

Migration Intentions in Mauritius

Ourvashee Roopchund, Verena Tandrayen Ragoobur* and Harshana Kasseeah

University of Mauritius, Reduit, Mauritius

KEYWORDS Demographics. Life Satisfaction. Migration. Social Networks. Social Capital

ABSTRACT The objective of the paper is to investigate the migration intentions in the small island economy of Mauritius. The researchers innovate on existing literatures by modelling the social and economic dimensions of migration intentions. The paper concentrates on two important perspectives in the migration literature, namely, the influence of social networks and social capital. In addition to these measurable factors, the paper probes further into the qualitative dynamics of migration intentions. The methodology rests on a mixed approach with a survey of 190 respondents and life history interviews of four Mauritians. Using logit regression techniques, the results reveal strong links between migration intentions and demographic factors like gender, education, age and income levels. The main thrust of the paper, however, resides on the social dimensions where the perceptions of wellbeing of foreign networks act as a pull factor on migration intentions while greater social capital and socialisation at home represent a deterrent.

INTRODUCTION

Migration has long been deemed as a mechanism to better lives of migrants and the families of migrants, because it is often seen as the key to unlock better life chances. The United Nations (UN) estimates a global stock of migrants at around 272 million (UNDESA 2019). It is estimated that almost half of the global stock of migrants is made up of women, at around 48 percent and one third of the migrants are aged below 30 years, which constitutes a significant number of young people. Similarly, out of those migrants, more than 164 million are labour migrants (Popova and Özel 2018). However, the impact of migration goes beyond the number of migrants. They involve families, communities and countries, which send and receive migrants.

Existing research on migration intentions are mainly focused on developed countries (Van Dalen and Henkens 2013; Docquier et al. 2014; Otrachshenko and Popova 2014; Piracha and Saraogi 2017; Fouarge et al. 2019). Very few studies have analysed migration intentions in developing economies and in particular, in small island economies. For instance, Leevies (2009) investigates the relationship between remittances and migration intentions using data from households in the Pacific island countries of Tonga and Fiji. The results show a positive impact of

remittances on migration intentions and this effect is stronger in a country with a longer history of migration and across households with current migrants than those without migrants. Further, Speelman et al. (2017) assess the migration decision-making process in Maldives and there is evidence that attitudes influence intention to migrate both internally and internationally. People consider perceived employment and educational opportunities, quality of health services and expectations about general quality of life, happiness, and social environment as important factors influencing their migration behaviour. Though, Maldivians widely express concerns about climate change and the sea level rise, which increases the vulnerability of the islanders, these are not important elements in their decisions to migrate.

The paper builds and innovates on these two studies on migration intentions in a small island economy setting by adopting a different angle and focusing on social dimensions of migration intentions captured by network and social capital variables. After controlling for many factors including demographics and subjective perceptions of wellbeing, past migration experience, the researchers factor in the multidimensionality of social networks not only via the migration experience and existence of networks but also the wellbeing of such networks. The social capital dimension is also gauged by the strength of social ties, and the structure of social relations at home as well as an assessment of own wellbeing in the home country. The networks of rela-

*Address for correspondence:
E-mail: v.tandrayen@uom.ac.mu

tionships among people in the Mauritian society are very strong and impact on the intention to migrate. Another contribution of this paper is the qualitative dimension captured by life stories, which provide another facet of the migration intention of Mauritians. Though the phenomenon of migration of Mauritians is deemed to be of utmost importance, the subject has remained largely unexplored and empirical enquiry in this turf has remained restricted and inadequate. This paper aims to fill an important gap in migration research in Mauritius by delving into the dynamics of migration intentions of Mauritians.

Objectives

The objective of the paper is to assess the drivers of the intention to migrate in Mauritius. The researchers first specifically address the demographic factors that influence the decision of people to migrate in terms of age, gender, education, ethnicity, region, marital status, employment status, and income groups. Second, the researchers expand on the demographics by adding to the analysis their perceptions on their current wellbeing in Mauritius and as such the paper differentiates between financial satisfaction, health satisfaction and overall life satisfaction. Third, the researchers add to the existing migration literature by assessing the social dimensions of migration intentions. This is measured by controlling for two important perspectives in the migration literature, namely, the influence of social capital and networks on the decisiveness to migrate. Adding to these factors, the researchers also analyse other qualitative dynamics that influence the migration intention. The methodology therefore, rests on a mixed approach with both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. A survey of 190 respondents including those with migration intentions and those without migration intentions is used while the qualitative side is modelled via life history interviews of four Mauritians.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on migration intentions while Section 3 provides a situational analysis of the Mauritian society and migration patterns. Section 4 presents the data analysis and findings. The paper finally concludes in Section 5.

Review of Literature

Migration intentions are not a clearly defined term (Tjaden et al. 2019). Carling (2017) defines the intention to migrate as the desire, consideration, inclination, plan or preparation of individuals to migrate, regardless of their actions. Migration intentions may reflect discontent about one's personal situation in a country (Tjaden et al. 2019). Scholarly research usually concentrates on two aspects of migration intention. One stream of the literature examines drivers of migration intention, for instance, subjective wellbeing (Ivlevs 2015; Otrachshenko and Popova 2014), personal networks (Epstein and Gang 2006; Haug 2008), democracy and governance (Hickey et al. 2014) or remittances (Piracha and Saraogi 2017). The other stream of work investigates the relationship between aspirations, plans and actual migration behaviour (Creighton 2013; Van Dalen and Henkens 2013; Czaika and Vothknecht 2014).

Migrations intentions have been probed into from both qualitative and quantitative angles (Thulin and Vilhelmson 2016; Gubert and Senne 2016; Van Hear et al. 2018; Carling and Schewel 2018; Carling and Collins 2018; Dao et al. 2018; Williams et al. 2018). The quantitative studies have used primarily the Gallup World Poll (most recent work are Bertoli and Ruyssen 2018; Dao et al. 2018; Tjaden et al. 2019), or the Latinobarometro, Arab Barometer (Falco and Rotondi 2016). In the absence of quantitative data for many countries, researchers have conducted surveys on migration intentions (van Dalen et al. 2005a; van Dalen et al. 2005b; Laczko et al. 2017; Williams et al. 2018 amongst others). Changes in the level of migration intentions in a certain region or country are indicative of increasing migration levels in the future. Although migration intention cannot be deemed a proxy for or a reliable forecast of migratory flows, previous research claims a strong link between migration intentions and the subsequent translation of these intentions into action (Papapanagos and Sanfey 2001; Sandu and De Jong 1996). Applying the theory of planned behaviour to migratory flows, Ajzen (1991, 2005) also claims that intentions are a prelude to migration actions.

The 'life-course' theoretical paradigm is often used to explain migration intentions. Elder et

al. (2003) define a life course as ‘an age graded sequence of socially defined roles and events that are enacted over historical time and place’. According to Mulder (1993), important life-course events such as the completion of the tertiary cycle of education and marriage or career advancement opportunities are important events, which tend to be contributing factors to the development of migration intentions. Similarly, Kley and Mulder (2010) argue that life course events in the likes of studies or marriage or retirement can have an important role to play in the formation of migration intentions as well as the subsequent fulfilment of these intentions. However, the realisation of migration intentions is influenced heavily by factors such as the migrants’ network and social capital as well as his/her financial resources.

Life satisfaction and intention to migrate can best be described as complex imbroglios. The relationship between the two concepts depends on a panoply of factors, namely the individual’s needs, aspirations, and beliefs, as well as families characteristics families. These factor do not remain static over the individual’s life cycle. Besides dissatisfaction with local and country related circumstances, the literature has also noted a negative correlation between happiness and life satisfaction on the one hand, and intention to migrate on the other, even though the causal relationships have not been fully established (Ivlevs 2015; Cai et al. 2014; Migali and Scipioni 2019). In general, it seems difficult to disentangle the relationships between life satisfaction and other place utility, which can be defined as a function of both instrumental and emotional bonds to the place of origin. This is so because several of them (for example, confidence in public institutions and trust in government) have been shown to be highly correlated with life satisfaction (Chindarkar 2014). Further, Dustmann and Okatenko (2014) argue that satisfaction with local amenities and conditions (such as public services and security) reduces the likelihood of moving to another place. In addition, Czaika and de Haas (2012) reveal that when higher levels of education are not matched with relevant opportunities, migration aspirations and intentions are bound to rise, as ‘education brings with it a broadening of “mental horizons” and changing concepts of the “good life”’ (2012: 427). This

connects local and country level factors, to life satisfaction, to aspirations and intentions to migrate (Migali and Scipioni 2019).

Further, migration intentions are associated to the economic gains, which result from migration (OECD 2011). Migratory moves, whether permanent, temporary or circular, are often spurred by the prospects of better employment opportunities and higher standards of living and better income. However, recent research suggests that motivations for migration do not solely relate to economic factors and should in addition, be extended to personal factors of wellbeing. Hence, it becomes increasingly interesting to look into the various factors, which affect life satisfaction to understand their impact on migration intentions. Otrachshenko and Popova (2014) show that there are strong correlations between dissatisfaction with current life situations and the formation of migration intentions.

