditions that define a particular social and economic context. According to Massey *et al*. (1998), the modern history of international migration can be roughly divided into four periods — the mercantile period from 1500–1800, the industrial

period from 1800–1925, the post-industrial migration from the 1960s, and from the end of the millennium until present day is known as the period of contemporary migration.

Massey *et al*. (1998) argue that the industrial period was where a number of ahistorical and historically-specific theories were developed. Although ahistorical frameworks offered universal explanations, immutable laws and timeless regularities were not helpful in understanding new forms of movement, while historically-specific explanations were frequently criticised for being ad hoc and unsystematic (Massey *et al*. 1998). A number of these industrial-era theories have resulted in conceptual frameworks that lasted for decades and evidenced across subsequent periods (Gemery and Horn 1992; Hatton and Williamson 1994; Massey *et al*. 1998; Altman 1995). However, the new social and economic realities that have emerged from the post-industrial and post-Cold War periods have meant that such theories have since grown rigid. They appear to be ill-suited to the current century where migration has played a central role in the everyday lives of individuals in sending and receiving countries (Castles and Miller 1993). Therefore, Massey *et al*. (1998, pp. 3–4) proposed that

> "Understanding the causes of global migration is of paramount importance, for whatever concepts and theories we derive will determine predictions about the magnitude, duration, and character of international migration in the next century, and hence, the policies that will ultimately be adopted to meet this unique global challenge."

Although contemporary migration is distinct from other forms of migration, some of its attributes have previously featured in other periods during the modern history of international migration. Throughout the industrial period, modern migration was dominated by European crossings, as drivers include initial stages of economic development accompanied by a demographic boom, exacerbated by extensive settlements in Europe's countryside and overcrowding in urban centres (Thomas 1973; Hatton and Williamson 1994). However, the restructuring of local economies impacted labour movements, which is evidenced by the shift in labour migrants on two levels: that direction of labour from the Middle East and North Africa to Europe occurred towards a capital-intensive region, and that individuals undertaking the labour migration journeys were no longer of European descent. Such movements were in stark contrast to traditional receiving countries — including the United States of America, Canada, Australia and Argentina — where labour movements involved Europeans in search of regions uninhabited and intensive in land throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hence,

the shift from exporting to importing labour demonstrated, for the first time, the widespread movement of migrants to countries that were not intensive in land (Rose 1969). The key factor that differentiates contemporary migration from previous eras is the proliferation of technology, facilitating air travel as the primary mode of transportation. Unlike previous eras, technological advancements, cheap fares and competitive airlines and the rise of globalisation have impacted the scale and direction of migration.

3.3 Limitations to the neoclassical approach

Much of the theoretical approach to migration, specifically labour migration, is centred on neoclassical economics, but it is widely regarded among many social scientists that such theories have not adequately come to terms with the complexities of the current reality. Where explanations to migration are built on standard economic models, the post-industrial world include movements that do not necessarily abide by rational principles. Massey *et al*. (1998, p. 10) claimed that

> "Economic disparities may be a precondition for international movement, wage and employment differentials are not necessarily the most important determinants of the propensity to leave home for a destination abroad."

Although there is evidence to show that a less developed country has a higher rate of migration than its more developed counterparts, migrants do not always go to countries where wages are highest; migration is related to differentials in wages and employment but can also occur in the absence of wage disparities (Massey *et al*. 1998). Consequently, there are other problems that arise as a result of using the neoclassical economic perspective to analyse migration as movements that are not economic in nature cannot be accounted for. An economic approach holds the assumption that migrants have a homogenous view towards the risks involved in the migration journey such that the movements that arise are always a result of net wage differentials (Massey *et al*. 1998).

When economic differences were long-standing, such explanations would have accounted for the majority of migration movements. However, the rise in temporary movements which then led to permanent settlement in the second half of the twentieth century were evidenced in the post-industrial era. These transformations in migration patterns spanned across the globe: starting from foreign guestworkers in Europe (Rose 1969; Castles and Miller 1993), followed

by labour recruitment from capital-poor States in the Middle East and in Asia to Gulf countries (Birks and Sinclair 1980), and finally, the rise of the Asian Tigers in the 1980s led to labour imports from neighbouring countries (Hugo 1995). Such transformations also affected migratory patterns in traditional migrant receiving-nations from the mid-1960s. The number of migrants increased sharply, from countries of origin that were no longer solely in Europe, but included a large proportion from Asia and Latin America (Massey 1981, 1995). Although the face of migrants was changing, it was observed that migrants still generally came from labour-rich yet capital-poor countries broadly referred to as the Third World. However, these countries were no longer restricted to Europe and its neighbouring countries as was the case during the industrialisation era. Similar to current conditions in developing countries, labour availability was attributed to a demographic boom (Schaeffer 1993; Straubhaar 1993), but Piore (1979) argues that the demand for foreign labour should stem from the segmented structure of advanced industrial economies rather than from demographic conditions *per se*.

Alongside the changing face of migration there were economic reforms at destination, resulting in high rates of unemployment even within the non-migrant population in receiving societies. In countries where a welfare system is inadequate, such as the United States, this has given rise to a growing class of working poor. Hence, migrants in the post-industrial period are no longer perceived as wanted or even needed, despite a persistent demand for their services (Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; Espenshade and Hemstead 1996). Where international migrants previously comprised a basic input for core sectors of the economy, countries have structured their economies to allow migrants to fill specific niches within a segmented labour market. In Singapore for example, the domestic and construction industries have been dominated by migrant workers from the Philippines and Bangladesh. More recently, there has been a push towards limiting the number of migrants to control what is increasingly perceived to be a social and political problem by both political leaders and citizens alike (Huang *et al*. 2005; Wee *et al*. 2018).

From the developed countries perspective, the obsession with adopting more restrictive *de jure* policies has to do with migrant populations as opposed to the actual size of flows (Massey 1995). These fears are exacerbated by broader political and social conflicts between sending and receiving countries. For international migration to be driven solely by economic disparities, the wage differentials need to have been quite large for migration to occur (Lewis 1954).

Moreover, contemporary patterns and processes suggest that the drivers of international migration are far more complex than a simple evaluation of economic and demographic disparities (Hugo 1995, Massey 1995). Although the advancements in global transportation and communication have facilitated the increase in the number of international migrants, this has not happened too dramatically as the incentive to move requires a perceived net gain in income. Therefore, the actual movements of migrants in the contemporary era have differed from the predictions in neoclassical economic models. By definition and given existing wage differentials, far more people should have engaged in North-South migration until an equilibrium wage was produced, especially given increased access to international transport (Massey *et al*. 1998). Hence, despite evidence of a strong link between migration and development, economic disparities may constitute a necessary but not the only condition of migration. As such, Massey *et al*. (1998, p. 10) suggested that migration models should not be completely centred on the economic drivers of migration.

> "Migrants may be motivated not simply by a desire for gain, but by an aversion to risk, a desire to be comfortable, or simply an interest in building better lives at home… a propensity to stay at home that is overcome only during certain exceptional periods when unusual circumstances coincide to alter the socio-economic context for decision-making in ways that make migration appear to be a good and reasonable investment of time and resources."

Zelinsky (1971) in his mobility transition theory attempts to integrate demographic interrelations into migration patterns. Based on a combination of demographic, geographic, and historic observations, population geographers have attempted to use demographic data to illustrate the impacts of migration on economic development and social change in both destination and origin countries (Skeldon 1997; Jones 2005; Hugo 2006). The demographic transition has been identified as a key dimension in the 'migration hump' theory (Rogers and Willekens 1976; Martin 1994). The three aspects of fertility, mortality and generational experiences come together in the 'demographic transition', where 'societies move from having a combination of high mortality and high fertility to the opposite condition, with longer life expectancy and low fertility' (Rogers and Willekens 1976; Goldstone 2012). The sudden increase in population growth can retard the rate of out-migration, as the expansion of the young working population in origin countries can lead to the reduction in earnings potential of fellow young workers considering migration (Zelinsky 1971; Lucas 2005). Hence, a migration hump may reflect an underlying demographic hump — the result of population growth

proportional to the rise in income — leading to a demographic transition (Zelinsky 1971; Lucas 2005). In the later stages of migration, the influence of technology on mobility is evident (Zelinsky 1971). More recently, in the context of the permanent/circular polarisation, it has been observed that 'rather than linear and inversely proportional', the relationship between economic development and net migration is 'J-or inverted U-curve like' (de Haas 2010).

Massey *et al*. (1998) argue that demographic changes in sending countries that result in international migration have less to do with the resulting disparity relative to the demographic conditions at destination. Rather, the impacts of such changes on sending regions and communities. For example, there is a known relationship between economic growth in developing countries and high fertility that results in rapid population growth, but the subsequent pressure placed on social infrastructure like schools, roads, hospitals and affordable housing may present a challenge to adequately provide for the needs of consumers. Massey *et al*. (1998, p. 11) explained that

> "Generally, they channel state resources away from productive investment into current consumption, driving up public expenditures and contributing to state deficits and foreign debt. The latter outcomes may further exacerbate migratory pressure by leading public officials to adopt policies of structural adjustment that, in the short run, aggravate unemployment, consumer scarcity, and housing shortages to yield social tensions, impelling people to search for relief through international migration."

There is no specific framework that connects the empirical evidence of demographic attributes to a coherent migration theory (Hatton and Williamson 1994). Zelinsky's model describes the limitations of distance in the initial phase of international migration; over time, communication systems would absorb potential circulation in the later phases of the mobility transition. Technological advancements have meant that the barriers of space and information were much bigger determinants in the past than they are today, where the cost of communication and time taken for travel has been greatly reduced. Zelinsky's view that migratory fields expand in concentric circles away from a point of labour supply, as well as his axiomatic acceptance of spatial diffusion as fundamental to the spread of migration, helped to link demographic factors to international migration in the industrial era (Zelinsky 1971). In comparison, migration patterns in the post-industrial and contemporary era have not only been influenced by technological advancements, they have also been affected by legal, political and policy dimensions that facilitate or inhibit migratory flows. Therefore, present-day migration is far

more complex than the neoclassical principles utilised in the past, and can be said to be far more entrenched in national and transnational political structures which collectively underpin international movement.

The 'push-pull' framework has been traditionally discussed as one of the neoclassical approaches to migration. This framework classifies migration and orders its determinants in space using an exclusively economic approach. This microeconomic approach has often been seen as complementary to the idea of rational expectations in neoclassical frameworks, and the most notable application of this framework is that of Thomas (1973) analysis of the great transatlantic migration in the industrial era. He discovered that oscillations in the British economic cycle had coincided with several successive waves of migration on American shores; periods of push in Britain coincided with periods of pull in the USA, while periods of pull in Britain coincided with times of push in America (Thomas 1973). Similar to neoclassical principles, the push-pull framework harbours an expectation that a certain equilibrium can be achieved between economic growth and the movement of migrants to specific geographic locations. Changes in the sequence and predominance of forces over time has led to the disruption of equilibrium (Thomas 1941, 1973). Massey *et al*. (1998) demonstrate that the new forms of migration that have emerged in the post-industrial era, including undocumented migration and the movement of refugees, have continued to increase even as migration policies in traditional destination countries become more restrictive.

Contemporary migration journeys involve contexts that were not necessarily considered between the forces originally proposed within the push-pull framework. Not only are push factors now more predominant than pull factors, government policies have the tendency to intervene in order to control, encourage, and restrict the flow of movement across borders. The focus on skilled migration in response to globalisation is evidence of this. Despite this, national borders remain 'porous' to some degree, and non-skilled labour migrants that successfully undertake the migration journey through means other than admission policies end up as undocumented migrants, together with an additional minority that have migrated solely through humanitarian means. In the Australian context, few engage in clandestine border crossing and undocumented migrants struggle to obtain residency after breaching visa conditions. This is in conjunction with the relative isolation of Australia's island geography, as well as border surveillance systems that use advance technologies to control and manage international

visitors, temporary and permanent migrants, with New Zealand entries as the only exception (Hugo 2014a). Where migration in the industrial era was restricted by physical distance, the main barrier to migration in the late twentieth to twenty-first century is that of the state, which may be argued as the principal factor determining the size and character of international migrant flows.

Unlike economic frameworks used in the industrial and post-industrial era, the circumstances in the contemporary era suggest that successful migration involves more than mere aspirations of economic improvement, but the presence of a combination of traits — education, skills, wealth, family connections — so that individuals can overcome the barriers that have been put in place and to gain access to employment at destination.

3.4 New theoretical perspectives

Widespread dissatisfaction towards the neoclassical approach in explaining the ebbs and flows of international migration have given rise to a new series of theoretical perspectives. These include the new economics of labour migration, segmented labour market theory, world systems theory, social capital theory, and the theory of cumulative causation, all of which have attempted to move beyond the analysis of disparities alone to address other underlying assumptions (Massey *et al.* 1998). The assumption that migrants respond rationally to wage and employment differentials and that the motivation to migrate is homogeneous, are critiqued because the scale and direction of movements in international migration in reality do not follow closely to predicted trends and patterns. Given that the contexts of sending countries are far more varied now than ever before, the new series of perspectives may address the gaps that have arisen as a result of the assumptions found in the neoclassical approach and in push-pull frameworks. Consequently, the following sections aim to unpack each perspective in reference to relevant empirical studies, highlighting the similarities and differences between contemporary migration and its historical counterparts.

3.4.1 The new economics of labour migration

In contrast to neoclassical economics which focusses primarily on wage and employment differentials between countries, the new economics of migration considers conditions on a

broader spectrum of markets, not just labour markets (Taylor 1987). Migration is viewed as a household or community decision as opposed to the assumption in neoclassical theory where individual actors make migration decisions in isolation. The goal with this approach is that people act collectively to control risks and maximise expected income by spreading out their labour over time and in different markets (Stark and Levhari 1982; Taylor 1986, 1987). This may involve seasonal internal or international migration to geographically discrete labour markets, participating in the local economy far from the home community. Thus, Stark and Levhari (1982) explain that economic conditions in these labour markets tend to parallel home communities, so that households can rely on migrant remittances for capital accumulation. In the absence of institutional mechanisms like private insurance used to mitigate risks in the developed world, families in developing countries have to look for alternate ways to loosen constraints associated with market failures, or to finance new projects related to production or household concerns (Taylor 1987). Massey *et al*. (1998) explain that crop insurance markets, unemployment or retirement insurance, the lack of futures, capital and credit markets and relative deprivation are some examples of various market failures leading to international migration as a household strategy.

The main similarity across these market failures is the lack of formal insurance arrangements that are present to account for crop losses — both objective and subjective risks ensure the economic well-being of the family (Taylor 1986, 1987). Such risks include human or natural events that may reduce or eliminate the harvest, which would affect the pay off at a future date. This may include retirement or unemployment which developing markets do not account for; the retired or unemployed are left to work out how to provide for themselves at this stage. Unemployment may be caused by the onset of illness or disability, but there are no government programs to address this problem (Taylor 1986, 1987). In such circumstances, international migration becomes a viable option to reduce the risk to the family's wages and guarantees a reliable stream of income, in the form of remittances, to support the family (Stark and Levhari 1982; Harker *et al*. 1990; Terry and Wilson 2005; Yang 2011).

Migration also acts as a viable alternative for farming families that wish to increase the productivity of their assets, increase consumer credit and insure against crop price fluctuations (Massey *et al*. 1998). In addition to market failures that result from human events, the absence

of structural mechanisms in many developing markets is a key limitation when it comes to addressing market failures. These include managing the risks involved in future crop prices, where the absence of investors in futures markets means that individual households are directly susceptible to price risk; even if such market mechanisms were in place, only a limited number of households would have access to futures markets (Massey 1995; Massey *et al*. 1998). As such, migration acts as a form of insurance to help reduce the vulnerability of farm families to crop price fluctuations. In a similar vein, where there is limited access for individual households to capital markets, migration also becomes an attractive alternative to accumulate savings or to transfer capital back in the form of remittances. This capital is essential for households that wish to increase consumer credit, including credit required to address a household emergency, or means of acquiring new taste in material goods, or in financing ownership of a new home (Stark and Levhari 1982; Taylor 1986, 1987).

3.4.2 Segmented labour market theory

The underlying assumption underpinning both neoclassical theory and the new economics of migration is the permanent demand for migrant labour in developed economies. According to Piore (1979), migration is not caused by push factors in sending countries, rather, it is caused by pull factors in receiving countries. This chronic need for foreign workers can be attributed to the four fundamental characteristics of advanced industrial societies and their economies: structural inflation, hierarchical constraints on motivation, economic dualism and the demography of labour supply (Piore 1979; Loveridge and Mok 1979). Structural inflation relates to the correlation between occupational status and wages — wages go on to reflect social status, and the increase in wages can threaten existing social hierarchy. In times of labour scarcity, increasing entry wages would require an increase in wages through the job hierarchy to maintain socially defined relationships (Darity 1993). However, this increase is not only expensive but also disruptive, hence employers in receiving countries are better off seeking easier and cheaper solutions in migrant workers who are more likely to accept low wages. Migrants who are hired in bottom level jobs are also less likely to consider social status or prestige in a job search, especially at the beginning of their migratory careers, and are more likely to see a job as a means to an end — income as remittances back home, which can include building or buying a new home, as well as paying for children's education, carrying honour

and prestige within migrants' home communities (Darity 1993). Within advanced industrial economies, the inherent duality between labour and capital means that migrants were also likely to be part of the labour-intensive secondary sector (Piore 1979; Loveridge and Mok 1979). In comparison to native workers, migrants are more likely to work in the capital-intensive primary sector, with low wages, unstable conditions and a lack of reasonable prospects. Necessary labour in the secondary sector has meant that employers turn to migrants to fill these positions, and where possible, maximise profits (Piore 1979).

There are specific demographic groups within receiving societies that are willing to labour under unpleasant conditions, at low wages and with great instability: women, teenagers, and rural-to-urban migrants (Ukwatta 2010a, 2010b). At the individual level, these sets of people possess similar social statuses and characteristics to that of migrants, but as societies continued to advance, these sources of entry-level workers continued to shrink over time as a result of changing sociodemographic trends, which resulted in the transformed meanings of work for women, the decline in birth rates, and the urbanisation of society (Ukwatta 2010a, 2010b, Hoang *et al*. 2015). All of these factors result in the imbalance between the structural demand for entry-level workers and the limited supply for such workers domestically, giving rise to an underlying, long-run demand for a supply of migrants in developed markets (Piore 1979; Loveridge and Mok 1979; Darity 1993). Therefore, changes in the demography of labour supply within domestic markets is closely related to the segmented labour market theory, but contrary to microeconomic models, this theory does not consider the individual decision-making process that migrants undertake when considering international movement. The segmented labour market theory does not directly conflict that of neoclassical principles and the push-pull model, rather, it considers additional aspects of international labour migration. As explained by Massey *et al*. (1998, pp. 33–34)

> "Developed societies, through the primary means of recruitment by employers, create a demand for migrant labour and in the process facilitate international labour migration… governments have little to do with job or labour creation, rather, these labour opportunities are structurally built into post-industrial economies… employers are incentivised to recruit workers to fill low-level jobs where wages are either constant or decreasing… this gives rise to ethnic enclaves in receiving societies to complement the social and institutional need for foreign workers in secondary sectors."

3.4.3 World systems theory

Drawing on the work of dependency theorists, world systems theory uses the perspective of historical-structural theory of unequal political and economic structures that have been created and extended throughout the world (Braduel 1981, 1982; Wallerstein 1974, 1980; Hopkins and Wallerstein 1982). Dependency is classified as follows: 'core' countries as dominant capitalist powers, 'peripheral' nations as the most dependent, 'semi-peripheral' countries as slightly wealthier and with relatively more independence in the global market place, and 'external arena' as nations isolated from the global capitalist system (Simmons 1989). The vision of an expanding global capitalism became known as the 'world systems theory', with little to no relevance in international migration in the first instance, and more to do with internal migration, in particular, rural-to-urban migration (Simmons 1989). The initial proponents of world systems theory sought to link rural-to-urban migration to specific historical contexts and economic transformations, and it was only after several economic recessions in the mid-1970s that international migration researchers started to look into the relationship between structural changes and the global marketplace (Massey *et al.* 1998). The 'brain drain' was an initial concept generated from these changes, referring to the selective migration of talented and educated people from peripheral nations to core countries, depriving poor countries of human capital and further exacerbating the inequality between developed and developing countries.

Hopkins and Wallerstein (1982) argue that where control over land, raw materials and labour was previously dominated by colonial regimes, power is now controlled and perpetuated by neo-colonial governments and multinational firms. Owners and managers of capitalist firms, often based in core countries, are driven by a desire for higher profits and greater wealth, go into periphery and semi-periphery nations in search of consumer markets (Simmons 1989). Thus, international migration emerges as a natural outgrowth of disruptions and dislocations that occurs in the process of capitalist development. This was first evident in Western Europe and in New Zealand in the mid-1970s, where a number of migratory 'guests' began to establish roots in developed nations (Massey 1995; Bedford 2002; Spoonley *et al*. 2003). The core of capitalism was subsequently perpetuated by core markets in North America, Oceania and Japan, so portions of the globe and population have gradually become under the influence and control of global markets (Bedford 2002; Spoonley *et a*l. 2003). Hence, international migration

was no longer viewed as an individual or household decision, but as an inherent consequence of the global political hierarchy. With local communities and even national bureaucracies under the control of global markets, migration flows are inevitably generated, not just within a country or society in rural-urban and internal migration, but also flows that indicate individuals moving abroad (Massey *et al*. 1998).

Therefore, the world systems theory argues that international migration ultimately has little to do with wage or employment differentials, rather, it argues that the political structure of the global economy is the most dominant feature in population ebbs and flows (Simmons 1989). The process of economic globalisation stemmed from cultural and ideological links between core capitalist countries and their peripheries, which have been reinforced from historical links between past colonial powers and their former colonies (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1982). The longstanding colonial past is evident when similarities in administrative, educational and communication systems are observed, facilitating an environment conducive to the formation of specific transnational markets and cultural systems. Given that international migration stems from the globalisation of the market economy, the only way that governments can influence migration rates is by regulating the overseas investment activities of corporations, as well as controlling international flows of capital and goods (Massey *et al*. 1998). However, not only is it difficult to enforce both in the short and long term, protecting investments abroad could lead to global market failure, producing refugee movements directed to core countries, giving rise to an additional wave of international migration.

Therefore, international movement in the industrial and post-industrial era has been perpetuated by a combination of the above, but in the course of migration, new conditions begin to function as independent causes themselves (Massey *et al*. 1998). The new economics of labour migration, segmented labour market theory and world systems theory were models to understand how migration in the post-industrial era came about in the first place. Recruitment and profit maximisation strategy by global capitalist firms, rise and maintenance of protectionism, incidental displacement of workers are a result of market failure. The perpetuation of this movement is theorised by social capital theory and the theory of cumulative causation. These include the spread of migration networks, the rise of private and public institutions supporting transnational movement, and changes in the social meaning of work

have made additional movement across international borders more likely. Arango (2000) argues that although such transience may be observed across time and space, this only serves as a partial explanation to the contemporary situation.

3.4.4 Social capital theory

The concept of social capital was introduced by the economist Glenn Loury to recognise often intangible family and community resources that help promote social development among young people (Loury 1977). Bourdieu (1986) subsequently pointed out its relevance to human society more broadly; social capital can be converted and translated to other forms of capital, including financial capital. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 119) explained that

> 'Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance.'

Social capital is more broadly used to explain how other forms of financial capital may be identified and attained, as well as to explain international migration from the perspective of foreign wages and remittances (Harker *et al*. 1990). Migrant networks are essential for households that consider international migration as a strategy for risk diversification, making jobs at destination accessible to their communities. Such networks increase the likelihood of international movement, accounting for the progressive reduction of costs and simultaneously, the progressive reduction of risks (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992)

The presence of a migrant community has also given rise to a number of private and public institutions, voluntary and for-profit organisations, and private entrepreneurs providing a range of services to facilitate the increasing demand of people who seek entry into capital-rich countries. Due to the limited number of migrant visas, it is not uncommon for migration to involve a plethora of illegal processes: smuggling across borders, arranged marriages between migrants and legal residents or citizens at the destination (Prothero 1990). Hence, social capital theory recognises the presence of individuals, firms and organisations that can facilitate or create new flows of migration from areas of labour surplus to areas of labour scarcity (Harker *et al*. 1990). The general consensus of social capital theory is that the rise of migrant networks and other institutions have meant that migration flows are self-sustaining and can occur beyond the control of governments and migration policies (Loury 1977; Bourdieu 1986). In addition,

a number of humanitarian groups have also emerged to provide services and other relevant support. Given constant reductions in the costs and risks to migrate, variables such as wage differentials and employment rates that have previously been viewed as promoting or inhibiting migration are no longer relevant when migration becomes a self-sustaining diffusion process. This leads to consequences that vastly differ from the equilibrium analysis used to understand migration in the past. Consequently, migration only begins to decelerate when network connections have diffused widely in the sending region such that all who wish to migrate can do so without difficulty (Massey 1995; Massey *et al*. 1998).

3.4.5 The theory of cumulative causation

The theory of cumulative causation argues that there are a number of ways that international migration sustains itself. Causation is cumulative in the sense that each act of migration alters the social context and influences subsequent migration decisions in ways that make additional movements more likely (Myrdal 1957; Massey 1990). The expansion of migrant networks redistributes household income, which in turn reduces the distribution of land and labour required in farm production. It also produces a culture of migration — once someone has migrated, there is the likelihood of migrating again, the odds of taking an additional trip rise with the number of trips already taken (Massey 1986). From the community perspective, migration is seen as a rite of passage for the brightest and most innovative young men and women (Reichert 1982). The brain drain debate identifies that migration as a process is seen to be highly selective and the initial passage of migration tends to draw relatively well-educated, skilled, productive and highly motivated people away from sending communities (Taylor 1987). However, in any finite population, there is an end point to the processes of cumulative causation, where saturation is reached (Massey *et al*. 1993). When this occurs, it is possible that the stock of potential new migrants will be composed of women, children and the elderly. Nevertheless, subsequent migratory experiences are very much dependent on the level of diffusion across communities, with evidence of the characteristic ‘migration curve’ in national populations that have made the transition from emigration to immigration (Hatton and Williamson 1994; Martin and Taylor 1996).

3.5 Transnational theory

The consensus among migration researchers is that transnational theory is best used to inform the understanding of the contemporary migration process. Migrants identify with and commit to more than one nation-state, and this has impacts on origin and destination communities (Glick Schiller *et al*. 1995). The subsequent developments among migration researchers and public policy practitioners has focussed on the linkages maintained by migrants between origin and destination rather than just at destination to understand the current picture of international migration (Faist 2000; Levitt and Schiller 2004). The shift in global migration patterns from simple, linear new-settlement arrangements toward more complex movements have resulted in the formation of transnational communities; temporary, multidirectional and circular movements characterise this population (Anderson 1983; GCIM 2005; Faist 2000; Faist *et al*. 2013).

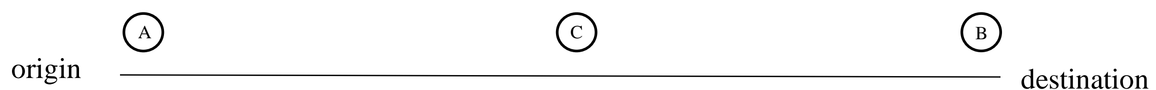
Accelerating social, economic and technological change have blurred the fundamental linkages that distinguish temporary and permanent migration (Hall and Williams 2002; Coles and Timothy 2004). Khoo *et al*. (2008) argue that the temporal dimension of international migration as well as the transition from one type of mobility to the other has been neglected both by migration theory and in empirical studies of population mobility. In Australia, the prioritisation of the skilled temporary migration program over the permanent migration program upon the introduction of the Temporary Business (Long Stay) visa in 1996 transformed dominant migration patterns to Australia, most of which were permanent movements at that point in time (Hugo 1999, 2011, 2014b; Khoo *et al*. 2007). As opposed to permanent migration which largely involves family migration, temporary migration has given rise to increased circulation where young, skilled migrants live and work at destination, demonstrating their expertise and political know-how for a temporary duration, before making the decision to stay on or to return to origin, and in some instances, move on to other destinations.

In the experience of post war Europe, the strategy of importing temporary guestworkers to cope with labour shortages led to substantial permanent communities. Other studies argue that circular migration may be a longstanding structural phenomenon as opposed to a precursor to permanent settlement (Hugo 2003; Castles *et al*. 2014). The transition from temporary migration to permanent residency is not fully captured by existing data systems, but is

increasing in policy significance (Charles-Edwards *et al*. 2008; Hugo 2015). One way that migration flows can be better understood is by identifying the commitment indicators relevant to specific migrant profiles. Assimilation models of settlement assume that migrants forsake their country and culture of origin and move quickly from origin to destination, but in reality, this is not common. Rather, most migrants retain a mix of commitments between origin and destination. Hugo (2015) argues that the concept of commitment is significant when considering the linkages underpinning permanent and circular mobility.

As indicated in Figure 3.1, the commitments of circular migrants are located closer to A (origin) whilst permanent migrants are closer to B (destination). C indicates the aggregate measure of linkages obtained that locates them along the commitment continuum. Thus, there is the need to go beyond 'narrative of departure, arrival and assimilation' to examine the linkages that give rise to temporary movement (Jackson 1990; Dwyer *et al*. 1993; Ley and Kobayashi 2005, p. 1120; Hugo 2006a; Goldstone *et al*. 2012).

Figure 3.1. The commitment continuum of migration



Source: Adapted from Hugo (2015).

3.6 Diaspora theory

The concept of diaspora has been a subject of contention in academic literature. Historically, some researchers have argued that the fuzziness surrounding 'diaspora' is no different from other concepts in political science, as the conceptual tools utilised to deconstruct an abstract notion should involve the use of evidence in high level, medium level and low-level categories (Butler 2001). Coming up with a definition on diaspora is a complex affair, as including a typology that accommodates for all contexts has led to confusion on the conceptual boundaries of diaspora — what it should include and exclude, the seemingly arbitrary definitions of typology which begs the question of who should decide what these criteria are in the first place (Butler 2001; Kenny 2013).

Tracing back to its origins, the word diaspora has Greek origins and is derived from the verb *diaspeirein*: a compound of ‘dia’, which means ‘over or through’ and ‘sperin’, ‘to scatter or sow’. In its original context, diaspora describes scattering and dispersal, and to the ancient Greeks this mainly signified the process of destruction in human communities. However Greek colonies within the empire retained close relations with their mother cities, victims of the diaspora were completely cut off from such connections (Kenny 2013). Hence, in the Greek sense, diaspora is referred to in distinctly negative and non-religious connotations, which is again differentiated from other forms of population movement, including the Jewish narrative, while biblical in nature, discusses themes such as displacement, exile and longing for a homeland. In view of this, some academics, especially historians, argue that usage of the term diaspora in the contemporary, non-theological era should still describe elements of human suffering, salvation, nationalism, race, or the politics of identity. However, Hugo (2006a) argues that the acceleration in international mobility has led to the term more broadly used to encompass expatriate populations who live outside their home countries. Therefore, using diaspora to understand contemporary migration involves describing the migration experience from an analytical framework that considers the broader historical and cultural context: migration as coercive, migrants making connections with kinsmen abroad, with the dream of returning to the homeland (Butler 2001). From a policy perspective, diasporas have been defined as ‘expatriate populations abroad and generations born abroad to foreign parents who are or may be citizens of their countries of residence’ (IOM 2005).

Contemporary diasporas are studied from many different perspectives, including the capacity to express dual homeness within imagined communities, challenging national cultures’ aspiration to sociocultural unity (Ben-Rafael 2013). Not every migration event to more than one destination leads to the creation of a diaspora, rather, the dispersal must then lead to the formation of internal links and networks brought about by the connection to an actual or imagined homeland (Butler 2001). Diasporic communities should also exhibit an underlying consciousness of an ethnonational group which binds them to each other (Butler 2001). It is important to note that the diasporan identity is constantly changing, and in some instances, multiple diasporan identities can constitute a single diaspora.

However, not all diasporas are transnational communities, rather, transnational communities, and its associated social spaces, arise from migrants' interactions with existing diaspora communities (Vertovec 2005). In some cases where diaspora communities are less established, often due to a shorter history of migration, individual migrants or households may step up to act as a go between, facilitating interactions and forming linkages between destination and origin. For different communities, the incentive to engage with other members of the diaspora is dependent on the context, both at destination and at origin. As such, the strength of linkages differs by material and symbolic attachments to origin, multiple identities, dual or multiple citizenships (Castles 2002).

3.7 Evaluation of migration theories in relation to this study

Following the earliest observations of Ravenstein (1885) and the systematic analysis by Thomas (1973), it has been established that mobility is a selective process. Migration influences not only the culture, society and economy of the communities' which people depart from or move to, but also shaping in multiple ways the lives of those who move (Hugo 2015). The search for universal laws of migration selectivity is no longer relevant, however empirical studies have confirmed that certain characteristics predispose individuals to be geographically mobile. Within the context of local migration, it has been observed that the likelihood to engage in mobility varies with age (Rogers and Castro 1981), but studies also point to a positive association between mobility and income, education and occupation, with further differences evident according to labour force status, marital status, and housing tenure (Shaw 1975; Bell 2002). In the context of Asian migration, some theoretical attention has also been given to understanding the role of religious networks on the decision to migrate, which go on to facilitate and maintain linkages between destination and origin, on both the individual and community levels (Schiller 1999). Given that the theories earlier presented address migration from the perspective of structural or individual agency, they highlight various dimensions of causal mechanisms that occur at each level of aggregation that give rise to international migration. Such explanations are not necessarily contradictory, rather the causal processes operate on multiple levels simultaneously, and the evaluation of individual theories demonstrate how they can work in tandem so as to bring about the data, methods and analysis elucidated in subsequent chapters.

In the case of international migration between Singapore and Australia, the neoclassical model suggesting that wage differentials give rise to movement between countries may offer broader explanations to specific human capital variables. This is despite subsequent refinements to the neoclassical model which suggests that the expected earnings gap is more significant than the absolute real-wage differentials; international flows that occur in the absence of a wage gap, or that decelerates or diminishes before the gap is eliminated represents anomalous conditions that challenge the assumptions of neoclassical economic theory (Todaro 1980; Greenwood 1985). At the individual level, the Todaro model goes on to explain that the likelihood of migration is related to human capital variables such as age, experience, schooling, marital status and skill, with some relationship to the households' capacity to generate income at origin, affecting the net return to movement. International migration involves a change of language, culture, economic and political systems, so the empirical issue is to do with whether there are greater rewards at home or abroad for the same standard of human capital, since migrant skills acquired at home are often imperfectly transferred abroad, and are usually negatively selected with respect to variables such as education and job experience. However, the pattern of negative selectivity is heavily dependent on individual skills and job experience, related to social, economic and historical conditions at origin. Social change lowers the market value of human capital at either society and has the potential of shifting the size and direction of the relationship between independent variables and the likelihood of international movement. Modelling the probability of migration as a structural function of the expected-income differential and the expected-income differential as a function of individual and household variables allows for the effects of individual background variables to be explicitly examined (Massey *et al*. 1998).

On the other hand, the new economics of migration focusses on the household rather than the individual as decision-makers on whether to engage in international migration as a response to income risks in the event of market failure. Unlike the neoclassical model, the new economics of migration places migration within a broader community context, so the model may be tested at the aggregate level. However, this theory is largely anchored on migrant households that diversify risks from agriculture-based livelihoods, so examining the underlying motivation to choose international migration for risk diversification or to overcome risk and credit constraints in local markets is less relevant in the context of Australia and Singapore as both countries

have access to reliable banking and financial services. Thus, individuals that engage in international migration are less likely motivated by overcoming household risk and credit constraints. The segmented labour market approach goes on to explain how international migrants from origin countries end up at the lower end of the economies of scale so as to maintain the economic organisation of advanced industrial societies, allowing for the reliable prediction of the patterns of international movement.

The argument that migration is driven by conditions of labour demand rather than supply is counter to the neoclassical principle, but is in line with the Australian migration system where occupations on the skilled occupation list is demand-based and regulated according to skill shortages in the Australian economy. Contrary to the segmented labour market approach, there are a number of occupations that facilitate a migration pathway to Australia, including jobs that would have been formerly open to native workers. Due to changes in wage rates and the meaning of work in receiving societies, Singaporeans in Australia may be employed in occupations alongside Australians. On the other hand, Australians who have been recruited to work in Singapore through formal recruitment mechanism are included in this study, sustaining a key prediction of segmented labour market theory.

World systems theory suggests that international flows of labour is directly related to the presence and disruptions of direct foreign investments, and the existence of ideological and material ties from former colonial rule helps to facilitate an environment that is suitable for foreign trade and investments. Thus, the influx of foreign capital is accompanied by outflows of migrants, and the historical partnership between Australia and Singapore has facilitated migration flows between the two countries.

Finally, the social capital theory and the transnational network theory addresses the social dimension of international migration through the concept of migrant networks. Controlling for a person's individual migrant journey, the propensity for international migration should increase for individuals who are related or connected to someone at destination. The likelihood of movement may increase if this is a close relationship, for instance, partner or kin, and also increase if the partner or kin relation has already migrated some years ago, as a longer length of time from the time of migration implies an increase in the quality of social capital. The effect of network ties can be measured on the community level — people are more likely to migrate

if there is already a large stock at destination. As the stock of social ties and migrant experience increases, migration becomes progressively less selective and spreads to the middle- and lower-income groups of society. Thus, the social capital theory values the presence of network connections within the community, and such networks are able to sustain itself such that migration leads to more migration (Massey *et al*. 1993; Massey 1990). However, systematic testing of this theory poses substantial data demands in order to accurately capture the feedback mechanism aspect of the changing context from one migration to the next. The emergence of transnational theory proposes a complementary approach to social capital theory, which may offer solutions to the empirical challenge posited by the theory of cumulative causation.

Despite the rapid increase in the number of Singaporean migrants in Australia and the population movements to various destination countries, it may be too early to tell if a Singaporean diaspora exists especially when the temporal-historical dimension is taken into consideration. Singaporeans in Australia may have linkages with each other, but it is currently unclear what the imagined community looks like. This question is explored in relation to the temporal-historical dimension that Butler (2001) argues is significant to the study of diasporas. After only 55 years of independence, Singapore's multiracial, multiethnic and multi-religious identity is a product of a transnational society, as such, the connection to homeland may be dependent on the migrant profiles of those residing overseas. Some may have migrated as a result of diaspora networks, as these networks may lead to lowered barriers in terms of costs and risks of movement (Taylor 1986). To understand diasporas, there is a need to understand whether a critical mass of Singaporeans currently reside in Australia.

At each stage of the demographic transition, from high fertility and mortality, to low fertility and mortality, population mobility changes depending on the level of development or the type of society (Zelinsky 1971; Goldstone 2012). Many types of mobility have attracted scholarly interest, but little attention has been given to scoping the overall dimensions of the migration phenomenon that is becoming increasingly dominated by circular and temporary forms of movement. Permanent migration is seen as a transition leading to a new steady state; indicators include key events in the life course such as leaving home, formation of a partnership, and entering or leaving the labour force. Explanation for these differentials is commonly sought by reference to the triggering force of key life events. The characteristics likely to facilitate or

promote migration may be deduced from the reasons for movement and socio-demographic characteristics.

As demonstrated in Table 3.1, production-related moves imply strong labour force connections, which may be a result of skills-transfer through the various permanent migration categories that are selective of particular industries and occupations. Therefore, changes in demographic composition at origin and destination tend to affect migration rates, and whether individuals engage in permanent or temporary forms of migration is dependent on socio-demographic characteristics, and whether they are production or consumption-related moves.

The lack of push factors such as political or social unrest in either country implies that labour migration is one of the main reasons for international movements in either direction. Incorporating reason for move sheds light on the linkages that are related to migration journeys of Singaporeans in Australia, as well as the migration journeys from Australia. This is further segregated by socio-demographic characteristics as migrant profiles and linkages may differ at each life stage. Temporary migrants have been theorised as more likely than permanent migrants to engage in circular migration between destination and origin, other socio-demographic factors, such as age, and gender, influences transnational linkages and activities.

Table 3.1. A typology of permanent and circular mobility and diagnostic attributes

	Production-related	Pleasure-seeking	Other consumption
Reason for move	Business; industry-related, seasonal work	Visiting family and relatives, excursions/ vacations, extended travel	Family, tertiary studies; other residential courses, lifestyle migration
Characteristics	Low and high income, professional, specific industries	Financial resources, freedom to travel, attachments to overseas family and friends	Professional, extensive family and financial resources, children and young adults, retirees

Source: Adapted from Bell and Brown 2006.

