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The Causes of Emigration from Singapore: How Much is Still Political?

JOEL S. FETZER AND BRANDON ALEXANDER MILLAN

Abstract

Efforts to maintain a robust Singaporean economy have had to confront the serious challenge of substantial brain drain from the city-state. To address the negative effects of this problem, Singapore's ruling People's Action Party (PAP) has adopted a policy of increasing reliance on a foreign labor force. Meanwhile, the PAP appears to ignore the continued loss of human and intellectual capital. This study examines the main determinants of emigration from Singapore, specifically the political factors. The analysis is based on two primary data surveys that investigated what Singaporeans think about emigration: the 2006 Asian Barometer and the 2000–2002 Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia. Contrary to some previous empirical literature, data from these surveys indicate that anti-PAP and pro-democratic ideas strongly influence the decision of native Singaporeans to leave the island state. These findings likewise suggest that democratization and an expansion of business and technical education would be more effective in preserving economic growth than a policy of importing labor in the face of popular xenophobia.

Key words: Singapore, Australia, emigration, E.G. Ravenstein, brain-drain, democratization, People's Action Party (PAP), Albert O. Hirschman

Singapore ranks as one of the most successful examples of rapid economic development and political stability in Asia,¹ but recent elections have increasingly challenged the hegemony of the ruling People's Action Party (PAP). In the legislative contest of 2011, for example, the dominant party performed worse than it had in any election since 1963, and a cabinet minister even lost his riding.² Referring to this emboldened political opposition to the PAP, commentators on Singapore such as Parag Khanna have questioned whether the "island nation [can] stay prosperous and peaceful as democratic storms begin to blow."³ Other observers question whether PAP authoritarianism itself is driving young, highly educated Singaporeans to leave their country of birth.⁴ Yap Mui Teng argues, for instance, that a sense of "helplessness and fear in the face of an overpowering political and power structure that the average person cannot hope to participate in, penetrate, or even understand"⁵ drives emigration.

Such “moving with one’s feet” clearly harms Singapore’s economy. Philip Lewis and John Tan estimated that the economic loss to Singapore from emigration in the mid-1990s was \$657,306 per graduate;⁶ Chew calculated the total annual cost to be approximately \$235.45 million for 1988.⁷ Unfortunately, more recent scholarly estimates do not appear to be available. But if we adopt Lee Kuan Yew’s 2008 assumption of about “four to five percent of the top thirty percent” (all of whom would be university graduates) of the residents leaving per year, an inflation-adjusted version of the earlier estimate by Lewis and Tan would total more than \$52 billion in emigration-caused losses simply for 2013.^{7a} Among members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean), Singapore appears to rank highest in emigration after Brunei and Laos,⁸ and in 2002 the island nation reportedly experienced the most elevated out-migration rate in the world.⁹ Every year, upwards of one thousand educated Singaporeans renounce their native citizenship in favor of that of their new homelands.¹⁰ Since those leaving are young and highly skilled, the negative fiscal and economic consequences are easily imagined.¹¹ When they do emigrate, educated Singaporeans most often find residence in the Anglophone countries of Australia,¹² New Zealand,¹³ Canada, or the United States, where their proficiency in English is especially marketable.¹⁴ Even emeritus senior minister Goh Chok Tong admitted that “at his high school reunion, it seemed all his best friends had emigrated to the United States or Australia.”¹⁵ This brain drain may have a crippling effect on Singapore’s economy; in 2009, Lee Kuan Yew described the problem of brain drain from the island nation as “pretty serious,” and Goh likewise stated at the same time that if emigration of the best students continued as it had over the previous decade, the country’s talent pool would be hollowed out.¹⁷

The Singaporean government has traditionally viewed emigrants in negative terms; in a 1989 speech, for example, Goh claimed that “those who leave are a loss to us. . . . Every Singaporean has a place here. We need him [sic] to keep Singapore going.”^{17a} Officials had tempered their criticism by the early 1990s, however, seeing emigrants instead as “overseas ambassadors” who are helping to develop Singapore’s external economic links.¹⁸