According to the social network theory, migrant networks comprise of “sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin” (Massey 1993). A migrant’s social network in the destination country plays an important role in driving migration flows internationally. As depicted by Munshi (2014), the contribution of migrant social networks in making migration possible are numerous and range from smoothing the process through information sharing with potential migrants to assistance in securing employment and so on. Hence, the social network theory claims that the migrant networks hold a pivotal role in the perpetuation of migration to the extent that these networks are used to simplify entrance, assimilation, and employment in the countries of destination (Massey 1987; Boyd 1989). While the role of networks in facilitating immigration is well known (Beine et al. 2011), having a relative or friend abroad has also been found to increase the attractiveness of a country for potential migrants (Bertoli and Ruysen 2018; Manchin and Orazbayev 2018). Manchin and Orazbayev (2018) demonstrate that the role of networks is stronger when friends and family who are abroad also send remittances. Conversely, having strong social bonds and networks in the country of origin may deter the intention to

migrate (Migali and Scipioni 2019). A recent study by Ruyssen and Salomone (2018) observe that women's awareness of gender discrimination increases their intention to move. However, actual preparation of their migration journey is mainly guided by traditional drivers such as income and networks.

One way to sort through the various migration theories is to look at the extent to which they perceive individuals as possessing agency in their decision to migrate. Traditionally the bulk of migration literature tends to depict the migrant as a passive agent in the migration process, but the structure and various institutional settings have now a preponderant role in influencing migration decisions.

Migration in Mauritius

Migration in Mauritius is not new. The peopling of Mauritius has been described as a 'de-territorialisation' of people across the globe (Bunwaree and Kasenally 2007). Migration history in Mauritius is hence inexorably linked to its development. Situated at around 800 km east of Madagascar, the island was unoccupied until discovered by the Dutch in 1638, leaving the island in 1710. The second settlement of importance in Mauritius was the French, which happened in 1721, thereby engendering a rapid demographic expansion. French activity on the island contributed to the growth of the sugarcane industry, supported greatly by in-ward migration of slaves from Africa.

The advent of the British settlement in Mauritius in 1810 saw a population of a hundred thousand a figure boosted mainly by the presence of slaves on the island. The British settlement in Mauritius inadvertently contributed to a decline in the population, as via the abolition of slavery in 1830, there was an exodus of slaves from the island to Madagascar and Africa. The British settlement however, also accounted for a demographic increase owing to the in-migration of more than 100,000 Indian indentured labourers to compensate for the loss of labour due to the abolition of slavery. The demographic changes in Mauritius during the early settlement were driven mainly by in and out migration patterns.

The past few years have been a testimony to the will of the country to turn migration into a

triple win for Mauritius, the receiving countries and the migrants. According to Lincoln (2012), Mauritius has experienced five distinct types of migration occurrences, which can be linked to development. The first migration phenomenon is the considerable diaspora, which the island can exploit for development. Statistics point to the concentration of the Mauritian diaspora in a few selected countries, with a vast majority of the number of official emigrants being registered in France and the UK and Australia (Salt 2016). Other countries, which have a high percentage of Mauritians, include Canada, which can be associated to the open migration policies in these receiving countries (International Organisation of Migration 2014). The second migration phenomenon identified by Lincoln (2012) is with respect to migration from Rodrigues to Mauritius. Rodrigues is a 108-square-kilometre autonomous island situated next to Mauritius and is part of the Republic of Mauritius. The third migration phenomenon is of circular migration, which has been an institutionalised state policy since 2008 facilitating the placement of Mauritians in jobs in selected countries, which have signed circular migration Memorandum of Understandings with the island in order to provide short term, employment abroad. For instance, Mauritius has entered into bilateral agreements on circular migration with France and Canada to actively encourage temporary employment abroad as a way of acquiring skills and capital, which migrants can use to set up their own business in return (International Organisation of Migration 2014). Endorsed by donor agencies, programmes providing technical and financial support to returning migrants have been established. The fourth migration phenomenon experienced in Mauritius is another state-led migration incentive regarding the promotion of high-skilled and high net worth migration into the island. This initiative, led by the Economic Development Board rests on the grant of occupational permits to investors, professional and retirees to Mauritius. The fifth type of migration experienced in the island is the one which brings the most number of migrants and deals with contract workers from countries such as Bangladesh and China, namely in the textile and construction sectors.

In line with its stated objective of using migration policy as a tool for socio-economic de-

velopment, Mauritius became the first African nation to host the Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2012. According to the latest migration profiling done by the International Organisation of Migration in Mauritius, there is a growing percentage of Mauritians currently living abroad. Table 1 shows total number of emigrants from 1960 to 2000.

Table 1: Estimates of total number of emigrants (1960 – 2000)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>
1960-1972	30,237
1973-1982	36,178
1983-1990	38,979
1991-2000	7,267
Total	113,651

Source: www.pmdiman.com and Statistics Mauritius, 2013

One of the highest numbers of emigrants was recorded in 1968, with 3,067 Mauritians leaving the island. The years 1968 to 1973 represent a first migratory wave of Mauritians moving from the island. Also, data shows that during the 1980s, emigration peaked. These two periods, that is, 1960-1970s and 1980-1990s constitute the migratory waves experienced by the island. There is also in fact a rather large diaspora of Mauritian migrants having settled abroad over the last decades and that migration is inextricably linked to the social, political and economic situations in Mauritius.

METHODOLOGY

The paper uses a mixed approach with a survey of 190 Mauritians and the life history interviews of four Mauritians. Both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions are considered to increase the validity of the data and robustness of the results.

Data Source and Sampling Strategy

The survey covers Mauritians between the age of 18 and 64 years, covering 46.8 percent of females and 53.2 percent of males. The recruitment of participants was done in a purposive manner and many methods of recruitment were used simultaneously to boost response rates.

The sampling procedure also ensures adequate representation of rural and urban residents. The survey was administered from December 2016 up to February 2017. A pilot of 5 questionnaires was carried out in late 2015 before the initial survey. The pilot provides insight on the ways in which the survey design can be improved upon, for the full-scale research.

Survey Instrument

A structured questionnaire has been used for the survey and it is divided into ten sections. The first section pertains to the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, marital status, region where they live and their ethnicity. Section 2 of the questionnaire is a Likert scale question pertaining to the perceived quality and value of the tertiary education system in Mauritius. Section 3 of the questionnaire pertains to the employment status of the respondents and on their opinion of the labour market situation in Mauritius. Section 4 pertains to the perceived levels of life satisfaction, with regards their life in general, their health, their current financial situation, and so on. Section 5 covers the aspect of social capital that is the perceived significance of social networks, connection with comparable individuals and the perceived levels of attachment that respondents have for their country. Sections 6 and 7 include network of respondents abroad in terms of friends and family abroad, the frequency of contact between them, the number of travels abroad as well as their perceived condition of their relatives and friends abroad. Section 8 deals with the existence of previous migration experience of respondents. Lastly, section 9 tests for the respondents' intentions to migrate in the foreseeable future. A funnel approach is used to differentiate between different intensities of migration intentions. This section of the questionnaire also deals with the respondents' preferred country of destination, the reasons for choosing these countries, and the perception of the levels of difficulty they may face while emigrating. Section 10 follows with the factors that influence migration decisions, such as jobs and employment, wages and salaries and so on. Various modes of emigration are also captured.

Econometric Model

The researchers use a microeconomic model to assess migration intention among the 190 individuals surveyed. The dependent variable takes a value of 1 if the respondent has the intention to migrate and 0 otherwise. To measure the aspiration of people to migrate, the researchers extend earlier research on migration along two lines. The paper considers the traditional individual characteristics in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, region, marital status, number of children, employment status and income level. The first innovation is to assess the impact of the perceptions of respondents on their economic and social wellbeing in terms of their overall life satisfaction, their financial and health situations on their intention to migrate. Second, the researchers integrate forces exerted by social networks and social capital on the migration aspiration of individuals. This social dimension is very pertinent and relevant in the small island multicultural society with 1.3 million people, where there are strong bonds across communities and religious and social groups.