3.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the theories developed to understand migration patterns in the contemporary era posits causal mechanisms that can be utilised in tandem at various levels of analysis. The

neoclassical principle identifies human capital variables as the main instrument used to examine the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and the migration decision. Such movements occur as a result of individual migration journeys to Australia which are dictated by visa requirements and policy that regulate flows and characteristics. Australia has strict migration regulations that are very selective, and even visitors are required to apply for a tourist visa prior to entering Australia. Hence, migration is a selective process exacerbated by visa requirements, and these requirements suggest that travelling between Australia and Singapore for a permanent or temporary duration can get costly. On the other hand, the recruitment of Australian migrants to Singapore through more formal mechanisms demonstrate that this example of reciprocal flows still follows the principles dictated by segmented labour market theory. Given the structural imperatives in favour of international migration in both countries, traditional theories involving sending and receiving countries are less relevant in the context of globalisation and the internationalisation of labour markets. Finally, this study utilises transnational theory to understand migrants' networks, including formal ties, economic and social linkages maintained with their home country.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology undertaken for this study and outlines the reasons for the methods chosen. Research in the social world is a complex process, and a scientific method is required to interrogate not only the observations, but also to identify and seek to understand social patterns and social meanings. There are a number of ways that social meaning is produced, and the decision undertaken in regards to research methodology, these stem from the epistemological position that is first determined. As described in the research design and in data collection, this study utilises a mixed methods approach using quantitative and qualitative data.

This chapter provides details of the characteristics of respondents in respect to Singaporean migrants in Australia, including their socio-demographic and economic characteristics and length of residence in Australia. Some attention is also given to address the presentation of data and the way it is interpreted to achieve the broader aims of the research and in answering specific research questions. The analysis of the epistemological position is closely related to the discussion on research paradigms and researcher's positionality. The researcher's profile as a Singaporean student in Australia is acknowledged to have contributed to data collection. This chapter closes by discussing the ethical considerations, limitations to the methodology, and the utility of secondary data sources in this study.

4.2 Selecting a mixed methods approach

Social research has a role in debunking myths, as well as exposing the inaccuracies in assumptions made about specific social issues or populations (Neuman 2004). Investigating persistent patterns in social life first requires identifying which aspects of social theory need to be challenged (Glicken 2003). Social research can be classified into three categories:

1. Exploratory research, which is motivated by the desire to explore and in some instances, open up new areas of social enquiry;

2. Descriptive research, where the main purpose is to describe a social phenomenon;
3. Explanatory research, where the main goal is to provide or develop explanations from observations in the social world (Neuman 2004).

Social research that includes interpretations and analysis of social theories are often practiced in a combination of all three categories (de Vaus 2002). Neuman (2004) claims that exploratory research is intertwined with descriptive research, which gives rise to explanations in the social world that can either affirm or debunk existing social theory, and even at the basic level, propose some initial explanations as to what has been found. The development of good explanations involves the two related processes of theory construction and theory testing, both of which begin at different starting points but ultimately arrive at good theory (de Vaus 2002). Hence, de Vaus (2002) argues that there is a constant interplay between constructing theories and testing them; rarely is there theory construction without theory testing, or theory testing without theory construction.

Part of the theory testing involves the use of empirical data to measure or observe social phenomena (de Vaus 2002). In line with previous social research on migrant populations, a mixed methods approach was used to obtain empirical data. Farquhar *et al*. (2011) suggest one significant benefit to the mixed methods approach, that qualitative data can help to explain the quantitative results, and vice versa. Indeed, there are a number of mixed methods designs that have been established. Creswell (2015) suggests that there are three basic mixed methods designs, the convergent design, the explanatory sequential design and the exploratory sequential design. In particular, the explanatory sequential design, which was used in this study, involves the use of quantitative methods to identify the relationships observed from the surveyed population, and then use qualitative methods to help explain the quantitative results in more detail.

The mixed methods approach aims to integrate the quantitative and qualitative databases to place meaning of specific observations in context. This integration begins with the data collection process, which includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method involves the distribution of online surveys among the target population, followed by interviews with selected respondents. The distinct stages of conducting the research implies that quantitative results dictate qualitative findings. In the first instance, the analysis of

quantitative data emphasises summary, descriptive and inferential statistics to understand the patterns and relationships observed in the surveyed population (de Vaus 2002). Subsequently, data obtained from semi-structured interviews is used to complement quantitative observations evidenced from survey results, while the qualitative data obtained from open-ended responses and interviews are used to explore individual meanings and beliefs. When used in tandem with the quantitative findings, the themes extracted from qualitative data explain quantitative findings in greater detail. The results obtained from survey data often require more explanation, and qualitative data allows that investigation to be expanded to explain important variables. In some cases, the use of qualitative data can facilitate a closer look at outlier cases from quantitative results (Creswell 2015). Hence, the explanatory sequential design builds on each phase of data collection, ensuring that a more robust methodology is used to test existing social theories.

4.3 Data collection

Given that the research sought to investigate the migration journeys and experience of Singaporeans in Australia, the 'Singaporeans in Australia' survey (refer Appendix B) was designed and distributed among Singaporeans in Australia. This online survey was advertised through a number of institutional and social platforms. The University of Adelaide disseminated the survey through a number of internal newsletters, including Student News, International Student Newsletter, Staff News and among the University of Adelaide's Singaporean alumni, while the National University of Singapore advertised the survey among their Australian alumni. A number of Singaporean student associations across Australia, such as the University of Adelaide, Monash University and University of New South Wales, also distributed the survey on Facebook and through their respective member-based online newsletters.

To complement the main study on Singaporeans in Australia, the migration experiences of return migrants and Australians in Singapore were also examined as part of reciprocal flows from Australia to Singapore. The 'Migration to Singapore from Australia' survey (refer Appendix E) was a secondary survey targeting both population groups. Unlike Singaporeans in Australia, there were no online groups that specifically targeted return migrants, as such, the 'Migration to Singapore from Australia' survey was distributed alongside the main survey in

hope that those who had returned still maintained some connection to Australia. The survey was also advertised on the newly formed Facebook group, 'Returning overseas Singaporeans', which included, but was not limited to return migrants from Australia. The survey was advertised among Australians in Singapore through the Australia New Zealand Association (ANZA) Facebook page, which had approximately 30,000 members in its database. Despite these attempts, the 'Migration to Singapore from Australia' survey yielded only a small number of respondents (*N*=58) comprising 20 return migrants and 38 Australians residing in Singapore.

4.3.1 Use of online surveys

This study utilised a self-administered survey to obtain quantitative responses from the study population. The use of an online platform was deemed as the most effective method in reaching out to the study population, in a cost-effective manner and in a short-time frame. Similar to other migrant communities, both Singaporean and Australian migrant communities had an online presence on migrant and expatriate forums. The majority of these forums were hosted by individuals on social media platforms, including Facebook groups and community pages. These platforms are avenues for migrants to ask questions, organise catch ups, discuss national affairs, and share their migration experiences.

Engaging a target population online for social research is not a straightforward task, because of the proliferation of online questionnaires for a variety of purposes (Hooley *et al*. 2012). Hewson *et al*. (2008) suggest that, when there is no sampling frame, the main approach to generating an appropriate sample is to post an invitation to the online survey to relevant groups and message boards, or to suitable mailing lists and websites. In this case, the sampling frame was unknown due to the lack of an updated database collecting information on migrants residing in the country at a particular point in time. Although the sample size of migrants is usually unknown, distributing the survey to the relevant study groups ensures that surveys are disseminated to the right audience.

There is also the question of determining which platform would be best to host the research questionnaire. In this study, it was determined that SurveyMonkey was the most appropriate host platform because of its familiarity and accessibility as a research tool for both the researcher and the target population. Two surveys, one for Singaporeans in Australia, and the

other to capture reciprocal flows from Australia to Singapore, were created on SurveyMonkey and a web link was generated within the software for dissemination. The Facebook groups and community pages for each study population were identified, and administrators' permissions were sought to advertise and distribute survey links on these platforms. A Participant Information Sheet was attached to the online survey, outlining the aims and objectives of the research (refer Appendix A).

4.3.2 Sampling design

Walter (2006) states that the optimal sample frame can be obtained first by defining the population, then selecting an appropriate sampling frame, selecting a method of sampling (probability or non-probability), deciding on an appropriate sample size, and finally selecting the sample.

There is no current registration or listing specifically on migrant populations in Australia or in Singapore, so the size of study populations was estimated using Australian Census data for Singaporeans in Australia and world population data for Australians in Singapore. As a result of the limitations in arrival and departure data in Singapore, the actual flows of return migrants cannot be determined. A non-probability method of sampling was used, so the results obtained cannot be generalised to the wider population.

Background data on the Singapore-born population in Australia was obtained from DIAC and the Australian Census. Based on research objectives, the survey targeted individuals that had migrated to Australia from 1996 onwards. By 1996, almost half of the current Singapore-born population had migrated to Australia. Out of all survey respondents (N=192), the majority of respondents (N=182) came to Australia to live after 1996, corresponding with the introduction of temporary migration.

4.4 Questionnaire design

There are three broad ways that descriptive analysis is conducted and presented: in tabular, graphical and statistical formats. Descriptive and summary statistics were used to summarise the patterns in the responses of cases in the sample. Socio-demographic factors such as age, sex, marital status, post-school qualifications, occupation and income levels were included in

the questionnaire design to understand why Singaporeans had migrated to Australia. This included A: Migration to Australia, B: Life before Australia, C: Reason for move, and D: Connection to Australia, with questions that sought to understand who had migrated to Australia. The question of whether they intended to stay permanently in Australia was also an important aspect of contemporary migration given that student migrants and skilled temporary migrants were also represented in the sample. It was assumed that those who were permanent migrants, family visa holders, and those who have since become Australian citizens intended to reside permanently in Australia. The question why Australia was chosen as a migrant destination was posed to survey respondents, and secondary questions such as whether they had friends and family in Australia prior to migrating also helped to understand migrants' networks. The survey also included questions on current and previous employment, living arrangements, social networks, as well as the maintenance of economic and social linkages with Singapore, examining the hypothesised linkages between destination and origin (Massey *et al.* 1993).

Khoo *et al.* (2008) argue that since migration facilitates citizenship, then many migrants seek to become citizens regardless of whether they had come initially with the intention to apply for citizenship. In Singapore, where dual citizenship is not allowed, applying for Australian citizenship implies the intention to permanently leave Singapore. Migrants were asked in the survey whether they plan to stay or return, and to indicate the reasons for their decision. Reasons for returning to Singapore include: plans to marry and settle down, raise children, look after ageing parents, better employment opportunities, children's education in Singapore, unable to obtain permanency in Australia, miss family and friends, and dislike of Australia's lifestyle. Absent from this were the reasons that might have been given by migrants that had already left Australia and were missed by the survey.

The survey also investigated the perceptions of a Singaporean diaspora in Australia, as well as the perceived benefits that respondents may bring about to Singapore by living in Australia. Following the results obtained from the main survey, several observations found from the 'Migration to Singapore from Australia' survey is presented to complement the main findings. Comparing the motivations for migration of Singaporeans in Australia with that of return migrants and Australians in Singapore is of particular interest, and is discussed in relation to traditional neoclassical approaches of migration.

4.4.1 Response rate

It is difficult to estimate the response rate of each survey due to the unknown size of the population of interest and the absence of a comprehensive sampling frame. Across the study populations, it was assumed that the high rates of computer literacy and access to the Internet meant that prospective respondents can be informed about the research and choose to participate at the same time. However, not all prospective respondents are part of online migrant communities, particular older migrants. Even though the size of Singaporeans in Australia can be estimated using Australian Census data, there is no available data that estimates the proportion of Singaporeans in Australia that are part of the online Singaporean migrant community.

The same problem occurs when estimating the number of return migrants and Australians in Singapore. The particular challenge with estimating the number of return migrants is exacerbated by its definition, as not all who return do so indefinitely. Moreover, the number of Australians in Singapore cannot be estimated as the Singapore Census only collects data on Singaporeans and Permanent Residents, so the number of Australians in Singapore is estimated using global population data. Hence, the response rates of each survey cannot be calculated due to the unknown sample sizes of each population, which is exacerbated by the limitations in secondary data. The survey closed after about six months when the number of responses reduced over time, and eventually, no new responses were collected.

Table 4.1 presents the completion rates for each sampled population. Among survey respondents, the 'Singaporeans in Australia' survey had a completion rate of 79 percent (N=192), while the 'Migration to Singapore from Australia' survey achieved a 73 percent completion rate (N=58). The 'Singaporeans in Australia' survey had a total of 60 questions and on average, took respondents 12–13 minutes. On the other hand, the 'Migration to Singapore from Australia' survey was slightly shorter with 45 questions, and respondents on average took a total of 9–10 minutes to complete.

Table 4.1. Completion rates for each sampled population

Type	Population	Attempted (*N*)	Completed (*N*)	Completion rate (percent)
Online surveys	Singaporeans in Australia	244	192	79
	Migration to Singapore from Australia	79	58	73
Interviews	Singaporeans in Australia	32	32	100
	Australians in Singapore	6	6	100
	Singaporean returnees	2	2	100
	Singaporean government representatives	3	3	100

Source: Surveys and interviews of Singaporeans in Australia and Migration to Singapore from Australia 2019.

4.4.2 Open-ended responses

Open-ended responses were provided at various points in the questionnaire which aimed at giving respondents opportunities to clarify their views on their migration experience. The open-ended response was provided as an 'other' option, made available for questions such as reasons for move, connection to Australia, life in Australia, interactions with Singaporeans in Australia, current linkages with Singapore, and their plans to return.

Open-ended responses gave respondents the opportunity to write down options that had not been provided in pre-coded responses to specific questions. A response occurred with a small proportion of individuals choosing 'other' to describe their reason for move. Some addressed issues such as children's education, while others discussed 'push factors' such as religious discrimination, as well as the lack of LGBTQI+ support in Singapore. Hence, creating the option for open-ended responses in the online survey allowed the investigation of other factors that would have been otherwise excluded or ignored.

4.4.3 Interviews

Upon completion of the online survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide their name and contact details to the researcher to be contacted for participation in further research. It was advised that potential respondents allocate a total of 30 to 45 minutes for the interview (refer Appendix C). On average, interviews went for about one hour, with a handful going for only 30 minutes and with community leaders, up to three hours. Since interviews followed a semi-structured format, the length of each interview depended on how much respondents were willing to share about their migration experience. Interviews concluded when common themes began to emerge in the conversation.

The researcher conducted a number of in-person research interviews in Singapore, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Apart from Adelaide, where the researcher was based, two and a half weeks were spent at each location in July, August and September respectively. Although Western Australia, specifically Perth, was home to a large number of Singaporean migrants, the majority were not part of the target population as they had migrated before 1996.

Where possible, in-person interviews were scheduled, but interviews that involved respondents outside fieldwork locations were conducted over Skype. In some instances, the in-depth interviews became an opportunity to direct participants to the online survey. This was because some interviewees had been asked by others to participate, but had not heard of the research project beforehand. There was a high priority placed on conducting interviews face-to-face. Most interviews were conducted in person, at a public location that had been agreed upon prior to the interview. Only a handful of interviews were conducted on Skype, either because participants lived in a regional area or in other cities apart from the ones visited. The cost of travelling to Singapore, Melbourne and Sydney to conduct interviews was a feasible option due to successful grant applications, as well as having friends and family in each city that could provide short-term accommodation. In Singapore, interviews were conducted with return migrants and Australians living in Singapore, while in Australia, in person interviews were conducted among Singaporean migrants in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Interviews were also conducted with stakeholders in Singapore and Melbourne. This included representatives

from the Singapore government whose core business involved understanding overseas Singaporeans and managing the Singaporean diaspora.

4.5 Collecting data on Singaporeans in Australia

The online administrators of a number of Singaporean migrant groups agreed to advertise the survey on a number of Facebook groups and platforms. This included advertising and the dissemination through the largest Singaporean Facebook group, ‘SG Kongsi’, as well as their affiliated sub-groups in various states across the country. It turned out that the administrators were well-connected with each other and highly regarded in the local Singaporean community, and were happy to help with disseminating the survey on community platforms. This included platforms that targeted migrants in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Tasmania and Canberra. In some instances, the researcher was also invited on these platforms to advertise the study. Some administrators also managed other Singaporean business-related platforms, so the survey was also distributed among the Singaporean business community. Interviews conducted with stakeholders also helped with advertising the survey on their official Facebook page.

Among respondents, there were continued efforts made to nudge others to complete the survey. A number of respondents asked if they could distribute the online survey among their friends. Hence, the survey was further distributed in respondents’ personal group chats on WhatsApp, Facebook, on other social platforms like Twitter, and on business platform LinkedIn.

More than a third of respondents in the ‘Singaporeans in Australia’ survey was interested in a research interview (N=72), and due to limited resources, a screening process was necessary. A judgemental selection was undertaken and interview participants were chosen based on migrant profiles and reasons for migration. Stakeholders, including representatives from the Singapore government, were also interviewed using a different set of questions (refer Appendix D). This was focussed on facilitating a discussion on Singaporean emigration and the growth of the Singaporean diaspora population.

Another highlight of qualitative data collection was the opportunity to interview community leaders and government representatives as part of the research. Community leaders explained that the Facebook groups were merely a virtual extension of the existing social linkages that

had already been established among Singaporeans in Australia. They also acknowledged the growth in the number of Singaporean migrants over the years, which led to the formation of individual Facebook pages in each Australian State and Territory. Overall, their experiences alluded to a tight-knit Singaporean community who would go out of their way to help a 'fellow Singaporean'.

There were also a number of Singaporean government representatives interviewed whose portfolios involved understanding the Singaporean diaspora. The Singapore government has had a keen interest in migrant affairs, with a head office in Singapore and a number of officials based abroad, including one in Melbourne, all of whom participated in the interview. The interviews concerned the scale and magnitude of Singaporeans residing abroad, as well as understanding the role of the government in managing the growing overseas Singaporean population, which were compared in relation to the perspectives of Singaporean migrants, yielding mixed responses.

4.6 Characteristics of survey respondents

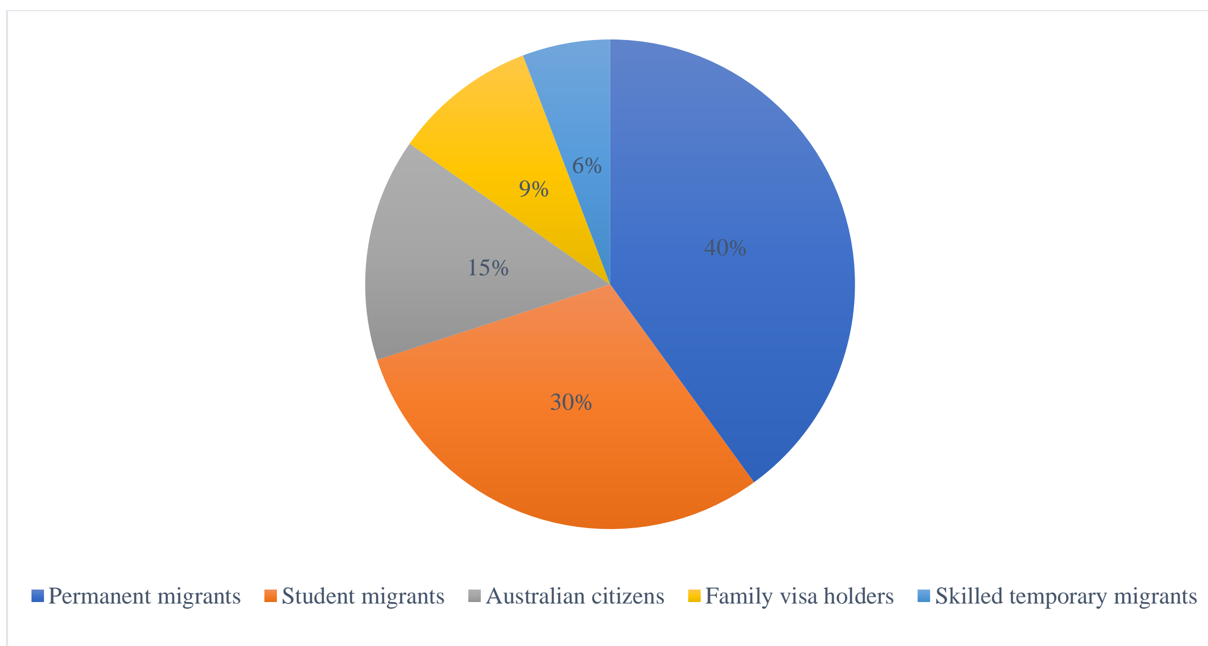
The characteristics of survey respondents are presented in relation to their visa type and length of residence in Australia. In comparison to temporary migrants, permanent migrants and those who have since become Australian citizens have resided in Australia for a longer duration. This implies that they are more established, which in turn influences the socio-economic commitments and transnational linkages maintained by migrants, examined in detail in Chapters 5 and 6. The age and sex structure and marital status of respondents are presented by migrant cohorts, as Australia's migration policies are dictated by visa requirements that regulate flows and characteristics of migrants.

Most respondents had lived in Australia for an average of 8 years. Those who have since become Australian citizens (*N*=28) had resided here the longest, at an average of 15 years, permanent residents for about 10 years, while students (*N*=56) had spent only about three years in Australia. The small number of skilled temporary migrants (*N*=12) represented in the sampled population had been in Australia for about four years. Given the relaxing of skilled migration policies to facilitate onshore application, it is highly likely that some temporary migrants were former students.

4.6.1 Visa type

Data on the type of visa held by Singaporeans in Australia was made available on ACMID, from which the sample size was drawn. Among the sampled population, 60 percent of respondents were on permanent visas (*N*=96), one-third were on temporary visas (*N*=70), and a smaller proportion who had become Australian citizens (*N*=28). This is consistent with ACMID data that demonstrates the Singapore-born population is made up of two-thirds permanent resident and one-third temporary migrants. Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of the sampled population by visa type. The largest migrant cohort represented were permanent migrants (*N*=76), followed by student migrants (*N*=58). These two migrant cohorts make up 69.3 percent of respondents. The remaining one-third comprised of Australian citizens (*N*=28), family visa holders (*N*=18) and skilled temporary migrants (*N*=12). Those in Australia for a permanent duration included permanent migrants, family visa holders and those who have since become Australian citizens (*N*=122), while temporary migrants included students and temporary visa holders (*N*=70).

Figure 4.1. Distribution of respondents by visa type

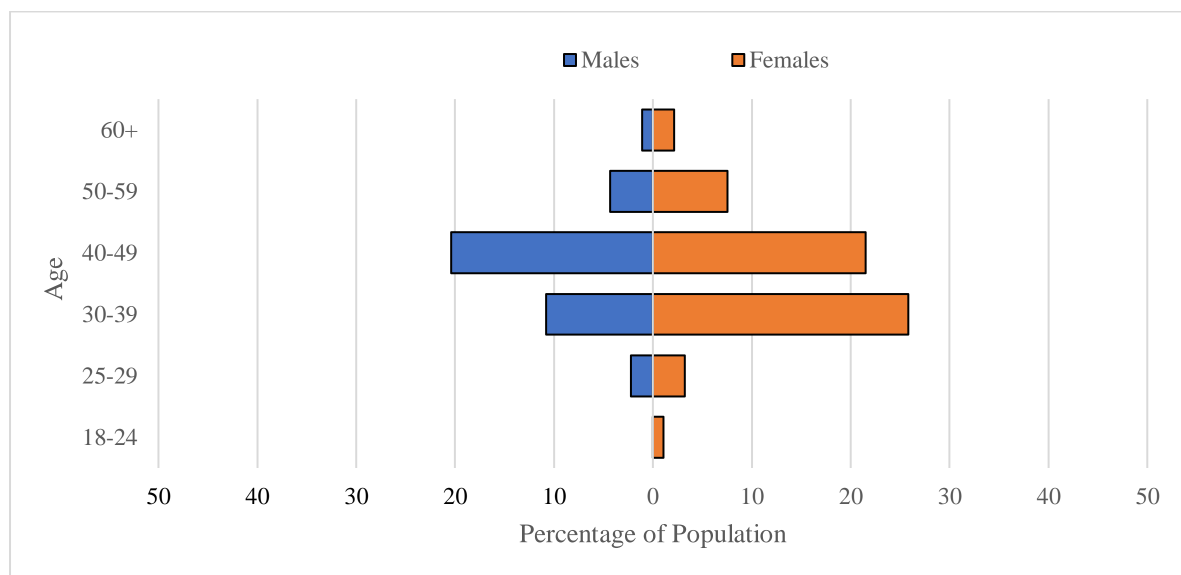


Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

4.6.2 Age and sex structure of migrant respondents

Figure 4.2 presents the age and sex structure of respondents who were permanent residents in Australia. Given age restrictions in permanent residency applications, it was not surprising to find that respondents in their 30s and 40s were predominant. A further breakdown of the differences between men and women revealed that there were more female permanent residents represented among the sampled population. Indeed, there were more females represented in the sample across all age groups, with the exception of those in their 40s where there were similar proportions of male and female respondents.

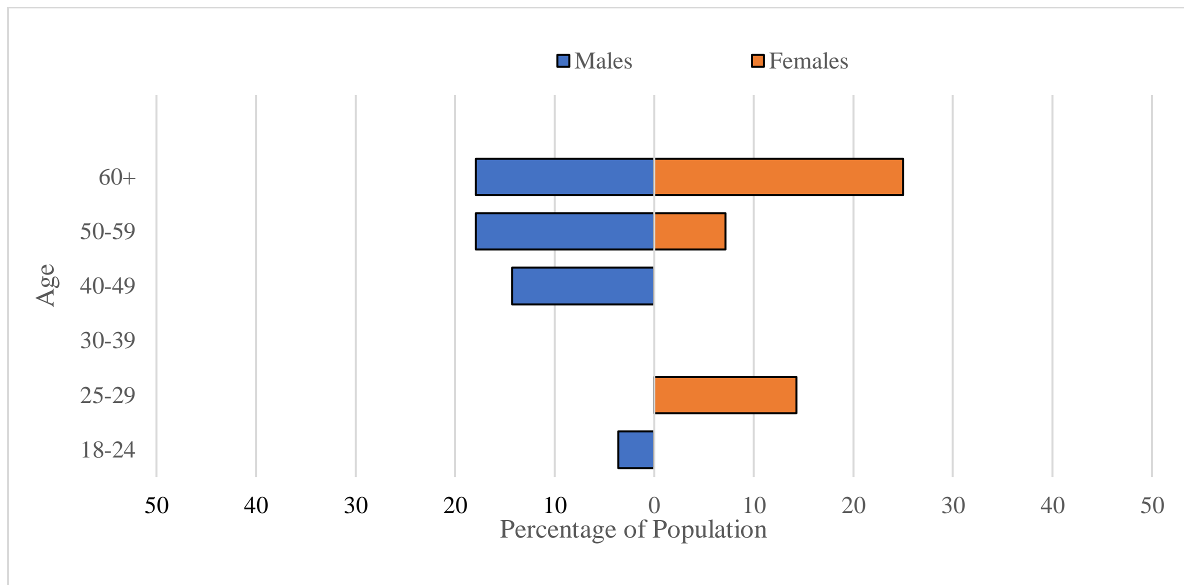
Figure 4.2. Age and sex structure of respondents who were permanent residents



Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

Figure 4.3 presents the age and sex structure of respondents who have since become Australian citizens, with males and females equally represented. It is likely that those aged 18 to 24 had migrated to Australia at a young age and with their families, while those in the older age cohorts have given up Singapore citizenship to become Australian citizens and have been in Australia for some time.

Figure 4.3. Age and sex structure of respondents who have since become Australian citizens

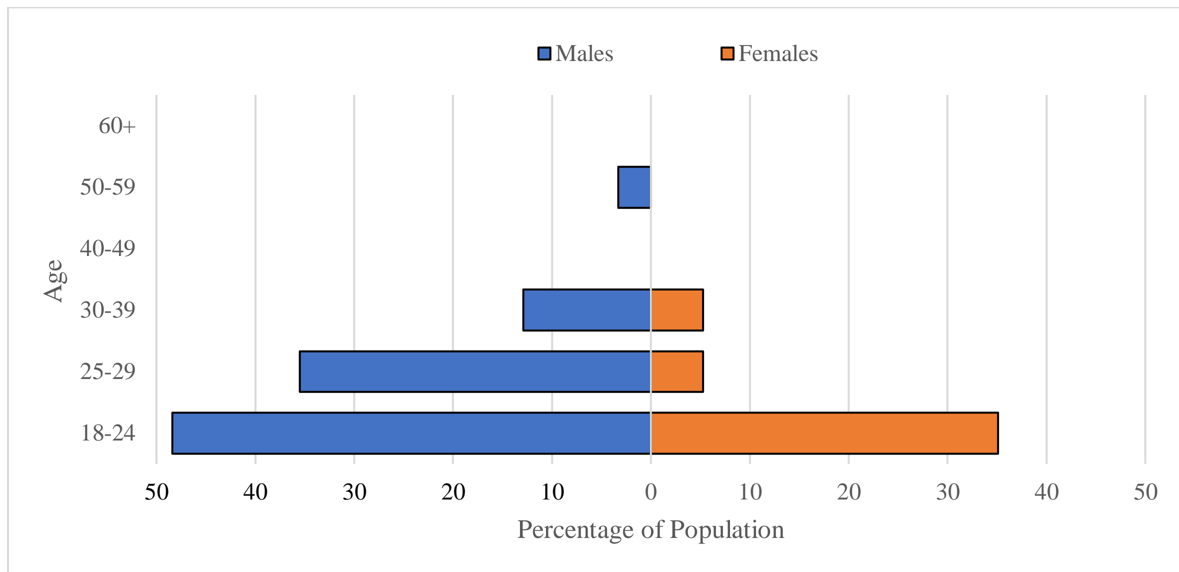


Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

Historically, the research on Singaporeans in Australia does not differentiate permanent residents from Australian citizens; it is generally assumed that permanent residents have the same intentions as those who have since become Australian citizens (Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1994). However, the increase in globalisation flows and connectivity between the two countries has given rise to permanent residents choosing to divide their time in both countries in order to manage career ambitions and personal commitments. Given Singapore's citizenship policy which does not allow dual citizenship, existing commitments in Singapore tend to influence respondents' plans to become Australian citizens.

Figure 4.4 shows the age and sex structure of student migrants in Australia. The majority of students were in their 20s with a relatively even distribution, but there were more males represented among students and they significantly outnumber females at 25–29 years and at older ages. The majority of students had migrated to Australia after completing their high school studies in Singapore, a result of Australia's reputation in attracting prospective students to its international education program especially at the tertiary level (Weiss and Ford 2011).

Figure 4.4. Age and sex structure of respondents who were student migrants



Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

Temporary migrants included those on the temporary 457 visa, business visa, bridging visas, visitor visa, and the recently established working holiday visa. Among the small sampled population (*N*=12), there were more female temporary migrants represented. The distribution of temporary migrants by age group was less predictable, with most aged in their 30s, followed by equal representation among those in their late 20s and those aged 50 to 59 years. Unlike permanent residents and student migrants, the circumstances for temporary migration are more varied. Khoo *et al.* (2008) suggest that whether temporary migrants go on to apply for permanent residency, or return home, is dependent on individual circumstances and the transnational linkages that migrants maintain between the two countries.

4.6.3 Marital status

Table 4.2 shows that a much higher percentage of married respondents were permanent migrants or have since become Australian citizens. This finding is not surprising and can be attributed to the differences between the two migration programs in Australia. Families are more likely to migrate and settle under Australia's permanent migration program which encourages family migration, while skilled temporary migrants and international students are more likely to migrate on their own, and for a specified duration. There were 86.2 percent of male permanent migrants who were married, compared with some 11 percent of male

temporary migrants who were predominantly unmarried (88.6 percent). A similar observation was found among female permanent and temporary migrants.

Table 4.2. Marital status of respondents by permanent and temporary visas

Marital status	Total (*N*=192)	Permanent* (*N*=122)		Temporary (*N*=70)	
	%	%		%	
		M	F	M	F
Married	59.0	86.2	78.9	11.4	25.7
Unmarried	41.0	13.8	21.1	88.6	74.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

*Note: Permanent migrants include those with Australian citizenship.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

4.7 Quantitative data analysis

Following the neoclassical theoretical arguments relating to micro-level factors motivating migration (Massey *et al*. 1993), respondents' reasons for migration were analysed for males and females, and by visa category. Given that employment outcomes are an important feature in understanding whether migrants had successfully settled and integrated into the Australian labourforce, the analysis presents labourforce participation, nature of employment, current occupation, and highest post-school qualifications of employed respondents. However, not all respondents were employed as one-third were students and had come to Australia to study.

There is a large body of literature that indicates not all migrants in Australia end up with jobs that match their skills and past experience (Peter and Verikios 1996; Cameron *et al*. 2013; Hawthorne 2014; Cebulla and Tan 2019). Therefore, the analysis goes on to examine the occupational barriers to employment for Singaporeans in Australia, as well as the consistency with their previous occupation. A number of summary measures were used to indicate whether economic and employment expectations had been met. These included annual income, sources of income, residential status and whether their financial situation had improved, gotten worse or stayed about the same.

Following the transnational framework used to understand international migration, a similar method of analysis was used to understand the social connections and transnational linkages of Singaporeans in Australia. Respondents' pre-move contacts and social commitments in Australia were analysed by males and females and visa type. It is documented that there are more Singaporeans living in Australia than in any other part of the world (UN 2017), and the idea of critical mass is examined in relation to the linkages found within the Singaporean community in Australia. As such, migrants were asked in the survey to indicate how regularly they interact with other Singaporeans in order to find out whether an overseas Singaporean community exists in Australia.

The linkages that Singaporeans in Australia maintained with Singapore were also examined by gender and visa type. Examples of economic linkages included income from rental property/s, home ownership, company ownership, while social linkages included celebrating ethnic festivals, discussing Singaporean affairs, keeping in touch with other Singaporeans. Respondents' current and future plans in Australia were investigated in relation to their life stage and frequency of visits to Singapore.

To understand respondents' views on a Singaporean diaspora, the responses to *'Do you feel like you are part of the Singaporean diaspora?'* were analysed by migrant characteristics. Their views on how their presence in Australia can benefit Singapore were summarised in relation to Singapore's diaspora policy, which has a focus on return migration and providing pathways for student migrants to return.

The main findings obtained from the sampled population are explored in relation to reciprocal flows which include return migrants and Australians living in Singapore. In particular, the reasons for migration among Singaporeans in Australia are compared with both groups of respondents. The socio-economic outcomes of return migrants and Australians in Singapore are also presented and discussed in context of globalisation and labour mobility in the Asia-Pacific region. These responses were cleaned in Microsoft Excel and analysed by males and females and visa type using cross tabulations in IBM SPSS Statistics.

4.8 Qualitative data analysis

Content analysis was used to unpack the main themes that emerged from interviews. Part of this analysis involved providing different kinds of units of analysis, including significant actors. The interviewee profiles of Singaporeans in Australia, and one Singaporean government representative living in Australia, are elaborated in greater detail in Table 4.3.

The interviews predominantly focussed on migration experiences, all of which were conducted and transcribed by the researcher. Out of the 32 respondents interviewed, 18 were permanent migrants, 8 were Australian citizens, and 6 were temporary migrants. Knowing the actual sample obtained from fieldwork facilitates the analysis of interview data. Bryman (2016, p. 10) suggests that the following process must be included in the course of the content analysis:

> "What kind of person has produced the item? Who is or are the main focus of the item? Who provides alternative voices? What was the context for the item?"

The in-depth interviews were valuable in allowing respondents to elaborate on themes included in the questionnaire, as well as the opportunity to address other factors that have driven their migration that were not anticipated. The questions 'why did you decide to move to Australia', 'are you happy living in Australia' and 'would you consider a move back to Singapore' were important in understanding migrants' settlement experiences (refer Appendix C). In particular, the question 'are you happy living in Australia?' explored their perspectives on life in Australia.

The final interview question, 'do you now call Australia home', connected the themes raised throughout the interview. This typically included stories of successful integration of life and education in Australia. Despite initial challenges in obtaining employment for a small number of interviewees, many of them positively reflected on the 'work life balance' experienced while living in Australia, which was strongly contrasted to life in Singapore.

Some interviewees expressed their interest in moving to another country. This reinforces the theory of onward or stepwise migration that tends to feature in contemporary migration (Hugo 2005a). Ultimately, the themes raised in the successful settlement of Singaporeans in Australia, for returnees and Australians in Singapore, assume that individual needs are economic driven, but lifestyle and individual preferences are closely linked to such economic drivers.

Table 4.3 Profiles of Singaporeans in Australia in follow-up interviews obtained from survey respondents

1.	Male permanent resident. Adelaide businessman. Community and business leader.
2.	Male return resident. Melbourne businessman.
3.	Female permanent resident. Melbourne academic.
4.	Female permanent resident. Sydney office worker.
5.	Male permanent resident. Melbourne auditor.
6.	Male Australian citizen. Melbourne retiree.
7.	Male Australian citizen. Melbourne auctioneer.
8.	Male permanent resident. Adelaide logistics coordinator.
9.	Male permanent resident. Melbourne IT manager. Community leader.
10.	Female permanent resident. Adelaide accountant.
11.	Male permanent resident. Melbourne registered nurse.
12.	Female Australian citizen. Brisbane administrator.
13.	Female temporary resident. Melbourne-based Singapore government representative (Stakeholder 1).
14.	Female business visa holder. Sydney business owner.
15.	Female Australian citizen. Melbourne business owner.
16.	Female permanent resident. Adelaide housewife.
17.	Male permanent resident. Melbourne business owner.
18.	Male permanent resident. Melbourne business owner.
19.	Female permanent resident. Tasmania administrator. Community leader.
20.	Male Australian citizen. Sydney retiree. Community leader.
21.	Male Australian citizen. Melbourne businessman.
22.	Male permanent resident. Melbourne businessman, frequently commutes to Singapore.
23.	Male business visa holder. Melbourne businessman.
24.	Male permanent resident. Melbourne businessman, frequently commutes to Singapore.
25.	Female permanent resident. Adelaide registered nurse.
26.	Male student. Sydney PhD Candidate.
27.	Male Australian citizen. Melbourne retiree.
28.	Male permanent resident. Melbourne transport engineer.
29.	Female permanent resident. Melbourne dog groomer.
30.	Male student. Melbourne law student. Student leader.
31.	Male permanent resident. Perth optician.
32.	Female Australian citizen. Adelaide retiree.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia interviews 2019.

Another significant aspect of migration is technological advancements, increasing the access of migrants to keep in touch with friends and family who still live and work in Singapore. This is especially significant for those who were initially hesitant about leaving behind family and loved ones. In response to ‘how do you communicate, and how often?’, all respondents expressed that communicating with family has ‘never been easier’. Some interviewees communicated with their family ‘several times a day’, or ‘several times a week’, through family group chats on WhatsApp, and found social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram helpful in keeping up with family and friends. Overall, technology was viewed by migrants as a tool that facilitated social connections to family and friends in Singapore, and for the politically minded, ‘discussing Singaporean affairs’ on online forums. Hence, whether the proliferation of technology has given rise to migration as a viable option may be explored in context of migrants and diaspora formation.

Absent from these interviews were those that expressed interest in moving back to Singapore, and was assumed that those who were dissatisfied with life in Australia had already moved back to Singapore. This gap was addressed by interviews with those that had decided to return to Singapore. Their experience is contrasted with Australians living in Singapore, and with stakeholders’ views.

4.9 Migration to Singapore from Australia

Previous research conducted by colleagues have found the recruitment of return migrants to be a common challenge in fieldwork (Yeo 2016; Wasserman 2016; Breen 2018). It is unlikely that return migrants are still part of migrant networks, so they are not likely to hear about this study, and even if they are still part of such groups, there may be a lack of interest in responding to the request to participate in the research study. In some instances, participants may decline participation because they do not wish to revisit their migration experience, especially if return migration is perceived as failed or unsuccessful migration. This may still be a common perception despite the changing notion that migration journeys are no longer a one way and permanent event as a result of the increase in those who engage in circular and transnational migration.

Table 4.4 presents the profiles of return migrants, Australians in Singapore and stakeholders which included representatives from the Singapore government who chose to be part of the study. Interviews with stakeholders were interviewed in Singapore who provided alternative voices from the high-level policy perspective, in line with existing literature which has demonstrated that governments in many parts of the world have taken an increased interest in migrants and the role that the diaspora can play in contemporary migration (Gamlen 2014, 2019; Gamlen *et al*. 2019). There is also some level of ambiguity surrounding the definition of return migrants as they are not limited to a specific individual under one set of migration circumstances, but include a diverse range of individuals whom at one stage lived in Australia. This Australian connection may vary from a few months to a few decades, or children born in Australia; return migrants simply imply that they have moved on from being a migrant to settling back into life at origin.

Table 4.4. Profiles of return migrants, Australians in Singapore and Singaporean government representatives interviewed in Singapore

33.	Australian male permanent resident.
34.	Singaporean male government representative (Stakeholder 2).
35.	Singaporean male government representative (Stakeholder 3).
36.	Australian female student.
37.	Australian male temporary work pass holder.
38.	Singaporean female returnee.
39.	Australian male temporary work pass holder.
40.	Australian female permanent resident.
41.	Australian male permanent resident.
42.	Australian male permanent resident.