Unfortunately for the country, however, “those Singaporeans who are most likely to emigrate are precisely the ones whom Singapore cannot afford to lose.”¹⁹ And by 2008 the government was once again criticizing emigration, describing it as “Singapore’s Achilles Heel” and warning that it threatened to strip the island nation of its critical “central core” of future political leadership.^{19a}

Of course, this is not the first time Singapore has experienced emigration. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the collapse of the local rubber market also provoked large-scale population flight.²⁰ Unlike during the exodus of

decades past, Singaporeans today do not seem to lack opportunities in the local labor force. In fact, Singaporean employers are increasingly finding it difficult to maintain a full and qualified staff.²¹ High emigration coupled with low fertility rates, especially among the Chinese population, have made Singapore ever more reliant on foreign labor.²² The PAP government—apparently seeking to preserve a Chinese ethnic majority—has thus developed a foreign labor policy that maintains existing ethnic ratios and thereby stifles some anti-PRC xenophobia among Singapore natives.²³

Recent election results further suggest the need for greater political liberalization. Just before the most recent general election, even the sitting Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong admitted that the PAP had considered ending effective one-party rule by splitting itself in two. In the end, however, the younger Lee concluded that Singapore was just too small to field two major-league political parties.^{23a} While the PAP went on to receive 60.1 percent of the popular vote in 2011, this majority was anything but a victory for the ruling party given its history of manipulating electoral rules to its own advantage.²⁴ More importantly, the opposition won its first Group Representation Constituency (GRC; a multi-seat bloc district) and even defeated the sitting foreign minister, George Yeo. According to the Asia blogger for *The Economist*, PAP ministers suffered this electoral blow due to voters' perceptions that the incumbent government had "lost touch" with the concerns of Singaporeans and allowed a "rapid influx of immigrants."²⁵

Empirical Dispute

A great deal of literature written in the early 1990s examined Singapore's brain drain, but scholarly interest in this topic has since declined. At the time, Lee Kuan Yew asserted that the idea that Singaporeans were leaving because of its authoritarian government was "a fiction of Western journalists."²⁶ But social scientists in the 1990s regularly argued that political motivations were acting as strong push factors. According to Gerard Sullivan and Subbiah Gunasekaran, for instance, 64.6 percent of Singaporean emigrant interviewees in Australia in 1989 reported that the political system was the worst aspect of living in Singapore: "With regard to the government, the respondents were critical of the 'limited freedom,' 'high-handed control of daily life,' 'government intolerance of opposition,' and 'short-sighted and forever-changing government policies'." In Sullivan and Gunasekaran's study, Singaporean migrants to Australia cited a lower level of civil liberties or "individual freedom" in their country of birth as a strong push factor.²⁷ If most Singaporeans who remained in their homeland in the 1990s were content with the PAP

political system, these results by Sullivan and Gunasekaran might suggest that opponents of the government were more likely to move abroad (e.g., to Australia).²⁸ One émigré interviewed in Yap's small, non-random sample of Singaporeans in Australia and Canada in 1991 said he would consider returning to Singapore when "the government shows proof that repression will end."²⁹ Tan and Chew's investigation also shows that political alienation (opposition to the regime) has a large effect on one's willingness to emigrate.³⁰ In the last decade, however, empirical studies have challenged the above argument. In his 2005 book chapter, Tan Ern Ser, in particular, found that politics had little or no political influence on emigration from the island nation.³¹ In this post-Sullivan and Gunasekaran, survey-based report, the relationship between Singapore respondents' level of political alienation and their self-reported propensity to emigrate was not statistically significant. Based on this empirical result, Tan concludes that the "extent of opportunity for political influence on the part of the citizens does not have a significant impact on emigration propensity."³² This unresolved dispute is thus the one we hope to help resolve in this article: to what degree is emigration from Singapore still politically motivated?