Hence, the first equation based on demographic factors only is specified as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Migration}_i = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age}_i + \beta_2 \text{Gender}_i + \beta_3 \text{Ethnicity}_i \\ & + \beta_4 \text{Marital Status}_i + \beta_5 \text{Education}_i + \beta_6 \text{Number of} \\ & \text{Children}_i + \beta_7 \text{Employment Status}_i + \beta_8 \text{Region}_i + \beta_9 \\ & \text{Income Group}_i + \varepsilon_i \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

Where, *Migration* represents the intention to migrate, which takes a value of 1 if the respondent has the intention to migrate and 0 otherwise. Amongst the set of explanatory variables, age (*Age*) is split into different categories, namely, those aged between 18 and 24 (Age 18- 24), those being between 25 and 34 years (Age 25 - 34), those in the age bracket of 35 to 44 (Age 35 - 44), those aged between 45 and 54 (Age 45 - 54) and those above 54 years. The latter is the benchmark dummy. The variable *Gender*_{*i*} takes the value of 1 if the respondent is male and 0 if female. Ethnicity (*Ethnicity*) denotes the main ethnic groups in Mauritius, namely, Hindus, Muslims, General Population and Chinese. Those within other religious groups are in the benchmark category. Marital status (*Marital Status*) represents 5 categories, that is, whether the individual is married, single, divorced, separated or widowed. Due to a limited number of

people in the survey being in the last 3 categories, these are merged into only 1 dummy variable. Hence, the study ends up with only 3 dummy variables for marital status. In addition, education (*Education*) consists of various dummy variables starting with those who have primary education or not completed secondary schooling or those who have completed secondary school. Further levels of education are those with vocational education, those who have completed an undergraduate degree and those with a postgraduate degree. The category of individuals having only primary education is the reference dummy. Among the demographic factors, there is also the number of children (*Number of Children*) the individual has. This is a continuous variable. Further, the employment status of the respondent (*Employment Status*) is captured by different categories as to whether the individual is unemployed or employed in a temporary position or has a permanent job or is self-employed. The benchmark dummy refers to those being currently unemployed. A region dummy (*Region*) is also included to differentiate between those individuals living in rural and those in urban areas, with the former being the reference category. Lastly, income groups (*Income Group*) of respondents are taken into account and the different income levels are those with a monthly income level of less than Rs 10,000 (around USD 300), those earning between Rs 10,000 and Rs 20,000, those with an income range of Rs 20,001 to Rs 30,000, respondents with an income between Rs 30,001 to Rs 50,000, and finally, the last category are those with income levels exceeding Rs 50,000. The lowest income level is the reference dummy.

The research extends on equation (1) above to incorporate the perceptions of individuals on their overall life satisfaction (*Life Satisfaction*) as well as their current level of satisfaction for their health (*Health Satisfaction*) and financial situations (*Financial Satisfaction*). All 3 variables were measured using a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being 'very satisfied' and 5 being 'very unsatisfied'. A dummy variable is created for each perception, with a value of 1 accounting for whether the individual is very satisfied and satisfied while responses with individuals being unsatisfied and very unsatis-

fied take a value of 0. Equation (2) is thus as follows:

$$\text{Migration}_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 \text{Age}_i + \gamma_2 \text{Gender}_i + \gamma_3 \text{Ethnicity}_i + \gamma_4 \text{Marital Status}_i + \gamma_5 \text{Education}_i + \gamma_6 \text{Number of Children}_i + \gamma_7 \text{Employment Status}_i + \gamma_8 \text{Region}_i + \gamma_9 \text{Income Group}_i + \gamma_{10} \text{Life Satisfaction}_i + \gamma_{11} \text{Health Satisfaction}_i + \gamma_{12} \text{Financial Satisfaction}_i + \epsilon_i \quad (2)$$

All other explanatory variables are as explained before.

Equation (2) is further broadened to include the two important social dimensions in the migration literature, namely, networks and social capital.

$$\text{Migration}_i = \phi_0 + \phi_1 \text{Age}_i + \phi_2 \text{Gender}_i + \phi_3 \text{Ethnicity}_i + \phi_4 \text{Marital Status}_i + \phi_5 \text{Education}_i + \phi_6 \text{Number of Children}_i + \phi_7 \text{Employment Status}_i + \phi_8 \text{Region}_i + \phi_9 \text{Income Group}_i + \phi_{10} \text{Life Satisfaction}_i + \phi_{11} \text{Health Satisfaction}_i + \phi_{12} \text{Financial Satisfaction}_i + \phi_{13} \text{Migration Experience}_i + \phi_{14} \text{Families Abroad}_i + \phi_{15} \text{Network WellOff}_i + \phi_{16} \text{Socialisation}_i + \phi_{17} \text{Home Good Place}_i + \epsilon_i \quad (3)$$

Where network is measured by three variables with the first one being whether or not they have ever lived outside Mauritius for more than one year (**Migration Experience**). The second variable measures whether the respondent has relatives and friends living abroad (**Families Abroad**). Lastly, individuals surveyed were also asked about whether they perceive that their families and friends abroad were well off (**Network WellOff**). It was measured using a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being 'very well off' and 5 being 'very poor'. Social capital is then captured by two variables. The researchers first measure how often they meet their friends, relatives or colleagues (**Socialisation**). This was also computed using a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being 'almost always' and 5 being 'never'. The second dimension of social capital was gauged by the extent to which respondents consider Mauritius as a good country to live in (**Home Good Place**). It was also assessed using a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being 'strongly agree' and 5 being 'strongly disagree'. All other explanatory variables are as explained before and ϵ_i is the error term.

Life History Interviews

The life history interviews have been used to complement the findings of the survey. The 4 respondents for the life history interviews represent distinct migration profiles with varying

degrees of migration intentions. Open-ended responses obtained through the life history interviews are compared to the statistical data obtained through the survey for greater validity. The paper adopts the triangulation principle and uses the life history method along with the questionnaire method to provide relevant insight into the macro and micro level implications of migration intentions. Hence, the life history interviews covered the participants' own histories of their migration or migration intention, substantial life events and factors, which contributed to their migration decision-making.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cross Tabulations

Cross Tabulation of Socio Demographics and Intention to Migrate

The socio-demographic characteristics of the 190 respondents of the survey questionnaire are presented in Table 2. Out of the 190 respondents interviewed, 111 expressed migration intentions. Out of these 111 respondents who expressed migration intentions, 57.7 percent were males and 42.3 percent were females. The respondents were further prompted regarding the preparation of their migratory move, that is, whether they had started 'collecting information on the internet', 'contacting an emigration agency' or 'requesting a visa from an embassy'. It is found that out of the 111 respondents with migration intentions, the share of male respondents who have started planning their migration is 24.3 percent, which is much lower than the share of male respondents who express migration intentions (57.7%). Of the respondents with migration intention, only 19.8 percent of male respondents claim that they may migrate within the next year. The share of female respondents having started planning their migration was 23.0 percent (of the 111 respondents who claim to have migration intentions), and for 19.0 percent it is likely that they will migrate within the next year.

In terms of age, it is found that, among those who have migration intentions, 42.0 percent are aged between 18 and 24, followed by around 29.0 percent who are in the age group of 25 to 34 years and 24.0 percent are aged between 35 and

Table 2: Cross tabulation of migration intention by socio-demographic characteristics

		Migration intention					Migration intention				
		0	1	Total	Pearson chi ²		0	1	Total	Pearson chi ²	
Gender	0	42	47	89	2.2	Unemployed	0	79	84	163	23.4***
	1	53.16	42.34	46.84			100	75.68	85.79		
		37	64	101			0	27	27		
		46.84	57.66	53.16			0	24.32	14.21		
	Total	79	111	190		Total	79	111	190		
Age 18-24	0	74	64	138	30.1***	Self-Employed	0	63	103	166	7.1**
	1	93.67	57.66	72.63			79.75	92.79	87.37		
		5	47	52			16	8	24		
		6.33	42.34	27.37			20.25	7.21	12.63		
	Total	79	111	190		Total	79	111	190		
Age 25-34	0	63	79	142	1.8	Temporary Job	0	77	110	187	0.8
	1	79.75	71.17	74.74			97.47	99.1	98.42		
		16	32	48			2	1	3		
		20.25	28.83	25.26			2.53	0.9	1.58		
	Total	79	111	190		Total	79	111	190		
Age 35-44	0	53	84	137	1.7	Permanent Job	0	55	46	101	14.7***
	1	67.09	75.68	72.11			69.62	41.44	53.16		
		26	27	53			24	65	89		
		32.91	24.32	27.89			30.38	58.56	46.84		
	Total	79	111	190		Total	79	111	190		
Age 45-54	0	64	107	171		Income	0	75	96	171	3.7*
	1	81.01	96.4	90	12.1***	<Rs 10,000	1	94.94	86.49	90	
		15	4	19			4	15	19		
		18.99	3.6	10			5.06	13.51	10		
	Total	79	111	190		Total	79	111	190		
Age 55-64	0	67	110	177	14.8***	Income Rs	0	70	80	150	7.6***
	1	84.81	99.1	93.16		10,001-	1	88.61	72.07	78.95	
		12	1	13		20,000		9	31	40	
		15.19	0.9	6.84			11.39	27.93	21.05		
	Total	79	111	190		Total	79	111	190		
Age 65 and above	0	74	111	185		Income Rs	0	63	97	160	2
	1	93.67	100	97.37	7.2**	20,001–	1	79.75	87.39	84.21	
		5	0	5		30,000		16	14	30	
		6.33	0	2.63			20.25	12.61	15.79		
	Total	79	111	190		Total	79	111	190		
Single	0	63	43	106	31.5***	Income Rs	0	69	91	160	1
	1	79.75	38.74	55.79		30,001-	1	87.34	81.98	84.21	
		16	68	84		50,000		10	20	30	
		20.25	61.26	44.21			12.66	18.02	15.79		
	Total	79	111	190		Total	79	111	190		
Married	0	23	76	99	28.6***	Income >	0	68	104	172	3.1
	1	29.11	68.47	52.11		50,001 -	1	86.08	93.69	90.53	
		56	35	91			11	7	18		
		70.89	31.53	47.89			13.92	6.31	9.47		
	Total	79	111	190		Total	79	111	190		
Separated / Divorced	0	72	105	177	0.9	Hindu	0	41	76	117	5.4**
	1	91.14	94.59	93.16			1	51.9	68.47	61.58	
		7	6	13				38	35	73	
		8.86	5.41	6.84				48.1	31.53	38.42	
	Total	79	111	190		Total	79	111	190		
Below Primary Education	0	77	111	188	2.8*	Chinese	0	72	100	172	0.1
	1	97.47	100	98.95			1	91.14	90.09	90.53	
		2	0	2				7	11	18	
		2.53	0	1.05				8.86	9.91	9.47	
	Total	79	111	190		Total	79	111	190		

Table 2: Contd...