Source: Migration to Singapore from Australia interviews 2019.

4.10 Researcher's positionality

As a Singaporean living in Australia, conducting in-depth interviews with other Singaporeans evokes a level of trust between the researcher and the participant. Most of the literature on researcher's positionality discusses aspects of ethnicity and race, yet language is also an important aspect to explore, especially among migrant populations (Hult 2014). In spite of the

ethnic composition of Singaporeans, one advantage of research involving Singaporeans in Australia is their English competence, as English is Singapore's main working language. The majority of primary data was collected in English, and only a small section of interviews needed to be translated.

Despite Singaporeans' competence in the English language, no Singaporean is a native English speaker, rather, they have a mother tongue, and are not only bilingual, but in some cases, trilingual; they also enjoy and are in the habit of code-switching (Ljosland 2011; Auer 1998). Code-switching is an indicator of trust, as it only occurs when it is accepted, and when some legitimacy is ascribed to the researcher (Ljosland 2011; Auer 1998). Furthermore, as these languages are only spoken among migrant populations, they tend to result in a more faithful representation of participants' perspectives (Witcher 2010). The multiethnic composition of non-native English speakers in Singapore has given rise to the pidgin language, Singlish, which is used colloquially across all races. Some aspects of Singlish may be 'more Chinese' or 'more Malay'. For example, those who are Singaporean Chinese tend to use a 'more Chinese' version of Singlish, by describing certain observations and expressing feelings in the Chinese dialect. Code switching can also refer to an accent change, and in some instances, the use of Chinese or Malay phrases (used among all Singaporeans regardless of ethnicity) may help to build rapport between the researcher and interviewees.

In addition to being Singaporean in Australia, my role as a PhD candidate at an Australian institution was also viewed positively by research participants among the sampled population. Obtaining a more diverse group of participants than initially proposed, including Australians living in Singapore and Singaporean government representatives, was an indication that the research was perceived to provide a better understanding of Singaporeans in Australia particularly among stakeholders. There was a general willingness among Australians in Singapore to participate and discuss their migration experiences.

4.11 Ethical considerations

Successful social research occurs when each stage of the research process is conducted in a professional and ethical manner (Walter 2006). Social research involves interacting with people and societies, which is vastly different from physical research where interaction is

limited to inanimate species or objects. As such, some thought must be given to the research process so as to protect human subjects from researchers, and vice versa. A common feature across all types of social research is working with human subjects who are not always rational or predictable. Not only does this mean that responses obtained from research participants are subjective and sometimes ambiguous, there is no guarantee that the research topic is of interest to the target population or that the optimal sample frame can be obtained within the specified time frame. Despite this, populations should be approached with ethical integrity, setting clear boundaries and addressing limitations in the approach.

Since 1973, there have been a number of external surveillances of research by Human Research Ethics Committees in Australia, and depending on the level of risk perceived, all researchers must undergo an ethics approval process stipulated by their respective institutions. Given that the majority of social research involves participants, some thought must be given to think through the benefits of research participation from a participant perspective rather than purely research considerations. The ethics of social research has continued to be a subject of contention as the set of moral standards that govern behaviour in a particular setting or for a particular group is not always followed. This may be because social research is often concerned solely with the project and its requirements, rather than the needs of the participants involved. Ethics approval was sought before any of the study was advertised or participants were recruited (refer Appendix G).

In terms of protecting the rights of research participants, anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent were the three considerations that emerged from the approval process. Participant Information Sheets were provided at the start of both the online, self-administered questionnaires and at the start of each interview (refer Appendix A) and research participants consented to participation and informed that their data could be withdrawn at any time. All responses collected from the questionnaires were anonymous, protecting participants' identities and information were automatically protected. As interviewees were not anonymous to the researcher, they were asked to provide written, signed consent prior to the interview, with a minority providing recorded, verbal consent. There was a preference for interviews to be audio-recorded, but interviewees could choose not to be recorded and note-taking was used instead. To ensure confidentiality, the audio-recordings were saved under pseudonyms. Data management strategies preserved the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents.

4.12 Methodological limitations

Although the use of online questionnaires has become ubiquitous, offering huge value to researchers in terms of cost, speed of data collection and analysis, and access to respondents, there are some disadvantages (Hooley *et al*. 2012). A non-probability sample was used, so it is impossible to generalise the findings to the wider population. The survey was advertised on platforms that were accessible to both the researcher and the target population, and some respondents also helped to distribute the link in their own personal networks. Hence, the online nature of the survey may have reduced older migrants' access to the survey, which in turn, may have resulted in the overrepresentation of younger migrants (Zwarun and Hall 2014), Nevertheless, the age and sex profiles of respondents are generally representative of the Singapore-born population in Australia as recorded in the 2016 Australian Census (ABS 2016b).

Hooley *et al*. (2012) also question whether the online identity can be regarded as an extension of the offline identity, more specifically, whether we can trust online personas. Personal details of respondents were not collected unless they wished to be interviewed, meaning that the online personas of respondents could not be verified.

The lack of personal information collected in the online survey also highlights the problem of defining the online study population. Although the linking of online information with an individual's geographical position or demographics can be performed, integrating datasets poses an ethical challenge in maintaining anonymity unless very carefully handled (O'Hara and Shadbolt 2008). This exacerbates the existing problem of limited comprehensive information on composition and distribution of migrant populations in Australia.

Survey data obtained in this study did not lend itself to modelling. This was mainly attributed to sample size (N=192) which was not suitable for analysis for smaller cohorts, and with multiple variables. The survey also targeted individuals, not households, implying that the migration experience of males and females were limited to individuals, and could not establish differences within households. Hence, this study gave rise to a comparison of different migrant profiles but was not able to provide more details on the migration experience of households, and migration journeys, which were more likely to have occurred in a household context.

4.13 Secondary data

Statistical collections from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), World Bank and the Singapore Department of Statistics (DOS) proved to be very useful in verifying some results in terms of the characteristics and circumstances of respondents. Where available, Australian Census data was used, but most data obtained from the World Bank and DOS were aggregated, and obtained only through unpublished sources. Apart from these databases, secondary sources in the form of academic writings, scholarly works in the field of migration and social sciences more broadly helped relate findings to the wider research context. Other sources included media releases, newspaper articles, reports by non-governmental organisations.

The main source of stock data used to identify Singaporeans in Australia are the quinquennial population censuses, which collect comprehensive stock information on key aspects of the population in Australia on Census night. The Australian Census showed that the majority of Singaporeans lived in Australia's major cities and in the last decade have congregated in Melbourne's inner and outer suburbs. The ACMID, which links Census data with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's (DIBP) Settlement Data Base (SDB), indicates that up to two-thirds of the Singapore-born population are permanent migrants, and only one-third are temporary migrants comprised mainly of students. Flow data from DIBP were also used and the trends analysed in relation to Overseas Arrivals and Departures (OAD) data (refer Chapter 1, Section 1.4).

The study of population mobility is often handicapped by availability, reliability and consistency of data and information (e.g. Stahl and Appleyard 1992; Hugo 2015). The Singapore government has been particularly secretive about its population movement statistics with actual counts of low and high skilled migrant workers never released, due to political sensitivities (Low 1995; Iredale *et al*. 2003; Hugo 2005b; Charles-Edwards *et al*. 2016; Raymer *et al*. 2019). Within the Asia-Pacific region, these problems are compounded by illegal labour movements and unreleased data for reasons of security (Low 1995; Asis and Battistella, 2018; Baas, 2018). With exception of Australia and New Zealand, few countries in the region go through the process of matching up arrival and departure information for the same person (Stahl and Azam 1990). However, it should be noted that such estimates should be treated with

caution, because of quality issues associated with linking variables, and the introduction of temporary migration pathways to permanent and family settlement (ABS 2013a; Hugo 2014a; Collins 2018). Moreover, data measurement problems can also be attributed to underlying conflicts in the conceptual definitions of migration (Gutmann *et al.* 2011). In Australia, as in the case of other traditional destinations countries, such conflicts have been further complicated by more recent reforms to migration policy (Hugo 2011).

Although secondary sources have managed to capture useful observations of past and present trends in migration, this information is limited in providing conclusive deductions on the types of diasporic linkages underpinning specific communities at dominant life stages. This is because the frameworks from which indicators are derived are based on fixed interval measures; respondent characteristics are recorded at the end of the interval rather than at the time migration occurred (Bell and Ward 2000; Bell and Brown 2014). As a result, it is unclear whether mobility observed among certain age groups, is intrinsic to the status, or is the product of specific circumstances. Bell and Ward (2000) argued that the decision-making process for those engaging in temporary or permanent mobility was as important as the physical act of migration, relying solely on secondary data sources to demonstrate mobility changes did not address the data gap between migration and life course transitions. This can only be addressed with the collection of primary data sources that have been designed to answer specific research questions.

4.14 Conclusion

This chapter explored the use of a scientific method, differentiating social research from other forms of social commentary or opinion. Scientific method has traditionally been defined as observation, classification and interpretation of information. Ultimately, the best outcomes in social science research can only emerge from solid, well-formulated research design. This involves looking at research methods from practical, social science and resource considerations. Social science research, especially demographic research, is heavily based on empirical data. Moreover, perhaps more so in social science research than in other disciplines, there is a need to address the researcher's positionality to understand how it might play out in research epistemologies and the data collection process. Since the research objectives require the use of primary data sources to address specific aspects of the study, considerable efforts

were made to acquire a large sample size, as well as an ethical way of obtaining this sample without compromising the anonymity of respondents and ensure confidentiality. Results presented in the following chapters are according to the specific themes addressed in the research questions. Although research objectives are determined beforehand, the iterative nature of research, and the challenges in data collection, result in unpredictable and complex fieldwork. However, whether data are collected via a questionnaire, a semi-structured interview, or secondary sources, there some limitations in data obtained which are discussed later in this study.

CHAPTER 5

THE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE OF SINGAPOREANS IN AUSTRALIA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the employment experience of Singaporeans in Australia using data obtained from the online survey of 'Singaporeans in Australia' and interviews. It begins by examining the reasons given by respondents who have migrated to Australia which are analysed by visa type for males and females. In line with traditional migration theories, better employment opportunities in Australia was one of the reasons given by respondents that featured consistently throughout the analysis. Consequently, the employment characteristics of respondents and its outcomes are explored in relation to their employment experience, while selected quotes from interviewees are used to complement findings obtained in the analysis.

Given that labourforce participation is an important aspect of settlement experiences, the chapter discusses the occupations of employed respondents in relation to their highest post-school qualifications and current employment. The discussion on current employment includes an examination of respondents' nature and extent of employment, and barriers to employment, both aspects which help to understand their labourforce experiences. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the socio-economic outcomes experienced by migrants, exploring these outcomes in respect to migrants' financial situation and success in the labourmarket. The similarities and differences in the employment experience of respondents are evaluated in comparison to other migrant groups in Australia, including Malaysian, South African, American and Chinese migrants, and in relation to the broader Australian population.

5.2 Reasons for migration

The study utilises reasons for migration as a measure to identify the relationship between the decision to migrate and their employment experience. The question asked about respondents' reasons for migration and allowed them to provide multiple reasons which were ordered in terms of popularity. Given that the motivations for migration tends to differ amog migrant

profiles, this study explores the reasons for migration and how they are influenced by respondents' characteristics and visa type. These reasons applied to their initial arrival in Australia, which may have changed at the time of the survey.

Khoo *et al.* (2011) have found that in addition to economic or employment-related factors, non-economic reasons for skilled migration were shown to be of equal importance in migrants' decision-making process. As such, the precoded reasons for migration included economic and non-economic aspects for migration. Historically, Australia's migration program is labour driven and more recently structured in a way that predominantly facilitates skilled migration. In addition to better employment opportunities, other factors such as the Australian way of life, marriage partnership and accepted an offer as a student were also included. Some student migrants may be seeking employment and others may eventually apply for permanent residency.

Table 5.1 shows the ranked reasons for migration provided by respondents to Australia, ordered according to overall popularity. Of the nine selections, six yielded the majority of responses, while family in Australia, political and religious freedoms, and adventure were combined and categorised as other reasons yielding 10.9 percent of the overall response. The top three reasons for migration comprised almost three-quarters of overall responses, with more than half of respondents attributing the Australian way of life as a reason for migration to Australia. This is followed by 42.7 percent of respondents who had accepted an offer as student, and 39.6 percent who came to Australia in search of better employment opportunities. The Australian way of life is synonymous with lifestyle, which encompasses work, cultural and environmental aspects, quality of life, and social reasons (Kontuly *et al.* 1995; Stimson and Minnery 1998). Moreover, lifestyle reasons for migration are consistent with studies by Wasserman (2016) of South Africans in Australia, Yeo (2016) of Malaysians in Australia, as well as Khoo *et al.* (2008) in their research work looking at the transition of temporary migrants to permanent residency.

Table 5.1. Reasons for migration given by male and female respondents (multiple response)

Reasons for migration	Males (*N*=86)	Females (*N*=106)	Total (*N*=345)
	%	%	%
The Australian way of life (*N*=99)	57.0	47.2	51.6
Accepted offer as student (*N*=82)	43.0	42.5	42.7
Better employment opportunities (*N*=76)	44.2	35.8	39.6
Marriage partnership (*N*=31)	7.0	23.6	16.1
Other (*N*=21)	11.6	10.4	10.9
Children's education (*N*=18)	10.5	8.5	9.4
Retirement in Australia (*N*=18)	8.1	10.4	9.4

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

There was a higher proportion of males than females that attributed the Australian way of life and better employment opportunities as reasons for migration, indeed, almost 10 percent more males than females were attracted to the Australian way of life, while better employment opportunities yielded smaller gender differences with 8.4 percent more males than females doing so. Those who accepted an offer as a student featured in the top three reasons for migrating to Australia, which was in line with the number of students represented. This could have been an initial reason for permanent residents coming to Australia. There were three times more females citing marriage partnership as a reason for migration, corresponding with more females holding family visas. Retirement in Australia was slightly skewed towards females, suggesting that females were more likely to participate in family reunification than males, which is commonly the case. On the other hand, children's education was slightly skewed towards males rather than females, suggesting that both males and females saw their migration to Australia as an investment into their children's future.

The majority of Singaporeans migrated to Australia as permanent migrants under Australia's skilled permanent migration program. Like other migrants in Australia who have come from developed countries, Singaporean migrants may have chosen to live and work in Australia for non-economic reasons as a way to seek change. Because of the initial low critical mass of Singaporeans to enable stepwise migration and settlement, Singaporeans in Australia are more

likely to be employed in professional occupations and experience positive socio-economic outcomes.

One married female Australian citizen, aged over 60 years, stated:

> *Back then, there was a lot of talk about Singapore falling to the Communists, that if Vietnam fell the rest of Southeast Asia would fall as well. My husband's family decided to migrate, his elder sister and his parents migrated to Canada, another followed them and another sister also followed. He's got five sisters. They all went to Canada or the US, one went to the UK because she married a Brit. But I didn't want to go anywhere as far as the US, so we chose Australia (Interviewee 32, 2019).*

Similar to factors such as ethnicity and location, the role of gender in migration literature has been increasingly acknowledged and developed. Castles *et al.* (2014) demonstrates that gender is an important dimension of social differentiation that affects the migration decision. Not only are migrant women often overrepresented in the least desirable occupations, their decisions tend to be influenced by marriage partnership, family reunion, and education. Gendered migration is particularly evident among Asian women in Australia, as a study by Bonfiacio (2009) found that since the 1980s, Filipino women comprised 69.3 percent of the total Philippine-born population in Australia, with at least half of them arriving as marriage migrants.

One married female permanent resident, aged in her early 30s, expressed:

> *My husband and I migrated here on a whim. We wanted to live in New Zealand originally, but it was more straightforward to apply to Australia. I was the main applicant through my job as a registered nurse. Life here is much more enjoyable, as I felt really overworked in Singapore. I think it was a good decision especially after I ended up having my two daughters here, who are Australian citizens (Interviewee 25, 2019).*

Table 5.2 presents the reasons given by permanent and temporary respondents. Those who have migrated with the intention of permanent settlement include: permanent migrants, those that have since become Australian citizens, and family visa holders, while temporary migrants were made up of student migrants and skilled temporary migrants. Among permanent migrants and

those who have since become Australian citizens, the Australian way of life, better employment opportunities, marriage partnership, children's education and retirement in Australia featured prominently. Investigating the less popular reasons for migration revealed that other reasons for migration (29.6 percent) and children's education (18.5 percent) featured more prominently among respondents who have since become Australian citizens, while marriage partnership was the main reason for migration for two-thirds of family visa holders. These reasons correspond with skilled migration policies favouring family migration and permanent settlement, which were influenced by respondents' circumstances.

Table 5.2. Reasons for migration given by respondents indicated by visa type (multiple response)

Reasons for migration	Permanent migrants (*N*=94)	Student migrants (*N*=58)	Australian citizens (*N*=28)	Skilled temporary migrants (*N*=12)
	%	%	%	%
The Australian way of life (*N*=99)	60.6	25.9	59.3	84.6
Accepted offer as student (*N*=82)	23.4	87.9	14.8	38.5
Better employment opportunities (*N*=76)	46.8	27.6	40.7	38.5
Marriage partnership (*N*=31)	24.5	3.4	7.4	30.8
Other (*N*=21)	9.6	6.9	29.6	0
Children's education (*N*=18)	11.6	1.7	18.5	7.7
Retirement in Australia (*N*=18)	13.8	1.7	3.7	23.1

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

In comparison to children's education and other reasons for migration, the Australian way of life and better employment opportunities featured more prominently among the small number of temporary migrants (N=12). The survey found that some 84.6 percent indicated the Australian way of life as one of the reasons for migration, compared to 60.6 percent of permanent migrants (*N*=94). On the other hand, there was a slightly higher proportion of permanent migrants (46.8 percent) who indicated better employment opportunities as one of the reasons for migration, as compared to temporary residents (38.5 percent). It is unsurprising that a much higher proportion of temporary migrants prioritise the Australian way of life as a

reason for migration, as Khoo *et al.* (2008) demonstrated that a liking for Australia's lifestyle was an important reason for temporary migrants wanting to apply for permanent residency.

One married male permanent resident, aged in his early 40s, explained:

> *I came to Australia for the first time as a student and I have since returned as a permanent resident. My grandparents are from China, my Dad's born in Indonesia, and he moved to Singapore, where I was born. Our migration journeys hold the vision of giving a better life for future generations. Having lived here for 11 years now, I see myself as totally entrenched in the Australian lifestyle and culture. I am very comfortable living and working here. I don't see myself as a migrant, but as an Australian (Interviewee 5, 2019).*

5.3 Student migration

Table 5.2 also indicated that out of the six reasons for migration, 87.9 percent of student migrants attributed the acceptance of a student offer as their main reason for migration. Despite this, it does not indicate why students have chosen Australia, over other countries for their education. Some student migrants interviewed indicated that current living arrangements with family members in Australia facilitated their transition to living overseas, with Australia being in close proximity to Singapore.

One single male international student, aged in his early 20s, expressed:

> *I studied law in Melbourne and am now in my final year of my undergraduate studies. After finishing high school, my parents were keen to send me overseas to study, with UK and Australia being our top two destinations. But we chose Australia in the end because of its geographical proximity to Singapore. I live here with my cousin and her family (Interviewee 30, 2019).*

Even before international students became a primary source of income for Australian universities, there had been a long history of Singaporean scholars who were selected to study in Australia as part of the Colombo Plan. A number eventually became notable Singaporean parliamentarians and other dignitaries. Since the introduction of skilled temporary migrants to traditional destination countries, Australia has become a destination for international students

looking to further their studies in higher education, and the focus on attracting international students is similarly observed in the United Kingdom, United States of America and Canada. One of the main attractions of studying in Australia is that international students can apply onshore for a temporary graduate visa, and then permanent residence if they are successful in their job search and eventual employment. It is possible that Singapore's familiarity with the Colombo Plan meant that when Australian universities opened its services to international students, they would more likely consider Australia as a study destination.

Despite competition in the higher education sector, it was estimated that the international student industry in Australia grew by 15 percent to $37.6 billion during the 2018-2019 financial year, and maintained its status as Australia's largest service-based export up until 2020 (DFAT 2019). Since then, the global pandemic caused by COVID-19 has meant that Australia's international borders have closed since March 2020, and it is unclear when international borders will reopen. Although the economic impacts on the higher education sector is still unknown, prospective and current international students are inadvertently affected from the closure of international borders.

It was found from the survey that better employment opportunities were another important reason for migration among one-quarter of student migrants. Some students, supported by Australia's temporary graduate visa policy, choose to stay on and look for employment in Australia after graduation. Indeed, respondents who accepted an offer as a student featured among 22.4 percent of permanent migrants, and 38.5 percent of temporary migrants. This reaffirms the observation that a proportion of student migrants gain employment and stay on in Australia after graduation and become permanent residents.

As expressed by a single, male permanent resident, aged in his late 20s:

> *I did a Bachelor of Law in Melbourne and decided to stay on. I felt that being Singaporean and bilingual gave me an advantage in terms of finding a job, especially since most Asia-Pacific firms deal with Chinese clientele. I ended up getting a job at a law firm here in Melbourne even before I finished my studies (Interviewee 17, 2019).*

Similar to the temporary graduate visa application process, graduates from Australian institutions can also apply for permanent residency onshore. This facilitates the conversion

process from international graduate to temporary residents; those with settlement aspirations go on to apply for permanent residency. Consequently, Hawthorne (2010a; 2010b) suggests that the lives and everyday practices of student migrants are far more varied than that of a skilled temporary worker, so a transnational approach must be used to understand the future aspirations of international students.

Therefore, the longstanding nature and success of Australia's permanent migration program demonstrates the country's reliance on international labour mobility, and more recently, Australia's reliance on temporary migrants have been shown to contribute significantly to the Australian economy and society (Hawthorne 2005; Hugo 2013; Khoo 2014). The earlier analysis revealed that better employment opportunity was one of the main reasons for migration particularly for permanent migrants and those who have since become Australian citizens. Indeed, permanent and temporary migrants have different reasons for migration which is largely dictated by policy. Respondents who were Australian citizens had spent on average about 15 years in Australia, while permanent residents had been in Australia for about 10 years. On the other hand, student migrants have lived in Australia for about three years, while skilled temporary migrants have been in Australia for a slightly longer duration at an average of four years. The average duration of permanent residents in Australia implies that the majority who are eligible for Australian citizenship have chosen not to do so.

5.4 Perspectives toward Australia as an attractive migrant destination

Although migration to Australia has evolved since the mid-1990s to include skilled temporary migrants, there is evidence to suggest that the long-term economic prospects of individuals is an important factor for consideration among the sampled population. Sullivan and Gunasekaran's (1994) study on the motivations of Singaporean migration to Australia indicated that for Singaporeans who had migrated to Australia in the 1990s, confidence in Australia's long-term economic prospects was an important reason for migration. This was similarly reflected among respondents who had recently migrated to Australia.

One married female respondent, aged in her late 40s, who had become an Australian citizen, explained that:

People tend to find Singapore exciting in their 20s, and go after their career, but when they are in their 30s, they have either made their mark or they haven't. When they come to their 40s, they are either still in the same job or they lost that job, and can never find a job that meets their expectations, because of foreign talents in Singapore. That was what happened to me, and to my friends. So, there is an exodus from Singapore every 10 years, and lots of people in their 30s and 40s have ended up here. Since we are migrants, we have lowered expectations. We take what we get, and work our way up (Interviewee 15, 2019).

At the time of the survey, Australia's economic advantage was unparalleled as the economy had been sustained for 29 years without an economic recession. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Australia, like many other countries, have suffered from economic hardship including a recession and a recovering economy (Janda 2020).

Even though many migrants from Singapore tend to visit Australia prior to their application to migrate, and significant numbers do end up moving to Australia, they are unsure how long they will stay or whether they will return to Singapore to live. A study by Sullivan and Gunasekaran (1994) identified that a proportion of permanent migrants had migrated to Australia 'to provide a well-rounded education for my children'. Another study by Yeo (2016) identified that Malaysians in Australia were concerned about securing a better future for their children, and the decision to move to Australia often involved sacrificing their professional and career development. Similarly, this study identifies children's education as one of the reasons for migration among respondents who were permanent migrants and those who have since become Australian citizens. Although their children have adapted to life in Australia, many face initial challenges in obtaining suitable employment. This issue is exacerbated by parenting challenges that have arisen from exposure to a new environment and the lack of extended family support in Australia.

One married male respondent, a business migrant in Australia aged in his late 40s, stated that:

We wanted to move here for the children's education. But bringing up the children in Australia has also been our main challenge. When we tell them that there are things that they can and cannot do, they are not as compliant as we were growing up. They require

explanation, which is hard for us, because we don't understand why certain things need to be explained. Sometimes we find that our kids abuse the term 'children's rights' just to get what they want. Overall, I would say that life in Australia has been quite challenging for us (Interviewee 23, 2019).

Similar to Singapore, Wasserman (2016) suggested in her study that English, the main language spoken in Australia, is one of the main attractions for South Africans considering migration to Australia. Most South Africans are bilingual, speaking both English and Afrikaans, and are educated in English. Singapore's bilingual policy means that English is taught in schools and is the primary language for business, but Singaporeans also tend to utilise their mother tongue in personal contexts to preserve their cultural identity (Tan and Ng 2011). It is difficult to test the assertion that Singaporeans choose Australia for reasons different to other English-speaking countries due to the limitations in comparative data in other major receiving countries. Nevertheless, the similarities in the perception and use of the English language between South Africans and Singaporeans suggest that parallels can be drawn on the two study groups. Other studies on South African doctors in Australia have suggested that the use of English as a business language plays a subconscious role in their decision to migrate, and seemed like a criterion 'too obvious to mention' (Arnold 2011, p. 10).

The analysis conceptualises the Australian way of life in reference to Davitt's (1898) original definition on the Australian standard of living, where Australia's economic position was found to influence the social aspects of life in Australia. As the socio-economic circumstances of migrants continue to influence the decision to migrate, the economic aspect of the Australian way of life must be factored into the analysis to understand how respondents, regardless of gender or migrant status, have fared in their employment experience in Australia.

One married female permanent resident, aged in her late 30s, stated that:

I'm Muslim, I wear a headscarf, and I'm one of the few that has a job in my industry. As Muslims, we are not often given a chance to gain local experience, because of the negative associations that come with being a Muslim. My boss was pretty cautious around me at first, but he's fine now. I will happily have lunch at the pub, which still

shocks my local colleagues, but I won't drink alcohol like Aussies do (Interviewee 10, 2019).

5.5 Employment characteristics

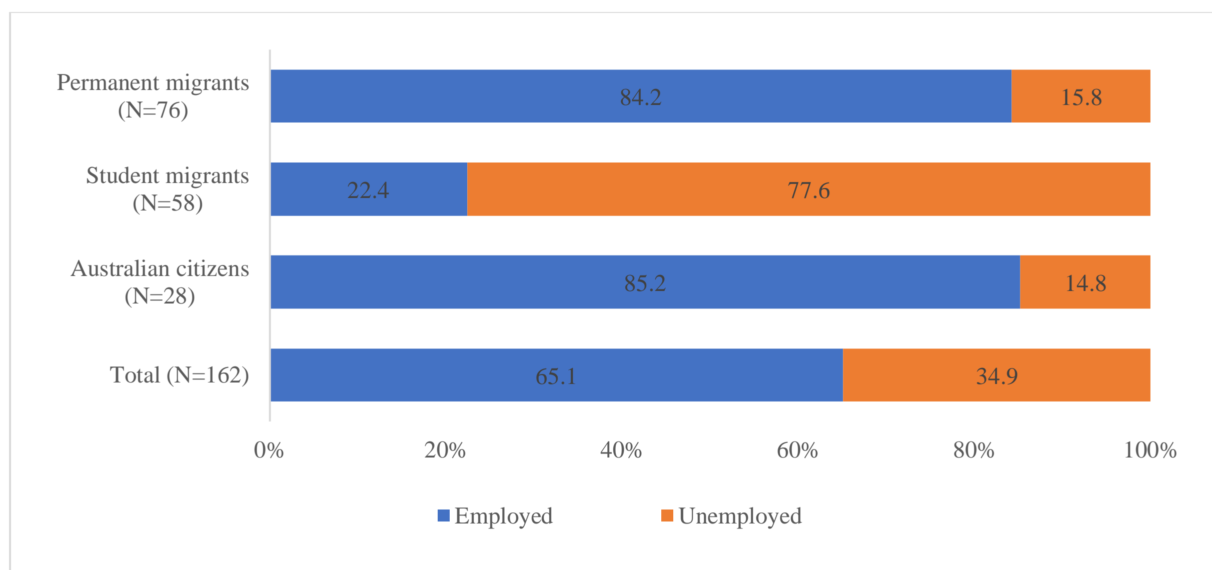
Better employment opportunities was revealed as one of the main reasons for migration to Australia, the study utilises several employment indicators to understand how respondents' employment characteristics have influenced their economic outcomes in Australia. Although respondents migrate to Australia for better employment opportunities, researchers have pointed out that not all migrants experience upward economic mobility after moving to Australia (Coughlan 1998; Yeo 2016; Wasserman 2016; Cebulla and Tan 2019; Tan *et al*. 2019). The study investigates labourforce participation, nature of employment, occupations and barriers to employment, to examine how respondents have fared as part of their economic experience. Previous studies on Asian migrants in Australia, namely Yeo (2016) on the employment experience of Malaysians in Australia demonstrate varying results. Interestingly, the study by Yeo (2016) on Malaysians in Australia demonstrated that only one-fifth of respondents indicated better employment opportunities as the main reason for migration, as compared to reasons such as education and lifestyle which made up 60 percent of responses.

In previous studies that targeted temporary migrants, researchers or government agencies directly contacted prospective respondents who were invited to participate in the research study, giving rise to much larger, sampling frame. For example, Khoo *et al.* (2008) collaborated with the Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMIA) who had administrative information of employer-sponsored temporary migrants, including names and contact addresses, so hard copies of the questionnaire could be distributed to migrants. This generated a large number of responses (*N*=1,175), with the access to a known sample population estimated at 30 percent rate of completion, a much higher rate than most social surveys. Although the online platform used in this study was effective in obtaining a sample of permanent migrants and students that resembled the overall proportions of Singaporeans in Australia, it was not able to specifically target skilled temporary migrants which resulted in low counts (*N*=12). As such, temporary migrants and students have been analysed together but must be recognised as reflecting the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of predominantly the students.

5.5.1 Employment participation

Some 65 percent of respondents were employed. Figure 5.1 demonstrates the percentage of respondents by labourforce status by visa type. At 84.2 percent and 85.2 percent respectively, similar proportions of permanent migrants and those who have since become Australian citizens were employed. On the other hand, about one-fifth of students were employed on a part-time or casual basis, corresponding with visa requirements for international students who are typically on a full-time study load.

Figure 5.1. Percentage of respondents by labourforce status by visa type*



*Note: Excludes family visa holders and skilled temporary migrants.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

The survey found 100 percent employment among respondents who were skilled temporary migrants, and interestingly also for family visa holders. However, it is important to note that the number of skilled temporary migrants (*N*=12) and family visa holders (*N*=18) were very small in both contexts and are not presented in Figure 5.1. Therefore, contrary to the general assumption of family visa holders, it is possible to analyse respondents who were family visa holders as part of the permanent migrant population, reaffirming McDonald (2020) claims that family visa holders are often highly educated with relevant qualifications in occupations that permanent migrants seek to address.

5.5.2 Nature of employment

The analysis so far demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of respondents who were skilled migrants were employed. Given that Australia's migration program is regulated based on the supply and demand of skills and occupations from the previous financial year, it is likely that most respondents were employed in occupations that addressed skill shortages in the existing labourforce. As such, respondents' nature of employment is analysed in relation to those employed, and how long they have been in Australia in relation to gender and migrant status. This includes student migrants where the majority were employed on a part-time or casual basis.

Table 5.3 presents the nature of employment of employed respondents. Some 60.3 percent of them were employed full-time, while 23.8 percent were employed part-time, 11.1 percent on a casual basis, and 4.8 percent were self-employed. When considering male and female employment there are some notable differences. Some 62 percent of males were in full-time employment, compared to 58.8 percent of females. In relation to part-time employment, there were only 22.4 percent of males compared to 25 percent of females. Hence, despite the relative casualisation of female employment, the nature of employment for full-time and part-time employment among male and female respondents was found to be relatively equal.

Table 5.3. Nature of employment given by employed male and female respondents

Nature of employment	Males (*N*=58)	Females (*N*=68)	Total (*N*=126)
	%	%	%
Full-time	62.1	58.8	60.3
Part-time	22.4	25.0	23.8
Casual	6.9	14.7	11.1
Self-employed	8.6	1.5	4.8
Total	100	100	100

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

The differences by gender were more evident among those in casual employment, and for those self-employed. There were twice as many females than males who were in casual employment,

and almost six times more males than females who were self-employed. The high proportion of males in self-employment corresponds with self-employed Australians, although the gender differences for self-employed Australians was less stark, with 2.4 times more males than females (ABS 2013c). There were a small number of respondents who were self-employed, thus the findings on self-employment should be treated with caution.

Data obtained on the forms of employment in Australia in 2013 shows that 69 percent of employed Australians were employed full-time, while 30.3 percent were employed part-time, and there was limited information on the working hours of Australians who were self-employed (ABS 2013c). More recent publications on Australian labour statistics do not detail the full-time and part-time status of Australian employees, focusing instead on weekly income indicators and flexibility of working arrangements (ABS 2019b). Despite the limitations in Australian employment data, comparing the two populations reveals that there was 8.7 percent more full-time employed Australians than employed respondents, and 4.6 more part-time and casual employment among survey respondents than employed Australians.

Table 5.4 shows the nature of employment of employed respondents by visa type. Some 59 percent of permanent migrants and 73.9 percent of those who have since become Australian citizens were employed full-time. Although skilled temporary migrants are meant to acquire full-time employment as specified on the Temporary Skill Shortage visa (subclass 482), there was a small number who were employed on a part-time or casual basis. It is possible that such respondents were on the Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485) after graduating from an Australian university. Nevertheless, the majority of skilled temporary migrants were employed full-time, as expected of skilled temporary migrants and according to the conditions of their visa. For respondents who were not yet employed full-time, the challenge to obtain full-time work could become a problem if they intend to become permanent residents. Having a part-time or casual position may inhibit such aspirations as their current working hours may not meet the necessary requirements to apply for a permanent visa. Females were more likely to face such challenges due to caring and child bearing responsibilities. The Table also demonstrates that there was a small number of student migrants who were employed in part-time or casual positions, corresponding with the expected profile of student migrants.

Self-employment also became a strategy for 11.1 percent of permanent migrants and 4.4 percent of Australian citizens. This strategy was less preferred by Singaporean migrants as evidenced by the low proportion of small business owners which was similar to Malaysians in Australia (Yeo 2016). Moreover, the business culture of Singaporeans and Malaysians in Australia is relatively limited in comparison to business migrants from Mainland China (Colic-Peisker and Deng 2019).

Table 5.4. Nature of employment of employed respondents indicated by visa type

Nature of employment	Permanent migrants (*N*=64)	Australian citizen (*N*=23)	Student migrants (*N*=14)	Family visa holders (*N*=13)	Skilled temporary migrants (*N*=12)
	%	%	%	%	%
Full-time	58.7	73.9	7.1	69.2	75.0
Part-time	27.0	13.0	42.9	15.4	16.7
Casual	3.2	8.7	50.0	15.4	8.3
Self-employed	11.1	4.4	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

A male Singaporean community and business leader expressed similar sentiments:

> *I think that somehow the Chinese coming from China are much more competitive, they tend to have a bigger appetite for risk. And for that reason, I think you see a lot more of them in business, than Singaporeans, because Singaporeans tend to move here and start looking for a day job. I was looking for a job initially, but then decided that that was not for me. Since becoming a business owner, and getting to know others in the business world, I would consider myself as the minority (Interviewee 1, 2019).*

5.5.3 Current occupation

Given Australia's strong emphasis on recruiting skilled migrants, and coupled with the high proportion of respondents who were participants in the labourforce, there is a need to understand the types of occupations in which respondents were employed. Respondents were

asked for their main occupation in Australia, and their responses were subsequently grouped according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO).

Table 5.5 shows that most respondents were employed in the top seven occupations. Examples of *'other'* occupations include actors, veterinarians, and sports coaches. Most respondents were employed in specialist professionals, which included engineers, lawyers, and experts in government and private spheres. This is closely followed by education professionals and health professionals. Specialist professionals were represented among 24.6 percent of respondents, while education professionals and health professionals were equally represented at 19.0 percent respectively. Education professionals included schoolteachers, university researchers and academics, and were more likely to be females (20.6 percent) than males (17.2 percent). This was also the case for health professionals with 23.5 percent females and 13.8 percent males. The gender differences were starker among health professionals, which consisted predominantly of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. It is not surprising that there were more females than males found in education and health occupations, as these professions tend to have greater female representation, as was similarly represented among employed Australians (ABS 2013c). On the other hand, there were more males (27.6 percent) than females (20.6 percent) represented among specialist professionals, which includes consultants in the public and private sectors, and specialist technicians. The two other occupations with a higher proportion of males include hospitality, retail and service managers, *'other'* occupations, and those who were self-employed.

The occupations represented among respondents differ from the occupation structure found among employed Australians. The majority of employed Australian males were found to be technicians and trades workers (22 percent), followed by professionals (19 percent), while females were mostly concentrated among professionals (26 percent) and clerical and administrative workers (24 percent) (ABS 2013c). Hence, the types of occupations represented among employed respondents suggest that a sizeable proportion were found within the highly skilled category in the SOL, corresponding with labourmarket shortages dictated by migration policy. Since 2016, the SOL had been revised to further differentiate occupations on the Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List (MLTSSL), and the Short-term Skilled Occupation List (STSOL). These revisions have minimal implications for employed

respondents, rather it demonstrates the parallels between occupations represented among respondents and occupations found in the MLTSSL. Occupations included in the MLTSSL tends to list highly skilled professionals, of which there is a sizeable proportion represented among sampled respondents.

Table 5.5. Occupations given by employed male and female respondents

Current occupation	Males (*N*=58)	Females (*N*=68)	Total (*N*=126)
	%	%	%
Specialist professionals	27.6	20.6	24.6
Education professionals	17.2	20.6	19.0
Health professionals	13.8	23.5	19.0
Business, human resource and marketing managers	13.8	13.2	13.5
Hospitality, retail and service managers	10.3	7.4	9.7
Sales representatives and agents	5.2	4.4	4.8
ICT professionals	1.7	5.9	4.0
Other	5.2	2.9	3.9
Self-employed	5.2	0	2.4
Total	100	100	100

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

Other occupations found among the majority of respondents include hospitality, retail and service managers, business, human resource and marketing managers, and ICT professionals. ICT professionals emerged as one of the seven most common professions, engineering professionals, a common profession among Singaporeans, was found in a smaller proportion of respondents. This is in spite of a known shortage of engineers in Australia (Engineers Australia 2020). Some have attributed the differences in labourforce structure within the industry as some of the initial challenges that Singaporean engineers face when looking for a similar position in Australia.

One married male permanent resident, aged in his early 40s, expressed the sentiment that:

I was looking for something in engineering because my experience is in engineering. But engineering jobs in my field are structured very differently in Australia as compared to Singapore. What we do in Singapore as one job has been split into four or five different jobs here. In Singapore, you learn many skills and manage multiple roles, but here, the jobs are more specialised and divided into multiple roles. So I had to learn to change my CV structure to suit the Australian job market, and had to think about how to make myself relevant to Australian employers (Interviewee 28, 2019).

The top five occupations represented among respondents were selected and analysed by visa type. Table 5.6 shows that health professionals were predominantly represented among permanent and temporary migrants and those who have since become Australian citizens, due to the higher level of training required in health industries. Over one-third of health professionals were permanent migrants. On the other hand, the majority of respondents in hospitality, retail and service manager occupations were students. Specialist and education professionals, were fairly evenly distributed across all visa types. It is likely that students who were also education professionals worked on a part-time or casual basis, as research assistants and undertaking tutoring work in a private capacity or at university.

