

**THE TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION
STRATEGIES OF CHINESE AND INDIAN
STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA**

Ghim Thye Tan

BA Hons. (Adelaide)

Discipline of Geography, Environment and Population
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
The University of Adelaide

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

February 2012

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
ABSTRACT.....	xii
DECLARATION.....	xiii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	xiv
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	xv
CHAPTER 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 The mobility of international students.....	2
1.3 International students in Australia.....	5
1.3.1 Growth of the international student market in Australia.....	6
1.4 International education as a precursor to permanent settlement.....	13
1.5 Aims and objectives.....	14
1.6 Organisation of the thesis.....	15
1.7 Conclusion.....	16
CHAPTER 2: Factors that Influence the Study Abroad decision of Chinese and Indian Students in Australia.....	18
2.1 Introduction.....	18
2.2 Brain Drain: A shift in paradigm.....	19
2.3 The literature on international students.....	22
2.4 Push factors that motivate international students.....	24
2.4.1 The outflow of international students from China.....	26
2.4.1.1 Higher education in China.....	27
2.4.1.2 Other factors influencing the study abroad decision of Chinese students.....	29
2.4.2 The outflow of international students from India.....	31
2.4.2.1 Higher education in India.....	31
2.4.2.2 Other factors influencing the study abroad decision of Indian students.....	33

2.5	Pull factors that motivate Chinese and Indian students	35
2.5.1	English as the language medium in the host country.....	36
2.5.2	Cultural/geographical proximity and historical/economic ties between home and host countries	36
2.5.3	Knowledge and awareness of institution and host country.....	37
2.5.4	Networks of family or friends who live and have lived in the host country....	38
2.5.5	Reputation and quality of education in the host country	38
2.5.6	Environmental considerations of host country	39
2.5.7	The cost of studying in the host country.....	39
2.5.8	Host country policies related to student immigration.....	40
2.5.8.1	The importance of work rights during the course of study.....	40
2.5.8.2	Ease of obtaining a student visa to enter a host country.....	41
2.5.8.3	The opportunity for permanent settlement.....	43
2.6	Conclusion	45

CHAPTER 3: The Role of Government Policy on the Decision Making Process of Chinese and Indian Students48

3.1	Introduction.....	48
3.2	The retention of international students	49
3.3	International education policy in Australia.....	51
3.4	Evolution of Australia’s immigration policy on the permanent settlement of international students	53
3.5	How the points system works for international students	57
3.6	Examining the link between immigration policy and course selection of international students	61
3.7	Examining the spatial aspect presented by regional universities.....	65
3.8	Conclusion	68

CHAPTER 4: International Students in the context of Migration Theory 69

4.1	Introduction.....	69
4.2	Defining international student mobility	69
4.3	Migration theories and international student mobility.....	72
4.3.1	Economic migration theories	73

4.3.2	Migration systems theory.....	77
4.3.2.1	Macro-level structures	77
4.3.2.2	Micro-level structures	78
4.3.2.3	Meso-level structures	79
4.4	Transnationalism: A shift in paradigm?.....	80
4.4.1	Defining transnationalism.....	81
4.4.2	Space, place and international student transnationalism	83
4.4.3	Physical and social elements in transnational social space.....	84
4.5	Transnational social spaces within networks in transnational migration strategies	86
4.5.1	Transnational strategies used by migrants	87
4.5.1.1	The configuration of places in transnational migration strategies	88
4.5.1.2	Modelling the transnational migration strategies of international student migration	92
4.6	Conclusion	95
 CHAPTER 5: Methodology and case study groups.....		97
5.1	Introduction.....	97
5.2	Triangulation.....	97
5.2.1	Data triangulation	98
5.2.2	Methodological triangulation.....	100
5.3	Survey of Chinese and Indian students questionnaire	101
5.3.1	Sampling strategy and online data collection	103
5.3.2	Pilot surveys.....	104
5.3.3	The survey distribution process and response rates	105
5.3.4	Potential limitations and biases with the online survey and the distribution	106
5.4	In depth interviews with students and key informants	108
5.4.1	The recruiting and interviewing process.....	109
5.5	Study area and the CISS study population.....	111
5.5.1	Study area	111
5.5.2	The CISS survey population	112
5.5.3	Demographic profile of CISS respondents	113
5.6	Educational background of Chinese and Indian respondents	116
5.7	Financial discussion on Chinese and Indian respondents.....	121

5.8	Conclusion	126
-----	------------------	-----

CHAPTER 6: The Decision Making Process of Chinese and Indian Students coming to Australia 127