		Migration intention			Pearson χ^2			Migration intention			Pearson χ^2
		0	1	Total				0	1	Total	
Primary Education	0	75	111	186	5.7**	Muslim	0	58	93	151	3.0*
	1	94.94	100	97.89			1	21	18	39	
		5.06	0	2.11				26.58	16.22	20.53	
	Total	79	111	190			Total	79	111	190	
Incomplete Secondary Education	0	58	104	162	15.1***	General Population	0	67	73	140	8.6**
	1	73.42	93.69	85.26			1	84.81	65.77	73.68	
		26.58	6.31	14.74				15.19	34.23	26.32	
	Total	79	111	190			Total	79	111	190	
Complete Secondary Education	0	66	86	152	1.1	Number of Children	0	21	74	95	43.3***
	1	83.54	77.48	80			1	26.58	66.67	50	
		16.46	22.52	20				13	14	27	
	Total	79	111	190			Total	79	111	190	
Vocational	0	74	88	162	7.6		2	18	19	37	
	1	93.67	79.28	85.26				22.78	17.12	19.47	
		6.33	20.72	14.74			3	19	4	23	
	Total	79	111	190			Total	79	111	190	
Undergrad Degree	0	53	78	131	4.2**		4	7	0	7	
	1	67.09	70.27	68.95				8.86	0	3.68	
		32.91	29.73	31.05			5	1	0	1	
	Total	79	111	190			Total	79	111	190	
Postgraduate Degree	0	71	88	159	3.8**	Region	0	40	50	90	0.6
	1	89.87	79.28	83.68			1	50.63	45.05	47.37	
		10.13	20.72	16.32				39	61	100	
	Total	79	111	190			Total	79	111	190	

Source: Own survey

44 years. Further, looking into the cross tabulations by marital status, it is observed that 61.0 percent of those aspiring to migrate are single while around 32.0 percent are married. The study further probes into migration intentions by education level and note that around 30.0 percent of respondents who want to migrate have an undergraduate degree, followed by 23.0 percent having completed their secondary education. The percentage of those who aspire to migrate and having either vocational or postgraduate qualification is around 21.0 percent.

Similarly, in terms of employment status, 59.0 percent of those with migration intentions have a permanent employment followed by the unemployed (24%). By income groups, it is gauged that those with migration intentions are more

likely to be earning between Rs 10,001 to Rs 20,000 (28%) followed by those within the income category of Rs 30,001 to Rs 50,000 (18%). The study also differentiates across ethnic groups and note that those with migration intentions are mainly Hindus (31.5%) and the General Population (34.2%). It is further noted from the data that 67.0 percent of those who have aspirations to migrate do not have children whilst around 13.0 percent have one child and 17.0 percent have two children. Lastly in terms of region, 55.0 percent of those with migration intentions live in the urban areas relative to 45.0 percent residing in the rural region.

The cross tabulation also provides information on the Pearson's chi-square test or the chi-square test of association, which is used to probe

into the existence of any relationship between two categorical variables. In this case, the study links the intention to migrate with different socio-demographic features of the respondents. The Pearson's chi-square test is statistically significant and shows the presence of an important association between migration intentions and different age categories except those between 25 and 34 and those between 35 and 44. There is also a significant association between migration intention and different education levels. A link can also be noted for single and married individuals who intend to migrate. A statistically significant association can be observed between different income levels and intention to migrate with the exception of those respondents in the highest income group and those earning between Rs 20,000 and Rs 50,000. With respect to employment, the Pearson's chi-square test is also significant for those who are unemployed, in permanent employment and the self-employed.

Cross Tabulation of Non-Demographics and Intention to Migrate

The non-demographic factors relate to the life satisfaction, health and financial situation of the respondents. The researchers undertake a cross tabulation of these variables with the mi-

gration intention of individuals in the sample. The statistics are presented in Table 3. It can be gauged that among those who intend to migrate, only around 30.0 percent are not satisfied with their life in Mauritius while around 38.0 percent are not satisfied with the current health situation. The financial situation seems to be a vital factor in the migration intention, as around 70.0 percent in that category are not satisfied with their current financial position. The Pearson's chi-square tests are, however, not statistically significant for all three types of satisfaction.

The study then cross tabulates migration intention with network variables in terms of past experience of living in a foreign country, having friends and families abroad and perceptions about the wellbeing of these relatives abroad (see Table 4). From the survey, it can be stated that 73.0 percent of respondents who intend to migrate have never stayed outside Mauritius for more than one year. However, around 78.0 percent of those who have migration aspirations, have families, relatives and friends living abroad, and around 51.0 percent of those who view migration as an option recognise that their relatives abroad are better off. The researchers note that the Pearson's chi-square test is statistically significant only for perceptions about the wellbeing of relatives abroad and this may have an important influence on migration intentions. In essence, social capital is measured in terms of

Table 3: Cross tabulation of migration intention with life satisfaction

		Migration intention			Pearson chi ²
		0	1	Total	
Life Satisfaction	0	26	33	59	0.2
		32.91	29.73	31.05	
	1	53	78	131	
		67.09	70.27	68.95	
	Total	79	111	190	
Health Satisfaction	0	37	42	79	1.5
		46.84	37.84	41.58	
	1	42	69	111	
		53.16	62.16	58.42	
	Total	79	111	190	
Financial Satisfaction	0	60	78	138	0.7
		75.95	70.27	72.63	
	1	19	33	52	
		24.05	29.73	27.37	
	Total	79	111	190	

Source: Own survey

Table 4: Cross tabulation of migration intention with network and social capital

			Migration intention			Pearson χ^2		
			0	1	Total			
<i>Network</i>								
Live outside Mauritius for more than 1 year	0		56	81	137	0.1		
			70.89	72.97	72.11			
		1	23	30	53			
	Total		29.11	27.03	27.89		0.9	
		0		79	111			190
				22	24			46
	1			27.85	21.62			24.21
		Total		57	87			144
				72.15	78.38			75.79
Family and friends abroad were well off			79	111	190			
	0		66	54	120			
		1		83.54	48.65	63.16		
Total				13	57	70		
			16.46	51.35	36.84			
		79	111	190				
<i>Social Capital</i>								
Socialisation	0		37	70	107	4.9**		
			46.84	63.06	56.32			
		1	42	41	83			
	Total		53.16	36.94	43.68		10.1***	
		0		79	111			190
				21	55			76
	1			26.58	49.55			40
		Total		58	56			114
				73.42	50.45			60
	79		111	190				

their meetings with families, friends and relatives as well as their views on Mauritius as to whether or not it is a good place to live. Among those respondents who wish to migrate, it is noted that only around 37.0 percent visit families, friends and colleagues, regularly. With respect to the second dimension of social capital, it can be said that there is not much difference across migration intentions in terms of perceptions about whether Mauritius is a good place to live or not. It can be observed that the Pearson's chi-square test is statistically significant for both dimensions of social capital depicting a strong association between social capital variables and the intention to migrate.

Econometric Results

Equations (1), (2) and (3) are assessed using the logistic estimation technique and the results are presented in Table 5. There is evidence that males have greater intention to migrate relative to

their female counterparts. Similar results have been obtained by De Jong (2000) for Thailand, Plopeanu et al. (2019) for Eastern Europe and Van Dalen and Henkens (2008) for Netherlands. The migration literature in general also observes an important gender gap in migration motives, strategies and behaviour (De Jong et al. 1996; De Jong 2000; Kanaiaupuni 2000). It is widely acknowledged that migratory flows are highly gendered and that male migrants outnumber female migrants, despite the recent upward trend in female migration, especially in terms of occupational migration (Chant 1992; Zlotnik 1995; Kofman 1999; Kanaiaupuni 2000). Female migrants, whilst seen as being dependent on male migrants in the past, are increasingly migrating on their own, to further their education or career.

In addition, the desire to migrate is more likely to be for the young (Kley 2013; Van Dalen and Henkens 2008). The intention to migrate is the strongest in the younger sections of any given population and this is supported by similar results from Collyer (2014) and Agadjanian et al.