Table 5.6. Top five occupations of employed respondents indicated by visa type

Current occupation	Permanent migrants (*N*=53)	Australian citizens (*N*=20)	Student migrants (*N*=14)
	%	%	%
Specialist professionals	34.0	25.0	21.4
Education professionals	15.1	40.0	28.6
Health professionals	30.2	20.0	0
Business, human resource and marketing managers	15.1	10.0	14.3
Hospitality, retail and service managers	5.6	5.0	35.7
Total	100	100	100

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

The top five occupations were matched with reasons for migration, however their employment now does not necessarily reflect their initial motivations. With the exception of education

professionals, it was found that some 67 percent of respondents in each of the top five occupations attributed the Australian way of life as one of the reasons for migration. A similar distribution was found in the association between respondents in these occupations and better employment opportunities, suggesting that some were willing to compromise on employment opportunities for what they perceived was a better lifestyle. On the other hand, education professionals attributed marriage partnership (33.3 percent) and accepted an offer as a student (37.5 percent) as the main reasons for migrating to Australia. This suggests that education professionals were most likely to have come to Australia after accepting their offer as a student, and have since applied for permanent residency. Children's education as a reason for migration was particularly concentrated among one-fifth of health professionals, while retirement as a reason for migration was found among health professionals and interestingly, hospitality, retail and service managers. Given that students were the main group of respondents working in hospitality, this suggests that some may return to Australia at a later life stage.

5.5.4 Highest post-school qualifications

The analysis continues to examine the skill sets of respondents by analysing their highest post-school qualifications. Not all respondents with post-school qualifications are currently in the labourforce, for instance, some may be pursuing further study, some are choosing not to work, and still others may be looking for work, unfortunately the survey did not ask about unemployment. The analysis also excludes the majority of student migrants since their visa status implies that the majority are still obtaining their post-school qualifications at the time of survey. As such, a total of 142 respondents were included in this analysis.

Respondents were given several options to choose from, including postgraduate qualifications, Bachelor degrees, diplomas, and trade certificates. Due to the low numbers of respondents with diplomas, and trade certificates, they were grouped together. As shown in Table 5.7, some 85.6 percent of respondents had post-school qualifications, with 44.5 percent of them with postgraduate qualifications, and 41.1 percent with Bachelor degrees, while the remaining 14.4 percent had diplomas or trade certificates. This category comprised of those whose highest post-school qualifications were diplomas and trade certificates, including a proportion who had obtained International Baccalaureate diplomas, while less than five percent of them had trade certificates.

From the 2016 Census, the ABS recorded for the total Australian population, close to one-quarter had completed a Bachelor degree or above, almost ten percent had an Advanced diploma or diploma, and just under one-fifth of respondents had completed a Certificate level qualification (ABS 2016a). A notably larger proportion of survey respondents had obtained higher post-school qualifications in comparison to the broader Australian population. Three and a half times more Singaporean respondents have completed a Bachelor or higher degree, while twice as many Australians have completed an Advanced diploma or diploma, or a Certificate level qualification. Therefore, the highest post-school qualifications of respondents demonstrate considerable differences in skill sets in comparison to the Australian population, and this corresponds with the types of occupations represented among employed respondents and occupations found in the MLTSSL.

Table 5.7. Post-school qualifications given by male and female respondents

Post-school qualifications	Males (*N*=65)	Females (*N*=81)	Total (*N*=142)
	%	%	%
Postgraduate	47.7	42.0	44.5
Bachelor or higher	36.9	44.4	41.1
Diplomas or trade certificates	15.4	13.6	14.4
Total	100	100	100

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

Table 5.7 also shows the highest post-school qualifications of male and female respondents, indicating that some 48 percent of male respondents had postgraduate qualifications, while 42 percent of females did so. This finding is similar to previous studies that have examined the post-school qualifications of Singaporeans, where Saw (2012) concluded that males tended to hold higher qualifications. There were relatively high proportions of females working as education and health professionals, so it is not surprising to find that there was a higher proportion of females with Bachelor or higher qualifications. The analysis also demonstrates a fairly even distribution of respondents with other post-school qualifications between males and females.

The country where respondents' highest post-school qualifications were obtained was explored in an open-ended response. The analysis demonstrates a smaller number of responses (*N*=66) as more than half the respondents with a post-school qualification misread the question and wrote their award title instead. It is possible that the question on the country where highest post-school qualifications were obtained should have been placed after award title in order to facilitate a higher number of responses. It is important to understand whether respondents are affected by the occupational regulations that are usually concerned with migrants from non-English speaking countries, of which Singapore is regarded.

Figure 5.2 indicates that up to 60 percent of respondents obtained their highest post-school qualifications in Australia. This proportion was higher among some visa types and lower among others. Less than 60 percent of respondents who were permanent migrants and Australian citizens had obtained their highest post-school qualifications in Australia, but were no less disadvantaged than temporary migrants and family visa holders who had Australian qualifications. Other countries where highest post-school qualifications were obtained include Singapore, United Kingdom, United States, Canada and Sweden, and it is likely that post-school qualifications obtained from these countries would have been similarly recognised by Australian employers.

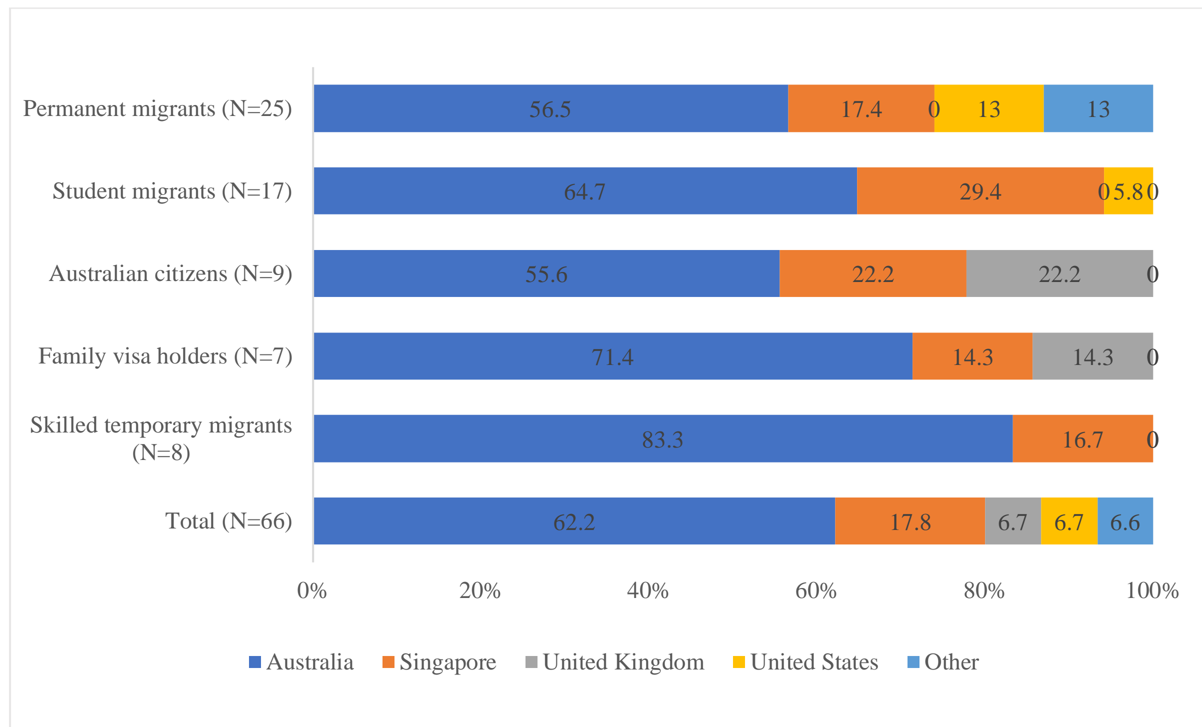
One married male permanent resident, aged in his early 40s, reflected on his experience:

> *I studied overseas through a military scholarship and graduated from a British university. That worked out well for me when I moved to Australia, because my degree was similar to the program here, and employers recognised it straightaway (Interviewee 28, 2019).*

Some 83 percent of skilled temporary migrants obtained their highest post-school qualifications in Australia, followed by 71.4 percent of family visa holders, corresponding with existing literature that reiterates Australia's international education as a pathway to skilled migration (Ziguras and Law 2006; Robertson 2013). It is possible that family visa holders ended up staying in Australia after meeting a suitable partner, a flow on effect since the structuring of international education as a pathway to skilled migration. Some postgraduate students were also represented in the analysis, as Australia was chosen as a destination for

postgraduate studies among students that have completed their undergraduate degrees in Australia, Singapore and the United States.

Figure 5.2. Country where highest post-school qualifications of respondents were obtained indicated by visa type



Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

5.6 Occupational barriers to employment

Prospective migrants outside Australia who are successful in their permanent residency application eventually relocate to Australia, and upon arrival, continue work in their respective careers. Historically, existing literature demonstrates the employment challenges that migrants face upon arrival in Australia, and around half of non-English speaking migrants were never able to return to their pre-migration occupations (Iredale 1989). In addition to the linking of international graduates with skilled migration, the introduction of temporary migration policies in Australia encouraged 'designer migrants' who have been trained to circulate in neoliberal labour markets (Ziguras and Law 2006; Qureshi and Osella 2013, p. 111).

There is a long history of occupational regulation in Australia which started from the establishment of the New South Wales Medical Registration Board (Dewdeny 1970). In

addition to medical practitioners, a number of other occupations, especially those that are perceived as life-threatening, such as nursing, dentistry and pharmacy, gradually followed the pattern of regulating entry. Since then, prospective migrants are more likely to have Australian qualifications, as migration policy encourages prospective migrants to train in Australian institutions and in doing so facilitates onshore access to permanent jobs (Sullivan *et al.* 2002). Throughout this process, state autonomy remained a feature, meaning that skills recognition in one state or territory did not always translate to another (Iredale 1989, Hugo 1999, 2014a).

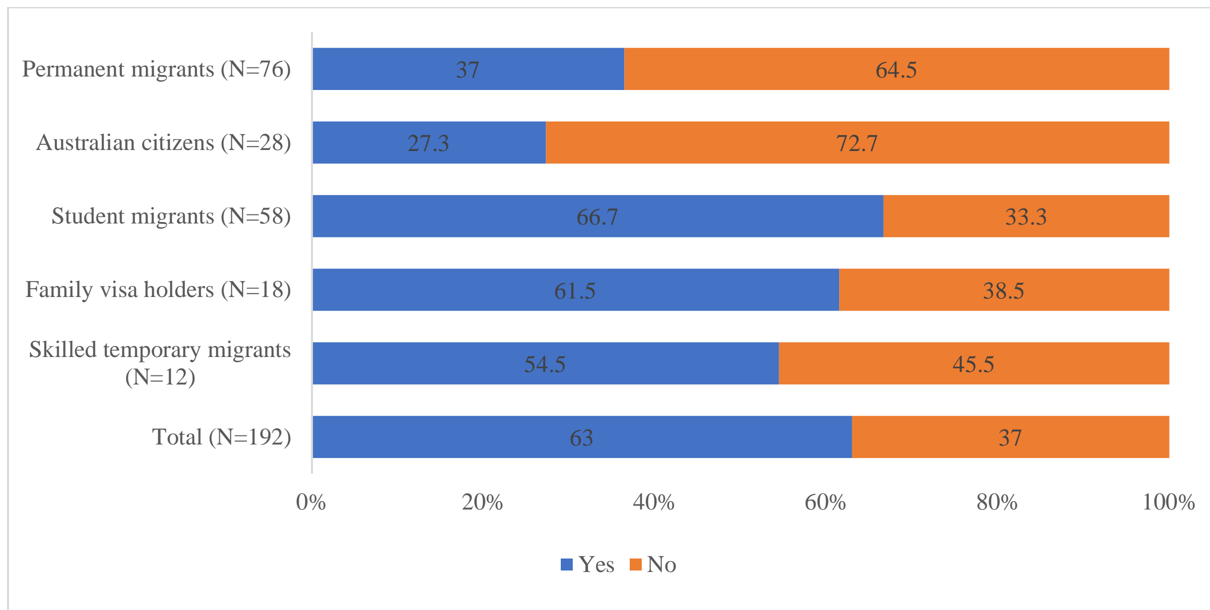
One married male permanent resident, aged in his early 30s, expressed an opinion that:

> *In my opinion, the most difficult part about migration is skills assessment, to face the governing bodies who assess your occupation. My wife is a registered nurse, she had to go to ACRA to get her nurse registration, and after that, she had to go for skills assessment with NMED. The easy part was when it came to lodging our migration application with the Department of Border Protection (Interviewee 8, 2019).*

The analysis reveals that despite being a highly educated and highly skilled workforce, 63 percent of total respondents identified as experiencing barriers to employment (Figure 5.3). However, those who experienced barriers to employment were more likely to be students, family visa holders and skilled temporary migrants. In comparison, less than 35.5 percent of respondents who were permanent migrants, and a quarter of those that have since become Australian citizens, experienced barriers to employment in Australia. Other studies have demonstrated that employers tend to favour applicants with permanent residency status as was the case here (Wasserman 2016; Yeo 2016; Tan and Hugo 2017).

Stated barriers to employment given by respondents included the lack of Australian connections and lack of Australian work experience, yielding 56.0 percent of responses. These barriers were not expected, suggesting the initial barriers to finding a job in Australia may have to do with the culture of recruitment in Australia, rather than job availability, or a language barrier (Cebulla and Tan 2019; Tan *et al*. 2019). As explained by a female permanent resident, *'I'm up to my fourth job in Australia, so it was much easier. The first job was really hard, took more than 3 months and it was through a contact in Singapore' (Interviewee 12, 2019).*

Figure 5.3. Barriers to employment of respondents indicated by visa type



Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

One married male permanent resident, aged in his early 40s, reflected on a similar experience:

> *After a while, I realized that the recruitment process in Australia is quite different to Singapore or Malaysia. In Singapore, there is a huge emphasis on your qualifications, your certifications and your experience, but in Australia, the focus is a lot more on the relationship, and your networks. When I understood that, I spent a lot of time building those relationships. It was from these networks that I got my first engineering job (Interviewee 28, 2019).*

Nevertheless, there were a number of ways that respondents took upon themselves to overcome the barriers they faced. Examples of methods utilised by respondents included *'changing the structure of my CV to suit the Australian job market'*, '*thinking about how to make yourself relevant to the people here'*. Others demonstrated willingness to change their skills, or to undergo retraining, in order to meet the needs of the Australian economy.

One married male permanent resident, aged in his late 40s, expressed:

> *I was a civil servant in Singapore but now I am in real estate. I started out being an analyst, and I ended up becoming an Auctioneer. It just came down to job availability.*

Real estate is a low entry barriers type sector, as compared to something that requires Australian experience. Initially, I was not that interested on a career switch, but I could not find a government job without first becoming an Australian citizen. Right now, I'm two months away from becoming a citizen. But even if I was a citizen then, I didn't have the Australian experience (Interviewee 7, 2019).

When analysing barriers to employment between males and females there were no observable patterns of differentiation between them, corresponding with the earlier analysis on the nature of employment, and their employment on a full-time or part-time basis. Despite the initial observations that more women in their 40s end up working part-time in the sampled population, it appears that the decision to work part-time is a personal choice, probably related to child-raising activities, rather than the lack of options to work full-time, or inherent structural or traditional biases in hiring men over women.

5.7 Consistency with previous occupation

According to Australia's skilled migration program, those considering migration to Australia must have an occupation listed on the Skilled Occupation List (SOL). The SOL is evaluated at the end of every financial year, and jobs may be added or taken off the list depending on demands in the Australian economy. As the Australian financial year starts on July 1st and ends the following year on June 30th, prospective migrants must ensure that their nominated occupations are found on the SOL before their migration applications can be processed (Tan and Hugo 2017). Part of the application process involves skills recognition by selected Australian organisations. Tan and Hugo (2017) claim that migrants must present evidence, to demonstrate their expertise in their nominated occupation, supported by prior or ongoing work experience, and relevant post-school qualifications.

Richardson *et al.* (2002) found that obtaining employment in a field that is consistent with migrants' qualifications and previous experience is crucial for successful settlement. Not only does obtaining suitable employment provide necessary income for migrants and their families, it reaffirms the self-worth of migrants and facilitates integration into the broader society. A large proportion of respondents were part of the labourforce, demonstrating the intended outcome of Australia's skilled permanent migration program, however not all skilled migrants

gain employment in their desired occupation (Coughlan 1998; Cebulla and Tan 2019; Tan *et al*. 2019). Nevertheless, the survey found that almost 60 percent of permanent migrants were employed in an occupation consistent with their nominated occupation.

A Singaporean community leader reflected on how this group of migrants have fared:

> *In my experience, there can be a big retraining process that happens when Singaporeans migrate to Australia. I came from a business background, but I had a career change and now I work in ICT solutions. I know of others who have done the same. We knew we had to change our skill sets to qualify for certain occupations where we could find work to support our families (Interviewee 9, 2019).*

The issue of skills transferability can be attributed to the hypothesised time lag between the revision of the SOL and the oversupply of certain occupations. A recent example in 2015 meant that dentists were subsequently removed from the SOL, but only after many petitions from the Australian Dental Association (ADA) that convinced the federal government that there was an excess of dentists in the number of dental graduates and the existing labourforce (Dental Community 2015). Hence, the inconsistency between the actual labourforce shortages and occupations listed on the SOL implies that it is not surprising that migrants in certain occupations may not be able to find employment consistent with their nominated occupation (Cebulla and Tan 2019; Tan *et al*. 2019).

The issue of job consistency is less relevant for Singaporeans in Australia since respondents demonstrate skills transferability in successfully entering the Australian labourforce. Ho and Alcorso (2004) found that positive employment outcomes in Australia are linked to higher levels of human capital, including educational qualifications and proficiency in English. Other studies have shown that migrants from English-speaking backgrounds enjoy higher rates of employment, rapid entry into the labourmarket, better salary packages, and other labourmarket advantages (Hawthorne 1997; Ho and Alcorso 2004; Richardson and Lester 2004). Hawthorne (1997) also demonstrates that migrants from Commonwealth countries also fare better than migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds, while refugees and migrants from other cultural backgrounds tend to experience greater disadvantages in the labourmarket, usually

because they have lower skill levels and experience language difficulties (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007).

As expressed by a married female permanent resident, aged in her early 30s:

> *Deloitte in Darwin interviewed us and gave both my husband and I jobs on a 457 visa. Back then, we didn't think of living permanently in Australia, but when we ended up moving here for the children's education, our job with Deloitte, together with our Australian university qualifications, was probably what helped us get our jobs here so quickly after getting permanent residency (Interviewee 10, 2019).*

Considering the challenges that other migrants have faced in finding jobs consistent with their occupation and previous experience, the survey results show that respondents have fared reasonably well in the labourforce. This is similar to research by Wasserman (2016) that found that just under two-thirds of migrants worked in the same job or industry in Australia as in South Africa. This suggests that most Singaporean migrants seem to transition seamlessly into the Australian labourforce without experiencing extensive downward mobility. These findings correspond with the observations that respondents are not only highly educated, but are educated in countries where their skills are recognised by Australian employers, and speak fluent English. Therefore, respondents are perceived as 'ideal migrants' and are likely to experience positive socio-economic outcomes in Australia.

As expressed by a single, female permanent resident, aged in her late 40s:

> *I came to Australia about 16 years ago on a skilled temporary visa and am now a permanent resident. I first came to Australia on holiday, visiting my Australian colleagues because I was interested in working in Australia. I was working for a multinational company at the time, which often advertised for international postings on the internal job portal. After my holiday, I decided to apply for a job in Australia, and I was living and working in Australia six months later (Interviewee 3, 2019).*

5.8 Socio-economic outcomes

The survey found that the majority of permanent migrants and those who have since become Australian citizens generally had positive employment experiences in Australia. Although socio-economic outcomes are an important aspect of settlement experiences, Yeo (2016) points out that it may be premature to draw conclusions on migrants' settlement experiences without taking into account the length of time that they have been in Australia. Similarly, Birrell *et al.* (2006) argue that longer term employment status provides better outcomes in comparison to the initial arrival stage, especially for permanent migrants who have made a lifetime move and may take some time to find a job and settle down. Indeed, there is a direct relationship between longer term employment status and length of stay in Australia. The analysis so far demonstrates that respondents who have since become Australian citizens have the highest rate of labourforce participation and the highest rate of full-time employment. At an average of 15.2 years, respondents who have since become Australians have been in Australia the longest. This is followed by permanent migrants and family visa holders who have lived in Australia for an average of 10 years, and not all are in full-time employment. Therefore, the employment outcomes of respondents correspond with longitudinal studies that show migrant employment outcomes consistently improve with the duration of settlement in Australia (Ho and Alcorso 2004).

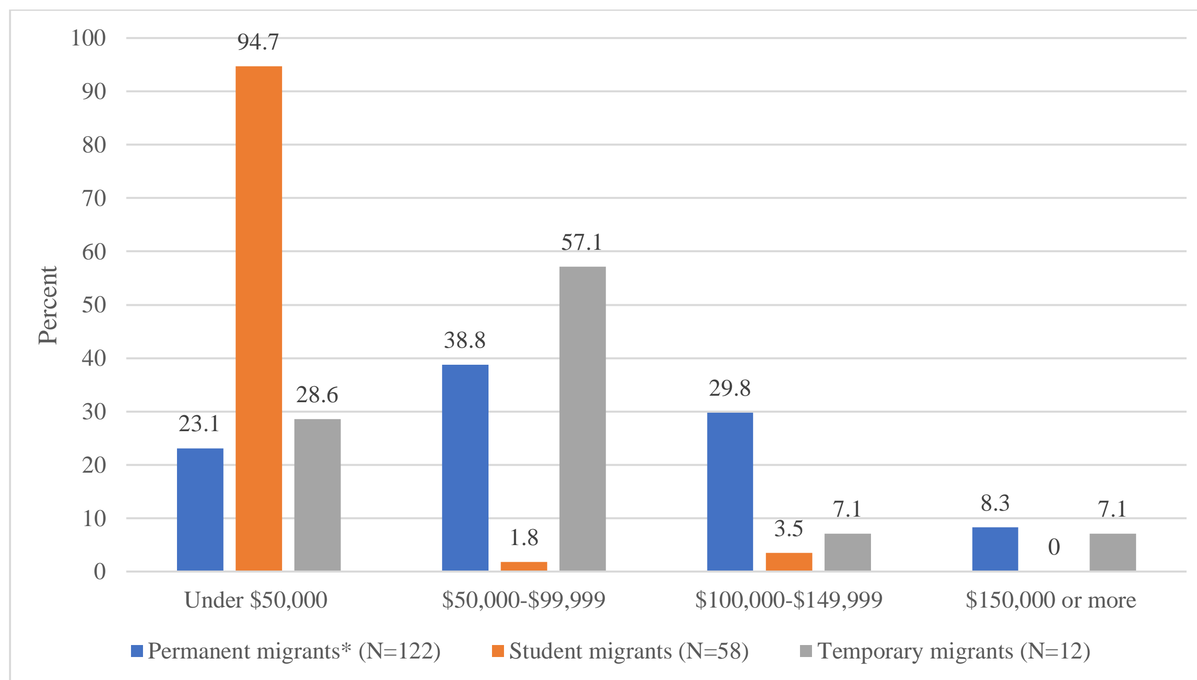
Due to the conditions of their visa, the majority of temporary migrants are in full-time employment despite having lived in Australia for an average of 3.9 years. It is expected that temporary migrants have positive economic outcomes as full-time employment is a prerequisite for obtaining a temporary visa. On the other hand, only one-fifth of all student migrants were employed part-time or on a casual basis, and the survey found that students experienced barriers to employment, corresponding with their length of residence in Australia (2.7 years).

The analysis on socio-economic status by migrant status involves the selection of four main socio-economic indicators as proxy to demonstrate the economic outcomes of migration. These indicators include annual income, sources of income, residential status and change in financial situation. Sources of income was the only indicator that allowed for more than one selection in order to account for respondents with multiple sources of income.

5.8.1 Annual income

Figure 5.4 shows that 74 percent of respondents had an annual income under $99,999, with 45 percent under $50,000. One quarter had an annual income over $100,000, while less than six percent of respondents had an annual income greater than $150,000. When comparing permanent and temporary visa types, it was found that there were some similarities in income distribution between the two groups. More than 60 percent of them had an annual income above $50,000, corresponding with positive employment outcomes. As expected of student migrants, almost all of them had an annual income under $50,000, given that the majority of them were not part of the labourforce, and the small proportion who were mainly worked on a part-time or casual basis. Some would also be on scholarships as seen in Table 5.8.

Figure 5.4. Annual income of respondents indicated by visa type



Note: Permanent migrants include skilled migration visa holders, family visa holders and those with Australian citizenship.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

Comparing annual income of respondents to the broader Australian population, their annual income is fairly similar to that of employed Australians, as the dataset on Australia's

employment characteristics reveals that the median employee earnings in August 2019 was $1,100 per week, which was equivalent to an annual income of $57,200 (ABS 2019).

5.8.2 Sources of income

Table 5.8 shows that a salaried job was the main source of income for two-thirds of respondents. Examining sources of income among permanent and temporary visa type demonstrate some similarities between the two cohorts. The majority of incomes are sourced from job salaries, corresponding with migration policy that emphasises the need for the participation of skilled migrants in the labourforce. Income from other sources, such as rental income, shares and other investments, were more prominent among middle-aged respondents who were permanent migrants, including those on family visas and those who have since become Australian citizens, where diversification in income sources was apparent. Permanent and temporary migrants indicated a salaried job as their main source of income, but family visa holders and those with Australian citizenship also supported themselves through rental income and other investments.

Table 5.8. Sources of income of respondents indicated by visa type (multiple response)

Sources of income	Permanent migrants* (*N*=122)	Student migrants (*N*=58)	Temporary migrants (*N*=12)	Total (*N*=251)
	%	%	%	%
Job salary (*N*=129)	82.6	28.1	92.9	67.9
Parents support (*N*=53)	11.6	64.9	14.2	23.7
Rental income (*N*=30)	23.1	3.5	0	15.6
Shares and other investments (*N*=28)	19.8	5.3	7.1	14.7
Awards and scholarships (*N*=11)	0.8	17.5	0	10.0

*Note: Permanent migrants include skilled migration visa holders, family visa holders and those with Australian citizenship.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

The survey found that more than half of student migrants used parents' support as a source of income, while at least a quarter supplemented their income through casual or part-time employment. To a lesser extent, parents' support was also evident among those who were Australian citizens, and this may be attributed to those who had migrated to Australia at a young age with their families. Despite having multiple income streams, Singaporean students had the lowest annual income, as 90 percent of them had an annual income under $50,000, corresponding with other international students who tend to face financial hardship in Australia (Tan and Hugo 2017).

5.8.3 Residential status

As indicated in Table 5.9, the analysis on residential status shows that more than 40 percent of respondents were renting privately. Some 40 percent were home owners or paying off a mortgage. For permanent migrants, one-third were home owners, one-quarter were paying off a mortgage, and another third were renting privately. The housing tenure of permanent migrants is comparable to the broader Australian population, as the 2016 Australian Census data demonstrates that two-thirds of Australians were home owners, half of all home owners were paying off a mortgage, while 32 percent were in private rental accommodation.

Table 5.9. Residential status of respondents indicated by visa type

Residential status	Permanent migrants* (*N*=122)	Student migrants (*N*=58)	Temporary migrants (*N*=12)	Total (*N*=192)
	%	%	%	%
Private rental	33.1	52.6	85.7	42.7
Home owner	36.4	3.5	14.3	25.0
Paying off a mortgage	25.6	0	0	16.1
Renting university accommodation	8.3	42.1	0	13.0
Living with parents	4.1	1.8	0	3.2
Total	100	100	100	100

*Note: Permanent migrants include skilled migration visa holders, family visa holders and those with Australian citizenship.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

The Table also demonstrates that some 86 percent of temporary migrants and 94.7 percent of student migrants did not own a home. Temporary migrants were much more likely to be in a private rental arrangement, and student migrants were more likely to be in university accommodation. Interestingly, students preferred a private rental arrangement, as about 53 percent of students lived in private rentals, in comparison to 42 percent who were in university accommodation. Therefore, the analysis on residential status by permanent and temporary visa type reiterates the finding that migrants may take some time to establish their lives in Australia (Ho and Alcorso 2004; Birrell *et al.* 2006; Yeo 2016).

Further analysis revealed that the largest proportion of home owners were older respondents who have since become Australian citizens, with half of these respondents being home owners. These results correspond with the length of time that respondents have been in Australia, which tends to influence their labourforce experience and employment outcomes.

5.8.4 Change in financial situation after migrating

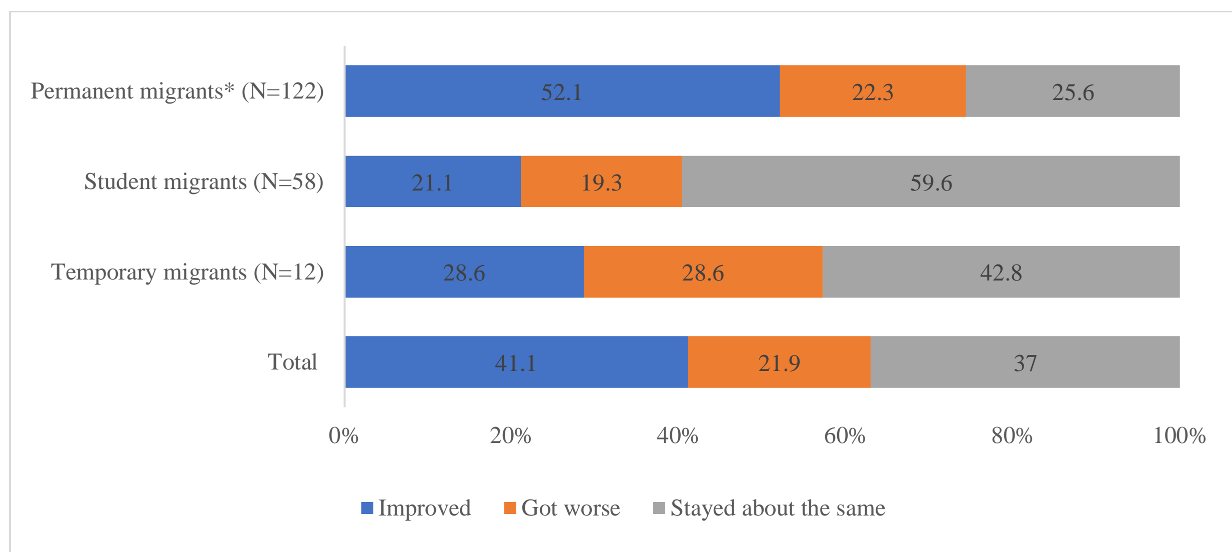
The final indicator and proxy used to examine the socio-economic outcomes of respondents refers to the change in financial situation after migrating. Figure 5.5 shows that almost half of the respondents indicated that their financial situation since moving to Australia had improved, while a third indicated that their financial situation had remained the same. The remaining one-fifth of respondents felt that their financial situation had become worse. There were minimal differences between males and females who felt that their financial situation had not changed, however, about one-quarter of females felt that their financial situation had become worse. This was mainly concentrated among older respondents.

The Figure shows that 52 percent of permanent migrants, family visa holders and those who have since become Australian citizens indicated that their financial situation had improved, however, a much lower proportion of student migrants (21.1 percent) and temporary migrants (28.6 percent) felt the same way. Since education was the main reason for students coming to Australia, it was not surprising to find that up to 60 percent of student migrants felt that their financial situation had not changed. It is likely that improvements in financial situation of respondents is directly related to the extent of commitment to Australia, as almost 70 percent of respondents who were Australian citizens felt that their financial situations had improved,

followed by half of all permanent migrants. Therefore, those who have been in Australia for a longer duration demonstrate positive longer-term changes to their financial situation after migrating.

Among the one-fifth of respondents who felt that their financial situation had become worse after migration, this may be attributed to higher income tax rates, as well as the higher cost of living in Australia, both factors that have exacerbated the overall financial costs in migrating to Australia. This view was particularly concentrated among older respondents, as many were either approaching retirement or were unable to secure a promotion.

Figure 5.5. Financial situation of respondents after migrating indicated by visa type



*Note: Permanent migrants include skilled migration visa holders, family visa holders and those with Australian citizenship.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter shows that there were two distinct groups of respondents in the survey, permanent migrants who had migrated to Australia with their families, and temporary migrants who were predominantly students. Despite differences in occupation and socio-demographic characteristics, the analysis found that all respondents tend to seek better employment opportunities in Australia. This is evident from their active participation in the Australian

labourforce, as most permanent migrants and those who have since become Australian citizens are employed full-time in professional jobs, and are less likely to face barriers to employment. Such respondents enter Australia as part of a well-educated and highly skilled workforce in order to address skill shortages in the Australian labourforce. This experience was similar for males and females. On the other hand, skilled temporary migrants and family visa holders are more likely to experience barriers to employment. The most common barriers included the lack of Australian work experience, and the lack of Australian connections. Despite initial challenges, all respondents tend to experience positive socio-economic outcomes in Australia. Those who had migrated to Australia with the intention for permanent settlement view their migration journeys as the search for a better life for themselves and for future generations. This appears to also be the case for some temporary migrants, who were in early stages of establishing their life in Australia at the time of the survey.

The online survey undertaken here looked exclusively at respondents who were part of existing Singaporean migrant networks and student associations, and were competent in using an online medium to participate in a research study. Therefore, the results do not demonstrate the full picture of Singaporeans in Australia, however, there appears to be a positive picture of Singaporeans in Australia at the time of the survey. The economic repercussions of COVID-19 extending beyond Australia's border closures are as yet unknown but they may considerably alter the dimensions in international migration and the outcomes for migrants in Australia. Nevertheless, the positive representation from this study of Singaporeans in Australia can serve as a baseline prior to any changes if they do arise.

CHAPTER 6

THE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND TRANSNATIONAL LINKAGES OF SINGAPOREANS IN AUSTALIA

6.1 Introduction

Given that social connections are an important aspect of migrant communities in destination countries, this chapter utilises data obtained from the online survey and begins by examining the pre-move contacts of respondents to establish how many had existing contacts in Australia before migration. The analysis also investigates differences between visa holders in relation to migrant networks and their settlement experience. Questions are directed toward exploring the nature and frequency of respondents' interactions with social organisations and clubs in Australia. The presence of a Singaporean community in Australia is also examined by how often they communicate with other Singaporeans in Australia and contacts in Singapore. Interview data are used to supplement the main findings from the online survey.

As migrant networks become increasingly transnational, the economic and social linkages of respondents, as well as their future plans in Australia, were examined in relation to gender and the type of visa they held. Existing literature indicates that some temporary migrants choose to become permanent migrants, yet respondents who are currently permanent residents and plan to become Australian citizens exhibit the ultimate form of commitment to Australia. Although Singaporeans are not allowed dual citizenship, a proportion of respondents have already adopted Australian citizenship and as a result have given up their citizenship from their country of birth. Therefore, the influence of citizenship on transnational linkages is explored within the lesser-known context where dual citizenship is not accepted, followed by a closing discussion on the frequency and reasons for respondents' visits to Singapore.

6.2 Pre-move contacts

Historically, Singaporean migrants in Australia have congregated in certain parts of Australia: in Perth, Western Australia, and more recently, in Melbourne, Victoria. Since the abolishment of the White Australia Policy throughout the late 1960s to 1970s, there has been a consistent

increase in the number of Singaporeans in Australia. This increase has been accelerated with the introduction of temporary migration schemes in 1996, allowing for shorter visa processing times. As such, those who wish to live and work in Australia for a temporary duration are able to do so quickly. Although the number of Singaporean students and skilled temporary migrants to Australia have waxed and waned over the years, the introduction of temporary migration policies have facilitated temporary migration to Australia in addition to more permanent flows.

One aspect of migration studies is the presence of a critical mass who maintain economic, social and political connections at the destination. In the context of transnational migration, such connections are simultaneously maintained with linkages in their country of origin. Similar to family networks which have a channelling effect as migrants move into geographical areas that others have settled beforehand, migrant networks influence the migration decision by connecting prospective migrants who currently live, study or work at the destination (Massey *et al*. 1998; Vertovec 1999).

The study utilises pre-move contacts as a measure to understand how respondents' migration decisions are affected by the presence of existing ties in Australia. A question was included in the survey that asked about their relationships to people and organisations in Australia and allowed them to provide multiple responses which were then ordered in terms of popularity.

The types of pre-move contacts include economic and non-economic ties to Australia, both of which feature prominently in contemporary migration. Faist *et al*. (2013) demonstrate that pre-move contacts are facilitated and maintained through digital communication networks known as transnational circuits, which includes those involved in the exchange of common goods and services. These observations follow a growing body of literature that have linked the presence of pre-move contacts to transnational ties maintained by migrants to their country of origin (Cohen 1997, 2008; Schiller and Fouron 1999; Schiller 2005). However, the scholarship on how pre-move contacts actually influence the migration decision is limited, which is surprising as these contacts are often regarded as trusted sources best placed to help prospective migrants determine the presence of opportunities at destination, and in eventually prompting the migration decision (Yeo 2016).

Respondents were encouraged to select all the pre-move contacts that were most relevant in influencing their migration decision. The likelihood of movement was also thought to increase with the closeness of the relationship. Herman (2006) argued that spouses, parents, siblings and children constitute strong familial ties, while grandparents, other relatives, and friends were regarded as weaker ties.

Table 6.1 shows the pre-move contacts in Australia for male and female respondents which were ordered according to overall popularity. Although the survey questionnaire allowed respondents up to nine selections for pre-move contacts, only six yielded more than five percent of responses; partners, distant relatives and colleagues were combined into pre-existing categories. Family contacts included partners and distant relatives, while colleagues were combined with employer or business associates. Half of all respondents indicated that they had contact with friends in Australia prior to their migration, while 39 percent of them had family in Australia. It was found that almost half the respondents who had friends as pre-move contacts also had family members in Australia, and combined friends and family yielded 89 percent of responses. On the other hand, those with employer or business associates only featured among 6.3 percent of responses.

Table 6.1 Pre-move contacts given by male and female respondents (multiple response)

Pre-move contacts	Males (*N*=86)	Females (*N*=106)	Total (*N*=250)
	%	%	%
Friends (*N*=96)	55.8	45.3	50.0
Family (*N*=75)	41.9	36.8	39.1
No one (*N*=55)	24.4	32.1	28.6
Employer or business associates (*N*=12)	8.1	4.7	6.3
Student groups (*N*=12)	7.0	5.7	6.3

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

More than ten percent of males had friends already living in Australia, while one-third of females indicated that they had no contacts in Australia before moving. Although the survey selected individuals, not households, the observations in the Table demonstrate that male

respondents have more established pre-move contacts, while females tend to form connections upon arrival at destination. Studying the movements of women separately from men has become more important in recent years as migration research shifts from exclusively studying male labour migrants to explore the role of women in the migration process (Rudd 2003; Donato *et al*. 2006; Piper 2008). Historically, studies that focussed solely on men have done so on the assumption that men are the decision makers in the migration process and women the tied movers; if women migrate on their own, they follow the same routes, are motivated by similar considerations, and experience the same consequences as do male migrants (Lauby and Stark 1988).

The role of gender in migration has been acknowledged over time, and has become an important dimension in social differentiation that influences the migration decision and outcome of migration (Rudd 2003; Hugo 2006; Castles 2014). In some instances, policies dictated by sending and receiving countries may influence the gendered patterns of migration (Piper 2008). Although there are no current policies between Singapore and Australia that involve gender preferences, there are some migration circumstances that have been observed to be more prevalent among females than males. In particular, marriage partnership as a reason for migration was more common among female respondents, affirming the age-old assumption that men are the decision makers and women the tied movers (refer Chapter 5, Section 5.2).