6.1	Introduction.....	127
6.2	The decision to study overseas	127
6.3	The underlying factors in the decision making process.....	130
6.3.1	The consideration of alternative countries as study destinations.....	130
6.3.2	The consideration of other Australian States as study destinations.....	132
6.4	Main factors that influenced the decision to study in Australia and in Adelaide	135
6.4.1	Academic reputation of study destinations	137
6.4.2	Cost considerations	138
6.4.3	Social amenities, cultural and environmental considerations	139
6.4.4	Influence of networks	141
6.4.5	Student friendly policies	143
6.5	Additional factors which contributed to the decision to study in Australia and in Adelaide	147
6.5.1	Main sources of information used by respondents	148
6.5.2	Social networks and its influence on respondents	150
6.6	Conclusion	155

CHAPTER 7: Life after Graduation- Future Intentions of Chinese and Indian students 158

7.1	Introduction.....	158
7.2	The permanent migration intentions of Chinese and Indian students.....	159
7.2.1	Intentions of Chinese and Indian students before coming to Australia	159
7.2.2	Changing future intentions of Chinese and Indian students	163
7.3	PR intentions of Chinese and Indian students	165
7.3.1	The intention to remain in Australia	168
7.3.2	The intention to remain in Adelaide	170
7.4	The onward migration of Chinese and Indian students	171
7.4.1	The intention to migrate to a third destination.....	171
7.4.2	The intended future destinations of Chinese and Indian respondents	174

7.5	Main factors that influence the decision to migrate interstate and to a third country	178
7.5.1	Professional, employment and economic based factors	180
7.5.2	Lifestyle and cultural considerations	181
7.5.3	A fascination with the West.....	182
7.5.4	Influence of networks and family	184
7.6	Intention to return home	187
7.6.1	Professional, employment and economic factors in their home countries	189
7.6.2	Societal factors.....	189
7.6.3	Personal factors.....	191
7.7	Conclusion	194
CHAPTER 8: Implications and Conclusion.....		197
8.1	Introduction.....	197
8.2	Summary and discussion of major findings.....	197
8.2.1	International student mobility in migration literature.....	197
8.2.2	Transnational migration strategies of Chinese and Indian students	200
8.2.3	Factors influencing the decision making process and mobility of Chinese and Indian students	204
8.2.4	Theoretical and policy implications and recommendations for future research ..	
	208
8.2.4.1	Theoretical implications	208
8.2.4.2	Policy implications	211
8.2.4.3	Recommendations for future research	217
8.2.5	Conclusion.....	218
APPENDICES.....		220
	APPENDIX 1: Comparison of retention policies towards international students in industrialised countries	220
	APPENDIX 2: Chronology of Australia's international educational policy shifting from aid to trade	224
	APPENDIX 3: Summary of points test application from July 2005 to September 2007	226
	APPENDIX 4: Chinese and Indian student survey	231

APPENDIX 5: Sample letter sent to senior University staff requesting for permission to survey students.....	254
APPENDIX 6: Sample email with participant information sheet sent to Chinese and Indian students	255
APPENDIX 7: Student feedback and the responses to feedback	257
APPENDIX 8: Second email with correct link to the CISS survey sent to students at the University of Adelaide	259
APPENDIX 9: Questions guides used in interviews	260
APPENDIX 10: Sample email and information sheet sent to key informants	265
APPENDIX 11: Sample email sent to student interviewees for their participation in focus groups/interviews	267
APPENDIX 12: Select information on interviewees; Chinese and Indian students; education agents; migration agents and university staff.....	268
REREFERENCES	270

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Successful General Skilled Migration (GSM) visas granted to international students	13
Table 2.1: Push Factors influencing international students	24
Table 2.2: Pull factors that influence international students.....	35
Table 3.1: Key milestones of the evolution of immigration policy for international students (1999-2007)	54
Table 3.2: Criteria for Skilled Graduate (Temporary) visa (subclass 485)	56
Table 3.3: International student applicants with 120+ points who gained points on 'non work items' for the 880 subclass visa in 2004-05	67
Table 5.1: CISS surveys sent to Chinese and Indian students enrolled in the University of Adelaide and UniSA; and the response rate	113
Table 5.2: Average age of Chinese and Indians in the AEI and CISS data.....	115
Table 5.3: Distribution of international enrolments at postgraduate level in Australia in 2007	119
Table 5.4: Occupation of parents of Chinese and Indian CISS respondents	124
Table 5.5: Proportion of Chinese and Indian CISS respondents who worked for pay in the last year	125
Table 6.1: Main reasons for decision not to study at an institution in their home country	128
Table 6.2: Proportion of respondents who seriously considered other study destinations	130
Table 6.3: The serious consideration of other Australian States as study destinations	133
Table 6.4: States which were seriously considered by Chinese and Indian respondents ..	134
Table 6.5: Factors that discouraged respondents from other seriously considered study destinations	135
Table 6.6: Factors that influenced all respondents' decision to study in Australia	136
Table 6.7: Factors that influenced all respondents' decision to study in Adelaide	137
Table 6.8: The influence of MODL on course enrolment	146
Table 6.9: Respondents who have Family/Relatives and Friends with study experience in Australia and in Adelaide	152
Table 6.10: Respondents who have Family/Relatives and Friends who are Australian citizens or PRs	153
Table 6.11: The influence of Family/Relatives and Friends who are Australian citizens or PRs on PR intentions	154