The literature examining the relationship between politics and emigration is vast and continues to expand as people's democratic inclinations challenge authoritarian governments. While a complete review is beyond the scope of this article, a brief introduction should suffice to provide a theoretical context. Throughout history political emigrants have sought the refuge of asylum as a way to escape the turmoil of insecurity, persecution, and war. According to Andrés Solimano, a noted Chilean economist at the United Nations

*"Prevailing political regimes—democracy or authoritarianism also affect the decision to emigrate. Individuals prefer countries where individual and economic rights (of speech, of voice, the right to be elected to office, etc.) are protected (e.g., in a democracy) rather than countries where these rights are restricted. . . . in non-democracies, the [right of political expression] can be suppressed or become very costly to exercise, or individuals, who are unsatisfied or discontent with current political or economic conditions may choose to exit their home country . . . however, . . . given the cost of migrating, it is likely that professionals, intellectuals, scientists and entrepreneurs (i.e., human capital) are more likely to emigrate under regimes curtailing individual and economic rights than unskilled laborers who [are] often less mobile internationally and face financial constraints to migration."*³³

When confronted with political theorist Albert O. Hirschman's ultimatum "exit" or "voice,"³⁴ both political elites and humble dissidents have often chosen the former. European emigrants in the open-door era,³⁵ German democrats (the "1848ers")³⁶ and antifascists,³⁷ Soviet Jews,³⁸ Iranian exiles,³⁹ Tiananmen-era Chinese (the "'89 Generation"),⁴⁰ pro-democracy activists in Taiwan,⁴¹ pessimistic pre-handover Hong Kongers,⁴² Libyans fleeing civil war,⁴³ and survivors of state terrorism in Argentina⁴⁴ all achieved solace in crossing international borders.⁴⁵

Hypotheses

Previous studies of the causes of emigration suggest respondents are more likely to leave if they are better-off than their fellow citizens or from the upper-class.⁴⁶ Among ethno-cultural variables, being a religious minority (especially Christian) makes one more likely to abandon one's homeland.⁴⁷ Respondents might also be more inclined to emigrate permanently if they are relatively well-educated and highly skilled.⁴⁸ Many Singaporean students first immigrate to Australia to receive their university education and later convert their student visas into work permits.⁴⁹ Although the literature suggests that some Singaporean retirees emigrate to countries with a lower cost of living,⁵⁰ students and young interviewees contribute more to brain drain than do nonstudents and older generations.⁵¹ Men have made up the majority of emigrants,⁵² perhaps because in traditional societies, they were more likely to decide on important family matters. Similarly, we would hypothesize that strongly Confucian respondents will stay home and care for their parents in Singapore instead of seeking new horizons abroad.⁵³ In a dominant-party system,⁵⁴ strong support for the governing PAP will reduce the likelihood of a respondent moving abroad.⁵⁵ In contrast, those who expressed a desire to democratize the political system will be more motivated to emigrate, or choose "exit."⁵⁶ Overall, we expect commitments to political openness and civil liberties to be strong push factors, while upward professional mobility and good economic conditions will be more effective in keeping those who have already left from returning.⁵⁷

Data and Methods

To test these hypotheses about the causes of emigration from Singapore, we analyze data from the Asian Barometer Survey: Singapore 2006, and Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, Phase 2.⁵⁸

In the Asian Barometer Survey, national team coordinator Tan Ern Ser (National University of Singapore) used stratified random sampling and face-to-face interviews between July and November of 2006. The resulting poll included 1,012 usable questionnaires from citizens of Singapore ages twenty-one to eighty. The sample was apparently weighted by gender, ethnicity, and age. The question wording that we used for the dependent variable was “given the chance, how willing would you be to go and live in another country?”⁵⁹ Responses varied from “very willing” to “not willing at all.”⁶⁰ Our measure of filial piety was a Likert scale for “even if parents’ demands are unreasonable, children should still do what they ask.” We used similar scales for PAP support (“You can generally trust the people who run our government to do what is right”) and democracy support (“conflict among political groups is not a bad thing for our country”).