Table 5: Migration intention: Logit Regression results

<i>Dependent variable: Migration intention</i>	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>
Gender	0.358 (0.136)***	0.335 (0.141)**	0.284 (0.141)**
Hindu	-0.673 (0.164)***	-0.748 (0.150)***	-0.875 (0.166)***
Chinese	-0.411 (0.182)**	-0.466 (0.161)***	-0.613 (0.448)
Muslim	-0.479 (0.186)***	-0.563 (0.172)***	-0.707 (0.374)
General population	-0.387 (0.263)	-0.508 (0.242)**	-0.758 (0.316)**
Age 18 - 24	0.996 (0.002)***	0.995 (0.002)***	0.999 (0.002)***
Age 25 - 34	0.992 (0.003)***	0.990 (0.004)***	0.997 (0.005)***
Age 35 - 44	0.992 (0.003)***	0.989 (0.005)***	0.996 (0.004)***
Age 45 - 54	0.859 (0.032)***	0.849 (0.037)***	0.882 (0.207)**
Age 55 - 64	0.753 (0.042)***	0.735 (0.049)***	0.749 (0.359)*
Single	-0.307 (0.326)	-0.414 (0.353)	-0.266 (0.353)
Married	-0.382 (0.252)	-0.423 (0.270)	-0.300 (0.328)
Number of children	-0.079 (0.084)	-0.148 (0.101)	-0.226 (0.148)
Region	-0.232 (0.147)	-0.221 (0.148)	-0.168 (0.161)
Incomplete secondary education	0.895 (0.010)***	0.887 (0.036)***	0.933 (0.119)***
Complete secondary education	0.969 (0.010)***	0.963 (0.016)***	0.987 (0.023)***
Vocational education	0.918 (0.023)***	0.907 (0.032)***	0.916 (0.138)***
Undergraduate degree	0.993 (0.004)***	0.991 (0.007)***	0.997 (0.005)***
Postgraduate degree	0.942 (0.019)***	0.928 (0.029)***	0.958 (0.085)***
Temporary employment	-0.452 (0.076)***	-0.458 (0.076)***	-0.281 (0.275)
Permanent employment	0.570 (0.189)***	0.607 (0.163)***	0.618 (0.209)**
Self employed	0.388 (0.198)**	0.318 (0.233)	0.273 (0.270)
Income rs 10,000- 20,000	-0.400 (0.157)**	-0.406 (0.153)***	-0.415 (0.269)*
Income rs 20,001- 30,000	-0.546 (0.126)***	-0.544 (0.135)***	-0.209 (0.435)
Income rs 30,001- 50,000	-0.438 (0.167)***	-0.434 (0.170)**	-0.085 (0.384)
Income more than rs 50,000	-0.543 (0.095)***	-0.544 (0.098)***	-0.218 (0.379)
Life satisfaction	—	-0.113 (0.182)	-0.475 (0.323)
Health satisfaction	—	0.047 (0.159)	0.016 (0.239)
Financial satisfaction	—	-0.337	-0.389

Table 5: Contd...

<i>Dependent variable: Migration intention</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)
Migration experience	–	(0.133)**	(0.225)*
	–	–	-0.484
Network abroad	–	–	(0.300)*
	–	–	-0.521
Network well off	–	–	(0.263)*
	–	–	0.396
Socialisation	–	–	(0.177)*
	–	–	-0.053
Home good place	–	–	(0.248)
	–	–	-0.603
			(0.209)**
N	190	190	190

Source: Own survey. Note: Significance levels are as follows: ***1 percent, **5 percent and *10 percent

(2008). The marginal effects from the logit regression are much higher for young adults and as the study moves to higher age categories the magnitude of the coefficient declines. The propensity of young people to foster migration intentions has been found in Armenia, Georgia and Morocco (Collyer 2014), and in Kyrgyzstan (Agadjanian et al. 2008). Drivers of youth migration are numerous and it is estimated that the decision to migrate is linked to key life transitions, such as pursuing higher education, employment opportunities abroad, or marriage. Nankova (2012) claims that generally, youth migration can be explained by four main reasons. First of all, the youth usually are equipped with higher levels of human capital than individuals in older cohorts. Moreover, the payback interval involved in the migratory move is longer, which renders their perception of the returns on their migration positive. Nankova (2012) further claims that the youth are more likely to hold a low stock of social capital, which tends to reduce the psychosocial impacts of leaving the network at home. Lastly, Nankova (2012) states that the life course of young people is less ‘crystallised’ and hence they are granted a level of freedom of choice in moulding their future, which is often denied to older generations.

In essence, the researchers probe into the link between education levels and migration intentions. The results reveal a strong and statistically positive link between education and intention to migrate. Higher levels of education imply greater aspirations to leave the country.

This supports the current situation in Mauritius where there is an important level of brain drain. The concept of brain drain in Mauritius is one, which has generated a lot of attention over the years. The World Bank estimates the emigration rate of tertiary educated population of Mauritius at 56.2 percent of the total emigrants in 2010. Top destination countries for Mauritian emigrants remain the United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, USA, Germany and Tanzania. In essence, migration and education are linked in a number of ways. Sjaastad (1962) maintains that migration and education should be seen in the same manner as an investment in human capital. Hence, the acquisition of skills can push an individual to migrate, but it can also be said that people who possess more education, are more likely to migrate. Differentials in returns to education in the country of origin and in the country of destination have traditionally been seen as a significant driver of migration. Similar results have been obtained by Dao et al. (2018) for OECD countries whereby they found that relatively young and educated people tend to have higher intentions to migrate. The findings also corroborate with Liao (2001) for Taiwan whereby educational level was found to positively and significantly enhance migration intention.

The study next probes into the employment status of the individual and his or her aspiration to migrate. The findings show that those individuals in permanent employment have greater intention to migrate relative to unemployed peo-

ple in the sample. Those respondents who are in a permanent job are mainly employed in the private sector. The private sector in Mauritius is characterised by long working hours, odd hours in many cases and in some instances the pay may not be meeting the expectations of workers. Plopeanu et al. (2019) find that the main drivers of students' migration in the Romanian region of Moldova is the parental role whereby if the father has an occupation in the private sector, this augments the child's migration intentions. Youngsters may not follow the same steps as their parents working in the private sector with less attractive jobs either in terms of working conditions or in terms of pay. In this analysis, those employed in the private sector though being permanent are more likely to have migration aspirations. Further, Migali and Scipioni (2019) confirm the results that the unemployed are less likely to aspire to migrate, as in their study on migration across different regions of the world they find that those people out of the workforce have from thirteen to twenty-one percent lower probability of planning to migrate than those in employment. This is attributed mainly to the costs involved in the migration process and an unemployed person may not have the necessary funding to move abroad.

In terms of income groups, the results display a negative relationship between different income groups and the intention to migrate. The marginal effects are negative and statistically significant showing that as one moves to higher income groups, the likelihood of migrating lowers. The findings are in line with Dustmann and Okatenko (2014) who demonstrate that migration aspirations respond to individual's wealth or income, but this link rests on where the person is along the income distribution. As one goes up along the income distribution, income decreases migration intentions because the gains from migration relative to the current wealth are lower. Clemens (2014) further supports this view by arguing that at low levels of income, rising income is related to rising migration rates but after some turning point, further income increases is associated with declining emigration rates. Once individuals are satisfied with their financial position, they do not show strong aspirations to leave their home country. This is

further supported by the results on financial satisfaction. The other variables on perception of wellbeing at home, namely, overall life satisfaction and health satisfaction turn out to be statistically insignificant. Variables such as marital status, number of children and region where respondents live are not statistically significant across the three equations.

In terms of network variables, the researchers find evidence that those who have lived abroad for more than a year are less likely to aspire to migrate compared to those with no migration experience. The role of migration experience has been analysed in the migration intention literature and the results vary in relation to the type and nature of migration. For instance, Hoppe and Fujishiro (2015) show that if migration is focused on the high skilled across high-income economies, migration experience does not impact migration intention. However, experience matters when people from low-income areas move to high-income areas (see De Jong 2000; De Jong et al. 1996; Agadjanian et al. 2008). In essence, DaVanzo (1980) postulates that previous migration experiences raise the probability of future migration, as it may modify the persons' perceptions of migration costs. The negative link found could be explained by the fact that many individuals who have lived abroad before want to return to their country at some point in time after having worked and accumulated wealth for some years. The idea is to come back for a peaceful and decent living in their country with their families and relatives. The other variables used to capture networks are the presence of families and relatives abroad and the perceptions of potential migrants on the wellbeing of their relatives. The results show that the marginal effect for the presence of families or friends abroad is negative and statistically significant implying that it reduces the likelihood of individuals to aspire for migration. From the existing literature, the influence of migrant networks is one of the most analysed determinants and a positive association is often postulated whereby potential migrants access resources and information through migrant networks (Massey et al. 1993; De Jong et al. 1996; Hoppe and Fujishiro 2015; Kaplan et al. 2016). The negative relationship between social networks

abroad and migration intention may be explained by the fact that Mauritians rarely share their migration aspirations and may already have the necessary information from local organisations, which facilitate migration moves. However, when the study accounts for their perceptions on the wellbeing of social networks in the destination country, a positive and statistically significant link is obtained. Though individuals with migration intentions may not necessitate resources or information from relatives and friends abroad, their state of wellbeing may trigger migration intentions. This is supported by arguments in the literature whereby the characteristics of the social network differ in terms of its size and type of relationship and these may have different implications on the intention to migrate.