One married female business migrant, aged in her early 50s, reflected on her migration experience:

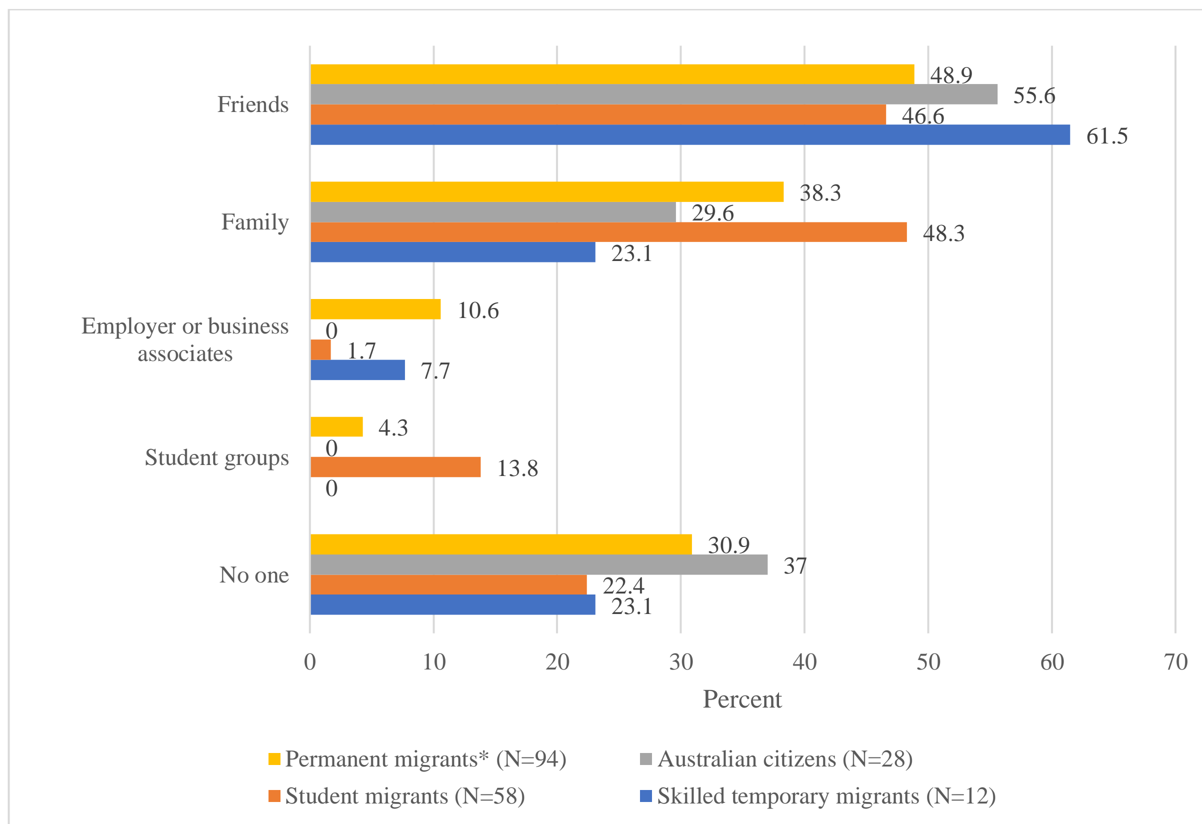
> *My husband wanted to come to Australia so I tagged along. But setting up a business here has not been easy. I will always regard Singapore as home, and sometimes life would be easier if we packed up and left. But we have made very firm friends since moving here, and it would be a shame to say goodbye. My children have settled in well here, and I like that they get to experience a 'proper' childhood in Australia — enjoying playdates and sleepovers. The expectation in Singapore to excel academically from a young age is stressful, it's not what I want for my kids (Interviewee 14, 2019).*

The pre-move contacts of respondents as indicated by different visa categories are shown in Figure 6.1. It was generally observed that those with a lower proportion of family members in

Australia had a higher proportion of friends who were already living in Australia. Those with Australian citizenship were more likely to have friends in Australia (55.6 percent), rather than family (29.6 percent), and this was similar for permanent migrants. A small number of skilled temporary migrants also had contact with more friends (*N*=7) than family (*N*=3) prior to migration.

On the other hand, almost half of all students (48.3 percent) indicated the presence of family members in Australia. This was similar for family visa holders where 44.4 percent of respondents indicated family in Australia, corresponding with visa requirements that family members must live in Australia for a minimum of two years (Department of Home Affairs 2020).

Figure 6.1. Pre-move contacts of respondents indicated by visa type (multiple response)



*Note: Permanent migrants include skilled migration visa holders and family visa holders.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

Although migrant networks play a crucial role in encouraging a continuous stream of migrants, almost one-third of respondents have chosen to migrate despite having no contacts at destination. This is interesting since migration to Australia has occurred relatively recently for the majority of respondents, as seen among some 37 percent of those who have since become Australian citizens have lived in Australia the longest and are more established. Additionally, the high proportion of those who had no contacts prior to their migration may be because their move had occurred a long time ago, where technology was not as far advanced, and keeping in touch with those who have already migrated was far more challenging.

One married male permanent resident, aged in his early 30s, expressed the following:

> *Moving to Australia was the best decision for our family, we are very happy in Australia now. But since we did not know anyone before moving here, it was very difficult at first, we left everything behind and felt lost at times, especially in the first couple of months. We started feeling more at home here once we got used to life in Australia. We have friends who are Australian and are also connected with the Singaporean community here (Interviewee 8, 2019).*

Arnold (2011) argues that pre-migration visits provide evidence that respondents take a strategic approach towards the migration decision. This may explain the trend of respondents' travelling to Australia before actually migrating, an observation that Wasserman (2016) found in more than half of South African permanent and temporary migrants in Australia. For South African migrants, the idea of visiting Australia before migrating had become so commonplace that it has been colloquially termed *'Look, See, Decide'* trips (Visser 2004; Arnold 2011).

Although the survey did not ask respondents about the frequency of visits to Australia prior to migration, it is possible that the majority of respondents, especially those who did not know anyone beforehand, would have undertaken pre-migration visits. Visits, which often took place as holidays, were reported among a number of interviewees. Therefore, the opportunity to migrate is specific to those of a particular demographic and socioeconomic status. Respondents who did not have pre-move contacts in Australia tend to utilise significant personal resources to ensure that they are making the right decision to migrate, and their willingness to invest in pre-migration holidays demonstrates the serious deliberation process undertaken by prospective migrants.

One married male respondent who had become an Australian citizen, aged in his late 50s, commented that:

> *I had the desire to migrate to Australia from the late 80s, and from then, we would choose to holiday in Australia, and in different parts of Australia. It took a few years of planning before we were eventually ready to move, and when we did, we never looked back (Interviewee 27, 2019).*

6.3 Social commitments in Australia

Traditionally, employment outcomes have been used by academics and public policymakers as the main indicators of successful settlement (Ho and Alcorso 2004; Lester 2005). Expanding on this definition, Jupp *et al*. (1991) posits the use of 'minimalist' and 'maximalist' approaches to determine successful settlement. The minimalist approach uses indicators such as securing accommodation and employment to examine migrants' initial years of settlement, while maximalist approaches considers successful settlement when migrants are employed at the same level as non-migrants. Additionally, Lester (2005) argues that they must have the same access to social services, which involve migrants having a full command of English, an intention to remain permanently in Australia, and the successful acquisition of Australian citizenship. On the other hand, Khoo and McDonald (2001) use a cross-sectional approach and argue that the successful settlement of migrants can be evaluated from four perspectives — social participation, economic participation, economic well-being and economic participation. This section turns to examine social commitments in Australia to understand how respondents' have fared in terms of social participation, which can be considered to be part of successful settlement.

A question included in the survey asked respondents about their involvement in social organisations or clubs in Australia. It was found that 55.4 percent of all respondents had ongoing social commitments in Australia, and this excluded the small number of skilled temporary migrants. The survey then asked respondents to select from a list of social activities in Australia, which were grouped into four categories: religious organisations, social clubs, volunteer groups and sporting groups. As presented in Table 6.2, the most popular social commitment indicated by half the respondents was religious organisations, followed by 46.2

percent of those involved in social clubs, while one-third were involved in volunteer groups, and 29.8 percent in sporting groups.

It is not surprising that religious organisations featured most prominently among male and female respondents, corresponding with previous studies which found that religious commitments were the most common form of social ties among Singaporeans in South Australia (Hia 2017; Barbour 2019). Burnley (2003) also found that religious selectivity was present among Southeast Asian migrants, as Christianity, a minority religion, was more highly represented among migrants than in their countries of origin. Most of this migration was based on self-selectivity. In addition to religious organisations, this survey also found that there were more males than females who were part of social clubs and sporting groups, while more females were involved in volunteer activities. When the involvement of respondents in religious organisations was matched with participation in social clubs, it was found that more than 40 percent of respondents were involved in both activities. This was similar for the association between religious organisations and sporting groups, while those involved in religious organisations were slightly less involved in volunteer groups.

Table 6.2. Social commitments in Australia given by male and female respondents (multiple response)

Social commitments in Australia	Males (*N*=54)	Females (*N*=53)	Total (*N*=107)
	%	%	%
Religious organisations; e.g. church groups (*N*=55)	51.9	50.9	52.9
Social clubs; e.g. school clubs, book clubs (*N*=48)	48.1	41.5	46.2
Volunteer groups; e.g. lions club, emergency services (*N*=22)	27.8	37.7	33.7
Sporting groups; e.g. football, netball, cricket (*N*=12)	35.2	22.6	29.8

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

The 2016 Australian Census found that more than half of the Singapore-born population identified as Christian, followed by 28 percent who were Buddhists and had Taoist beliefs, while Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs were represented among one-fifth of respondents. Given that Singapore is a multiracial and multireligious society, it is not surprising to find a variety of

religions represented among respondents. Interestingly, although Christianity was the main religious affiliation represented among respondents, as was the case generally with Singaporeans in Australia, it is regarded as a minority religion in Singapore representing only one-fifth of the population. Given that religious practices are closely related to social relations, cultural values and practices, it is likely that Australia's traditional Christian values is one of the main attractions for prospective Singaporean Christian migrants to Australia.

As expressed by one male business owner on how his Christian faith shaped his migration decision and settlement:

> *My wife and I are Christians, so when we thought about migrating, we were looking at North America, Canada or Australia, but felt that Australia was the best fit for us. Throughout our move, we felt at peace about the whole process. We are very connected with the Christian community here, and now that we have been here for over five years, we have decided to apply for permanent residency (Interviewee 23, 2019).*

Given that the concept of social capital prioritises some social networks and not others, Wessendorf and Phillimore (2018) argue that social commitments such as legal status, educational backgrounds, migration routes, and religious backgrounds, should be included to provide a more nuanced picture linking social commitments to integration. In the case of Singaporean migrants in Australia, the majority of them are Christian, which corresponds with the white Australian majority and this accounts for their integration towards more mainstream activities (ABS 2020). Other studies where religion has played a role in migrant integration include South African migrants in Australia, as they demonstrate strong affiliations with the Dutch Reformed Church and its associated Reformed churches (Sparks 2003; Clark and Worger 2011). These churches have been found to link with Afrikaans culture, as a study by Wasserman (2016) suggested that growth in the number of South African migrants in Australia has facilitated the preservation of South African culture, identity and religion. Although the majority of respondents are Christian, there is also a growing representation of migrants with different religious beliefs, and these include Muslims, Buddhists and Sikhs (ABS 2016). Those with no religion also featured among respondents, corresponding with one-third of the general Australian population that reported *'no religion'* in the 2016 Australian Census (ABS 2020). Therefore, the population composition of Singaporeans in Australia is diverse, reflecting

Australia's multicultural policy that facilitates the integration of diverse cultures while maintaining a focus on loyalty to Australia as a nation (Koleth 2010).

Similar to the religions represented among the broader Singapore-born population in Australia, Christianity was the main religion found among respondents, followed by traditional Chinese religions such as Buddhism and Taoism. Minority religions such as Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs were also apparent among a small proportion of respondents. When religious commitments was matched with religion, the results demonstrate that over half of respondents were Christian.

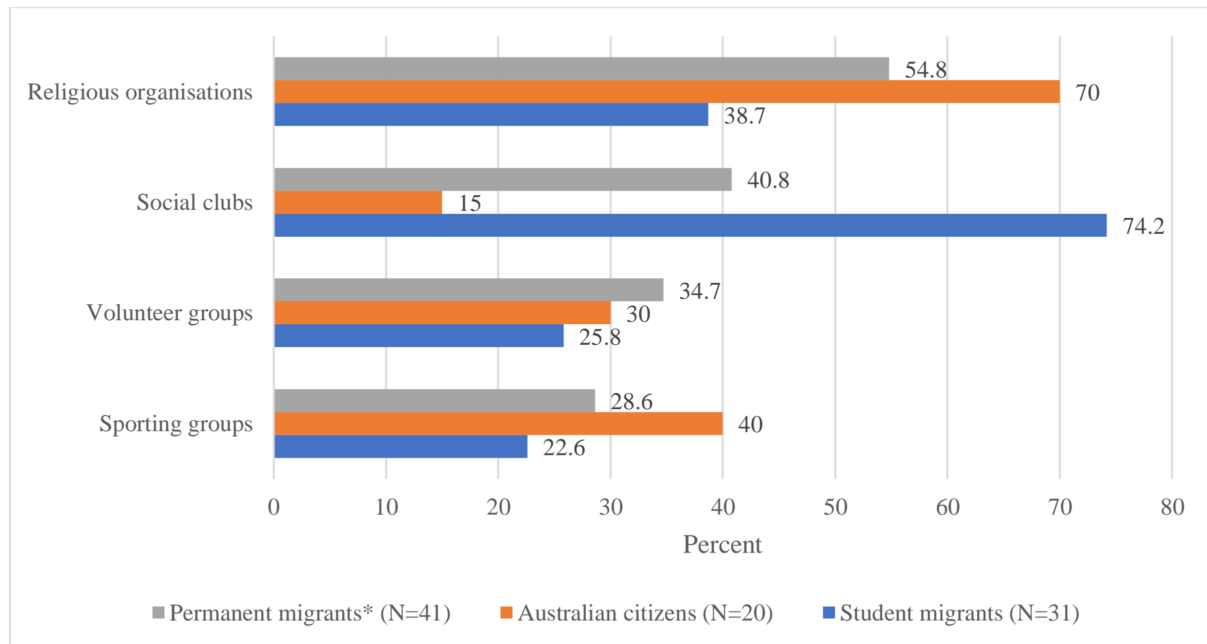
It is unclear how respondents' religious commitments in Australia compares with other migrant groups. This may be because the main body of literature on the social aspect of migrant settlement has been focussed on the notion of social capital (Bourdieu 1986; Portes 1998), which relates more to the social advancement of migrants influenced by socio-economic or educational qualifications.

Migrant status was selected as being important in identifying differences in respondents' ongoing social commitments, but the small number of temporary migrants who maintained social commitments (*N*=7) were left out of the analysis. Figure 6.2 shows that over half of permanent visa respondents had ongoing social commitments to religious organisations in Australia. This includes those who have since become Australian citizens and family visa holders. Clearly, religious ties play a key role in respondents' socialisation and successful settlement.

In addition to religious commitments, some 40 percent of respondents were involved in sporting groups, particularly the more established respondents among those who had already become Australian citizens. Commitments to sporting clubs, religious groups and volunteer groups was among a higher proportion of long-term respondents, while social clubs tended to attract a higher proportion of students. They were also less likely to be involved in religious activities. Participation in social clubs featured most prominently among student migrants, with three quarters of them involved in such activity. This finding corresponds with previous studies that found students are more likely to be involved in social clubs, including university-based Singaporean associations (Hia 2017; Barbour 2019). Not only do such associations help

Singaporean students connect with each other through social events, these events are also supported by the Singapore government through in-kind donations and other partnerships.

Figure 6.2. Social commitments in Australia indicated by visa type (multiple response)



*Note: Permanent migrants include skilled migration visa holders and family visa holders.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

As expressed by a student leader from a Singaporean student association at a tertiary institution in Australia:

> *I help to manage the clubs' external relations with other universities and also with the Overseas Singaporean Unit (OSU). I work closely with them, and we are actually hosting an event together in a few weeks. Depending on the budget, the OSU supports us financially on these events, as well as providing in-kind donations. During our National Day celebrations this year, the OSU gave us memorabilia to distribute to our members for free (Interviewee 30, 2019).*

Across the different visa categories, it appears that permanent migrants have the most diverse social commitments being more evenly spread across the four options. This alludes to the diverse skills and interests represented among those who are more established. More importantly, the findings on social commitments in Australia complements and reflects their

positive employment outcomes, demonstrating the successful settlement of respondents as a whole. By maintaining ongoing ties with the broader Australian community, their participation in mainstream activities demonstrates successful integration into Australian society, corresponding with the Australian way of life featured in Chapter 5 as one of the main reasons for respondents' migrating to Australia.

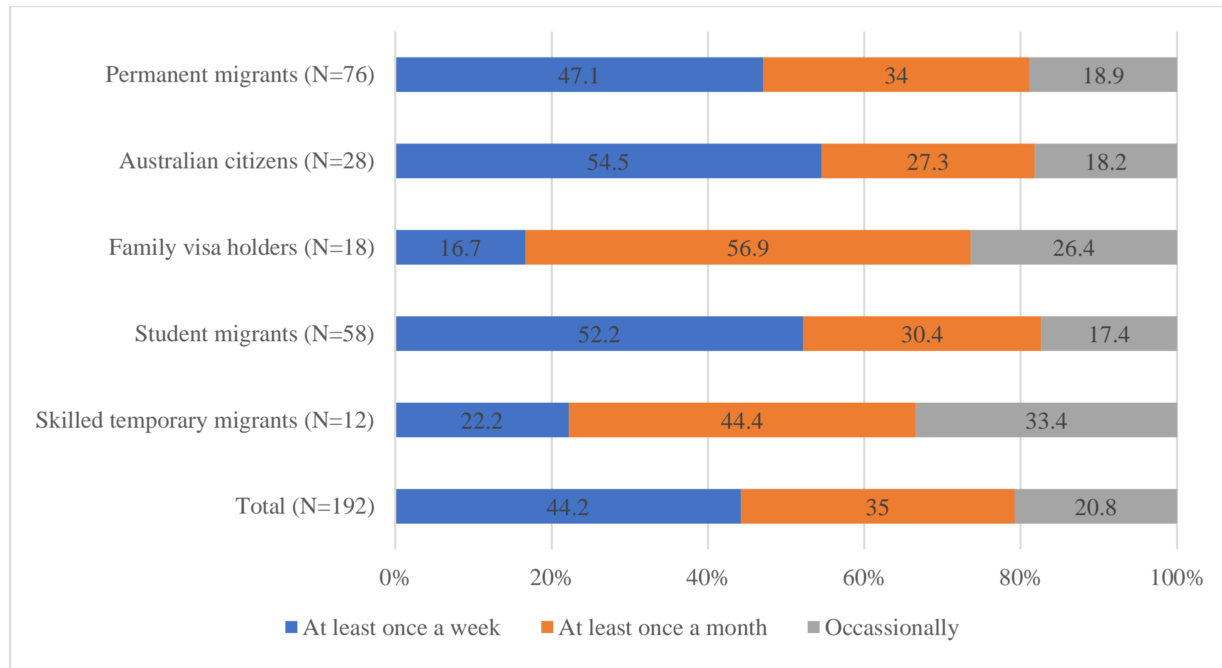
As expressed by a male Singaporean business leader in Australia:

> *I like encouraging other migrants to make friends with locals. Since we have moved away from Singapore, we need to be proactive in mixing with everyone. Australia is such a multicultural place, and while it's nice to know other Singaporeans here in Australia, I also really enjoy making friends with people from other cultures. My interest in other cultures probably stems from my professional background, as I used to work for a multinational company in Singapore (Interviewee 1, 2019).*

6.4 The Singaporean community in Australia

In order to understand whether a Singaporean community in Australia exists, the survey explored the relationships maintained by respondents with other Singaporeans in Australia by the type and frequency of interactions. Migrant status and characteristics were used to examine how respondents' interactions vary by length of time spent in Australia. Out of the total number of respondents, almost 93 percent are currently in contact with Singaporeans in Australia outside their own household. Figure 6.3 shows that almost half of the respondents communicate with other Singaporeans at a minimum of once a week, followed by one-third communicating at least once a month, and one-fifth communicating with other Singaporeans occasionally. Permanent migrants and respondents who have since become Australian citizens showed some similarities in their frequency of communication, with at least once a week being the most common response, and similar proportions also communicated with other Singaporeans at least once a month, and occasionally. Family visa holders were also most likely to communicate at least once a month with those outside household.

Figure 6.3. Frequency of communication of respondents with other Singaporeans* indicated by visa type



*Note: Excludes respondents living in Singaporean households.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

A Singaporean community leader in Australia reflects on the Singaporean community in Australia:

> *I think the fact that we can all speak Singlish to each other, the fact that we can discuss our problems and reflect on social issues from a common perspective, and enjoy social gatherings over a potluck lunch are some of the things that has brought the community together over the years. I've also seen the community coming together and help one another, turning around some difficult situations for families doing it tough especially in the initial years of migration (Interviewee 9, 2019).*

Table 6.3 shows the context of Singaporean interactions reported by male and female respondents. It was found that almost 80 percent of female respondents tend to maintain connections with other Singaporeans through social catch ups, which was also high for males. Participating in Singaporean events and seeing *post-school or university mates* were favoured by males while one-fifth of males and females worked with other Singaporeans.

Table 6.3. Context of Singaporean interactions outside household given by male and female respondents (multiple response)

Form of communication	Males (N=84)	Females (N=93)	Total (N=313)
	%	%	%
Catch up with my Singaporean friends (N=140)	77.4	80.6	79.1
I participate in Singaporean events (N=49)	28.6	26.9	27.7
Post-school or university mates (N=48)	31.0	23.7	27.1
I work with other Singaporeans (N=35)	20.2	19.4	19.8

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

Evidence of a close-knit Singaporean community was also reflected in the way that the survey was distributed among respondents. Given that there is limited direct assistance from government and other formal institutions, Singaporeans must rely on community members in Australia to overcome hardship (Mak 1997). In some instances, these interactions can lead to the creation of broader, more formal networks that play an active role in contributing to the political, social and economic development back home.

One Singaporean community leader, aged over 60 years, reflected on his experiences on helping new migrants settle into life in Australia:

> *There are so many stories to tell about Singaporeans helping one another. Even before we became a registered club, there was a family going through very difficult times and needed money. The word got out and people wanted to help, and those were the days before GoFundMe, so I had people constantly ringing me up to donate. Somehow, we managed to raise the amount they needed. My experience with Singaporeans in Australia shows that we all need a connection. Our home has hosted many Singaporean events to facilitate connections for those who need it. The migration journey can be very challenging for couples. We became marriage counsellors, hosted mothers' groups, and sometimes we set up shelter for students needing temporary accommodation (Interviewee 20, 2019).*

The frequency of communication among students was also expected as there are many Singaporeans currently studying in Australia. This has led to an active community of university-based Singaporean student associations. The Singapore government plays a more active role in collaborating with student associations, but whether students are already planning to return on completion of their studies, or their initiatives are an attractive pathway to return, may be dependent on individual circumstances and qualifications.

As expressed by a former Singaporean association student leader at an Australian university who is now a permanent resident in Australia:

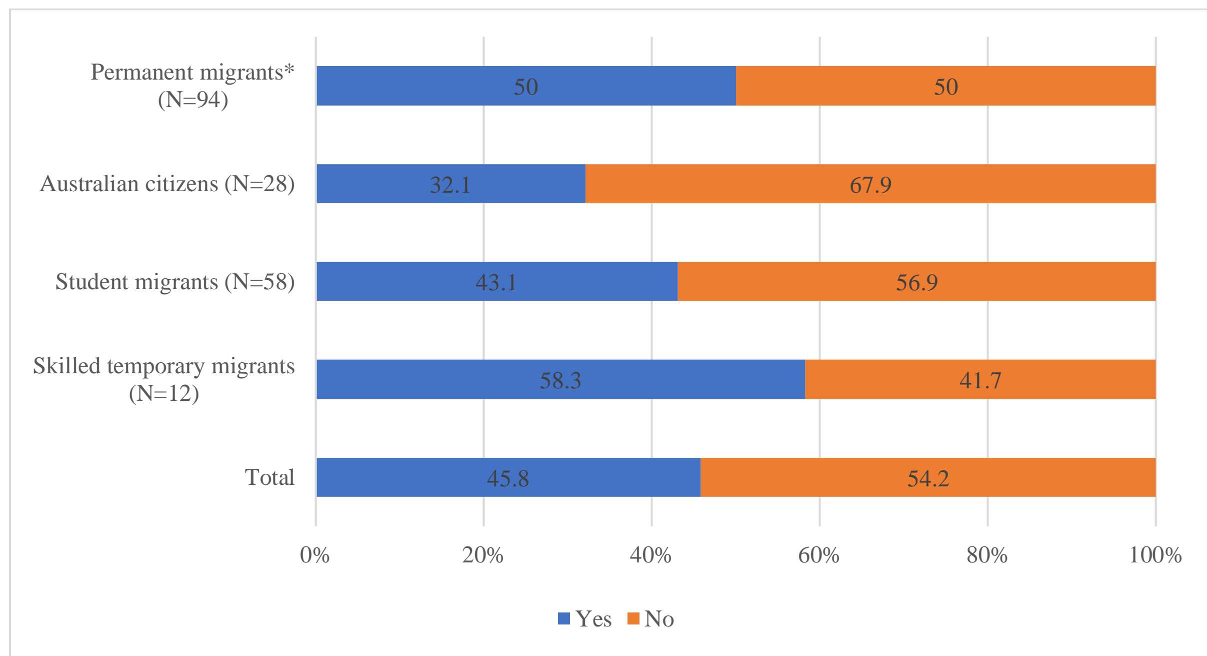
> *I think that the Overseas Singaporean Unit is good because it allows Singaporeans to keep in touch, think about doing business together, or for students to meet peers. But if their goal is to get people to go home, they should consider doing something else. It is tricky because with migration, you can't tell someone where to go. Australia is a good option for Singaporeans, it is a lot closer to Southeast Asia, and Australians generally are quite accepting of different cultures, as opposed to countries like the US, and even the UK is perceived as dangerous (Interviewee 18, 2019).*

6.5 Economic linkages with Singapore

Transnational migration theories refer to the ongoing interactions that migrants maintain across borders and with their country of origin (Glick Schiller *et al*. 1995; Vertovec 1999). As opposed to the neoclassical approaches in traditional migration literature which focusses on the impacts of migration and settlement in destination countries, the transnational perspective undertaken in this study posits that the migrant experience is multi-sited (Faist *et al*. 2013). Not only do migrants live and work in their current countries of residence, they also maintain ongoing relationships with individuals and communities who still reside in their country of origin. It is clear from the survey that some migrants choose to maintain ongoing economic commitments in Singapore. Respondents were asked 1) *whether they maintain economic linkages with Singapore*, and if so, 2) *what were these linkages*. The latter question allowed respondents to provide multiple responses which were ranked in terms of popularity, and any differences between visa holders were noted separately.

Figure 6.4 shows that overall less than half of the respondents had maintained economic linkages with Singapore. Half of those on permanent visas maintained economic linkages with Singapore, compared to only one-third of those who had become Australian citizens. On the other hand, 43.1 percent of student migrants still maintained economic linkages, while only a small number of temporary migrants (*N*=7) did so. Given that temporary migrants are only allowed to live and work in Australia for a specified duration, it is important that they maintain economic linkages with Singapore should they choose to return. It was interesting that only one-third of those who have since become Australian citizens still maintain economic linkages with Singapore, and were the group likely to be here the longest.

Figure 6.4. Respondents with economic linkages indicated by visa type



*Note: Permanent migrants include skilled migration visa holders and family visa holders.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

The survey allowed respondents up to nine economic linkages, but only five types of economic linkages yielded more than ten percent of responses. Table 6.4 shows that a life insurance policy (52.3 percent) was by far the most popular linkage maintained in Singapore, followed by home ownership (35.2 percent), shareholdings (31.8 percent), other forms of economic linkages (28.4 percent), and income from rental property/s (21.6 percent). Only 16 percent were

paying off a mortgage, indicating that a small proportion of respondents are still interested in property investments in Singapore despite having moved to Australia.

Table 6.4. Economic linkages of respondents indicated by visa type (multiple response)

Types of economic linkages	Permanent migrants* (*N*=56)	Student migrants (*N*=25)	Temporary migrants (*N*=7)	Total (*N*=171)
	%	%	%	%
Life insurance policy (*N*=46)	53.6	40.0	85.7	52.3
Home ownership (*N*=31)	46.4	12.0	28.6	35.2
Shareholdings; e.g. stocks, bonds (*N*=28)	33.9	20.0	57.1	31.8
Other (*N*=25)	23.2	44.0	14.3	28.4
Income from rental property/s (*N*=19)	26.8	16.0	0	21.6
Mortgage repayments (*N*=14)	19.6	4.0	28.6	15.9
Company ownership and employment (*N*=8)	12.8	4.0	14.3	9.1

*Note: Permanent migrants include skilled migration visa holders, family visa holders and those with Australian citizenship.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

When considering the type of visa held by respondents, it was found that a life insurance policy was the most popular form of financial investment among permanent migrants (53.6 percent) compared to 85.7 percent of temporary migrants and 40 percent of students. Home ownership was the most popular economic linkage among 46.4 percent of permanent migrants, followed by 28.6 percent of temporary migrants and 12 percent of students. Although there is limited research on why life insurance policies feature as the most popular type of financial investment, contextual factors such as passing down savings to the next generation, as well as the lack of a welfare system in Singapore, may account for the attraction towards investing in a life insurance policy. More recently, the Singapore government has also started to encourage young adults to invest in life insurance policies by providing tax relief for those starting to develop their financial portfolios. Respondents also do not need to be Singapore citizens to invest in a life insurance policy.

In addition to the saving habits of Singaporeans, the low tax bracket in Singapore implies that respondents who had spent a proportion of their working life in Singapore prior to migrating to Australia are likely to have substantial savings and can afford larger financial investments. However, the choice of life insurance policy as the main investment portfolio for respondents with economic linkages with Singapore appears to be preferred over home ownership (35.2 percent) and income from rental property/s (21.6 percent). This is likely due to the logistical complexities involved in home ownership and managing tenants, exacerbated when managing property across international borders.

The economic linkages that were categorised as *'other'* include Central Provident Funds (CPF), the equivalent to superannuation in Australia, as well as inheritance and bank accounts. These linkages represented 28.4 percent of the overall response. Although company ownership and employment yield less than ten percent of responses, this group of economic linkages were kept as a distinct category. This was also the least popular linkage represented among respondents given the size of the Singapore stock market, much smaller in comparison to neighbouring markets.

A Singaporean community leader, aged in his late 30s, reflected on this phenomenon:

> *In my experience, it is more to do with economic linkages between Australia and the broader region of Southeast Asia, with Singapore acting as the gateway. With my job, my trips usually start by visiting a customer in Singapore, and then going to the operation and production lines in Malaysia. In my industry, if we are successful in Malaysia, we are likely to succeed in Indonesia as well. Singapore acts as the financial hub to facilitate interactions between the three countries (Interviewee 9, 2019).*

It is likely that those who are looking to invest but had a more limited cash flows would purchase shares, where a smaller financial commitment is required, as compared to a life insurance policy or paying off an investment property. Shareholdings and other forms of economic linkages, including CPF, inheritance and bank accounts, were the main form of economic linkages to Singapore for respondents who have since become Australian citizens. However, as dual citizenship is not allowed in Singapore, respondents who have since become Australian citizens are unlikely to have major economic linkages with Singapore.

A Singaporean community leader, aged over 60 years, explains how dual citizenship is incompatible with Singapore's economic policies:

> *I don't think dual citizenship will work out for Singapore mainly because of the rules on CPF. Currently, the policy allows for the full withdrawal of CPF for those who are leaving Singapore permanently. So far, this policy has encouraged those who have plans to migrate to do so permanently (Interviewee 20, 2019).*

Remittances are traditionally defined as money transfers from migrants back to their country of origin, which can be an important way that migrants demonstrate a connection to their country of origin (World Bank 2011). It is interesting to note that remittances do not feature prominently among the types of economic linkages represented by respondents in this study. Singapore is classified by the World Bank as an Upper Middle Income country, but there are existing disparities in wealth distribution among Singaporeans. The majority of wealth is concentrated among the upper middle income and high-income elite, while those in the middle and lower classes can struggle to get by. Hence, remittance sending is not a major feature among respondents given that Singaporean migration to Australia does not fit the accepted South to North migration typically associated with remittances. This is particularly given that migration is a selective process and selects upper middle to high income individuals; however, not all within these income categories choose to migrate.

The maintenance of assets and investments in the country of origin is also linked to the intention to return, as the likelihood of return increases with respect to the increase in remittances, investments and assets maintenance (Ahlburg and Brown 1998; Collier *et al*. 2011; Carling and Petterson 2014). A study by Yeo (2016) on Malaysians in Australia demonstrated that the majority of economic linkages among Malaysian Chinese migrants were limited to Australia only, while ethnic Malays maintained ongoing economic activity in Malaysia. All respondents stated that they were happy living in Australia and did not see themselves returning to Singapore or elsewhere to live. Many of them had extended family and close friends still residing in Singapore, and as such regarded both Australia and Singapore as home. A number expressed concerns towards a number of social issues in Singapore, and the desire to see change.

One married male permanent migrant in Australia, aged in his early 40s, said that:

> *Coming from a Sikh community, a fairly small community in Singapore, there's a lot of competition, you need to be a lawyer or an engineer. But I was not an academic person, so I chose to get a nursing degree, which was a qualification that I eventually used to migrate to Australia. Even though I am very happy living here in Australia with my wife, I still see Singapore as my home, because we have extended family there. Singapore is a good country to make money, but it has a lot of social issues entrenched in society. For me personally, I have experienced racism in the workforce, but in my role as a palliative care nurse, I find it very difficult to accept how older Singaporeans are treated. Singapore has become a beneficiary from overseas billionaires, but the limited social security system means that older Singaporeans who have spent their entire lives building the country are working at McDonalds for AUD 3.62 an hour (Interviewee 11, 2019).*

6.6 Social linkages with Singapore

Given that social relationships transcend national boundaries, migrants' identities are often entrenched in both countries which are expressed in a range of economic, political and social activities (Portes *et al*. 1999). These activities, facilitated by advancements in communication technology, are initiated and maintained by migrants and their communities. The types of activities vary by context, as a study by Wasserman (2016) found that South African migrants in Australia were more likely to maintain social and family linkages over economic and political linkages, and these linkages were found to be much stronger than South Africans in Canada (Crush *et al*. 2013). The maintenance of social linkages was examined among respondents in two parts, 1) *whether they maintain social linkages with Singapore*, and if so, 2) *what were these linkages*.

Table 6.5 shows that 90.6 percent of respondents maintained social linkages with Singapore, with more females maintaining such linkages. Two-thirds of respondents reported that celebrating ethnic festivals was the most important social linkage maintained with Singapore, and this indicated the largest difference between males (29.5 percent) and females (70.5 percent). There were twice as many females that stayed in the loop of the Singaporean food scene, and they were also more likely to keep in touch with family and friends. Engaging in

Singaporean current affairs also featured strongly among the reported social linkages maintained with Singapore, with minimal differences between males and females. Therefore, although respondents now live in Australia, they still remain loyal to their country of origin by keeping up with political or social events that relate to Singapore's standing in the world.

Table 6.5. Social linkages of male and female respondents to Singapore (multiple response)

Types of social linkages	Males (*N*=78)	Females (*N*=95)	Total (*N*=402)
	%	%	%
Celebrating ethnic festivals (*N*=116)	29.5	70.5	67.1
Keeping in the loop of the Singaporean food scene (*N*=109)	32.6	67.4	63.0
Engaging in Singaporean current affairs (*N*=89)	49.5	50.5	51.4
Keeping in touch with friends and family (*N*=88)	45.3	54.7	50.9

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

Advancements in communication technology has led to reduced costs of communication, increasing the accessibility for individuals and families to keep in touch with those who live abroad. One key limitation of the survey was that it did not ask respondents the most popular method of communication between respondents with family members and friends Singapore and how often. This limitation was addressed through interviews, as interviewees were asked *'How often do you keep in touch with friends and family? Where do they live? How do you communicate?'* (refer Appendix B, Question 10). Among the Singaporeans in Australia interviewed (*N*=31), all of them explained that they keep in touch with family every day, while maintaining more sporadic communication with friends.

One married, female respondent, aged over 60 years, who is now an Australian citizen, reflected on how technological advancements have facilitated communication with friends and family in Singapore:

> *Back then, homesickness was a big thing. There was no technology, you couldn't FaceTime, and you had to write letters. Over 40 years ago, there was only one Chinese grocery shop, in the red-light district. I wrote some letters back in the day, and when I*

went back once a year, my friends would always meet with me. It is much easier now to keep in touch with family and friends, and I have been very lucky with friends – when I go back, I'll catch up with my friends from school, friends from university, and my best friend since Grade 1 (Interviewee 32, 2019).

It was found that a high proportion of permanent migrants (90.8 percent) and students (89.7 percent) maintained economic and social linkages with Singapore. Among students, more males were likely to keep in touch with family in Singapore. When interviewed, a number of male students expressed a close relationship with their parents, stating that *'I call my Mum at least once a week'*. Lastly, even the bulk of those who had become Australian citizens (85.7 percent) still maintained social linkages with Singapore.

As expressed by a male respondent who had become an Australian citizen:

I would say that Australia is my home, because this is where my life is. But I will always be loyal to Singapore. I think conscription plays a big part of instilling that loyalty. My son experienced that for himself as well when he went back for military service. Although he grew up in Australia, we explained to him that being born in Singapore means that he has to serve. He had no problems adjusting to military service and life in Singapore despite growing up here (Interviewee 21, 2019).

Given that religion plays an important role in preserving the social and cultural practices of migrants and populations, it is not surprising that celebrating ethnic festivals emerged as the main form of social linkage maintained by respondents. The much higher proportion of females that actively engage in this activity is perhaps less easily explained. The celebration of ethnic festivals is closely related to the preservation of culture and religion, but the earlier analysis demonstrates that both males and females were similarly involved with religious commitments in Australia. Hence, it may be possible that celebrating ethnic festivals is one way that females maintain a closer link with family and friends in Singapore.

One of the ways that multiculturalism is promoted by the Singapore government is by allocating each of the four main ethnicities, Chinese, Malay, Indian and Other (CMIO), two ethnic holidays a year to commemorate such festivals. Examples include Chinese New Year, Hari Raya, Deepavali and Christmas Day. Although only Chinese families celebrate Chinese

New Year, and Malay Muslims celebrate Hari Raya, and so forth, these festivals are commemorated as public holidays. Similar to Christmas Day celebrations in Australia, these festivals tend to be celebrated among families. As visits with family and friends are seen as a priority for respondents, it is likely that respondents' annual visits to Singapore correspond with these ethnic celebrations. Celebrating ethnic festivals was matched with keeping in the loop of the Singaporean food scene, with 82.6 percent of respondents indicating both of these social linkages, suggesting that there is a strong link between food and celebration, a culture not only unique to Singapore, but also to Australia. Singaporean respondents have socially integrated into Australian society, embracing the food, culture and diversity brought about by living in Australia.

One married male respondent who had become an Australian citizen, aged over 60 years, stated that:

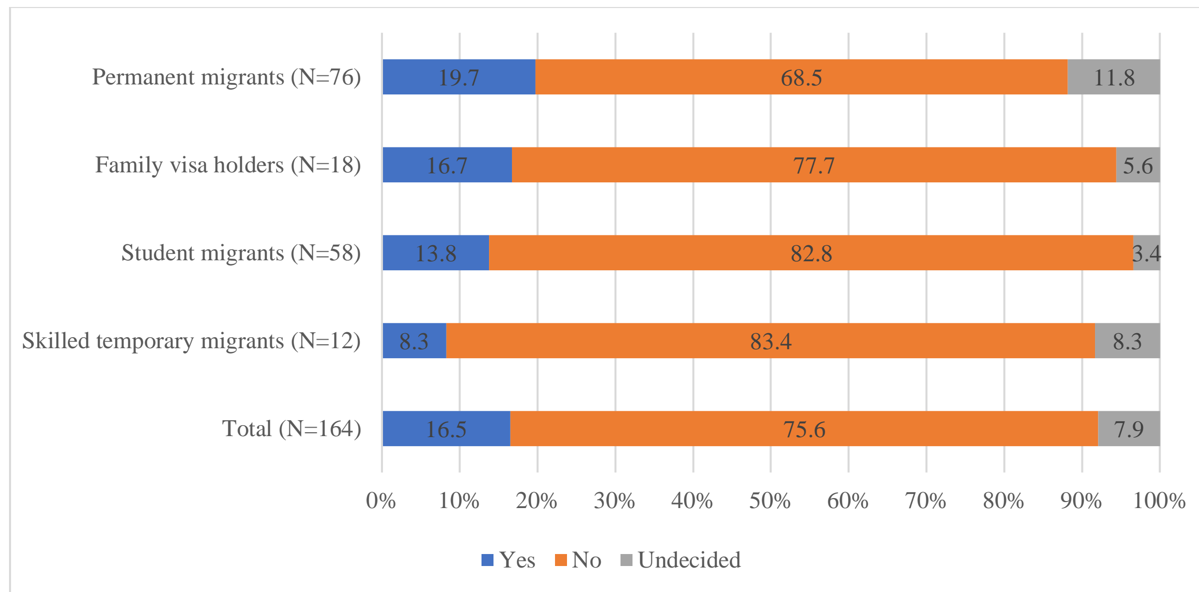
> *When I first came here, I thought I would miss the food, because I had no idea where I would get Singapore food here. But because Australia takes in people from so many countries, it's even more cosmopolitan than Singapore, and I enjoy the variety of food and cuisines represented in Australia (Interviewee 27, 2019).*

6.7 Future plans in Australia

One way of understanding the permanent nature of contemporary migration is by examining how many migrants become Australian citizens. Although this aspect of migration is discussed to a lesser extent within transnational migration literature, the survey found that some 15 percent of the sampled population formalise their connection with Australia by becoming Australian citizens. This compares to the Australian Census where 55 percent of Singaporeans in Australia were reported to be Australian citizens (ABS 2016). Despite the larger proportion of Singaporeans living in Australia, there is limited literature to suggest that dual citizenship is an option for consideration by the Singapore government. Rather, the Singapore government has taken an uncompromising stance towards dual citizenship (Ho 2011). It is possible that the inability to hold dual citizenship is one of the reasons that permanent migrants do not wish to become Australian citizens.