Table 7.1: Influence of attractive immigration policy on the original intentions of Chinese and Indian respondents	160
Table 7.2: Proportion of Chinese and Indian Respondents who changed their original intention	163
Table 7.3: Future intentions of respondents who have not changed their intentions.....	164
Table 7.4: Familiarity with PR requirements for respondents who intend to apply for PR or SIR visa.....	166
Table 7.5: The intention to remain in Australia of respondents intending to apply for PR and SIR visa.....	168
Table 7.6: Factors that influenced Chinese and Indian respondents to remain in Australia	168
Table 7.7: Length of time Chinese and Indian respondents intend on remaining in Adelaide	170
Table 7.8: Intention to migrate interstate.....	172
Table 7.9: Intention to migrate to a 3 rd country	172
Table 7.10: Proportion of respondents who intend to migrate to the places which they seriously considered studying in.....	173
Table 7.11: The seriousness of interstate and 3 rd country migration	173
Table 7.12: Future interstate destinations of Chinese and Indian respondents.....	175
Table 7.13: Future 3 rd country destinations of Chinese and Indian respondents.....	175
Table 7.14: Proportion of respondents who intend to return home immediately after their studies	188
Table 7.15: The return home intentions of respondents who remained in Australia and/or in third country after their studies	192

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Distribution of international students in higher education around the world 2007	4
Figure 1.2: Time series of international student enrolment in Australia 1994-2008.....	7
Figure 1.3: International Education Export in Australia 1985-2008/09	8
Figure 1.4: Australia's leading exports, 2008 (AU\$ Billion)	9
Figure 1.5: Export earnings of International Education to Australia 2008.....	10
Figure 1.6: Top 5 source countries for US in the higher education sector 2008	10
Figure 1.7: Top 5 source countries for UK in the higher education sector 2008.....	11
Figure 1.8: Time series of international students in the higher education sector by top 10 source countries from 1999-2008	12
Figure 2.1: Timeline of Chinese students studying abroad from 1999-2008	27
Figure 3.1: Australian Higher Education Funding Trends	52
Figure 3.2: The proportion of PR visas granted on shore to international students 2002-2008	59
Figure 3.3: Top 5 fields of education for international students 2001-2007	62
Figure 3.4: International enrolment in Masters by coursework in IT and Management & Commerce 2001-2007.....	64
Figure 4.1: Transnational migration strategy of Indian IT professionals	89
Figure 4.2: Conceptual model of the transnational migration strategies of Chinese and Indian students	93
Figure 5.1: Population distribution of capital cities in Australia	112
Figure 5.2: Breakdown of CISS respondents by nationality	114
Figure 5.3: AEI data on the age distribution of Chinese and Indian students in Australia 2008	114
Figure 5.4: Age distribution of Chinese and Indian CISS respondents	115
Figure 5.5: Marital status of Chinese and Indian CISS respondents	116
Figure 5.6: Highest qualification held by Chinese and Indian CISS respondents.....	117
Figure 5.7: Level of enrolment for Chinese and Indian CISS respondents	118
Figure 5.8: Postgraduate and undergraduate enrolment of Chinese and Indian students in Australia 2002-2008	118
Figure 5.9: The broad fields education and levels enrolled in by Chinese and Indian CISS respondents	120

Figure 5.10: Source of tuition fee for Chinese and Indian CISS respondents	122
Figure 5.11: Source of living expenses for Chinese and Indian CISS respondents.....	122
Figure 5.12: Weeks worked/year for Chinese and Indian CISS respondents.....	125
Figure 5.13: Hours worked/week for Chinese and Indian CISS respondents	125
Figure 6.1: Countries seriously considered by Chinese respondents %	131
Figure 6.2: Countries seriously considered by Indian respondents %	131
Figure 6.3: Distribution of international student enrolments in Australia by higher education/State 2002-2008	133
Figure 6.4: Main sources of information used by Chinese and Indian respondent	148
Figure 6.5: Top 10 countries with EATC qualified education agents.	150
Figure 7.1: Original intentions of Chinese and Indian students	159
Figure 7.2: Influence of tuition fee sources on the original intentions of Indian respondents	161
Figure 7.3: Visa categories that Chinese and Indian respondents intend to seek after their studies	165
Figure 7.4: Seriousness of respondents intending to remain in Australia	169
Figure 7.5: Factors influencing the decision to migrate interstate.....	179
Figure 7.6: Factors influencing the decision to migrate to a 3 rd country	179
Figure 7.7: Intentions to bring family to Australia or to 3 rd country destination.....	185
Figure 7.8: Factors influencing respondents who intend to return home immediately after their studies	188
Figure 7.9: Factors influencing respondents who, after some time abroad, intend to make an eventual permanent move back home	193