The study next probes into the social capital dimension, which is a further development of the social network perspective (Dako-Gyeke 2016). Social networks are found to significantly explain intentions to stay or move. However, rather than focusing only on social networks in the destination country, one should also assess the implications of social networks within the home country. Many migration intention studies have established that local social networks deter out-migration from their place of residence (Kley 2013). The intention to migrate is likely to be lower when people are more locally embedded socially, with a large number of close friends, relatives, families living nearby this is the case of Mauritius being a small island economy, where people visit their families regularly, and there is a strong feeling of closeness. Therefore, this feeling discourages intention to migrate. The results confirm this negative relationship between socialisation and the aspiration to move out. Strong social ties are here viewed as a deterrent for migration intention. In addition, the researchers also include the perceptions of individuals surveyed on the extent to which Mauritius is a good place to live and the results show that positive insights on their home country dissuades their intention to migrate. In contrast with Dako-Gyeke (2016) for Ghana, there is evidence that social networks in Mauritius will serve as pull factors and social networks abroad would be push factors for individuals seeking to migrate.

Life History Interviews

Next, the study analyses the data from four life history interviews. In line with the survey, the researchers also consider views on both demographic factors and non-demographic influences on the intention to migrate.

Gender and Youth

From the discussions, it was observed that there is a mixed influence of gender on migration intentions. The influence of gender on migration intention is considerably lower in comparison to other factors. Respondent 1 is a young man aged 19 years and has just completed his Higher School Certificate. He has initiated the process of migrating by applying to Australian Universities. He thinks that there is no gender difference when students decide to go for studies abroad. He states that:

"I do not believe it makes a difference whether you are a girl or a boy. My school friends, who are girls, are also making arrangements to study abroad... I believe parents no longer differentiate between boys and girls when sending their children abroad for studies."

Respondent 2 is a 30-year-old woman who had previous migration experience, which in turn was motivated by educational purposes, and lasted for four years, during which she completed her postgraduate degree in Finance. She has now moved to Mauritius and she is of the view that gender differences prevail when it comes to migrating for work purposes. She states that:

"Some people are quite narrow-minded when it comes to girls or young women who decide to settle abroad for work. I think that in our society it is more acceptable for girls to study abroad than to work. It is sometimes wrongly perceived for girls to be living alone and working in another country..."

With respect to youth, there is evidence from the survey that points towards young people having higher aspirations to migrate. This trend is also confirmed with the findings from the life history interviews. Respondent 1 is a profile with high intention to migrate. He says,

"...There is no future here! I will be enrolling in a course in engineering there... My relatives will help fund my first year of studies and

then I will look for a job for the remaining years. In Mauritius, I feel restricted, and I will most probably not get a high paying job in the desired field. I believe there are better opportunities for young people who go abroad..."

Respondent 1 is then prompted to ponder on his propensity to migrate at a young age or a later stage in life.

"I think that when you are young it is easier to be mobile, to go out and try new experiences. I am not married, I do not have kids, and I do not have any responsibilities except towards my mom, who is still working. Right now I am not employed. It is simpler for me. There is nothing that is holding me back..."

Respondent 1 supports the claim that migration intention among the younger cohorts is a result of the looseness of their life, the freedom to choose their future plans in terms of economic and educational goals, and the perception that the Mauritian educational institutions and the labour market cannot cater for the needs of the younger generation. Hence, young respondents are more likely to migrate than the older ones. The results support the migration literature whereby migration intentions are higher amongst the young sections of the population (Jacobsen and Levin 2000; Yang 2000).

Marital Status, Children and Family Size

During the interviews on the life stories of four Mauritians, the study also gathers information on whether marital status, family obligations and children matter in influencing migration aspirations. The study gathers the views of 3 different respondents on how these socio-demographic characteristics can impact their migration intentions.

Respondent 2 claims that:

"I decided that I would return to Mauritius temporarily after my stay in the UK. I was working in an accounting firm there, and I had been earning a decent salary and was able to live my life freely. I decided to stay in Mauritius permanently because I have recently met someone, with whom I intend to get married. I am thus foregoing the opportunity to work and live abroad."

Respondent 3 is a 42-year-old man who is married with two children aged 9 and 11 years. He states that:

"I have been working on a contractual basis far too long. My contract will end in 2019. After that, I don't know how things will turn out for me, as the public sector does not employ people above the age of forty. The salary is good here, but I have children and must think about them. Like I say, if the tire goes bust, I do not have a spare one."

It's been two years since I have been trying to complete the formalities to move to Canada. At first I was not very serious about it and was only looking at the different possibilities. But since the past few months, I have really started to look into this seriously. I have contacted an agent who will be helping me with the formalities. I am open to the idea of moving there first, and then bringing in my family. My wife also works, but she will be able to manage with the children. But my agent had suggested that it is my wife who must go first as her qualifications fit better and it will be easier for her to find a job there. I am trying to get my wife accustomed to the idea that she will be able to stay alone for the first 6 to 7 months. She is suffering from a medical condition, which requires constant treatment. I know this is a difficult decision but my wife will also get better treatment over there."

The interviews demonstrate that profiling of migration intentions according to relationship status is not straightforward. As in the case of respondent 2, marriage prospects act as an important pull factor for her to remain in Mauritius. While neoclassical theory typically presents female migrants as 'tied' migrants (Pedraza 1991; Riley and Gardner 1993; Pessar 1999), the two narratives above, one male, one female show a different aspect of the female migration profile.

Indeed, while it was initially estimated that respondents in marital relationships would hold little or no migration intentions, it can be seen that the relationship between marital status and migration intention is not direct and can be mediated by several factors such as the respondents' satisfaction with current life and work situation, health issues, and the presence of children. Indeed, one can state that the effects of marital status and the presence of children on the development of migration intentions can be both negative (Andersson and Scott 2005; Kulu 2005, 2006; Kulu and Vikat 2007) and positive as

parents will want to secure better life chances for their family, but at the same time, the presence of children and spouses can increase the cost of migration so much that it becomes a deterrent.

The life history interviews support the above literature and underline the importance of the presence of children in determining migration intentions. The study gathers the views of the two respondents as follows.

Respondent 2, who plans on getting married, says:

"Here I have my parents, and I am also really close with my partner's family. I have now met someone with whom I am now planning to get married and have children. I don't think that I would want to go back [to England]. I think it is important to have the support of one's family when your child is growing up..."

Respondent 3 who is married with two children highlights that:

"My children go to a private school. Thankfully, next year my daughter will be starting college. The level of education in Mauritius is good, I do not deny this, but for the self-development of the child, they must also have extra-curricular activities. I have friends in Canada who tell me that the kind of self-development that children have abroad is different. They have more time for other activities and are better coached and guided. I cannot think only for myself, I would like my children to have a better education which allows them to develop themselves."

In the case of Mauritius, the researchers note that the presence of children may have either a positive or negative effect on the intention to migrate, as it depends on the family environment and expectations of parents.

Education Levels and Employment Status

Life history interviews from all four respondents confirm the trend of the flight of the highly skilled. Respondent 4, who holds no migration intention, claims that:

"Young people nowadays don't want to stay in Mauritius. It is difficult for the young people to make a living in this country. A graduate earns only Rs 15,000. Someone who has studied so much cannot be paid this low wage. They are thus attracted to the better lifestyle of people living abroad."

The life history also points towards a negative perception of the limited opportunities for career prospects in the labour market. The majority of respondents postulate that the job market is limited in its size and scope, especially in knowledge intensive sectors. Young qualified individuals face increasing competition for jobs. Based on the views obtained from all four life histories as outlined below, it is observed that the limited capacity of the job market to absorb skilled workers leads to mass emigration to destinations with better job opportunities, wages and career prospects.

Respondent 1 says:

"I want to go to Australia to study engineering. I don't think I will be coming back to Mauritius because I'm sure that I will not find a job in this field afterwards. Also, I know that engineers don't earn well in Mauritius. I will not study so much to earn 'peanuts'!"

This view is further supported by Respondent 3 who says,

"In Mauritius you must be qualified to get a job. In my case, it has been two years since I have applied for the post of director at my current job. I have been there for a long time and I am the senior-most employee. I did not get the post. Someone with less experience got the position. He has more qualifications. Of course one is discouraged."

Income and Social Networks

One of the most commonly cited drivers of migration is income level. Although the considerations are diverse, all point towards the determining influence of income on the choice to move abroad and also, on the opportunity cost of moving back to Mauritius as in the case of Respondent 2.

Respondent 2 says:

"I came back to Mauritius only a few months ago. I understand that it is not possible for me to draw the same salary here as I did in the UK, but at the same time, it is difficult to accept that I would not be earning as much. It is sad to say, but a graduate in Mauritius earns very little, especially when compared to other countries in Europe or in America."

Respondent 3 whilst talking of his intention to move to Canada:

"I'll be honest, I am more than ready to re-cycle myself. I am not afraid to do odd jobs, since my agent has told me that I stand more chance of getting a job in another field (even if it is in the technical field), I am ready to do that. Do you know how much a welder earns over there? Rs. 100,000 to 120,000! You can't earn that much in Mauritius. I work from 9:00a.m. to 4.30p.m every day for 15 years! I don't even earn half of that amount! I'm not ashamed, in the end, it is the money that counts! If I am able to make the ends meet I would be happy! In the end what people want is to earn enough to guarantee their family's future, right?"