The survey examined the future plans of respondents by asking them if they plan on changing their current citizenship. Figure 6.5 shows that of the total sampled population, three-quarters of respondents who were not yet Australian citizens had no desire to apply for Australian citizenship. Among permanent migrants, one-fifth had plans to become Australian citizens, while ten percent were undecided. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of students (13 percent) and six temporary migrants who had plans to become Australian citizens.

Figure 6.5. Plans of respondents to become Australian citizens* indicated by visa type



*Note: Excludes respondents who had already become Australian citizens.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

Although the majority of permanent migrants and family visa holders are eligible for Australian citizenship, a large proportion of permanent migrants indicated that they were happy to keep their current status. The analysis so far demonstrates that there are minimal differences in the employment and social experience of permanent migrants and those with Australian citizenship. The socio-economic outcomes presented in Chapter 5 demonstrate similarities between permanent migrants and those who had become Australian citizens, all of whom have obtained suitable employment. The employment experience of Singaporean family visa holders in Australia differs from other migrant groups, as many are well-educated and are proficient in the English language, factors which Guven *et al*. (2020) have established are important determinants to labourforce participation.

Permanent migrants who were eligible to apply for Australian citizenship but had not yet done so were asked to elaborate on their plans to remain as permanent residents. Examples of more pragmatic views include *'no real benefit in becoming Australian'*, *'difficult to reacquire Singapore citizenship'*. Other views to do with personal identity include *'Singapore is my home'*. Family commitments in Singapore also featured as a common response, since a large proportion of permanent migrants were middle-aged and had migrated to Australia with their spouse and children. In most instances, migrating to Australia meant leaving their parents behind, and this often led to challenges faced with managing caregiving responsibilities in Singapore while living in Australia.

As explained by one married female respondent, aged in her late 40s, who has since become an Australian citizen:

> *I am the only child, and after my Dad passed away, looking after my Mum became very difficult. She was living on her own, fell a lot, and missed my Dad. I brought her out here for five years, but she could not get used to life in Australia – the winters were too cold, and she found it difficult to make friends. When she moved back, I persuaded her to live in a nursing home as that was the only way that she could receive 24-hour care. Thankfully, my cousins are close to us, so they often visit and take her out on weekends (Interviewee 15, 2019).*

Six out of ten female permanent migrants were undecided on their plans to become Australian citizens. Without the need to sever ties for political reasons, the majority are happy with their status as permanent migrants and it was found that those who eventually become Australian citizens are more likely to do so at a later life stage. Moreover, the care arrangements present in Singaporean families suggest that permanent migrants are often preoccupied with family commitments in Singapore, while managing their own families in Australia, and this is a result of Australian visa requirements that has tightened for permanent parental visa applications.

One married, female respondent, aged over 60 years, who had become an Australian citizen, stated that:

> *I've called Australia home for over four decades now, but I only became a citizen a month ago. It was because I needed to go home for my Mum, and when my Dad was sick, I had*

to go back. I went back six times in six months and I thought, if there ever came a time where you had to apply for a visa every time you go back, I didn't want to do that. When my Mum passed away last year, I applied for Australian citizenship. It was a long time coming, my children have already married and settled down in Australia (Interviewee 32, 2019).

Ho and Bedford (2008) introduced the term 'transnational family' to refer to families that deliberately choose to live in one or more countries in order to maximise opportunities for education, employment and social advancements. The subject of transnational family strategies has been discussed further in contemporary Asian migration literature (Skeldon 1994; Beal 2001). More recently, Yeoh *et al*. (2005) argued that similar strategies were utilised by Asian families, who remain connected through transnational communication, regular visits to their country of origin, a shared imagination of identity and belonging, and above all, a 'strategic intent of ensuring economic survival or maximising social mobility' (Yeoh *et al*. 2005, p. 307). The literature has also focussed on understanding the changes in transnational family strategies over time (Ley and Kobayashi 2005), influenced by changes in family members' personal aspirations, as well as changes in the wider socio-economic and political context. Although respondents on average had lived in Australia for almost nine years and are eligible to apply for Australian citizenship, formalising ties with Australia implies severing ties from their country of birth. Given that the decision to apply for Australian citizenship results in the disruption of formal connections with Singapore, respondents who have since become Australian citizens must be absolutely certain that they are unlikely to return to Singapore.

One married male respondent, aged in his late 30s, explained his decision to become an Australian citizen:

My wife and I chose to become Australian citizens as we did not have any real family ties in Singapore. From a pragmatic perspective, the money that we took out from our CPF went towards our housing deposit. Because of the 99-year lease policy in Singapore, where the house that you pay for essentially goes back to the government after 99 years, we felt that we had to choose between enjoying retirement and passing something on to the next generation. I can understand the benefits of dual citizenship, but I am someone who believes in only serving one master. Unless Australia goes through something

similar to Donald Trump's white nationalism, which can lead to economic failure, I am happy holding an Australian passport (Interviewee 7, 2019).

Hage (2002) suggests that dual citizenship is often taken up by 80 to 90 percent of migrants, but only a handful of interviewees have expressed the need for dual citizenship policy to be implemented in Singapore. Interestingly, even though dual citizenship is allowed in South Africa, only a small proportion of South African migrants choose to maintain both Australian and South African citizenship, even though the push factors behind South Africans suggests the low propensity to return (Wasserman 2016). Khoo *et al*. (1994) explained that migrants from English-speaking countries tend to be socially integrated into Australian society, and as a result do not prioritise applying for an Australian citizenship. The likelihood of respondents choosing to give up their Singapore citizenship to become Australian is influenced by the length of time spent in Australia. Over time, the majority of their commitments are contained within Australia, and the extent of transnational practice tends to be to be reduced among second-generation Singaporean-Australians.

As expressed by a Singaporean community leader, aged over 60 years:

My friends are not connected to Singapore, it is just the old guys like me who are sentimental towards Singapore. The second generation, those who grew up here, are not connected either. From my experience, it only takes one generation for the ties to be cut off completely. The language might be similar, but the jokes are different – among boys, we joke about military service, and among girls, they talk about shopping. When we watch the Singaporean sitcom, Under One Roof, my wife and I would be laughing our head off, but my son has no idea what is going on (Interviewee 20, 2019).

On the other hand, students and temporary migrants are younger, unmarried, and are less likely to be presented with immediate demands to manage family responsibilities across international waters. Although this study did not ask temporary migrants on their intention to apply for permanent residency in Australia, proximity between the two countries was an important factor that favoured Australia as a temporary destination. Given that some 62 percent of respondents had obtained their highest post-school qualifications in Australia, it is highly likely that many students do end up as permanent residents in Australia.

As expressed by a single male permanent resident, aged in his early 30s:

> *After graduating from university and getting my first job here, it turned out that most of the employees were Chinese, which I did not expect. My interviewee, who was Malaysian, was keen to hire me, because of my fluency in English and Mandarin, and Singaporeans are known for their good work ethic. I learned later that some Australian employers are even familiar with the prestigious schools in Singapore. A fellow Singaporean ended up being my supervisor, and now, we are business partners looking for opportunities to expand our business overseas (Interviewee 17, 2019).*

6.8 Visits to Singapore

Contrary to traditional migration literature which assumes that migrants 'settle into a host society and undergo a gradual but inevitable process of assimilation' (Portes *et al*. 1999, p. 28), transnationalism suggests that migration is not always unidirectional and permanent; rather, migrants live in social worlds that are located in two or more nation-states (Vertovec 2001). The use of transnational theory in conceptualising international migration allows for a more holistic perspective in understanding the lives of migrants. Not only do they adopt some aspects of the culture at destination and their way of life, studies in contemporary migration reveal that migrants also retain mobilities, linkages and identities with their country of origin (Hugo 2008, 2011a).

Short-term visits are an important feature of transnational practice, defined as periodic but temporary sojourns made by migrants to their country of origin in which significant social ties exist (Duval 2004). The survey found that 97 percent of all respondents travel to Singapore. Eight out of ten respondents indicated that they had visited Singapore in 2019.

Table 6.6 shows that the most popular reasons for visits to Singapore were related to social ties, corresponding with existing literature on transnational migration and practice. These include family, friends, holiday, and attending special events, such as birthdays, anniversaries, weddings and funerals. In particular, family as a reason for visits was reported by 86 percent of respondents, indicating the strong family ties that respondents still have with Singapore. This was followed by 53 percent of respondents who were visiting friends, 42 percent

holidaying in Singapore, with one-third attending special events, and one-fifth visiting for business reasons. Family reasons were the only response indicated by slightly more females (87.5 percent) than males (81.7 percent), corresponding with the earlier finding that more females tended to maintain closer links with family in Singapore.

Table 6.6. Reasons for visits to Singapore given by male and female respondents (multiple response)

Reasons for visits to Singapore	Males (*N*=82)	Females (*N*=104)	Total (*N*=440)
	%	%	%
Family (*N*=158)	81.7	87.5	85.9
Friends (*N*=98)	56.1	50.0	53.3
Holiday (*N*=78)	46.3	38.5	42.4
Attend special events (*N*=66)	36.6	34.6	35.9
Business (*N*=40)	25.6	18.3	21.7

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

One married female permanent resident in Australia, aged in her early 50s, explains her family ties to Singapore:

> *We moved to Australia permanently twelve years ago because my middle child was not coping well with the school system in Singapore. Prior to that, we had already lived in Australia temporarily for my husband's work and the kids were enrolled in the school system here, and were much happier. All three kids are completing their university degrees now. My husband still works in Singapore, but comes to visit us in Australia every ten weeks during the school holidays and we go back to visit him and our extended family in Singapore at least once a year on special occasions (Interviewee 16, 2019).*

Travelling to Singapore for business consisted mainly of economic ties, including business trips, ongoing work commitments, temporary work contracts, and other economic-related activities. However, each of these categories yielded less than ten percent of total responses, and when combined, business visits to Singapore contributed to just one-fifth of all responses. Despite the overall positive socioeconomic outcomes experienced by respondents since

moving to Australia, it was interesting to note that only a small proportion of them still maintain economic linkages with Singapore.

One married male permanent resident in Australia, aged in his late 50s, who maintained business linkages with Singapore, stated that:

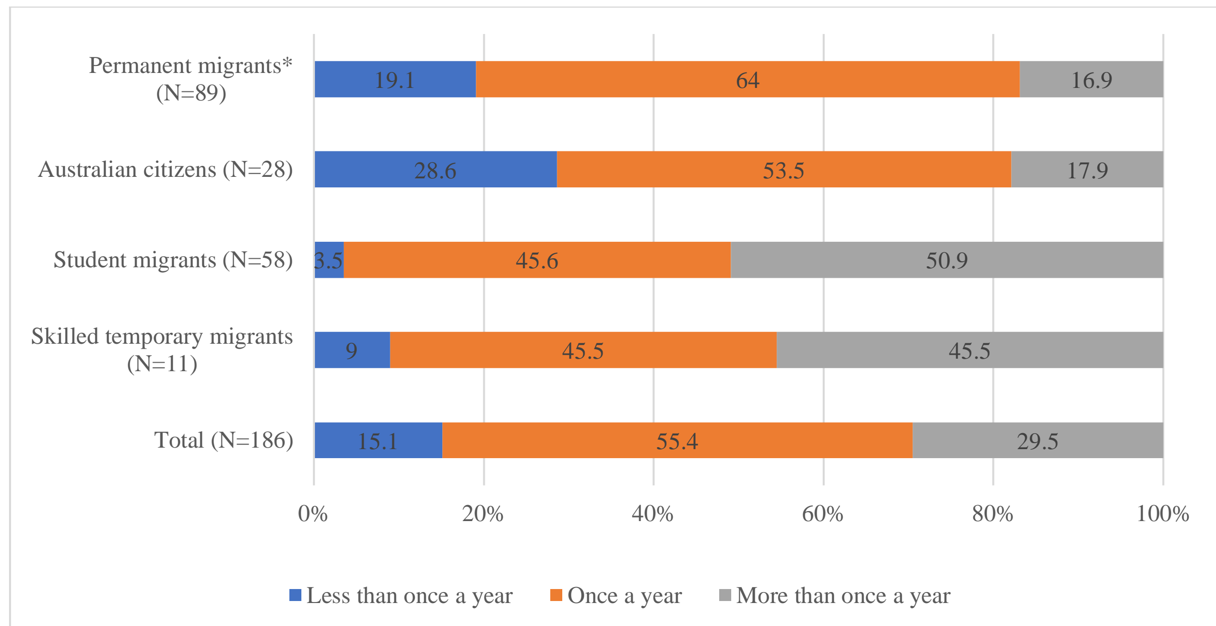
> *My wife and I moved here as accountants, and when we decided to migrate, the plan was to move my business to Australia. That didn't work out as we experienced some challenges getting a tax license. Since I still had clients in Singapore to service, I decided to continue travelling to Singapore to manage the business. This worked out for us because my kids were older and my wife was happy to manage them on her own. It ended up being a good decision in the end because my son had to return to Singapore to complete his military service, and I also look after my ageing parents, who never considered moving to Australia because they cannot speak English (Interviewee 24, 2019).*

Migrants in recent years could travel between their current countries of residence and their country of origin more frequently than ever before. Given that this study was conducted before the COVID-19 induced border closures, initial evidence now indicates that increased costs, the limited flight availability, and bans on large-scale international travel will greatly impede such mobility. Therefore, the results do not take into consideration the consequences of the border closures, and even after the borders are reopened, it is unclear whether travel will resume to normal levels (Semple 2020).

Figure 6.6 demonstrates that the frequency of respondents' visits to Singapore were grouped into three categories — more than once a year, once a year, and less than once a year. The three percent that did not visit are excluded. Permanent migrants and those with Australian citizenship tended to visit once a year, while students and temporary migrants were more likely to visit more frequently. Some 60 percent of permanent migrants were more likely to visit once a year, which was slightly lower for those who had become Australian citizens. It is possible that permanent residents may be tied to permanent jobs in Australia and can only get home once a year as a result. Although it is not clear why one-fifth of permanent migrants visit Singapore less frequently, it was interesting that there were twice as many males than females

who visited Singapore less than once a year, which suggests that their decision is likely driven by personal circumstances.

Figure 6.6. Frequency of visits of respondents to Singapore indicated by visa type



*Note: Permanent migrants include skilled migration visa holders and family visa holders.
Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

As explained by one married male respondent who had become an Australian citizen:

> *I migrated to Australia in the mid-2000s with my wife and son. My son was in primary school at the time, so he grew up in Australia, but went back to Singapore to complete his military service. He now lives in Singapore with his wife, who is also Singaporean. They met at university here, but have since decided to work in Singapore due to better employment opportunities and career progression, although their long-term goal is to come back to Australia and settle down here (Interviewee 21, 2019).*

The survey found that the majority of respondents who were student migrants were undertaking regular visits to Singapore, corresponding with the general recognition that international students in Australia tend to go home during the holidays. The high proportion of students visiting Singapore more than once a year corresponds with the initial observation that such visits are likely to take place during the main university breaks in summer and winter. They

also tend to maintain very strong socioeconomic ties to Singapore, given that the majority of them rely on family members in Singapore to support their education and living expenses in Australia. These ties have been maintained by the increase in low-cost air carriers within Australasia, which enable students to travel home on relatively lower budgets, which may no longer be the case. Moreover, as a result of the COVID-19 induced border closures, international students who chose to remain in Australia have not been able to return home to visit as frequently.

Research on international migration in a different time period has found that the transition to residence from visitor or temporary work permits due to overstaying has led to the growth in the number of Pacific Islanders in New Zealand throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Bedford 2002; Spoonley *et al*. 2003). Indeed temporary entry, and more specifically, the circulation between places of residence in more than one country, has long been a driving force in the creation of transnational populations (Ho and Bedford 2008). In order to retain skilled labour in a competitive global labour market, Hawthorne (2005) explained that Australia has changed its policy to allow onshore permanent residency application for students and temporary migrants, while similar initiatives have been enacted in Canada (Hiebert 2005), and New Zealand (Bedford 2005).

Those who chose not to visit Singapore were found to be permanent migrants and skilled temporary migrants. It is possible that the small number of temporary migrants who had not visited Singapore are aspiring to settle down permanently in Australia, as some permanent residency applications do not allow applicants to leave the country while the visa is being processed, or if they had only been here a short time. Those who travel to Singapore more than once a year are likely to have strong ties to Singapore and maintain a similar lifestyle to student migrants. Travelling to Singapore for business reasons is also a strong reason for more frequent visits, and similar movements were also observed by Yeo (2016) in the highly mobile Malaysia-born in Australia departing to Malaysia for a variety of reasons.

One single male international student, aged in his early 30s, explained his decision to pursue his postgraduate studies in Australia:

Even though I really enjoyed my time in the US, I had to come back because I was too far from home, and my parents were getting old. I tried to find a job when I came to Singapore, but I only found temporary work after looking for seven months. I eventually found the offer to pursue postgraduate study in Australia on Facebook, applied and got in, which was great because I get to do what I like, and I'm a lot closer to my family too (Interviewee 26, 2019).

On the other hand, the explanation for the small number of permanent migrants who have chosen not to visit Singapore since arriving in Australia is less straightforward. Similar to those who visit Singapore less frequently, it is likely that their decision not to visit Singapore is driven by personal circumstances, either because most of their family live elsewhere, or they are not close to family members back home, and some may not be able to afford frequent visits.

One married female permanent resident, aged in her early 30s, indicated that:

My relationship with my family became quite strained after we moved to Australia. I no longer keep in touch with my immediate family, and although I get lonely at times, the decision not to speak to them is much more beneficial for my mental health. There is a strong family culture in Singapore, so it is not so easy to cut off all ties, and I still talk to my cousin (Interviewee 25, 2019).

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter based on online survey data and selected interviews has found that local and transnational linkages play an important role in the lives of the sampled population. Pre-move contacts were found to influence respondents' decision to migrate to Australia. Moreover, a large proportion of Singaporean migrants continue to maintain social linkages with Singapore. Among the various aspects of transnational linkages, family linkages were an important form of transnational practice particularly among females, influencing the frequency of visits to Singapore. Respondents who were less established in Australia were also more likely to visit Singapore more frequently.

Although the Singapore government plays an active and ongoing role in engaging with Singaporean students, the decision for students to stay or leave after graduation is associated

with personal circumstances reflected in their economic, social and familial linkages with Singapore. For those who choose to stay on in Australia after graduation, the majority apply for permanent residency in Australia and end up with jobs suited to their skill set, faring well in the Australian labourmarket and integrating well into Australian society as a whole.

Permanent migrants and those who have since become Australian citizens were more established and also more likely to participate in mainstream activities in Australia. The majority were Christians and participation in religious activities which featured as their main form of social commitment, and some were also involved in a number of social and sporting groups in Australia. The general observation of the Singaporean community in Australia is that it is active, tight-knit and supportive. Not only do Singaporeans in Australia communicate regularly with other Singaporeans outside their household, they also rely on existing networks to help one another and are particularly responsive to those in need.

Given that social commitments in Australia, as well as economic and social linkages with Singapore, are an important feature in the wellbeing and identity of migrants, respondents are more likely to decide whether to take up Australian citizenship at a later stage in life, where responsibilities to look after ageing parents may have diminished. This observation corresponds with existing literature on transnational family strategies, which suggests that individual aspirations are influenced by changing family contexts. Although permanent migrants are happy living in Australia and do not see themselves returning to Singapore, many view transnational linkages as an important way to stay connected to Singapore and where possible, make positive contributions to the lives of family and friends left behind.

CHAPTER 7
PERSPECTIVES ON A DIASPORA IDENTITY AND RECIPROCAL FLOWS FROM AUSTRALIA TO SINGAPORE

7.1 Introduction

Given that contemporary diasporas have been shown to make positive contributions to their country of origin, this chapter uses data obtained from the online survey of Singaporeans in Australia to establish respondents' views on a diaspora, as well as how they perceive their presence in Australia can benefit Singapore. From data obtained from stakeholder interviews, the perspectives of Singaporeans in Australia are then compared to the Singapore government's views. These interviews explore the following aspects of migration 1) reasons for Singaporeans migrating overseas 2) whether a Singaporean diaspora exists and 3) how those living overseas can benefit Singapore.

The second part of this chapter using a second online survey identifies two distinct groups of respondents who have migrated from Australia to Singapore. These include 1) return migrants, including second-generation Singaporean-Australians and 2) Australians working and living in Singapore. Corresponding with previous studies on return and reciprocal migration, the discussion reveals that return migrants choose to move back to Singapore for social, rather than economic reasons. Such movements often signal the end of their migration journey. On the other hand, Australians in Singapore are primarily motivated by economic opportunity. To this end, the socio-economic outcomes of Australians in Singapore are explored in relation to their financial situation and success in the labourmarket. Despite differences in international migration systems between Singapore and Australia, the analysis demonstrates that Australians in Singapore experience similar economic outcomes to Singaporeans in Australia. However, Australians in Singapore are far more consistent in respect to future plans, as the majority are usually on employment contracts and have plans to return to Australia in the future.

7.2 Perspectives on a diaspora identity

The term ‘diaspora’ is defined as the dispersal of a people from its original homeland (Safran 1991; Tölölyan 1994). Although the term is most commonly associated with the dispersion of the Jewish people (Cohen 1997), since the 1980s, the use of the word ‘diaspora’ has been employed in a number of contexts (Tölölyan 1994). The origins of the term lie in the Greek word, ‘to colonise’, and it was traditionally used to refer to a large group of people who are linked by common cultural or religious bonds, who have left their homeland as a result of external forces, and have developed a strong identity and mutual solidarity in exile (Hugo 2006). Thus, this term has been used not only to describe the Jewish diaspora, but also the histographies of the Armenian, Greek and African diasporas (Butler 2001). In the contemporary context, the term has been used more broadly to encompass migrant or expatriate populations who live outside their home country (Safran 1991; Vertovec 1997). Therefore, researchers who study diasporas are divided into two groups, those who focus on the ‘classical’ definition of the Jewish diaspora, and the other those who co-mingle contemporary diaspora with issues of transnationalism and globalisation (Reis 2004; Hugo 2006).

The discussion on the Singaporean diaspora fits into the second category. Singapore as a country is made up of migrants, with a significant temporary migrant population specific to the domestic and construction sectors which have grown over time (Chua 2003; Saw 2012). In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, questions have been raised on the sustainability of temporary migration regimes in countries that rely heavily on temporary workers in specific industries, including Singapore (Yeoh 2020). In addition, the IOM estimates that around 200,000 Singaporeans are currently residing outside of Singapore in permanent or temporary arrangements, comprising an estimated 0.05 percent of the national resident population (IOM 2016).

There are several reasons why it is important to understand the Singaporean diaspora. From a theoretical perspective, the study of diasporas is an aspect of transnational migration literature which focusses on links that migrants maintain to their country of origin, as well as the impacts such links have on development as a whole. In contrast to the brain-drain debates of the 80s, diaspora as a concept in transnationalism proposes a more positive approach to migration and

development. An engaged diaspora can make positive contributions to development in their country of origin, which has been recognised by a growing number of academics and public policymakers (Butler 2001; Hugo 2006a; de Haas 2010, 2012; Kenny 2013). Currently, half of all United Nations Member States have diaspora institutions (Gamlen 2014a).

Butler (2001, pp. 191-193) proposes four defining criteria of contemporary diasporas, 1) a scattering of two or more destinations, 2) a relationship with an actual or imagined homeland, 3) common group identity shared among diaspora communities, and 4) existence over two generations. Indeed, Singaporeans reside overseas in a number of countries. The survey has demonstrated that Singaporeans in Australia are a close-knit community, and a large proportion of respondents continue to maintain economic and social linkages with Singapore. Therefore, Singaporeans in Australia were found to share a common group identity, as many maintain transnational linkages with Singapore while embracing Australia as their new home.

Since diasporas have become a priority among governments for their role in development, this study goes on to investigate Singaporean perspectives on a diaspora identity and whether they feel that their presence in Australia can bring about any benefits to Singapore. The themes obtained from survey findings are subsequently examined in relation to stakeholders' views.

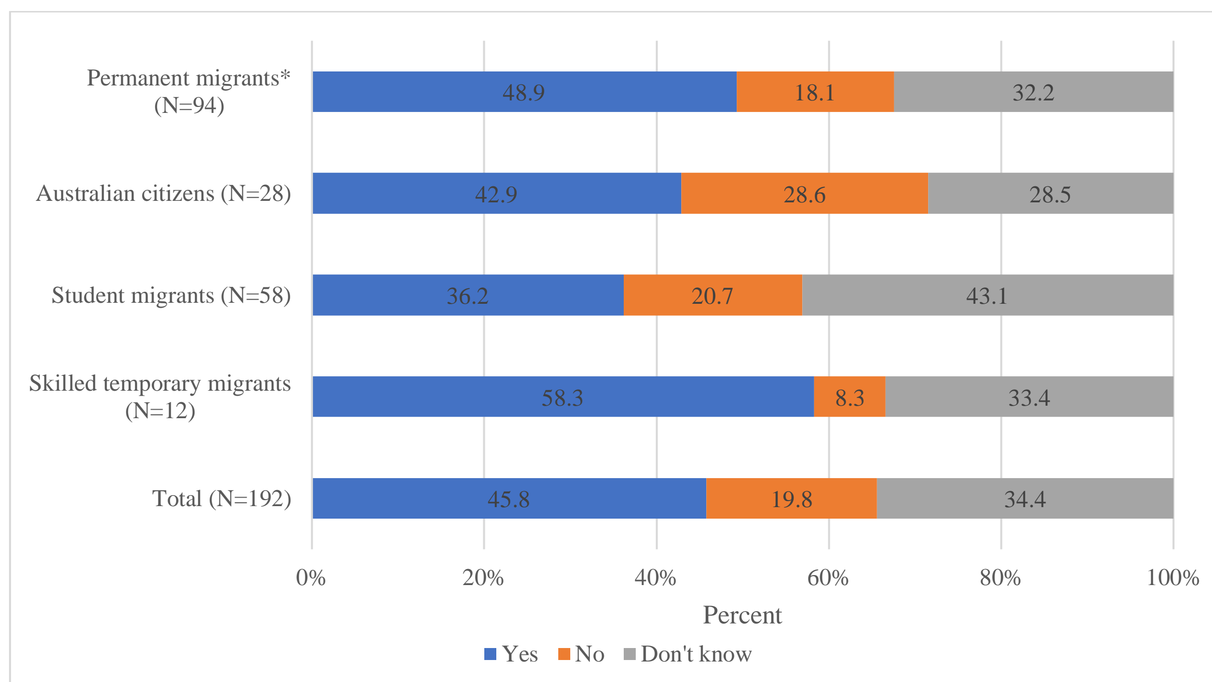
7.2.1 Singaporean perspectives

In order to find out if Singaporeans in Australia feel like they have a relationship with their actual or imagined homeland, the survey sought to understand respondents' perspectives on a diaspora identity. The survey included the following question, *'Do you feel like you are part of the Singaporean diaspora?'*, and were given three options as response, 1) Yes, 2) No and 3) Don't know (refer Appendix A, Section N).

The survey found a mixed response among the sampled population. Figure 7.1 shows that out of the total number of respondents, almost half (45.8 percent) identified themselves as part of a diaspora, one-third did not know, and one-fifth did not identify with a diaspora identity. However, some 49 percent of permanent migrants, and 43 percent of those who have since become Australian citizens identified with a diaspora, while about one-third of students held a similar view. It is interesting to note that more than a third of respondents do not know whether

they are part of a diaspora. This was particularly concentrated among students (43.1 percent) and the small number of skilled temporary migrants (33.4 percent). Only one-third of students considered themselves as part of a diaspora, and this may be because the majority of students already have plans to return to Singapore. It was found earlier that students maintain economic and social linkages to Singapore, and their parents who reside in Singapore tend to be their primary source of income for education and living expenses in Australia. Although respondents identify as Singaporean migrants in Australia, not all may be clear as to what 'a Singaporean diaspora' entails. Thus, it is possible that including a definition as part of the survey question would have been essential for respondents, or had been useful as an educative process.

Figure 7.1. Respondents' perspectives on a diaspora identity indicated by visa type



*Note: Permanent migrants include skilled migration visa holders and family visa holders.
Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

Given that almost half of permanent migrants identify as being part of the diaspora, and are active in maintaining economic and social linkages with Singapore, it is interesting that economic links such as company ownership and employment do not feature prominently in the analysis (refer Chapter 6, Section 6.5). This is in spite of a small number of respondents who were business owners and have experienced successful economic outcomes in the Australian

labourforce. In addition to the changes in family members personal aspirations over time, infrastructural differences between the two countries may make it difficult to facilitate economic linkages led by Singaporean business owners in Australia.

As observed by a Singaporean business and community leader in Australia:

> *We know that there are many hotels and student accommodation here owned by Singaporeans, but when it comes to small businesses, there are much fewer Singaporean-owned businesses in comparison to other migrant groups. The Chinese in particular have a much bigger appetite for risk. Although Singaporeans are adaptable, they are generally risk-adverse; they tend to move here and look for a day job. I suppose that's how most of us were brought up, with a very traditional mindset (Interviewee 1, 2019).*

It is possible that respondents must experience successful economic outcomes in the Australian labourforce over a sustained period of time before they then consider building business linkages with Singapore. Although research on diaspora-led economic linkages is limited, a study by Gao (2015) demonstrates the success of Chinese migrant entrepreneurs in Australia since the 1990s and its impacts on Sino-Australian relations. From the perspective of diaspora relations, it may be worth exploring the business culture among Singaporean business owners in Australia to understand how many have built economic linkages with Singapore. Given that the majority of respondents have migrated to Australia relatively recently, it is possible that Singaporean businesses are less established in comparison to other migrant entrepreneurs in Australia. Thus, examining how other migrants have developed business linkages with their country of origin may be useful for Singaporean businesses in Australia to look towards building such linkages.

Wolf (2001) argues that having dual citizenship is one of the ways that migrants maintain ties to various places, and countries like Australia have become more permissive towards dual citizenship as a result of increased international trade and trends in international migration (Hugo *et al*. 2001; Martin 2002). In the case of Singaporeans in Australia where those who are more established tend to have adopted Australian citizenship and give up their Singapore citizenship as a result, this limits migrants' capacity to build economic linkages with Singapore.

One married, female business migrant, aged 50-54 years, expressed:

> *I see myself as part of the diaspora, and am really proud to be a Singaporean living in Australia. I'm very aware of the opportunities that being Singaporean has given me, particularly a good education, a safe environment, with English as our first language. Without these advantages, I would not have been able to move here in the first place. We have experienced success with our business so far, and even though we are currently on a temporary visa, we plan to settle down permanently and are undecided about whether to expand our business to Singapore (Interviewee 14, 2019).*

Studies (Ziguras and Law 2006; Robinson 2013; Tan and Hugo 2017) have found that for students who choose to stay on in Australia after graduation, the majority eventually become permanent residents, facilitated by Australia's migration policy that explicitly links skilled graduates to permanent residency. This policy is in line with transnational family strategies, as Ho and Bedford (2008) indicate that Asian international students tend to adopt Australian permanent residency as part of the broader strategy to live in one or more countries in order to maximise opportunities for education, employment and social advancement. Indeed, a study by Tan and Hugo (2017) has demonstrated that a large proportion of Chinese and Indian graduates in South Australia apply for permanent residency onshore, although not all are clear on their intentions to live in Australia in the long run.

As expressed by a former male international student who is now a permanent resident in Australia:

> *When I first came as a student in Australia, I thought about applying for permanent residency just to keep my options open — have two places which you can call home, and then decide where you want to settle down eventually. Back then, I did think about going back to Singapore to expand the business, but now that I am married with children, it is much harder to build international ties without compromising on family time. So now, I think about expanding the business to other parts of Australia (Interviewee 18, 2019).*

7.2.2 Benefits to Singapore

In addition to exploring respondents' views on a diaspora identity, the survey included the following question, *'Do you feel that your presence in Australia can benefit Singapore?'*. It was found that only one-quarter of respondents viewed their life in Australia as having no benefits to Singapore, while three-quarters of them provided multiple responses as seen in Table 7.1. Less than ten percent of respondents felt that their presence in Australia provided *investment opportunities* in Singapore, so this option was grouped together with *creating business or trading links*. The most popular response was *learning skills transferable back to Singapore* (58.0 percent), while *creating business or trading links* (25.9 percent) was the least popular. Other responses included — *good ambassadors for Singapore* (49.7 percent), *existing contacts useful for other Singaporeans* (49.7 percent), *linking two countries together* (46.9 percent) and *creating goodwill towards Singapore* (42.0 percent).

Among the different visa types represented in the sampled population, the perspectives of permanent migrants, including family visa holders, closely followed this distribution. Although permanent migrants and those who have since become Australian citizens both experience positive settlement and integration outcomes, there were some differences in respondents' perspectives on how their presence in Australia can benefit Singapore. Among permanent migrants, *learning skills transferable back to Singapore* featured among some 50 percent of responses, but this selection was much lower among those who have since become Australian citizens (28.6 percent). Rather, those who have adopted Australian citizenship felt that *existing contacts were useful for other Singaporeans* (66.7 percent) and *linking two countries together* (61.9 percent) were more relevant as they had given up formal ties to Singapore and are less likely to return.

Interestingly, *good ambassadors for Singapore* featured as the most popular selection among permanent migrants (56.7 percent), suggesting that many of them are proud of their Singaporean identity. Not only are Singaporeans active participants in the Australian labourforce and experience social integration, the majority maintain transnational linkages with Singapore, demonstrating a positive connection between the two countries.

Table 7.1. Respondents' perspectives on benefits to Singapore indicated by visa type (multiple response)

Benefits to Singapore	Permanent migrants* (*N*=67)	Australian citizens (*N*=21)	Student migrants (*N*=44)	Skilled temporary migrants (*N*=11)	Total (*N*=389)
	%	%	%	%	%
Learning skills transferable back to Singapore (*N*=83)	50.7	28.6	86.4	45.5	58.0
Good ambassadors for Singapore (*N*=71)	56.7	52.4	43.2	27.3	49.7
Existing contacts useful for other Singaporeans (*N*=71)	50.7	66.7	34.1	72.7	49.7
Linking two countries together (*N*=67)	49.3	61.9	31.8	63.6	46.9
Creating goodwill towards Singapore (*N*=60)	46.3	52.4	38.6	9.1	42.0
Creating business or trading links (*N*=37)	26.9	23.8	15.9	63.6	25.9

*Note: Permanent migrants include skilled migration visa holders and family visa holders.

Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

On the other hand, *learning skills transferable back to Singapore* featured far more prominently among student migrants (86.4 percent), while *creating business or trading links* featured strongly among the seven skilled temporary migrant respondents. It is possible that diaspora-led economic linkages and networks can develop under the right policy framework, given that about one-quarter of respondents were economically motivated and expressed the desire to create business or trading links between the two countries.

One Singaporean community leader in Australia reflected on the changing motivations of Singaporeans migrants in Australia:

> *In addition to settlement and integrating to life in Australia, the new generation of migrants are also interested in networking and forming business connections between the two countries (Interviewee 20, 2019).*

It was found that respondents with Australian citizenship were more established, and were therefore, more likely to be more sentimental towards their actual or imagined homeland, despite having had to give up their Singapore citizenship as a result of becoming Australian citizens. Researchers (Faist 2000; Castles 2003; Levitt and Schiller 2004) have argued that ideas of belonging reflect transnational identities that are not limited to territory, but rather, encompasses origins, culture and language. Castles (2003) argues that dual or multiple citizenship is one of the ways that transnational belonging is recognised, and in doing so emigration countries bind emigrants to the home country, bringing about benefits in the form of remittances, technology transfer, political allegiance and cultural maintenance. However, not all respondents felt that their presence in Australia has been utilised in a way that benefits Singapore.

One male, married respondent, aged over 60 years, who has since become an Australian citizen, stated that:

> *Singaporean migrants are liked by most countries. We are educated, and thanks to our government, we don't break laws, we won't get into trouble and we produce smart children. Personally, I feel that the government has not done enough to promote Singaporean culture, there is the Singapore Day every four or five years, but that's about it. It is a shame that a lot of us, the older generation of migrants, fade away and have nothing to do with Singapore (Interviewee 20, 2019).*

7.3 Stakeholders' perspectives

In view of the increasing number of diaspora institutions dedicated to migrants and their descendants, the analysis on contemporary diasporas compares respondents' views on a diaspora identity with stakeholders' perspectives. Diaspora institutions are not entirely a new phenomenon, having existed in Mexico, Italy and elsewhere at various times throughout history (e.g. Smith 2003; Fitzgerald 2009; Delano 2011), however the proliferation of diaspora institutions in recent times is unprecedented (Gamlen 2014b). Gamlen (2019) elaborates on a number of diaspora engagement efforts that have since emerged: the Mexican, Indian and Eritrean diaspora response to territorial reconfigurations in their respective contexts, labour migration and remittances in South and Central Asia, diaspora perspectives on geopolitical

issues in the Black Sea region, and issues related to regional integration schemes in the European Union.

Due to the importance of economic ties established as a result of migration and development, interviews were conducted with stakeholders represented by Singaporean government representatives in Australia and Singapore. Given that remittances are a major aspect of Asian and Southeast Asian diaspora populations, interviews with Singaporeans in Australia sought to understand whether remittances featured in their migration journeys and settlement experiences, while stakeholders were asked a different set of questions which focussed on two key aspects, 1) migration trends between Australia and Singapore, and 2) the relationship between the Singapore government and the diaspora (refer Appendix D).

One Singapore government representative elaborated on the reasons for Singaporeans migrating to Australia:

> *After education and economic opportunities, liveability would be the third reason that would motivate Singaporeans to live elsewhere. They migrate because they want a slower pace of life. Singapore is a city, there is no countryside for a quick getaway. As long as those opportunities exist in Australia, migration is bound to occur. But we always welcome Singaporeans who wish to return (Stakeholder 2, 2019).*

One male, married respondent, aged over 60 years, who has since become an Australian citizen, reflected on Singapore's diaspora strategies in an earlier time period:

> *Even before Singapore introduced the Foreign Talent policy, they tried to get migrants back. In the late 70s, there was a campaign to attract overseas Chinese back to Singapore. They offered us discounts to stay in the Westin hotel for three days. Some of my friends took the offer and returned to Singapore, others took the offer but came back to Australia; they were not used to the lifestyle in Singapore (Interviewee 20, 2019).*

The Singapore government's diaspora initiatives have evolved in recent years to facilitate business networks, and are found within formal networks as part of the legislative and executive branches of government. Researchers have argued that incorporating diaspora initiatives as part of formal government networks is a feature of contemporary migration

(Gamlen 2019; Gamlen *et al*. 2019). Hence, although the majority of Singaporean migration to Australia has occurred relatively recently and make up only a small proportion of Asian migrants in Australia, the majority of employed respondents were professionals in law, engineering, education and health sectors and have successfully overcome any challenges to employment.

In origin states around the world, diaspora institutions, which are defined as formal state offices in executive or legislative branches of government dedicated to the affairs of migrants and their descendants, have become a regular feature of political life in many parts of the world (Agunias and Newland 2012; Gamlen 2014b, Gamlen *et al*. 2019). Diaspora institutions encourage a number of financial activities to facilitate economic linkages, including remittances, investments, donations and 'roots tourism' campaigns (Abramson 2019; Mahieu 2019). Such activities can also take on a political agenda, with migrants being granted citizenship and voting rights, and their involvement with political affairs have become an integral part of the international landscape (Collyer 2014). Up until the 1990s, a large proportion of migration research focussed more on policies made in destination countries, as migrants were often seen as victims, deserters or traitors to their home country (Shain and Barth 2003; Durand 2004; Gamlen *et al*. 2019). Migrants are now more likely to be celebrated as national heroes, with holidays dedicated to celebrate their contributions to their 'homeland', for example in Mexico (Shain and Barth 2003; Durand 2004). In Singapore, ongoing concerns toward Singaporeans residing overseas were perpetuated by Singapore's political leaders, in 1987, by former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, and again in 2003, by former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong (refer Chapter 2; Section 2.6.1).

Similar sentiments were reiterated by one Singaporean government representative:

> *If Singaporeans are migrating overseas to pursue their aspirations elsewhere, there must be a push factor that prevents them from being in Singapore. I think that's what the government is worried about, because it is the duty of every government to make sure that their citizens want to be in the country (Stakeholder 3, 2019).*

Similar to many diaspora institutions in many parts of the world, the Singapore government formed the Overseas Singaporean Unit in 2006 in order to facilitate a formal relationship

between the government and its diaspora. By modifying the perceptions of migrants and their descendants into a category of belonging towards their country of origin, it is argued that diaspora institutions transform relationships among power, place and identity central to the study of politics (Ragazzi 2009; Délano Alonso and Mylonas 2019). Gamlen *et al*. (2019) argue that diaspora institutions merit close research attention because they extend domestic politics beyond national borders, projecting state power to shape the identity of migrants and their descendants' in an extraterritorial capacity.