Abstract

Migration is increasingly transient, particularly among the highly skilled. In addition, countries engaged in a race for highly skilled labour are prepared to modify immigration regulations to attract those migrants. Australian immigration policy reflects how Australia sees international students as highly skilled migrants. Despite abundant research regarding the mobility of the highly skilled, there is a relative lack of investigation into the mobility of international students and their subsequent migration patterns. This thesis explores the nexus between immigration policy and international education by investigating the determinants of the mobility of Chinese and Indian students in Australia. Chinese and Indian students enrolled in the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia were surveyed and key informants were interviewed to uncover the underlying factors that motivated the students in going abroad to study and their future intentions when they graduate.

It was found that while decisions were based on myriad factors, Chinese and Indian students were motivated differently. Findings revealed Permanent Residency in Australia as a key objective for many; with Indian students more driven than their Chinese counterparts in seeking this outcome. Skilled migration programmes designed to encourage the permanent settlement of international students influenced the deliberate selection of Australia and Adelaide as study destinations; however, questions of permanency were raised as Chinese and Indian students, particularly the latter, exhibited post study migration intentions to either interstate and/or third country destinations.

The limited effectiveness of policy was highlighted as Australia's skilled migration programme was circumvented through the use of Australia and/or Adelaide as gateways to preferred destinations. In other words, as much as policy can influence the decision of students when deciding on study destinations, students also subvert policy by configuring particular study destinations as gateways en route to a preferred destination. The implications for policy and its role in shaping the migration strategies of the students are thus investigated. International student mobility is conceptualised in this thesis as linkages to permanent settlement and onward migration highlight the inadequate and limited scope of traditional forms of migration research in explaining student migration.

Declaration

I, Ghim Tan certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma 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.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

I also 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 catalogue and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank Professor Graeme Hugo for giving me the opportunity to pursue this PhD by securing funding for my scholarship.

I would also like to thank the Chinese and Indian students who participated in this study. Their contribution has been essential to the completion of this research. Learning about their study experiences has been both eye opening and humbling.

My supervisors Professor Graeme Hugo and Dr Jennifer Bonham, are also acknowledged for their support and assistance. I am grateful to Professor Hugo for his guidance and invaluable advice throughout the course of this study. I particularly thank Dr Bonham for her encouragement and willingness to make time for the endless discussions we've had over the years. Dr Matthew Rofe is also acknowledged for his supervision in the formative years of this research. I would also like to thank Margaret Young, for her technical assistance in setting up the online survey, and Janet Wall and Dr Di Rudd for their help in many different areas.

Further, I need to mention the students and staff of Geography, Environment and Population; past and present. I am fortunate to have met and worked alongside many amazing and hardworking individuals, some of whom I have forged good friendships with. Thanks go out to KTG club for their academic and emotional support - it is very much treasured.

To Damien, Claire, Becky and Miriam, thank you for your constant love and support. It was what I held onto throughout this bumpy postgraduate journey. Lastly, I would like to thank my mother, for her love, patience, understanding and support throughout my candidature. To those mentioned and unmentioned on this page - thank you.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACE	American Council on Education
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AEI	Australian Education International
AIEF	Australian International Education Foundation
CABE	Central Advisory Board of Education
CISS	Chinese and Indian Student Survey
CSL	Critical Skills List
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIMA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
DIMIA	Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
EATC	Education Agent Training Course
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students
ENS	Employer Nomination Scheme
ERASMUS	European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
EU	European Union
GNP	Gross National Product
GSM	General Skilled Migration
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IIE	Institute of International Education
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
IMM	Indian Institute of Management
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IT	Information Technology
MARA	Migration Agents Registration Authority
MODL	Migrant Occupation in Demand List
MOE	Ministry of Education (China)
MPI	Migration Policy Institute
NAFSA	National Association of Student Advisers

NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSC	Overseas Student Charge
PIER	Professional International Education Resources
PR	Permanent Resident/Permanent Residence
PRC	People’s Republic of China
QLD	Queensland
SA	South Australia
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SIR	Skilled Independent Regional (visa)
SOL	Skilled Occupation List
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TAS	Tasmania
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UniSA	University of South Australia
US	United States
USIEF	United States-India Educational Foundation
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VIC	Victoria
WA	Western Australia