Respondent 1, whose perception regarding salaries in Mauritius is negative, says:

"I believe that the starting salary for engineers in Mauritius is around Rs. 15,000. So I will not study for 4 years to earn just that. I prefer to go abroad and to make sacrifices for 4 years so that when I start to work, I get a salary, which is enough for me, and also to send some money to my mom every month. I am well aware that in the beginning it will be difficult, my relatives tell me that I have the potential, so they will help in financing my first year. But afterwards I will have to find a job, and I'll manage! I'm sure that even people who work in fast-food chains earn more than engineers in Mauritius."

It can hence be concluded that the prominence of income in the considerations of migration intention is very much apparent in the life history interviews. This is in line with the survey results, where income plays an important role.

Respondent 4, while speaking about the island, his strong sense of belonging and his unwillingness to move to another country says,

"I have grown up here since I was born, my children are born here, have grown up here. It's all my life that is anchored here. I have seen the country becoming independent, and many governments have come and gone. I have become old in this country, and I will not be able to adapt to another country! My family is here, and I'm not talking about just my wife and kids, my brothers, sisters, cousins, all my relatives are in Mauritius. My life is here!"

The above quote is indicative of what is called a strong sense of bonding with the birthplace and strong socialisation. It is apparent from

the analysis of the survey responses and the life history interviews that there is a strong sense of place amongst respondents who do not wish to live abroad. The sense of place is depicted in life interviews as being a feeling of security while the act of migrating is considered as a loss of history and forfeiting the sense of fitting in.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the paper was to explore the socio-economic dimensions of migration and assess the importance of social networks and social capital in explaining the intention to migrate in a small island setting. The researchers first assess the demographic factors and second probe into the life satisfaction of individuals in order to gauge their migration aspirations. More important, is the existence and impact of social networks and social capital on the migration intentions of individuals in Mauritius. Using both a quantitative approach with a survey of 190 individuals and four life history interviews, the study first finds evidence of the importance of socio-demographics in terms of gender, age, education, income and employment status in supporting the aspirations of Mauritians to move abroad. It can be observed that individuals with migration intentions are more likely to be a young male, highly educated with at least an undergraduate degree and having a permanent job in the private sector.

Findings of this paper also lend credence to previous studies led elsewhere, which establish age as one of the most significant demographic variables influencing migration intentions. There is a statistically significant positive link between age and migration intention, which means that the younger generation of the population are more likely to hold migration intentions. Gender also constitutes an important factor impacting on migration intentions. Other demographic factors, such as education impact directly on migration intentions with highly educated individuals being more likely to migrate than their less educated counterparts. Marital and the presence of children on the other hand are not significant determinants of migration intentions. Factors such as place of residence also do not have a noteworthy impact on migration intentions.

The life history interviews help to shed light on the significance of factors such as age, gender, education and employment on migration intentions. Although they are from being the only determinants of the cross border mobility, the socio-demographic characteristics offer much insight into the dynamics of the migration decision process and therefore deserve to be studied. From the qualitative analysis, the potential Mauritian migrant is hence deemed to be young, educated, relatively unattached, that is unmarried and without children. This supports the survey findings on 190 respondents.

The results also confirm the importance of social networks and social capital in the intention to migrate. In contrast with previous studies, migration experience is negatively related to migration aspiration and this is attributed mainly to the fact that many Mauritians who have lived abroad want to move back to their home country and live with their families, after having ensured a decent living through accumulated wealth and working experience. Likewise, the researchers find that the existence of networks in the destination country has a negative impact on migration intentions. In essence, based on the existing literature, it is vital to differentiate between the size, quality and relationship within the networks and very often Mauritians do not share their migration intentions and prefer to use local organisations and resources to gain information on the migration process. However, once one considers the perceptions on the well-being of networks, one notes a positive influence on migration aspirations. The potential migrant will wish to know how well their families and friends are doing abroad, and the better they are, the greater the likelihood of the migration intention. Next in terms of social capital, it is noted that the existence of internal networks act more as a pull factor not to migrate. In effect, greater socialisation and closeness with families and friends in a small island deter people to migrate. Lastly, perceptions about the fact that Mauritius is a good place to live also affect negatively migration intentions. The findings are in line with previous research focussing on the importance of social networks and social capital in influencing migration aspirations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is noted that a large percentage of those people who have intentions to migrate are the young and educated generation. Mauritius is in fact facing a high degree of brain drain among the younger population and this has important socioeconomic costs for the country. There are various ways to deal with the problem of brain drain but there is a need to first identify the problem and adopt a holistic approach with all relevant stakeholders namely universities, governmental organisations, the business sector, civil society, youth organisations, amongst others. One then needs to identify the sectors that need particular talents and specific skills and develop these required skills to reduce the degree and extent of skills mismatch. There is a need for firms and also institutions to develop appropriate training. By doing so, young people will broaden their skills and talents by engaging in relevant courses, training or studies, which will help them get into a suitable job in the near future. The government can further provide support to key driving sectors for retaining or attracting talents and also remove obstacles for recruitment of international talents especially the Mauritian diaspora.

There is also evidence that people having permanent employment in the private sector are more likely to have migration intentions. This is attributed to long hours of work and inappropriate working conditions and pay. Thus, the private sector must consider acting responsibly and compensate workers accordingly in line with higher productivity, performance. Moreover, the need to provide more attractive jobs for highly skilled workers and offer better working conditions must correlate with higher investment in capital, innovations, knowledge and research and development in order to avoid the brain drain phenomenon.

REFERENCES

- Agadjanian V, Nedoluzhko L, Kumskov G 2008. Eager to leave? Intentions to migrate abroad among young people in Kyrgyzstan. *International Migration Review*, 42(3): 620-651.
- Ajzen I 1991. The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2): 179-211.
- Ajzen I 2005. *Attitudes, Personality and Behavior*. UK: McGraw-Hill Education.

- Andersson G, Scott K 2005. Labour-market status and first-time parenthood: The experience of immigrant women in Sweden, 1981-97. *Population Studies*, 59(1): 21-38.
- Beine M, Docquier F, Oden-Defoort C 2011. A panel data analysis of the brain gain. *World Development*, 39(4): 523-532.
- Bertoli S, Ruysen I 2018. Networks and migrants' intended destination. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 18(4): 705-728.
- Bolton N, Chalkley B 1990. The rural population turnaround: A case-study of North Devon. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 6(1): 29-43.
- Boyd M 1989. Family and personal networks in international migration: Recent developments and new agendas. *International Migration Review*, 23(3): 638-670.
- Bunwaree SS, Kasenally R (Eds.) 2007. *Rights and Development in Mauritius: A Reader*. Ossrea Mauritius Chapter.
- Cai R, Esipova N, Oppenheimer M, Feng S 2014. International migration desires related to subjective well-being. *IZA Journal of Migration*, 3(1): 8.
- Carling J, Collins F 2018. Aspiration, desire and drivers of migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6): 909-926.
- Carling J, Schewel K 2018. Revisiting aspiration and ability in international migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6): 945-963.
- Carling J 2017. How does migration arise? In: M McAuliffe, M Klein Solomon (Conveners): *Ideas to Inform International Cooperation on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*. Geneva: IOM.
- Chant S 1992. *Gender and Migration in Developing Countries*. London: Belhaven Press.
- Chindarkar N 2014. Is subjective well-being of concern to potential migrants from Latin America? *Social Indicators Research*, 115(1): 159-182.
- Clemens MA, Ogden T 2014. Migration as a Strategy for Household Finance: A Research Agenda on Remittances, Payments, and Development- Working Paper 354. Center for Global Development, Washington, DC.
- Collyer M 2014. A geography of extra-territorial citizenship: Explanations of external voting. *Migration Studies*, 2(1): 55-72.
- Creighton MJ 2013. The role of aspirations in domestic and international migration. *The Social Science Journal*, 50(1): 79-88.
- Czaika M, De Haas H 2012. The role of internal and international relative deprivation in global migration. *Oxford Development Studies*, 40(4): 423-442.
- Czaika M, Vothknecht M 2014. Migration and aspirations—are migrants trapped on a hedonic treadmill? *IZA Journal of Migration*, 3(1): 1.
- Dako-Gyeke M 2016. Exploring the migration intentions of Ghanaian youth: A qualitative study. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 17(3): 723-744.
- Dao TH, Docquier F, Parsons C, Peri G 2018. Migration and development: Dissecting the anatomy of the mobility transition. *Journal of Development Economics*, 132: 88-101.
- DaVanzo J 1980. *Micro Economic Approaches to Studying Migration Decisions*. Rand Publications: Santa Monica, CA 90406.
- De Jong GF, Richter K, Isarabhakdi P 1996. Gender, values, and intentions to move in rural Thailand. *International Migration Review*, 30(3): 748-770.
- De Jong GF, Gordon F 1999. Choice processes in migration behavior. *Migration and Restructuring in the United States*, 273-293.
- De Jong E 2000. *How Secure is Social Security in Northeast Thailand. Rural Social Security Mechanisms in the Aftermath of the Economic Crisis*. Nijmegen: Centre for International Development Issues.
- De Jong GF 2000. Expectations, gender, and norms in migration decision-making. *Population Studies*, 54(3): 307-319.
- Docquier F, Peri G, Ruysen I 2014. The cross-country determinants of potential and actual migration. *International Migration Review*, 48(1_Suppl): 37-99.
- Dustmann C, Okatenko A 2014. Out-migration, wealth constraints, and the quality of local amenities. *Journal of Development Economics*, 110: 52-63.
- Elder GH, Johnson MK, Crosnoe R 2003. The emergence and development of Life Course Theory. In: JT Mortimer, MJ Shanahan (Eds.): *Handbook of the Life Course*. Boston, MA: Springer, pp. 3-19.
- Epstein GS, Gang IN 2006. The influence of others on migration plans. *Review of Development Economics*, 10(4): 652-665.
- Falco C, Rotondi V 2016. Political Islam, internet use and willingness to migrate: Evidence from the arab barometer. *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy*, 22(1): 73-95.
- Fouarge D, Özer MN, Seegers P 2019. Personality traits, migration intentions, and cultural distance. *Papers in Regional Science*, 98(6): 2425-2454.
- Gubert F, Senne JN 2016. Is the European Union Attractive for Potential Migrants?: An Investigation of Migration Intentions Across The World, *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers* 188, OECD Publishing.
- Haug S 2008. Migration networks and migration decision-making. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(4): 585-605.
- Hiskey J, Montalvo JD, Orcés D 2014. Democracy, governance, and emigration intentions in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 49(1): 89-111.
- Hoppe A, Fujishiro K 2015. Anticipated job benefits, career aspiration, and generalized self-efficacy as predictors for migration decision-making. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 47: 13-27.
- Ivlevs A 2015. Happy moves? Assessing the link between life satisfaction and emigration intentions. *Kyklos*, 68(3): 335-356.
- Jacobsen JP, Levin LM 2000. The effects of internal migration on the relative economic status of women and men. *The Journal of Socio-economics*, 29(3): 291-304.
- Kanaiaupuni SM 2000. Reframing the migration question: An analysis of men, women, and gender in Mexico. *Social Forces*, 78(4): 1311-1347.