As expressed by one Singaporean government representative in Australia:

> *My role in Australia has a lot to do with fostering community. We can't force people to return, especially since the community here is more mature in the sense that people have been migrating here for over four decades. There are many pockets of Singaporeans in Australia, so I look for opportunities to support these communities, and help people maintain the connection to home (Stakeholder 1, 2019).*

7.4 Government policies facilitating return migration

Given that the literature surrounding 'brain drain' as a concept had previously concerned academics and public policymakers in the 1980s, it is interesting to find that this perspective was still found among stakeholders, as one of the principles dictating Singapore's diaspora policy includes the return of migrants living overseas. Unlike other diaspora institutions around the world where political activities among the Jewish-American diaspora include ethnic lobbying (Shain 1995), or a more neoliberal perspective among Columbian and South African expatriates where diaspora resource contributions are used to offset the migrant 'brain drain' (Meyer 2008), the Singapore government perceives return migration as the main feature of its diaspora framework. Therefore, it is not surprising that Singapore's diaspora policy focusses on collaboration with university-based Singaporean associations, as among all migrant groups, students tend to have plans to return after completing their studies in Australia (refer Chapter 7, Section 7.5.1). The earlier analysis demonstrates that the majority of respondents maintain transnational linkages with Singapore. In comparison to one-third of students, 45 percent of permanent migrants and those who have since become Australian citizens were more likely to share a common diaspora identity.

A Singaporean community leader reflects on the Singapore governments' diaspora initiatives in Australia:

> *I do feel that the Singapore government is interested in us, they have tried to engage with overseas Singaporeans for many years now. However, I believe the natural tendency is to stick with the students, may be because families don't have the time to engage. But it is families who make up the Singaporean community in Australia, as we have been here for a much longer duration. We have links with both Singaporeans and Australians that others, particularly students, can use to their advantage, so they don't have to do the hard yards — making cold calls, maintaining relationships — they are here only for a few years and are most likely returning to Singapore (Interviewee 9, 2019).*

Unlike other diaspora institutions around the world, the analysis on stakeholders' perspectives found that the Singapore government has incorporated return migration as part of its diaspora framework. Previously social network theories focussed on the linkages between origin and destination which drive return migration. As opposed to an assimilationist perspective, transnationalism proposes that migrants experience successful integration at destination, while still maintaining significant linkages to origin. It is the result of changing family members' personal aspirations over time, or changing socio-economic circumstances, which results in some linkages being prioritised over others (Ley and Kobayashi 2005).

One possible reason for the Singapore government's ongoing concern regarding 'brain drain' may be to do with historical concerns about a dwindling Singaporean population (refer Chapter 2; Section 2.6). At the same time, the ideal Singaporean was described by the Singapore government as someone who is 'cosmopolitan', 'familiar with global trends and lifestyles', and 'feels comfortable working and living in Singapore as well as overseas' (Singapore 21 Committee 1999, p. 45). Therefore, Singapore's population and economic policy operates on the premise of encouraging its citizens to pursue education and employment overseas, with the underlying premise to return.

As stated by one representative from the Singaporean government:

> *We must have better opportunities in Singapore to fulfill individual aspirations. If most Singaporeans end up studying in Australia, work for three years, work again in another*

market another three years, and then comes back to Singapore, that's great, and we need Singaporeans who are willing to take such risks (Stakeholder 2, 2019).

Despite this, there is currently only one incentive available directed at attracting overseas Singaporeans back to Singapore. This incentive is specifically directed at Singaporean students studying medical degrees overseas. Known as the Pre-Employment Grant scholarship, this scholarship is awarded by the Ministry of Health. Applicants, who are assessed by merit, are given direct access to the Singaporean labourforce upon graduation as they are are required to serve a bond that varies in length depending on the amount of money received (Pre-Employment Grant 2020).

One representative from the Singaporean government reflects on the success of this scholarship in recruiting overseas medical graduates to full-time employment in Singapore's labourforce:

Through the scholarship issued by the Ministry of Health, medical students now have an incentive to return to Singapore and a lot of students have taken on these incentives. By capitalising on the opportunity to incentivise medical students to return to Singapore after completing their studies, I would say that only about one in ten students choose not to take up this scholarship (Stakeholder 3, 2019).

Given that respondents who were undecided about returning to Singapore said that they were more likely to consider returning if a suitable job arose, it is possible that similar initiatives may be developed in other industries to attract migrants with overseas qualifications and experience to return to Singapore. As most employed migrants are likely to have occupations in specialist professions such as law, engineering and technology, as well as in health and education professions, similar initiatives may be developed and presented as opportunities not only to graduates, but also to those at different stages of their careers.

As expressed by one married, female respondent, aged in her late 20s, a permanent resident employed as an academic in Australia:

My husband and I have thought about returning to Singapore, but as an academic who is just starting out and wanting to grow my career, there are not many opportunities. I struggled to find information on getting an academic position in Singapore, and it was

only through connecting with other Singaporean academics at an international conference that I got to know the system better. I found that there were limited pathways in Singapore to develop young researchers, as grants at the three major universities in Singapore were targeted towards senior academics from North America or the United Kingdom. We did consider moving to Hong Kong, but in the end, we decided to stay on in Australia (Interviewee 3, 2019).

7.5 Return migration

Given that contemporary migration operates under a transnational framework which suggests that not all migration occurs in a linear direction, it is important to consider the trends underpinning return migration under the broader context of migration between Australia and Singapore. Return migrants are defined as the return of Singaporean migrants back to Singapore, and this departure may include permanent or temporary migrants. Therefore, in addition to understanding the motivations for Singaporean migration to Australia, their settlement experiences and plans to return, the study sought to understand reciprocal flows from Australia to Singapore based on the actual experiences of return migrants.

Although return migration is a significant aspect of the migration journey, it is mostly understudied, and one reason for this is the lack of reliable quantitative data collected by countries which makes it challenging to estimate the extent of return (Arowolo 2000; Cassarino 2004). Interestingly, Australia is one of the few countries that collects international migration data in a way that allows return migration to be measured, but this information is limited to return migration to Australia (Hugo 2011). Moreover, some of the arrival and departure data described by Hugo (2011) has since changed, reaffirming the ongoing challenges with data sources used to estimate return migration (refer Chapter 4, Section 4.13).

7.5.1 Reasons for return

There were only a small number of return migrants (*N*=20) who participated in the survey titled 'Migration to Singapore from Australia' (refer Appendix E). Results from this survey were used here in conjunction with interviews held with three stakeholders. The study on return migrants yielded a low response rate as they are a very elusive group that are difficult to locate

once they settle back into their lives in their country of origin. Other researchers who have studied contemporary migration among other migrant groups in Australia have sought to survey those who had returned also faced similar challenges (Wasserman 2016; Yeo 2016; Breen 2018). Despite the research challenges involved in understanding return migration, existing literature on the typologies of return migration propose two aspects that can determine the possibility of migrants undertaking a return journey, 1) the length of time that migrants plan to stay at destination, and 2) their reasons for return (Gmelch 1980; Ben Yehuda-Sternfeld and Mirsky 2014). De Haas (2015) has found that temporary migrants eventually return after achieving their goals that saw them migrate in the first place, while permanent migrants may return under voluntary or forced circumstances.

The most popular response for the majority of Singaporeans who returned from Australia was to 'return home'. Females were more likely to return to undertake caring responsibilities in Singapore, while employment, 'Singaporean lifestyle', and children's education were also popular. Singaporeans in Australia are generally happy with their lives in Australia, and those who do return tend to be females that prioritise the family connection. On the other hand, males were more economically motivated to return if a suitable a job opportunity came up, one that matched their skills, qualifications and experience. Both males and females were highly qualified as the majority held higher education degrees obtained in Australia or Singapore. Consequently, the observation that non-economic factors play a bigger role in influencing the decision to return is in line with existing literature on return migration (Gmelch 1980; Chappell and Glennie 2010). This corresponds with the finding that respondents who returned from Australia were more likely to be driven by personal and family circumstances, rather than economic opportunity. Not all permanent migrants successfully adapt to their new lives at destination, while others may be forced to return under political, racial or religious circumstances (Cassarino 2007, 2014).

One female respondent who was unmarried, aged in her late 20s, explained her decision to return to Singapore:

> *I enjoyed studying in Australia but did not consider staying on after my degree, because my family is back here. I'm a bit of a homebody, and did not consider staying away from*

home for too long. It's really hard to get a job in Australia in my industry; even my Australian peers took some time to find a suitable job (Interviewee 38, 2019).

Younger respondents were less likely to be married with children, or have caretaking responsibilities towards ageing parents in Singapore. In fact, half of the respondents were never married. This meant that younger respondents were more likely to see their return to Singapore as returning home to friends and family left behind. On the other hand, middle-aged respondents were more likely to be married with children, implying that the decision to return to Singapore may be influenced by the children's upbringing with the help of grandparents and extended family members. Given that family migration to Australia has become less of a priority within Australia's migration system, it is possible that changing family circumstances may have facilitated return migration. Respondents were either living in a multi-generational household, or married with children, reaffirming Ley and Kobayashi's (2005) hypothesis that changes in family members' personal aspirations are closely related to life cycle stage, which tend to impact transnational family strategies.

As expressed by one Singaporean government representative in Australia:

I know of someone who studied in Australia, stayed on and worked in Australia for about sixteen years. He got married, and had kids in Australia, but his kids had never lived in Singapore. In the last couple of months, he decided to move back to Singapore because he wanted his kids to grow up in the same environment as he did (Interviewee 13, 2019).

Given that characteristics such as age and gender are key determinants in the decision to return, the analysis explored the socio-economic characteristics of respondents to understand how migrants have re-integrated into life in Singapore. The majority of them were employed in professional occupations within industries such as healthcare and technology, corresponding with the main occupations represented among Singaporeans in Australia. In particular, banking and financial services were well-represented among return migrants, while only one respondent was employed in the education sector, suggesting that the transferability of skills across certain sectors is limited. The majority of employed respondents did not experience barriers to employment, and the two respondents that did explained that the specialised nature of their occupations meant that there were very few job openings in these sectors. Although

respondents did not prioritise economic reasons for return, the majority of them indicated an improvement in financial status, attributing this to *'more favourable personal income tax'*.

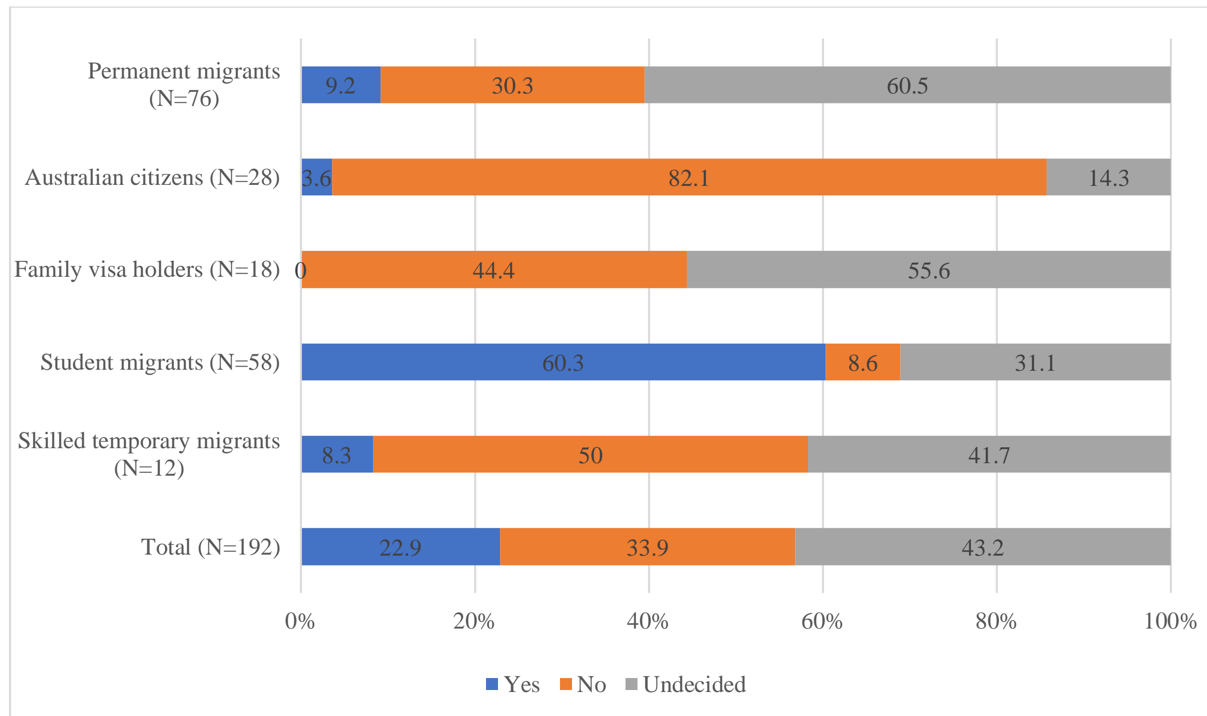
The Singaporeans in Australia survey asked respondents if they were planning to return to Singapore. Similar to the response towards perspectives on a diaspora identity, this question gave rise to a mixed response. Out of the total number of respondents, 43 percent were undecided about their plans to return, one-third had no plans to return, and one-fifth were had planned to do so. Minimal differences were shown between males and females among those with plans to return. However, as females tend to be tied movers, a higher proportion of females (49 percent) than males (36 percent) were undecided on their plans to return, corresponding with more males (40 percent) than females (29 percent) who do not plan to return.

Figure 7.2 highlights differences in plans to return between student migrants, with 60 percent planning to return, corresponding with earlier findings suggesting that the majority of students will return to Singapore after completing their studies in Australia. Some 82 percent of those who have since become Australian citizens had no plans to return to Singapore, while permanent migrants and family visa holders were mainly undecided about their future plans. Almost two-thirds of all permanent migrants were undecided on whether to return. Some expressed that they would consider returning to Singapore if the right opportunities were provided; one that recognised their skills, qualifications and experience. Given the successful integration of Singaporeans in the Australian labourforce, it is likely that the majority are in the position to make positive contributions to the Singaporean economy. In addition to the Singapore government encouraging its citizens to live and work abroad, there may be need to consider a program that creates opportunities in industries such as law, engineering, technology, health and education to attract the return of overseas Singaporeans. This may address some of the labourforce shortages that Singapore is currently experiencing as a result of an ageing population and shrinking labourforce.

It was interesting that only one skilled temporary migrant had plans to return, and for the five who were undecided. This may be because they are either waiting to become eligible for permanent residency, or that they see themselves as part of the global labourforce and have plans to live and work elsewhere. The small proportion of those with Australian citizenship expressing plans to return are likely to have grown up in Australia and hold citizenship in both

countries up until aged 21 years. Those with long-term plans to live and work in Singapore would eventually forgo their Australian citizenship.

Figure 7.2. Plans of respondents to return to Singapore indicated by visa type



Source: Singaporeans in Australia survey 2019.

One single, male international student, aged in his early 30s, expressed that:

> *I'm a research student here in Australia, and prior to my studies, I was working at a university in Singapore. Before that, I was based in the US where I'd finished two rounds of grad dissertation. My brother is in Melbourne, but I have got another brother who studied in Queensland, he is back in Singapore now. My family is still largely based in Singapore, but I've lived in Singapore, in the US, and now Australia for what would be the next few years. I still regard myself very much as someone who is still trying to locate their place in the world, or articulate a sense of what home is (Interviewee 26, 2019).*

When asked, *'When do you plan on returning to Singapore to live?'*, the most common response among permanent migrants was *'within the next two years'*, and some explained that they intend to split time between the two countries. Thus, it is likely that permanent migrants

who plan to return to Singapore will continue to maintain social and economic linkages there. Given that the literature on transnational family strategies suggest that changes in family members personal aspirations occur in response to transitions in the family life cycle (Ley and Kobayashi 2005), those who plan to return are often motivated by recent changes in personal or family circumstances. This is reflected in the back-and-forth movement undertaken by individuals and their families between the two countries.

One Singaporean community leader, aged over 70 years, described his observations:

> *I know of someone who has been here for the last 25 years and moved about five times between Singapore and Australia. I guess when they had children, they wanted a domestic helper and you can't get that in Australia. They also wanted their children to be educated in Singapore, and then return to Australia for university (Interviewee 20, 2019).*

Despite changes in personal or family circumstances that motivate the return of some permanent migrants to Singapore, the majority are happy living in Australia and have no plans to return. A small proportion did express some disillusionment towards various aspects of Singapore's political system, but this problem is vastly different from the political contexts that have driven other migrant groups towards adopting Australian citizenship. Unlike "reluctant exiles" from Hong Kong who take up Australian citizenship as a means to secure their freedom of movement and the relocation of personal assets (Skeldon 1994; Wong and Salaaf 1998; Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Ley 2010), Singaporean migration to Australia in the 21st century is not overtly driven by the need to secure an insurance policy for the future. This is supported by the observation that Singaporeans in Australia are far more likely to obtain Australian citizenship at a later life stage after fulfilling social and family commitments in Singapore.

One married, male respondent, aged in his late 50s, who had become an Australian citizen, reflected on his life in Australia:

> *When I came to Australia there was quite an exodus of people from Singapore at the professional level. I think I was lucky because I had the option to move out of Singapore. My son has moved back to Singapore with his wife, and my siblings are in Singapore. I have some good friends in Singapore too, but at the same time my church family is here.*

I am a Christian so I don't believe so much that my home is here, not a physical home anyway. I feel comfortable living in Australia and into retirement that my medical needs will be met (Interviewee 27, 2019).

7.5.2 Plans to return to Australia

Of the sampled 20 respondents in the return survey, half of them have plans to return to Australia to live. Among those who have plans to return to Australia, only one respondent had immediate plans to return within the next two years, while the rest were planning to return to Australia at a later life stage. Interestingly, all respondents who planned to return to Australia said that they wished to remain Singapore citizens, while entering Australia as permanent residents. Some *'did not feel the need to become Australian citizens'*, and given the close relationship between Australia and Singapore, it is not surprising that most respondents feel a sense of security moving between the two countries despite being a citizen in just one country.

One Singaporean community leader reflected on the close relationship between Australia and Singapore:

There was an article written many years ago that Singapore could have the same arrangements that Australia has with New Zealand. We can come here and live as long as we like, but soon after, they changed the wording to professionals, which allowed Australians to go to Singapore. These arrangements were not enacted in the end, I suppose it could not be sustained (Interviewee 20, 2019).

A handful of respondents in the Singaporeans in Australia survey indicated that they had re-entered Australia via the residents' return visa. This suggests that a small proportion had lived in Australia and Singapore at various points throughout their lives, reflecting their transnational migration journeys that correspond with existing literature (Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Ley 2010). These journeys are not unique to Australia and Singapore, as similar migration patterns have featured among other migrant groups, including Irish migrants in Australia (Breen 2018) and South African migrants in Australia (Wasserman 2016).

7.6 Migration to Singapore from Australia

The *'Migration to Singapore from Australia'* survey (refer Appendix E) also sought to understand reciprocal flows in the context of Australians in Singapore. Their motivations for migration were explored in relation to their migration experience and future plans for settlement. Similar to the sampled population size of return migrants (*N*=20), a small sample of Australians in Singapore was obtained (*N*=38).

In Australia, research that addressed the motivations for Australians living abroad only began in the 1990s, prior to that, research and policy that focussed on migration to Australia had been far more prominent (Hugo 1994, 2005, 2006a). The premise for the newfound interest in Australians living abroad had to do with macro level factors influencing globalisation and policy changes in Australia, as the introduction of temporary migration policies in the mid-90s also saw the increase in temporary mobility and the emigration of Australians (Parker 2010). Hugo (2005) estimated that there were about one million Australian citizens living overseas at any one time. Exploring these data by region of residence reveals that nearly half of all Australian citizens living overseas reside in the European Union, 17 percent live in North America, 14 percent in Asia, and nine percent in the Pacific (Parker 2010). Bilateral relations between Australia and Singapore had been in place since Singapore's founding in 1965, and to date is one of the closest and most comprehensive in Southeast Asia, linking the political and economic aspects of both countries. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that Australians, motivated by economic opportunity, had resided in Singapore prior to the 1990s. Similar to migration in other contexts, migration between Australia and Singapore has increased in scale and magnitude since the 1990s. It was not until 2020 that the impacts of the COVID-19 border closures have restricted movements between the two countries, although a travel bubble had been implemented on 8 October 2020 to allow Australian travellers outside Victoria to travel to Singapore (Olle 2020).

One Australian citizen, aged over 50 years, who had been resided in Singapore and Australia at various points since the 1980s, commented that:

> *Back in the 80s, there were many jobs in Asia. They wanted our expertise, and Singapore was far less developed back then, almost 25 years behind Australia. When I was*

presented the opportunity to work in Singapore, I decided to take it up, even though the standard of living was quite different to Australia's. When the contract finished, I moved back to Australia, and in 2008, I was offered a job again in Singapore. At that point you could see that Singapore was the best place to live in Asia, my brothers lived in China and Bangkok, and I had gone to visit them, but I could not see myself living there (Interviewee 37, 2019).

Similar sentiments were reiterated among the sampled population, where the top three reasons for Australians in Singapore were attributed to economic opportunity. As seen in Table 7.2, the majority of respondents attributed partners' employment as the main reason for migration (44 percent). This is closely followed by some 42 percent who indicated job contract in Singapore, followed by better employment opportunities (39.5 percent). Job contract in Singapore and better employment opportunities were more predominant reasons among males, while partners' employment had twice as many females. This survey was conducted among individuals, however the responses among females again point toward the age-old observation that men are the decision-makers in the migration process, and women in many cases are the tied movers.

Table 7.2. Reasons for Australian migration to Singapore given by male and female respondents (multiple response)

Reasons for migration	Males (*N*=8)	Females (*N*=30)	Total (*N*=58)
	%	%	%
Partners' employment (*N*=17)	25.0	50.0	44.0
Job contract in Singapore (*N*=16)	75.0	33.3	42.1
Better employment opportunities (*N*=15)	50.0	36.7	39.5
Lifestyle in Singapore (*N*=10)	37.5	23.3	26.3

Source: Migration to Singapore from Australia survey 2019.

The survey found that 82 percent of Australians in Singapore were married, half of them were aged in their 30s, and 40 percent were aged in their 40s. It was interesting to find that lifestyle reasons for migration was more popular among males (37.5 percent) than females (23.3 percent). Given the earlier discussion suggesting that Singapore's standard of living has dramatically improved since its founding 55 years ago, Australians in Singapore are likely to

experience a more privileged lifestyle. In addition to the conveniences in Singapore brought about by its small land size and population geography, such as affordable public transport, and access to regional markets in Asia, many elaborated that Singapore's *'access to affordable domestic care'* was one of the main attractions that made it difficult for Australians to return to Australia. This reason was also found to have attracted the return of some Singaporean permanent migrants in Australia.

One married, male Australian in Singapore, aged in his late 30s, reflected on his migration journey:

> *I was working in Sydney in 2008, no kids and no mortgage, and wanted to work overseas. Asia was a good option at the time, so I quit my job and looked to go to Hong Kong or Singapore. I ended up with a job offer in Singapore that I somehow managed to hold on to through the GFC. I have since gotten married to my then-girlfriend who came out with me to Singapore, she managed to get a job here and now we have two kids. Having domestic help is very important for us, since we both have careers. When I first came out to Singapore, I never thought I would be here ten years later, but our lives have adapted to become much more family-oriented since then (Interviewee 33, 2019).*

In exploring the socio-economic characteristics of respondents, it was found that three-quarters of them were employed in the Singaporean workforce, and they tended to be occupations concentrated within certain industries. Half of the respondents were employed in the banking and financial services sector, 28 percent were in the education sector. One-fifth were employed in a number of different sectors, including health professionals, and some were self-employed.

Given that the majority of respondents were professionals, 89 percent of respondents held a post-school qualification, obtained from an Australian institution (88 percent). More than half of all respondents with post-school qualifications had a postgraduate degree (53 percent), 35 percent with an undergraduate degree, while 12 percent had a diploma or certificate qualification. It is not surprising that Australians in Singapore would hold such qualifications as the majority of them would have migrated under the Foreign Talent policy and on employment contracts which would stipulate such requirements.

It was surprising to find that 28 percent of respondents who had Australian qualifications were in the education sector, given the earlier discussion suggesting Singapore's hiring preferences towards academics from North American or British institutions. When asked about occupational barriers to employment, almost half of those employed indicated that they had faced barriers, and this experience was not limited to those in the education sector. The most common barriers to employment were *'no Singaporean connections'* and *'no Singaporean work experience'*, which was identical to the barriers faced by Singaporeans in Australia. Despite this, similar to the employment outcomes of Singaporeans in Australia, four-fifths of respondents expressed that their financial situation since coming to Singapore had improved, predominantly a result of lower tax breaks, increased savings and a higher disposable income.

One married, male respondent, aged in his late 30s, expressed some of the challenges faced by Australians in Singapore:

> *Singapore may become too expensive for us to live long-term, and that is what is stopping me from calling Singapore home. Right now, there seems to be too much uncertainty around job security and housing, and as a foreigner, they can kick you out for basically any reason. I don't have a negative view towards it, it's just the way it is. It's the reason they have employment passes that expire every few years. The Singapore government wants the right type of people here that are going to stay and follow the rules. I don't think the system here is necessarily geared towards having people stay long-term. The immigration policy works this way not just for foreigners like me, as a professional, but also for say, domestic workers. I get the impression that unless you're a super wealthy expat, there is a high turnover for everyone in the middle (Interviewee 39, 2019).*

Due to political sensitivities in Singapore on the topic of immigration and population composition, the size and composition of foreigners applying to become permanent residents in Singapore is unknown (Low 1995). Nevertheless, the majority of respondents were permanent residents in Singapore, alluding to an increase in the number of Australian citizens applying to become permanent residents. However, when asked about future plans for settlement, all respondents (N=38) indicated that they had no plans to become Singapore citizens. A small number had only become permanent residents (N=7) because of job security, housing affordability and access to the local education system. All respondents cited *'I plan to*

return to Australia' as a main reason for not applying for Singapore citizenship, in spite of the fact that half of them had no tangible plans to return in the near future. Given that the Singapore government does not recognise dual citizenship, those who choose to adopt Singapore citizenship would have to give up their Australian one.

As explained by one representative from the Singapore government:

> *From the political angle, there is unlikely to be any barriers to migration between Singapore and Australia. It is the opportunity that Singapore presents, providing a stepping stone to elsewhere and that's what many expats expect when they come here. The initial exposure here in Singapore tends to place them in good stead for future career opportunities (Stakeholder 3, 2019).*

7.7 Transnational communities and citizenship

This chapter demonstrates that perspectives on a diaspora identity among Singaporeans in Australia tend to vary by type of visa held. Students for example were least likely to consider themselves as part of the Singaporean diaspora, while temporary migrants, permanent migrants including family visa holders and those with Australian citizenship tend to identify as part of the Singaporean diaspora. This may be expected given the difficulties in obtaining particular visas and constraints associated with certain visas. It is also interesting that those who have adopted Australian citizenship still identify as part of a Singaporean diaspora, reinforcing Castles (2003) theory that national identity is not limited to territory, as the impacts of transnationalism has resulted in a deterritorialised nation-state, and ideas of belonging together are more likely based on origin, culture, language, ethnicity and race.

The discussion in Chapter 6 established that the Singaporean community in Australia is tight-knit and active, and interviews with selected respondents stated that *'the ability to speak Singlish to one another'* facilitates a mutual understanding where migrants can *'discuss our problems and reflect on social issues from a common perspective'* (refer Chapter 6, Section 6.4). Singlish can be understood as a pidgin language that had been unintentionally developed as a result of language policies in Singapore that encouraged bilingualism (Wee 1993; Bolton 2019). As such, views on Singlish tend to be polarised, with some rejecting Singlish as 'not

proper, good English', while those in favour tend to view it as an important part of their national identity (Wee 1993; Bolton 2019). Among Singaporeans in Australia, the use of Singlish as a communication tool has helped to unify a racially and linguistically diverse group to a common national identity.

Castles (2003) posits that recognising transnational belonging has important consequences for the way societal belonging is defined, and the main instrument for this is citizenship. More established Singaporeans in Australia tend to adopt Australian citizenship, who are likely to participate in transnational activities, specifically to ensure that their *existing contacts are useful for other Singaporeans*, and in *linking two countries together*. Contrary to previous thoughts on transnationalism undermining traditional forms of national identity (Cohen 1997; Davidson and Weekley 1999; Castles and Davidson 2000), this study demonstrates that the dual or multiple identities as a result of having important linkages with more than one society has led to a revalorisation of national identity among Singaporeans in Australia. Whereas in the past where there was an expectation of assimilation (Eggert 2011; Jordan 2018), the conditions of globalisation are more likely to foster transnational consciousness and multiple identities (Glick Schiller *et al*. 1995; Castles 2003; Faist 2013).

Similar views on a diaspora identity were represented among skilled temporary migrants, despite a small number of temporary migrants participating in the survey (N=12). Long-term Singaporean residents in Australia have pointed out that the newer generation of migrants are more focussed on networking and forming business connections between the two countries and do not plan to settle down permanently. The Singapore government has tried to leverage on newer forms of migration and mobility by hosting talks and other networking initiatives to promote business linkages between the two countries. However, the effectiveness of such initiatives is unclear, as temporary migrants are generally less established in comparison to permanent residents and would need time to develop stronger networks in Australia.

The discussion on stakeholders' perspectives suggests that the existing government policies facilitating return migration are largely directed at students. The majority of students have plans to return after completing their studies, however only Singapore's health and medical industry offers scholarships and graduate programs to students who have studied abroad. The preference to engage with students who are young with qualifications and experience from other countries

over permanent migrants may be to do with ongoing concerns of a declining local population, and historical feelings of 'betrayal' towards those who have migrated overseas (refer Chapter 2, Section 2.6.2). Therefore, the Singapore government's focus on a returning diaspora may have limited their capacity to productively engage with permanent residents and those who have adopted Australian citizenship. Not only do such individuals view themselves as part of the Singaporean diaspora, the majority of them demonstrate economic and social integration with Australia while maintaining ongoing connections to Singapore. *Keeping up with Singaporean affairs through online forums and discussion* was one of the ways that respondents maintained social linkages with Singapore. On the other hand, a much smaller proportion of students view themselves as part of the Singaporean diaspora, and among the general migrant population, those who have chosen to migrate for international education should be recognised as a distinct group in the formulation of diaspora policy.

If the status of migrants in the host society is one of exclusion and discrimination, it cannot be a source of self-esteem and identity (Castles 2003). Researchers (Jayasuriya 2002; Tavan 2005; Keddie 2014) have expressed uncertainty towards Australia's journey in building a multicultural identity.

One single, male permanent resident in Australia, aged in his early 30s, reflected on his migration experience:

> *Australians generally are quite accepting of different cultures, but I get the impression that they are also subconsciously racist and that comes out when they are drunk. I have had people throw things at me in the past, but I would say that these are isolated incidences that should not always be stereotyped to the wider population. I still regard Singapore as home because that is where my parents are, but I don't see myself as a permanent resident of any place; I am happy to go where life takes me (Interviewee 17, 2019).*

This chapter also examined the migration journeys of return migrants and Australians in Singapore in comparison with Singaporeans in Australia. Return migrants were predominantly females who had been motivated to return due to social and family commitments in Singapore. On the other hand, Australians in Singapore were driven by better employment opportunities,

but in some cases females have experienced similar initial barriers to employment. Their settlement aspirations demonstrated that the majority do not see themselves becoming Singapore citizens as many have plans to return to Australia to live. Citizenship policies in Singapore shaped by legal frameworks and policy settings does not allow dual citizenship, exacerbated by the fact that Singapore as a nation-state views itself as a stepping stone for expatriates and its own citizens. A number of Australians in Singapore have become permanent residents in order to overcome some of the challenges faced by foreigners in Singapore, including job security, housing affordability and the preferences of Singapore's education system towards Singapore citizens and permanent residents.

The multiple identities resulting from transnationalism can be institutionally recognised through laws allowing dual or multiple citizenship. The arguments against dual citizenship are clear, as dual citizenship by definition 'breaks with the segmentary logic of the classic nation-state' (Joppke 2003, p. 441), where individuals should only belong to one state at a time. This is especially critical for Asia-Pacific nation-states, as many of them have been formed during the era of globalisation under strong cross-border influences, including migration and the formation of transnational communities, as well as the growing salience of international law and human rights regimes (Castles 2003). In the case of Singapore where the streams of migration have historically included the permanent emigration of Singaporeans to the United States, Canada and Australia; newer inward flows include return migration, expatriates, and temporary workers in the domestic and construction sectors, and flows involving India in the context of the information technology revolution (Iredale 2003). Therefore, globalisation and the liberalisation of opportunities have facilitated permanent and temporary migration flows in all directions. Given the historical flows of Singaporeans to Australia, it is not surprising that transnational communities have been established in Australia, and Singapore's reliance on skilled labour that considers assimilationist policies towards highly-skilled migrants suggests that such communities will eventually expand to include more recent flows of return migration and Australians in Singapore (Castles 2003; Iredale 2003).

As expressed by one Singapore government representative in Australia:

> *In my opinion, an Australian who has lived and worked in Singapore or in Southeast Asia for more than 10 years, would have a better understanding of Singapore than a second-*

generation Singaporean-Australian who was born in Australia and returning to Singapore to work for the first time (Stakeholder 1, 2019).

The perceived centralisation of diaspora policy is one reason that has been attributed to the lack of reciprocity of overseas Singaporeans toward engagement efforts, which has in turn, restricted interactions and international cooperation (Ho 2009; Ho and Boyle 2015). This is exacerbated by the Singapore government's unwillingness to constitutionalise dual citizenship (Ho 2011). The case study of Singaporeans in Australia establishes that the majority of long-term residents have adopted or will eventually adopt Australian citizenship and give up their Singapore citizenship as a result, even though many of them still identify as part of the diaspora. Hence, Singapore's exclusionary citizenship policy accounts for the dilemmas faced by many migrants, and ultimately, the refusal of Asia-Pacific governments to accept that labour migration leads to some degree of settlement and community formation is counter-productive (Castles 2003). Transnational linkages can be seen as a source of economic and cultural enrichment rather than a threat, especially in the context of Singapore's struggling labourforce that continues to rely heavily on individuals with overseas skills and qualifications to train local populations (Iredale 2003). It must be acknowledged that a major conceptual leap is required for Singapore to address transnational communities, however it is unclear when dual citizenship will be an option provided to Singaporean migrants. The political considerations, including compulsory national service for young Singaporean men have delayed this decision in the past, but the implications of COVID-19 on migration and mobility may close this gap. Therefore, there is a need to consider contemporary migration flows which are no longer unidirectional and restricted to Singaporeans in Australia. Rather, return migration and Australians in Singapore evidences a migration system between the two countries, which brings the citizenship question to the forefront of the discussion on transnational communities.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter establishes that a Singaporean diaspora exists in Australia and constitutes a distinct and meaningful group. In contrast to the brain-drain debates of the 80s, the study on contemporary diasporas focusses on the links that migrants maintain to their country of origin, as well as the impacts of such links on development as a whole. An engaged diaspora can make

positive contributions to their country of origin (Hugo 2006a; de Haas 2012; Kenny 2013), and similar to half of all United Nation Member States (Gamlen 2014b, 2019), the Singapore government focussed its diaspora strategies on return migration. However, responses toward these policies are mixed (Ho 2011) and an analysis of existing government policies alongside stakeholders' perspectives reveal a strong focus on return migration directed towards students. Their return helps alleviate existing pressures in the Singaporean labourforce, and their overseas qualifications and experience are often regarded highly by employers.

It is possible that providing scholarship opportunities by Singaporean industries and access to graduate programs may facilitate the return of students in other industries. Occupations featured among employed respondents suggest that in addition to the health and medical occupations, similar programs may be developed in education, and in specialist industries such as law, engineering, and in information systems and technology. Some 60 percent of permanent migrants indicated that they were undecided on their plans to return to Singapore, and would consider returning if a suitable job arose. A suitable job was defined as equal employment, one that recognised their skills, qualifications and experience. Contrary to stakeholders' perspectives where representatives from the Singapore government perceived lifestyle factors as an important reason for Singaporeans choosing to reside in Australia, better employment opportunities ultimately drive migration and mobility. The findings on reciprocal flows evidenced among returnees and Australians living in Singapore reinforces this, whereas return migration traditionally involves students choosing to return home for social, rather than economic reasons.

Finally, this Chapter discusses the formation of transnational communities and its implications for citizenship. The migration flows that have emerged in the past decade or so point towards a dynamic migration system that has been established between the two countries. This study exemplifies globalisation and interconnectivity in the Asia-Pacific region which has clearly impacted the migration and mobility of families and individuals. However, the impacts of COVID-19 including border closures in Australia, and the proposed travel bubble between Australia and Singapore, may have affected such movement. In the past where the costs of relocation and travel were low, there is now a greater incentive to offer security and protection to migrants and diaspora populations. One way that the Singapore government can continue to

leverage its diaspora in Australia in the post COVID-19 world is to provide an environment conducive towards facilitating business linkages between the two countries. Many countries around the world with high proportions of immigrants relative to its domestic population, including Australia, have done so by allowing dual or multiple citizenship. However, many Asian countries with similar migrant profiles do not allow dual citizenship, and this alludes to some of the political challenges that the Singapore government may face when considering such policies.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

The overarching objective of this study is to understand the movement between Singapore and Australia, and it was revealed that there was a complex and dynamic migration system between the two countries. The introduction of the temporary migration scheme in Australia in 1996 has driven temporary patterns and processes of migration in addition to more permanent forms of settlement. Like other recent studies on migrant groups in Australia, advancements in communication technology and increased affordability of air travel have allowed migrants to maintain transnational linkages and regular visits to their country of origin. Given that migrants maintain a mix of commitments between the two countries, their perspectives on a diaspora and how their presence in Australia can benefit Singapore, are examined in relation to the Singapore government's approach in engaging with diaspora populations.

8.2 Major summary of key findings

Although the number of Singaporeans in Australia has increased in recent years, the causes and consequences of migration flows between Singapore and Australia have received limited research attention. The migration corridor between Singapore and Australia had been established from an earlier time period, but it was not until the introduction of the temporary migration scheme by the Howard government in 1996 that the number of Singaporeans in Australia began to increase significantly. By 2016, there were 54,934 Singaporeans in Australia, an increase of some 20,000 Singaporeans since 2000. Secondary data demonstrate that two-thirds of Singaporeans have migrated to Australia as skilled permanent migrants, while one-third are temporary migrants who were predominantly students (ACMID 2016). This has led to a large proportion of overseas Singaporeans who have chosen to reside in Australia. Singaporeans have historically resided in Perth, however since 2011, Melbourne has become the primary destination for permanent and temporary migrants (ACMID 2016).

In comparison to other forms of Asian migration to Australia, it may be that migration flows from Singapore will diminish given the impacts of COVID-19 induced border closures, yet the analysis reveals a migration system between the two countries, demonstrating the effects of globalisation and labour mobility in the Asia-Pacific region. The migration system between Australia and Singapore is diverse and encompasses both permanent and temporary flows, as a result of migration policies in response to globalisation. Changes to the White Australia Policy in the 1960s and 70s has resulted in a migration corridor that is not limited to Singaporean Eurasians (Lowe 2018), but includes the Singaporean Chinese majority, as well as Malay, Tamil and Sikh minorities (ABS 2016b).

This study primarily focusses upon Singaporeans in Australia but also examines reciprocal flows which include return migrants and Australians living in Singapore. The frequency and volume of movements between the two countries exemplifies trade agreements and labour mobility within the Asia-Pacific region. Most importantly, the migration policies that have emerged in response to globalisation and the demand for skilled labour have facilitated increased numbers of migrants. Australia has also emerged as a popular destination for Singaporean international students, and as international education is a pathway to skilled migration, a large proportion have transitioned to permanent residency.

The survey found that the majority of permanent migrants who migrate to Australia are married with children. Female respondents were predominantly aged in their 30s, while males were older in their 40s. The younger cohort were largely students who were single and aged in their 20s, with more males than females represented. The survey was conducted using an online platform and this resulted in a sample biased towards younger respondents, and generally to those who were willing to participate in the study.

It was found that Singaporean migrants in Australia who responded were generally driven by better employment opportunities, corresponding with the study conducted earlier in the 1990s stating that confidence in Australia's long-term economic prospects was one of the main motivations of Singaporeans moving to Australia. The Australian way of life and its proximity to Singapore serves as a differentiating factor for prospective migrants choosing between Australia and other traditional destination countries, including the United Kingdom, United States and Canada, where many overseas Singaporeans reside. Given that Australia's economic

position tends to influence the social aspects of life in Australia, migration is a selective process, as not only are prospective migrants required to meet the skill requirements stipulated by the Australian government, they also tend to consider both economic and social factors before eventually making the decision to migrate.

The similarities in education contexts meant that Australia was considered an ideal destination for those seeking tertiary qualifications. The survey found that among some 70 percent of student respondents a major reason for migration was that they had accepted an offer from an Australian institution. Close bilateral ties between Singapore and Australia meant that prospective students were likely to be accepted at Australian institutions. Many chose Australia because they had family members and other contacts already residing in Australia, easing the transition for young adults going abroad and living away from home for the first time.

Traditional demographic indicators such as age and sex were also used to explore how core events such as a marriage partnership influences the migration decision. In turn this accounts for the different employment outcomes and social linkages that respondents maintain with Singapore. The survey established that more males indicated better employment opportunities and the Australian way of life as the main motivations for migration, despite females being well represented among those seeking employment. There were four times as many females who claimed that marriage partnership was a reason for migration. Interviews with selected female respondents demonstrated that their migration decision tended to follow traditional gender roles, with men as the key decision makers and women the tied followers (Lauby and Stark 1988; Rudd 2003; Castles *et al*. 2014).

The survey found that Singaporean migrants integrate well into the Australian labourforce and the results demonstrate that some 85 percent of respondents who were permanent residents and those who have since become Australian citizens, were employed. All 12 skilled temporary migrants who participated in the survey were employed, fulfilling visa conditions. Despite the relative casualisation of female employment, there were minimal gender differences found among respondents in full-time employment.

One-quarter of respondents were employed in specialist occupations which include information technology professionals, engineers, lawyers, and experts working in government and private

spheres. This was closely followed by those who were employed as education professionals and health professionals which each made up one-fifth of respondents. The labourforce was mainly made up of education professionals, including schoolteachers, university researchers and academics, while health professionals predominantly consisted of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. Females were over-represented in these occupations while males were more likely to be employed in technical occupations, and as lawyers and engineers. Self-employment was a strategy used by a small number of male respondents.

Given that Singaporeans have a good command of the English language, are well-educated and have appropriate qualifications that address skill shortages in the Australian labourforce, it is not surprising to find that the majority of respondents in the sampled population have found suitable employment. Some 60 percent of them had also graduated from Australian universities. This corresponds with existing research which has consistently demonstrated that having a good command of the English language, as well as obtaining formal qualifications in Australia, are important aspects of economic integration (Hawthorne 1997; Burnley 2003; Ho and Alcorso 2004; Richardson and Lester 2004).

Consequently, occupational barriers to employment do not feature prominently among Singaporeans in Australia, however the lack of Australian networks and the lack of Australian experience were seen as initial barriers in obtaining suitable employment by a small number of respondents. Approximately three-quarters of employed respondents had an annual income from $50,000 to $99,999 which was comparable to the broader Australian population. Most respondents had salaried jobs as their primary source of income, while students were more likely to receive financial support from their parents; with one-fifth of them employed part-time or on a casual basis. Overall, four-fifths of respondents claimed that their financial situation after migrating to Australia had improved or stayed about the same.

The survey found that respondents maintain active social lives in Australia strongly focussed upon religious organisations, with Christianity as the main religion. This suggests that Australia's history founded on Christian values may appeal to both current and prospective migrants. On the other hand, younger respondents were more involved in social and sporting groups. Thus, respondents as a whole were well integrated into Australian society.

The majority also maintained strong social linkages with Singapore and visited regularly. This is in line with transnationalism migration theory which suggests that migrants do not simply forsake their country and culture of origin and move quickly from origin to destination, rather, most migrants retain a mix of commitments to their origin whilst developing commitments with their destination. Females were particularly active in celebrating ethnic festivals and keeping in the loop of the Singaporean food scene, and in doing so maintained closer links with family and friends in Singapore. Males were more likely to engage in Singaporean current affairs.

Slightly less than half of all respondents maintained economic linkages with Singapore. Respondents who were less established in Australia, and those with caring responsibilities in Singapore, were more likely to maintain such linkages. A life insurance policy was the most common financial investment maintained by respondents, due to the cultural context of passing down savings to the next generation, and the lack of a comprehensive welfare system in Singapore. It is interesting that traditional migrant economic linkages such as remittances, did not feature prominently in this study. Selected respondents explained in interviews that remittances were important in lower income households, where the average annual income was under $30,000. Maintenance of assets at origin is often linked to the intention to return, however the majority of respondents stated that they were happy living in Australia and did not see themselves returning to Singapore or elsewhere to live.

Ley and Kobayashi (2005) have argued that mobility within the context of ongoing and comprehensive trade relationships is fluid and largely dependent on the changes within individual life stages. Interviews with selected respondents demonstrated that life cycle events such as graduation, marriage and family formation, children returning for national service, and carer responsibilities towards ageing parents tend to influence mobility decisions. Hence, permanent residents, particularly entrepreneurs, often divide their time between the two countries. Respondents were more likely to become Australian citizens at a later life stage after fulfilling their personal and social commitments towards Singapore, and the survey found that some 15 percent of the sampled population have become Australian citizens. Despite having given up formal ties, many viewed their presence in Australia as beneficial to Singapore in *linking two countries together*, and in *creating goodwill towards Singapore*. Therefore, the

social and entrepreneurial networks of respondents reinforced by international migration is evidence of transnational practice among the sampled population. However, Singapore's laws which do not constitutionally recognise dual or multiple citizenship, has restricted the development of multiple identities and transnational communities.

8.3 Transnational issues and citizenship

Gamlen *et al*. (2019) argue that diaspora institutions merit close research attention because they extend domestic politics beyond national borders, projecting state power to shape the identity of migrants and their descendants' in an extraterritorial capacity. Examples of diaspora institutions in other parts of the world include political activities such as ethnic lobbying (Betts and Jones 2016; Liberature 2018), or a more neoliberal perspective that uses diaspora contributions to offset the migrant 'brain drain' (De Haas 2010, 2012, 2015). The Singapore government formed the Overseas Singaporean Unit in 2006 to foster a formal relationship between the government and diaspora populations. Interviews with Singapore government representatives demonstrated a limited understanding of constructing diaspora policies that facilitate transnational communities. Rather, a large portion of their diaspora framework involves return migration. The focus on return migration, and Singapore's restrictive policies towards dual citizenship, ignores the impact of globalisation on the nation-state, and prevents the creation of transnational communities which largely involves increased cross-border mobility of populations.

Almost one-third of respondents who were permanent migrants wished to adopt Australian citizenship and in doing so risk losing their Singapore citizenship. Interviews with community leaders in Australia expressed fears that the Singaporean identity would be lost in the processes of globalisation as younger migrants and second-generation Singaporean-Australians increasingly see themselves solely as part of the global labourforce. Those who grew up in Australia may return to Singapore in search of better employment opportunities, however, many of them do not have the option to live in Singapore long-term. This highlights the limitations of Singapore's diaspora policy in facilitating the development of transnational networks, including diaspora-led economic linkages, although more recent literature suggests that the government may consider dual citizenship if required (Paulo 2018).

Although the Singaporean community in Australia was tight-knit and supportive, more than a third of Singaporean respondents did not know if they were part of a diaspora, especially students and skilled temporary migrants. Thus, in any further research, including a definition as part of the survey question would be useful as an educative process, as well as providing a more consistent basis for an understanding of the role of a diaspora.

Globalisation and diversification of communication channels, migration trends and the increased incidence of cross-national marriages were some of the motivations that gave rise to Australia's increased permissiveness towards dual citizenship (Martin 2002). Australia legalised dual citizenship in 2002, ensuring that the one million Australians who reside overseas would have the option to retain formal ties to their home country (Hugo *et al*. 2003). In recent years, Singapore has adapted from its *jus soli* traditions to allow citizenship by registration, including the citizenship application of children born overseas to one Singaporean spouse in the context of a legal marriage.

It was found that migrants returning to Singapore were mainly students that had chosen to return home, as such, the majority of them were younger. In a small number of cases, changes in personal or family circumstances also motivated the return of permanent migrants. Therefore, return migration was driven by social and personal factors which stood in contrast to Singaporeans in Australia who were in search of better employment opportunities and were attracted to the Australian lifestyle.

Exploring reciprocal flows from Australia to Singapore involved understanding the motivations and migration experience of Australians in Singapore. They reflected similar migrant profiles to Singaporean respondents in Australia, as both groups were well-educated with qualifications obtained from Australian institutions. Given that Australians are likely to have migrated to Singapore as part of the Foreign Talent policy, the majority are on employment contracts and had plans to return to Australia. Three-quarters of them were employed mainly on contracts and in two main sectors — banking and financial services, and education. Half of them had postgraduate qualifications obtained from an Australian institution, and many experienced a higher disposable income as a result of tax breaks in Singapore. Some had become permanent residents to ensure job security, but would not consider applying for Singapore citizenship as that meant giving up their Australian one. Many planned on returning

to Australia to live, but only half had actual plans to return to Australia in the near future. Access to affordable domestic care in Singapore was one of the reasons that made it difficult to return; interestingly, this reason also contributed to the return of some Singaporean permanent residents from Australia. Given similarities in migration journeys Australians in Singapore and Singaporeans in Australia, this study points towards a migration system that has developed between the two countries and a vibrant transnational community that formed as a result.

Throughout the 21st Century, the recognition of dual citizenship has been perceived as an important aspect of labour mobility and in the maintenance of transnational communities. Singapore relies heavily on globalisation and interconnectivity to regional and international markets, and many respondents still maintain transnational linkages to Singapore. Even those who have adopted Australian citizenship still retain a strong emotional connection to Singapore, despite current citizenship policies that do not give migrants the option to retain formal ties. Many countries in the Asia-Pacific, including Singapore, have been slow in making similar legislative changes due to historical challenges of nation building exacerbated by the pressures of globalisation. Given the changes in migration policies as a result of COVID-19, including border closures, it is possible that citizens may become more important in facilitating short and long-term migration flows.

Other means of recognising former citizens may also be considered in contexts where dual citizenship is not allowed. For example, the Indian government has introduced the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) with selected countries, including Australia, to allow those who have adopted Australian citizenship to travel to India without a visa, work in non-government organisations and own non-agricultural property. However, they not permitted to stand for public office or vote in Indian elections (Ministry of External Affairs 2020). This initiative was rewritten into the Indian Citizenship Act 1955 in response to the calls for dual citizenship by the Indian diaspora in North America. Although this form of limited citizenship must not be confused with dual citizenship, the OCI facilitates economic and social linkages between migrants and their home country. Consequently, this initiative has brought about positive socio-economic changes to the local economy while addressing migrants' concerns on belonging and multiple identities (Xavier 2011; Naujoks 2014).

8.4 Further avenues of research

There are limited studies exploring the nexus between transnationalism and dual citizenship as many countries in the 21st Century have grown to accept dual citizenship. This study evidences the presence of a Singaporean community in Australia and its benefits to Singapore, and further studies may be conducted to understand other overseas Singaporean communities who reside in traditional destinations countries such as the United Kingdom, United States and Canada. These can include an in-depth study of households to understand transnational practice in families, including their views on parents left behind. Understanding the transnational practices of overseas Singaporean populations in other contexts may address the issue of citizenship and policy and in turn justify the need for dual or limited citizenship, and constitutional change.

In countries such as Australia which rely heavily on skilled migration to address skill shortages in its labourforce, there is a need to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on migrant decision-making. Future studies may consider individual migrant profiles and the socio-economic risks that prospective migrants choose to undertake. Skilled migration may become more unpredictable and fast-changing even after borders reopen, as some may become more likely to move once borders open, while others less so (Gamlen 2020; Semple 2020). Given that the Australian way of life featured as a popular reason among respondents, future studies may explore whether the Australian lifestyle is still an important factor among Singaporeans in Australia. These perspectives may be examined in comparison to other migrant groups and in the context of the literature on lifestyle migration that assumes a suitable economic climate.

Future research also may focus on the future of international students in Australia, as the advancements in online teaching and learning pioneered throughout COVID-19 suggest that remote learning may be an option for many students. In the long-term, this may affect the supply of skilled permanent migrants which has relied on international students currently residing in Australia applying for skilled jobs and ultimately permanent residency (Hawthorne 2010a; 2010b; Tan and Hugo 2017).

8.5 Study limitations

One of the main limitations of this study is the reliance on online surveys which led to a younger sampled population, and essentially relied on self-reporting and engagement with target populations. This resulted in non-probability convenience sampling, so results cannot be generalised to all Singaporeans in Australia. The self-reporting nature of the survey assumed that those with positive migration experiences were more likely to participate. More than one-third of respondents (*N*=72) were interested to participate in a further research interview, however it was only possible to select interviewees based on migrant profiles. Ethnicity was not included as one of the characteristics of survey respondents, which led to some limitations in the analysis of migration experiences.

The introduction of temporary migration policies to complement the existing permanent migration scheme is one of the main features of contemporary migration. The Australian Census estimates that Singaporean skilled temporary migrants comprised about one-fifth of the Singapore-born population in Australia (ACMID 2016). However, only a small number of skilled temporary migrants (*N*=12) participated in this study. Therefore, the sampled population was somewhat biased towards permanent migrants, which made it difficult to compare the experiences of permanent and temporary migrants. The small number of skilled temporary migrants represented in this study suggests that the general migrant community tends to be made up of students or permanent migrants. Skilled temporary migrants are more similar to Australians in Singapore who are tied to temporary job contracts and see themselves as part of the global labourforce.

Similar difficulties were experienced around contacting return migrants including those that may not have enjoyed their Australian experience. They are a very difficult group to trace, particularly in the context of an online survey where those who have returned are not likely to be part of online migrant communities. Obtaining more respondents who were return migrants would have been useful to establish a more comprehensive understanding of the migration system between the two countries, in terms of who would move back to Australia, and why.

8.6 Final word

Being a Singaporean student in Australia facilitated data collection among Singaporeans in Australia and in my hometown of Singapore, with return migrants and Australians residing there. My perspective as a student in Australia was somewhat limited, and I found myself learning from respondents through engaging them in interviews and how they have adjusted to their new life in Australia. The majority of Singaporean permanent migrants and those who have since become Australian citizens were eager to share their migration experiences in Australia, and more importantly, to help out a fellow Singaporean. Given the limited number of formal studies conducted on Singaporeans in Australia, many were interested in sharing their own migration journeys as well as reflect on life in the two countries that they regarded as home. Many were faced with citizenship dilemmas as a result of the lack of dual citizenship policies in Singapore. This issue was especially pertinent among younger respondents whose life experiences reflected the effects of globalisation and interconnectivity from a young age.

Although no formal remuneration was offered to participants, it was interesting that the online survey struck a chord with one-third of respondents, particularly younger respondents, and many enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on their personal journeys. It was claimed that those who were dissatisfied with life in Australia had returned home, or used Australia as a stepping stone to other destinations. Given the number of respondents who were interested in participating in a research interview, it may have been useful to conduct a focus group discussion initially to establish relevant research questions and also to complement individual results.

In addition to the interest established among the Singaporean community in Australia, the participation of stakeholders, including government officials, as well as return migrants and Australians in Singapore, suggested that this study had broader implications on transnational issues. The findings point towards an effective and efficient migration system that has developed between Australia and Singapore as a result of globalisation and labour mobility in the Asia-Pacific region which has evolved over time. Despite a tumultuous year, 2020 has seen the renewal and development of many economic partnerships between the two countries, and a travel bubble that Singapore has initiated with Australia. This points towards international

migration and mobility that may resume to normal levels in a post-COVID world, however, it is unclear at this stage if the current satisfaction experienced among Singaporeans in Australia will be sustained. Given that Australia has yet to reciprocate with similar travel arrangements, this means that the majority of respondents who tended to visit family and friends in Singapore frequently have not been able to do so. It is possible that the restrictions placed on international travel may affect the life satisfaction of migrants in Australia in the future.

APPENDIX A: Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: Migration between Australia and Singapore in the 21st Century: trends, determinants and transnational experiences.
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2018-226
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Dianne Rudd
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Miss Hannah Hia
STUDENT'S DEGREE: PhD in Arts, Research in Geography, Environment and Population

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?

By evaluating the nature and extent of Singaporean migration in Australia, and Australian migration to Singapore, this research aims to:

1. Provide a greater understanding of migration between Australia and Singapore;
2. Discuss how empirical findings affect any theoretical understanding of contemporary migration particularly in the Asia-Pacific; and
3. Propose future research and policy implications based on findings from the study.

Who is undertaking the project?

This project is being conducted by Miss Hannah Hia.

This research will form the basis for the degree of PhD in Arts, Research in Geography, Environment and Population at the University of Adelaide under the supervision of Dr Dianne Rudd and Dr Jungho Suh.

It is anticipated that financial support will be received by application to the following university-based grants: The Charles and Frank Fenner Postgraduate Research Grants, the D R Stranks Travelling Fellowships, the School of Social Sciences Higher Degree by Research Support Funding and the Research Travel Scholarship.

Why am I being invited to participate?

You are being invited as you are either a Singaporean migrant in Australia, a return migrant to Singapore or an Australian migrant in Singapore.

With participants' consent, the interview will be audio recorded for transcription purposes.

What am I being invited to do?

You are invited to participate in a semi-structured interview, which follows on from some of the questions discussed in the survey questionnaire. This include questions to do with your

immigration experience, including that of your family, ancestry, education, employment, your connections to Australia and Singapore.

How much time will my involvement in the project take?

The interview will take about 30 – 45 minutes to complete.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?

Existing research has shown that migration almost always occurs at a time of stress, so recounting the migration experience in the semi-structured interviews may cause emotional discomfort.

However, the risks of such emotional discomfort escalating to distress is generally low.

What are the potential benefits of the research project?

Existing research shows that international migration is occurring at a rate much higher than ever before, but research on international migration between Singapore and Australia is scarce. Given that the migration decision is very much dependent on historical context and policy implications, findings from the study may go on to suggest theoretical understandings of international migration, and with the eventual hope of doing research that may produce outcomes that improve the life of the migrant.

Can I withdraw from the project?

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time up until the submission of the thesis.

What will happen to my information?

Confidentiality and privacy: Respondents to the survey questionnaire are anonymous, and in-depth interview participants will be referred to in analysis by a pseudonym.

Storage: All records, materials and data from the project will be stored on the University's U: drive.

It is anticipated that all data will be securely stored online, and any data printed in hard copy format for manual analysis will be stored in a locked filing cabinet either in the Principal Investigator's office (Napier G34) or in the Student Researcher's PhD office (Napier G37a). Only the research team – the Principal Investigator, Student Researcher and Co-Investigator will have access to stored data.

The University will retain the records and materials for a minimum of 5 years.

Publishing: The information will be used in the Student Researcher's PhD thesis, and in journal articles and conference presentations, but participants will not be identified in publications.

Sharing: By request, participants will be given full access to the Student Researcher's PhD thesis and subsequent publications.

Your information will only be used as described in this participant information sheet and it will only be disclosed according to the consent provided, except as required by law.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

Participants may contact the Principal Investigator, Dr Dianne Rudd, at +61 8 8313 4109 or email dianne.rudd@adelaide.edu.au for any questions about the project.

Alternatively, participants may contact either the Student Researcher, Miss Hannah Hia at +61 8 8303 5645 or email hannah.hia@adelaide.edu.au or the Co-Investigator, Dr Jungho Suh at +61 8 8313 3014 or email jungho.suh@adelaide.edu.au.

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number H-2018-226). This research project will be conducted according to the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator. If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on:

Phone: +61 8 8313 6028

Email: hrec@adelaide.edu.au

Post: Level 4, Rundle Mall Plaza, 50 Rundle Mall, ADELAIDE SA 5000

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?

Participants can click on the following link to access the online survey questionnaire:

Yours sincerely,

Dr Dianne Rudd, Miss Hannah Hia and Dr Jungho Suh

APPENDIX B: Singaporeans in Australia survey

SINGAPOREANS IN AUSTRALIA AND ITS SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

This research is undertaken as part of a doctoral study by Miss Hannah Hia, under supervision by Dr Dianne Rudd and Dr Jungho Suh, Department of Geography, Environment and Population, School of Social Sciences, The University of Adelaide, South Australia, Australia.

We would appreciate if you could take the time to complete the questionnaire (estimated 15 minutes). All responses are aggregated, which means that individuals cannot be identified, so participants remain anonymous. Information is confidential. We would greatly appreciate if you could fill out the questionnaire to completion.

A: Migration to Australia

A1. In what year did you first come to Australia to live?
A2. How long have you lived in Australia?
A3. What Australian visa do you currently hold?
[ ] Skilled Permanent Resident
[ ] Skilled Temporary Resident
[ ] Student Visa
[ ] Family Visa (including Partner Visa)
[ ] Visitor Visa
[ ] Working Holiday Visa
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

B: Life before Australia

B1. Where were you living before coming to Australia?
B2. How long did you live there?
B3. Where were you born?
B4. What is your citizenship?
B5. Do you plan to change your current citizenship?
[ ] Yes, how? : __________________
[ ] No, why not? : __________________

C: Reason for move

C1. Please indicate the reasons for your decision to live in Australia? *(You may tick more than one)*

[ ] Marriage partnership
[ ] Family in Australia
[ ] Better employment opportunities
[ ] Overseas job transfer/exchange
[ ] Job contract in Australia
[ ] Accepted offer as student
[ ] Partners employment
[ ] Retirement in Australia
[ ] The Australian way of life
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

D: Connection to Australia

D1. Did you know anyone in Australia before moving here? *(You may tick more than one)*

[ ] No one
[ ] Family
[ ] Friends
[ ] Partner
[ ] Employer or Supervisor
[ ] Business associates
[ ] Student groups
[ ] Recent migrants to Australia
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

E: Life in Australia

E4. Are you currently in contact with any Singaporeans in Australia?
[ ] Yes – Go to Question E5
[ ] No – Go to Question F1

E5. On average, how regularly do you interact with Singaporeans in Australia?
[ ] Daily
[ ] Once a week
[ ] Once a fortnight
[ ] Once a month
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

E6. What are the reasons for such interactions? *(You may tick more than one)*
[ ] I live in a Singaporean household
[ ] Catch up with my Singaporean friends
[ ] I work alongside other Singaporeans
[ ] Post-school or university course mates
[ ] I participate in Singaporean events
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

F: Visits to Singapore

F1. On average, how regularly do you visit Singapore?
[ ] No visits – Go to Question G1
[ ] Once a month
[ ] Once every 3 months
[ ] Once every 6 months
[ ] Once a year
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

F2. How many times did you visit Singapore in the last 12 months?

F3. What were the reasons for these visits? *(You may tick more than one)*
[ ] Family
[ ] Friends
[ ] Attend special events (e.g. birthday, anniversary, wedding, funeral)
[ ] Business
[ ] Temporary work contract
[ ] Holiday
[ ] Education or study
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

G. Plans to return

G1. Do you plan to return to Singapore to live?
[ ] Yes – Go to Question G2 and G3
[ ] No – Go to Question G4 and G5
[ ] Undecided – Go to Question G5

G2. When do you plan to return to Singapore to live?
[ ] Within 6 months
[ ] Within 12 months
[ ] Within 2 years
[ ] Longer period (please specify): ______________________________

G3. Why do you plan to return to Singapore? *(You may tick more than one)*
[ ] Plans to marry and settle down in Singapore
[ ] Raise children in Singapore
[ ] Look after ageing parents in Singapore
[ ] Better employment opportunities
[ ] Children's education in Singapore
[ ] Unable to obtain permanent visa in Australia
[ ] Miss family in Singapore
[ ] Miss friends in Singapore
[ ] Lifestyle
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

G4. Why do you have no plans to return to Singapore? *(You may tick more than one)*
[ ] Plans to marry and settle down here
[ ] Better employment opportunities
[ ] Children's education in Australia
[ ] Job here
[ ] The Australian way of life
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

G5. What needs to happen for you to return to Singapore?
____

H: Post-school education experience

H1. Have you completed any post-school education?
[ ] Yes – Go to Question H2
[ ] No – Go to Question I1

H2. What is your highest completed post-school education qualification?
[ ] Postgraduate degree
[ ] Undergraduate degree
[ ] Diploma
[ ] Trade certificate
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

H3. Where was your highest qualification obtained?

H4. What is the award title? (PhD, MA, BSc, BA, Dip Education, etc.)

I: Current employment

I1. Are you currently employed?
[ ] Yes – Go to Question I2
[ ] No – Go to Question J1

I2. What is your main occupation? ______________________________

I3. Describe the nature of your employment:
[ ] Full-time
[ ] Part-time
[ ] Casual
[ ] Self-employed

I4. Briefly describe your job:
____

I5. How long did you take to find this job?
[ ] Less than 1 month
[ ] 2 – 3 months
[ ] 4 – 6 months
[ ] 7 – 9 months
[ ] 10 – 12 months
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

I6. Did you face any barriers when finding this job? *(You may tick more than one)*

[ ] No barriers
[ ] Accommodation
[ ] Transport
[ ] Discrimination
[ ] No Australian work experience
[ ] Skills not recognised
[ ] No jobs in my field
[ ] No Australian networks and connections
[ ] Location of jobs
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

J: Previous employment

J1. Were you employed in your main occupation before coming to Australia?

[ ] Yes – Go to Question J2
[ ] No – Go to Question K1

J2. Describe the nature of your previous employment:
[ ] Full-time
[ ] Part-time
[ ] Casual
[ ] Self-employed

J3. Briefly describe your previous job:
____

J4. Is your current job in the same field as your nominated occupation?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

J5. Is your current job at a level consistent with or higher than your last job?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No, why not? ______________________________

K: Current income

K1. What is your current annual income? (estimated in AUD)

[ ] Less than $50,000 per annum
[ ] $50,000 - $99,999 per annum
[ ] $100,000 - $149,999 per annum
[ ] $150,000 - $199,999 per annum
[ ] $200,000 - $249,999 per annum
[ ] $250,000 or more per annum

K2. What are your sources of income? *(You may tick more than one)*

[ ] Job salary
[ ] Shares, dividends or bonds
[ ] Gold and other commodities
[ ] Other investments (e.g. collectibles)
[ ] Rental income
[ ] Inheritance
[ ] Awards and scholarships
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

K3. Briefly describe any salary package entitlements that make your current job attractive:

____

K4. Since going overseas has your financial situation:

[ ] Improved
[ ] Got worse
[ ] Stayed about the same

K5. Why?

____

L: Economic links with Singapore

L1. Do you maintain any economic links with Singapore?
[ ] Yes – Go to Question L2
[ ] No – Go to Question M3

L2. What are the economic links? *(You may tick more than one)*
[ ] No links
[ ] Income from rental property/s
[ ] Home ownership
[ ] Company ownership
[ ] Existing business
[ ] Mortgage repayments
[ ] Life insurance policy
[ ] Share holdings (stocks, bonds etc.)
[ ] Collectibles (art, cars, wine, watches etc.)
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

M: Social links with Singapore

M1. Do you maintain any social links with Singapore?
[ ] Yes – Go to Question K4
[ ] No – Go to Question K5

M2. What are the social links? *(You may tick more than one)*
[ ] No links
[ ] Keeping in the loop of the Singaporean food scene
[ ] Exploring new holiday destinations with other Singaporeans
[ ] Celebrating ethnic festivals (Chinese New Year, Deepavali, Hari Raya etc.)
[ ] Discussing Singaporean affairs on traditional media and/or online forums
[ ] Staying on top of retail trends and related discounts
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

N: Views on a diaspora

N1. Do you feel that your presence in Australia has any benefits for Singapore? *(You may tick more than one)*
.	[ ] No benefits
[ ] Existing contacts useful for other Singaporeans
[ ] Learning skills transferable back to Singapore
[ ] Creating goodwill towards Singapore
[ ] Linking two countries together by establishing roots/family in both
[ ] Creating business/trading links with Singaporean companies
[ ] Good ambassadors for Singapore
[ ] Investment opportunities
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

N2. Do you feel like you are part of the Singaporean diaspora?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No
[ ] Don't know

O: Living arrangements

O1. What are your current household living arrangements?
[ ] Single person household
[ ] Couple only household
[ ] Couple with children
[ ] One parent with children
[ ] Multi-generational household
[ ] Two or more unrelated individuals
[ ] Other (please specify): _______________________________

O2. In your current residence, are you:
[ ] Home owner
[ ] Paying off a mortgage
[ ] Private rental
[ ] Renting university accommodation
[ ] Paying college accommodation
[ ] Paying board
[ ] Living with parents
[ ] Other (please specify): _______________________________

P: Marital status

P1. What is your marital status?
[ ] Married (including defacto) – Go to Question P2
[ ] Separated or divorced – Go to Question P3
[ ] Widowed – Go to Question P3
[ ] Never married – Go to Question Q1

P2. For your spouse/partner what is their:
Birthplace: ____________
Citizenship: ___________

P3. Has your marital status changed since leaving Singapore?
[ ] Yes – Go to Question P4
[ ] No – Go to Question Q1

P4. If yes, how and when? ____

Q: About You

Q1. Could you please provide the following details:
[ ] Male [ ] Female

Q2. Please tick the category that best represents your age:
[ ] 18 – 24 years
[ ] 25 – 29 years
[ ] 30 – 34 years
[ ] 35 – 39 years
[ ] 40 – 44 years
[ ] 45 – 49 years
[ ] 50 – 54 years
[ ] 55 – 59 years
[ ] 60 – 64 years
[ ] 65 – 69 years
[ ] 70 years or more

Final Section

Please provide comments or suggestions that you feel may be of use to this study.
____
____

Thank you for completing the survey. We are most grateful for the time taken to provide this information. If you are interested in sharing your migration experience via a semi-structured interview, please provide your name and contact details below:

Name:

Contact details (Mobile or e-mail address):

APPENDIX C: Singaporeans in Australia interview guide

1. Mutual introductions and how did you hear about this research project?
2. When did you move to Australia?
3. Why did you decide to move to Australia?
4. Why did you choose Australia?
5. Did you consider another country to study/work and live? Which country, and why?
6. Are you happy living in Australia?
7. What sort of help did you receive in negotiating your move?
8. Would you consider a move back to Singapore? Why?
9. Did you live in another country before moving to Australia? Where and for how long?
10. How often do you keep in touch with friends and family? Where do they live? How do you communicate?
11. Would you consider moving again? To which country, and why?
12. Do you now call Australia home? Why?

APPENDIX D: Stakeholders' interview guide

1. How has Singaporean migration to Australia changed in the 21st Century?
2. Who migrates to Australia?
3. Who settles permanently?
4. Who returns?
5. How does Singaporean migration to Australia differ from Singaporean migration elsewhere?
6. What is the role of the Singaporean diaspora in Australia? Does this differ from the Singaporean diaspora elsewhere?
7. Does the Singaporean government work closely with individuals or organisations in Australia? How has this affected movements between the two countries?
8. Who immigrated to Singapore from Australia?
9. How has Australian immigration to Singapore changed in the 21st Century?
10. Could Australians settle permanently?

APPENDIX E: Migration to Singapore from Australia survey

MIGRATION TO SINGAPORE FROM AUSTRALIA AND ITS SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

This research is undertaken as part of a doctoral study by Miss Hannah Hia, under supervision by Dr Dianne Rudd and Dr Jungho Suh, Department of Geography, Environment and Population, School of Social Sciences, The University of Adelaide, South Australia, Australia.

We would appreciate if you could take the time to complete the questionnaire (estimated 15 minutes). All responses are aggregated, which means that individuals cannot be identified, so participants remain anonymous. Information is confidential. We would greatly appreciate if you could fill out the questionnaire to completion.

A: Migration to Singapore

A1. When did you move to Singapore?
A2. What visa do you currently hold?
- [ ] Singapore Citizen
- [ ] Permanent Resident
- [ ] Student Visa
- [ ] Family Visa (including Partner Visa)
- [ ] Temporary Work Pass (e.g. S Pass or Employment Pass)
- [ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

B: Place of birth

B1. Where were you born?
B2. What is your citizenship?
B3. Do you plan to change your current citizenship?
- [ ] Yes, how? : __________________
- [ ] No, why not? : __________________

C: Reason for move

C1. Please indicate the reasons for your decision to move to Singapore? *(You may tick more than one)*

[ ] Plans to marry and settle down in Singapore
[ ] Caring responsibilities in Singapore
[ ] Raise children in Singapore
[ ] Children's education
[ ] Better employment opportunities
[ ] Overseas job transfer/exchange
[ ] Job contract in Singapore
[ ] Partners employment
[ ] Retirement in Singapore
[ ] Lifestyle in Singapore
[ ] Family reunification
[ ] Return home
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

D: Plans to return

D1. Do you plan to return to Australia to live?

[ ] Yes – Go to Question D2
[ ] No – Go to Question E1

D2. When do you plan to return to Australia to live?

[ ] Within 6 months
[ ] Within 12 months
[ ] Within 2 years
[ ] Longer period (please specify): ______________________________

D3. Why do you plan to return to Australia? *(You may tick more than one)*

[ ] Raise children in Australia
[ ] Children's education
[ ] End of work contract
[ ] Plans to retire
[ ] Miss the Australian way of life
[ ] For education or study
[ ] Family reunification
[ ] Return home
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

D4. Why do you not plan to return to Australia? *(You may tick more than one)*

[ ] Employment opportunities better here
[ ] Career and promotion opportunities better here
[ ] Partner's employment located here
[ ] No equivalent jobs in Australia
[ ] Marriage/partnership keeps me here
[ ] Family here
[ ] Lifestyle more attractive here
[ ] Established here
[ ] Cost of relocating back to Australia
[ ] Higher income
[ ] More favourable personal income tax regime
[ ] Children's education
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

E: Post-school education experience

E1. Have you completed any post-school education?

[ ] Yes – Go to Question E2
[ ] No – Go to Question F1

E2. What is your highest completed post-school education qualification?

[ ] Postgraduate degree
[ ] Undergraduate degree
[ ] Diploma
[ ] Trade certificate
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

E3. What is the award title? (PhD, MA, BSc, BA, Dip Education, etc.)

E4. Where was your highest qualification obtained?

F: Current employment

F1. Are you currently employed?
[ ] Yes – Go to Question F2
[ ] No – Go to Question J1

F2. What is your main occupation? ________________________________

F3. Describe the nature of your employment:
[ ] Full-time
[ ] Part-time
[ ] Casual
[ ] Self-employed

F4. Briefly describe your job:
____

F5. How long did you take to find this job?
[ ] Less than 1 month
[ ] 2 – 3 months
[ ] 4 – 6 months
[ ] 7 – 9 months
[ ] 10 – 12 months
[ ] Other (please specify): ________________________________

F6. What barriers did you face when finding this job? *(You may tick more than one)*
[ ] No barriers
[ ] Accommodation
[ ] Transport
[ ] Discrimination
[ ] No Singaporean work experience
[ ] Skills not recognised
[ ] No jobs in my field
[ ] No Singaporean networks and connections
[ ] Location of jobs
[ ] Other (please specify): ________________________________

G: Previous employment

G1. Is your current job at a level consistent with or higher than your last job?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No, why not? ________________________________

G2. Briefly describe your previous job:
____

H: Current income

H1. What is your current annual income? (estimated in AUD)
[ ] Less than $50,000 per annum
[ ] $50,000 - $99,999 per annum
[ ] $100,000 - $149,999 per annum
[ ] $150,000 - $199,999 per annum
[ ] $200,000 - $249,999 per annum
[ ] $250,000 or more per annum

H2. What are your sources of income? *(You may tick more than one)*
[ ] Job salary
[ ] Shares, dividends or bonds
[ ] Gold and other commodities
[ ] Other investments (e.g. collectibles)
[ ] Rental income
[ ] Inheritance
[ ] Awards and scholarships
[ ] Other (please specify): ________________________________

H3. Briefly describe any salary package entitlements that make your current job attractive:
____

H4. Since leaving Australia has your financial situation:
[ ] Improved
[ ] Got worse
[ ] Stayed about the same

H5. Why?
____

I: Links with Australia

I1. Do you maintain any financial links with Australia?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No
If yes, what linkages ______________________________

I2. Do you or your employer have business links with Australia?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No
If yes, what linkages ______________________________

I3. Do you feel that your presence in Singapore has any benefits for Australia? *(You may tick more than one)*

[ ] No benefits
[ ] Existing contacts useful for other Australians
[ ] Learning skills transferable back to Australia
[ ] Creating goodwill towards Australia
[ ] Linking two countries together by establishing roots/family in both
[ ] Creating business/trading links with Australian companies
[ ] Good ambassadors for Australia
[ ] Investment opportunities
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

J: Living arrangements

J1. What is your current household living arrangement?

[ ] Single person household
[ ] Couple only household
[ ] Couple with children
[ ] One parent with children
[ ] Multi-generational household
[ ] Two or more unrelated individuals
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

J2. In your current residence, are you:

[ ] Home owner
[ ] Company sponsored
[ ] Paying off a mortgage
[ ] Renting privately
[ ] Occupied rent free
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

K: Marital status

K1. What is your marital status?
[ ] Married (including defacto) – Go to Question K2
[ ] Separated or divorced – Go to Question K3
[ ] Widowed – Go to Question K3
[ ] Never married – Go to Question L1

K2. For your spouse/partner what is their:
Birthplace: ____________
Citizenship: ___________

K3. Has your marital status changed since leaving Australia?
[ ] Yes – Go to Question K4
[ ] No – Go to Question L1

K4. If yes, how and when? ____

L: Visits to Australia

L1. On average, how regularly do you visit Australia?
[ ] Once a month
[ ] Once every 3 months
[ ] Once every 6 months
[ ] Once a year
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

L2. How many times did you visit Australia in the last 12 months?

L3. What were the reasons for these visits? *(You may tick more than one)*
[ ] Family
[ ] Friends
[ ] Attend special events (e.g. birthday, anniversary, wedding, funeral)
[ ] Business
[ ] Temporary work contract
[ ] Holiday
[ ] Education or study
[ ] Other (please specify): ______________________________

M: About You

M1: Could you please provide the following details:
[ ] Male [ ] Female

M2: Please tick the category that best represents your age:
[ ] 18 – 24 years
[ ] 25 – 29 years
[ ] 30 – 34 years
[ ] 35 – 39 years
[ ] 40 – 44 years
[ ] 45 – 49 years
[ ] 50 – 54 years
[ ] 55 – 59 years
[ ] 60 – 64 years
[ ] 65 – 69 years
[ ] 70 years or more

Final Section

Please provide comments or suggestions that you feel may be of use to this study.
____
____

Thank you for completing the survey. We are most grateful for the time taken to provide this information. If you are interested in sharing your migration experience via a semi-structured interview, please provide your name and contact details below:

Name:

Contact details (Mobile or e-mail address):

APPENDIX F: Migration to Singapore from Australia interview guide

1. Mutual introductions and how did you hear about this research project?
2. When did you move to Singapore?
3. Why did you decide to move to Singapore?
4. Why did you choose Singapore?
5. Did you consider another country to study/work and live? Which country, and why?
6. Are you happy living in Singapore?
7. What sort of help did you receive in negotiating your move?
8. Would you consider a move back to Australia? Why?
9. Did you live in another country before moving to Singapore? Where and for how long?
10. How often do you keep in touch with friends and family? Where do they live? How do you communicate?
11. Would you consider moving again? To which country, and why?
12. Do you now call Singapore home? Why?

APPENDIX G: Ethics Approval

RESEARCH SERVICES
OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS, COMPLIANCE AND INTEGRITY
THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

LEVEL 4, RUNDLE MALL PLAZA
50 RUNDLE MALL
ADELAIDE SA 5000 AUSTRALIA

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CRICOS Provider Number 00123M

Our reference 33198

16 October 2018

Dr Dianne Rudd
School of Social Sciences

Dear Dr Rudd

ETHICS APPROVAL No: H-2018-226
PROJECT TITLE: Migration between Australia and Singapore in the 21st Century: trends, determinants and transnational experiences.

The ethics application for the above project has been reviewed by the Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group (Faculty of Arts and Faculty of the Professions) and is deemed to meet the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* involving no more than low risk for research participants.

You are authorised to commence your research on: 16/10/2018
The ethics expiry date for this project is: 31/10/2021

NAMED INVESTIGATORS:

Chief Investigator:	Dr Dianne Rudd
Student - Postgraduate Doctorate by Research (PhD):	Miss Hannah Hia
Associate Investigator:	Dr Jungho Suh

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL: Thank you for your emails and considered responses to the matters raised. The revised application provided on 15.10.18 has been approved.

Ethics approval is granted for three years and is subject to satisfactory annual reporting. The form titled Annual Report on Project Status is to be used when reporting annual progress and project completion and can be downloaded at http://www.adelaide.edu.au/research-services/oreci/human/reporting/. Prior to expiry, ethics approval may be extended for a further period.

Participants in the study are to be given a copy of the information sheet and the signed consent form to retain. It is also a condition of approval that you immediately report anything which might warrant review of ethical approval including:

- serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants,
- previously unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project,
- proposed changes to the protocol or project investigators; and
- the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Anna Olijnyk
Convenor

The University of Adelaide

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