- Kaplan S, Gruenwald L, Hirte G 2016. The effect of social networks and norms on the inter-regional migration intentions of knowledge-workers: The case of Saxony, Germany. *Cities*, 55: 61-69.
- Kley SA, Mulder CH 2010. Considering, planning, and realizing migration in early adulthood. The influence of life-course events and perceived opportunities on leaving the city in Germany. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 25(1): 73-94.
- Kley SA 2013. Migration in the face of unemployment and unemployment risk: A case study of temporal and regional effects. *Comparative Population Studies*, 38(1): 109-136.
- Kofman E 1999. Female 'birds of passage' a decade later: Gender and immigration in the European Union. *International Migration Review*, 33(2): 269-299.
- Kulu H 2005. Migration and fertility: Competing hypotheses re-examined. *European Journal of Population/Revue Européenne de Démographie*, 21(1): 51-87.
- Kulu H 2006. Fertility of internal migrants: Comparison between Austria and Poland. *Population, Space and Place*, 12(3): 147-170.
- Kulu H, Vikat A, Andersson G 2007. Settlement size and fertility in the Nordic countries. *Population Studies*, 61(3): 265-285.
- Laczko F, Tjaden J, Auer D 2017. Measuring global migration potential, 2010–2015. *International Organization for Migration*.
- Leeves G 2009. Migration plans and received remittances: Evidence from Fiji and Tonga. *International Migration Review*, 43(1): 160-177.
- Liao PS 2001. Contextual analysis of rural migration intention: A comparison of Taiwanese and Pennsylvania data. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 42(5): 435-460.
- Lincoln D 2012. Migration and Development in Contemporary Mauritius. *SAMP (Southern African Migration Programme) Policy Brief* 27.
- Manchin M, Orazbayev S 2018. Social networks and the intention to migrate. *World Development*, 109: 360-374.
- Massey DS, Arango J, Hugo G, Kouaouci A, Pellegrino A, Taylor JE 1993. Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal. *Population and Development Review*, 431-466.
- Massey DS, Denton NA 1987. Trends in the residential segregation of Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians: 1970-1980. *American Sociological Review*, 802-825.
- Migali S, Scipioni M 2019. Who's about to leave? A global survey of aspirations and intentions to migrate. *International Migration*, 57(5): 181-200.
- Mulder CH 1993. *Migration Dynamics: A Life Course Approach*. PhD Thesis, Unpublished. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research Universiteit van Amsterdam.
- Munshi K 2014. Community networks and migration. In: Yann Bramoullé, Andrea Galeotti, Brian Rogers (Eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Networks*. New York, USA: Oxford University Press, pp.630-648.
- Nankova IN 2012. *The Profile of the Bulgarian Emigrant*. Bachelor's Thesis. Netherlands: University of Twente.
- OECD 2011. *International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2011*, OECD Publishing. From <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/migr_outlook-2011-en> (Retrieved on 30 June 2019).
- Otrachshenko V, Popova O 2014. Life (dis) satisfaction and the intention to migrate: Evidence from Central and Eastern Europe. *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 48: 40-49.
- Papapanagos H, Sanfey P 2001. Intention to emigrate in transition countries: The case of Albania. *Journal of Population Economics*, 14(3): 491-504.
- Pedraza S 1991. Women and migration: The social consequences of gender. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 17(1): 303-325.
- Pessar PR 1999. Engendering migration studies: The case of new immigrants in the United States. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42(4): 577-600.
- Piracha M, Saraogi A 2017. Remittances and migration intentions of the left-behind. *Migration and Development*, 6(1): 102-122.
- Popova N, Özel MH 2018. *ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers: Results and Methodology*. International Labour Office. International Organisation of Migration 2014. *Migration in Mauritius: A Country Profile 2013*. Geneva Switzerland: IOM.
- Pllopeanu AP, Homocianu D, Florea N, Ghiuă OA, Airinei D 2019. Comparative patterns of migration intentions: Evidence from Eastern European students in Economics from Romania and Republic of Moldova. *Sustainability*, 11(18): 4935.
- Riley NE, Gardner RW 1993. Migration Decisions: The Role of Gender in Internal Migration of Women in Developing Countries. *Proceedings of the United Nations Expert Meeting on the Feminization of Internal Migration*. Aguascalientes, Mexico, 22-25 October 1991. UN Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (Eds.), United Nations, New York, pp. 195-206.
- Ruysen I, Salomone S 2018. Female migration: A way out of discrimination? *Journal of Development Economics*, 130: 224-241.
- Salt J 2006. International Migration and the United Kingdom. *Report of the United Kingdom Systeme d'Observation Permanent des Migrations de l'OCDE-SOPEMI Correspondent to the OECD*.
- Sandu, D, De Jong GF 1996. Migration in market and democracy transition: Migration intentions and behavior in Romania. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 15(5-6): 437-457.
- Sjaastad LA 1962. The costs and returns of human migration. *Journal of Political Economy*, 70(5, Part 2): 80-93.
- Speelman LH, Nicholls RJ, Dyke J 2017. Contemporary migration intentions in the Maldives: The role of environmental and other factors. *Sustainability Science*, 12(3): 433-451.
- Thulin E, Vilhelmson B 2016. The Internet and desire to move: The role of virtual practices in the inspiration phase of migration. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 107(3): 257-269.
- Tjaden J, Auer D, Laczko F 2019. Linking migration intentions with flows: evidence and potential use. *International Migration*, 57(1): 36-57.

- UNDESA 2019. *International Migrant Stock: The 2019 United Nations Database*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2019. POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2019. UNDESA, New York.
- van Dalen HP, Groenewold G, Schoorl JJ 2005. Out of Africa: what drives the pressure to emigrate?. *Journal of Population Economics*, 18(4): 741-778.
- van Dalen HP, Groenewold, G, Fokkema T 2005. The effect of remittances on emigration intentions in Egypt, Morocco, and Turkey. *Population Studies*, 59(3): 375-392.
- van Dalen HP, Henkens K 2008. Emigration Intentions: Mere Words or True Plans? Explaining International Migration Intentions and Behavior. SSRN: From <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1153985>> (Retrieved on 15 January 2019).
- Van Dalen HP, Henkens K 2013. Explaining emigration intentions and behaviour in the Netherlands, 2005–10. *Population Studies*, 67(2): 225-241.
- Van Hear N, Bakewell O, Long K 2018. Push-pull plus: reconsidering the drivers of migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6): 927-944.
- Williams AM, Jephcote C, Janta H, Li G 2018. The migration intentions of young adults in Europe: A comparative, multilevel analysis. *Population, Space and Place*, 24(1): e2123.
- Yang H 2000. A comparative analysis of China's permanent and temporary migration during the reform period. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 27(3): 173-193.
- Zlotnik H 1995. The South-to-North migration of women. *International Migration Review*, 29(1): 229-254.

Paper received for publication in October, 2019
Paper accepted for publication in January, 2020