In the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, Phase 2,^{60a} the Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs conducted in-person interviews from March 2000 to March 2002 with a stratified random sample of off-shore visaed immigrant principals (n = 3,124) and accompanying spouses (n = 1,094), ages fifteen and over, who arrived in Australia between September 1999 and August 2000. The interviews resulted in forty-five usable respondents from Singapore.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Results

Table 1 presents the results for the determinants of respondents’ propensity to emigrate.⁶¹ To aid in understanding the effects of the various assumptions about the causes of emigration, this table describes four different models. All versions of the regression include the standard economic, ethno-cultural, and demographic variables that are clearly not caused by people’s attitudes toward emigration. Models 1 and 3, however, also add filial piety, arguably a more psychological factor that could at least be directly correlated with emigration propensity.⁶² The third and fourth models, meanwhile, both include the political attitudes “PAP Support” and “Democracy Support.”

Contrary to at least the results for the emigration-propensity variable in Tan Ern Ser’s (2005) study, the fourth column of Table 1 reveals a significant political influence: while possessing pro-democratic attitudes increases a respondent’s likelihood to emigrate (Model 4: $b = .118$, $p < .05$), support for the PAP produces the

opposite effect (Model 4: $b = -.209$, $p < .05$). In more user-friendly terms, a respondent who strongly opposed the ruling party and fervently endorsed democracy would, all else being equal, be 2.751 points (or 91.7 percent) more likely to emigrate (on a scale of 1 to 4) than would an interviewee who loyally backed Lee Kuan Yew's party and completely rejected democracy. This difference in willingness to leave Singapore is huge and eclipses the independent effects of a full-range change in even age (27.5 percent *less* likely if age changed from twenty-one to eighty) and education (21.3 percent *more* likely if education changed from no formal education to a postgraduate degree).

The nonpolitical controls produce a few surprises. In Model 2, loyalty to one's family just barely fails to produce statistically significant results at traditional confidence levels ($b = .061$; $p = .066$). However, when both ideological and political variables are introduced in Model 4, filial piety does achieve significance ($b = .067$, $p = .045$), but in the opposite direction (i.e., filial piety boosts pro-emigration views). The data analysis therefore disconfirms the hypothesis that Confucian concern for their parents is making some Singaporeans hesitate to move abroad.⁶³

Although among the economic variables, unemployment and income have no effect, being a professional (Model 2: $b = .231$, $p < .05$) or out of the labor force (Model 2: $b = -.217$, $p < .05$) perform as hypothesized. Perhaps the most unexpected result is that being a woman has no effect in any model. Finally, no ethno-cultural variable is significant.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Actual data from past emigrants now living in Australia also confirm our overall findings about the role of politics. Of the forty-five Singaporean respondents in the two Australian immigration data sets (see Table 2), thirty-five said they had had little or no "ability to influence government decisions" in their country of birth. No respondent stated that he or she had had "a great deal" of political influence in Singapore. A similar story appears from Singaporean immigrants' views on "things they disliked most" about their former homeland. Here, the questionnaires from the forty-five respondents contained seventeen politically related "dislikes" (e.g., "the laws of the country").

Although critics might claim that Singaporeans still living in the Lion City are equally pessimistic about their political efficacy, survey responses from a contemporaneous poll of Singapore residents tend to allay this concern. If one looks at the 2002 Singapore subsample of the World Values Survey,⁶⁴ 91.5 percent of valid respondents claimed to be “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with “the way the people now in national office are handling the country’s affairs.” In other words, support for the People’s Action Party appears to have been overwhelming among Singapore residents in that year. In a parallel question from this same survey, 78.1 percent found that the country was “run for the benefit of the people” instead of being controlled by “a few big interests looking out for themselves.” This rough comparison of the political attitudes of Singaporean emigrants in Australia around 2002 with the equivalent opinion of their compatriots still at home suggests therefore that “dissident” political perspectives *are* motivating emigration.⁶⁵

Conclusion

As our regression results show, the political environment in Singapore seems to be the most important factor in determining emigration from Singapore after one controls for the standard demographics of education and age. In the dispute between Tan versus Sullivan and Gunasekaran, our data therefore tend to confirm the views of the latter authors that hostility to Singapore’s authoritarian government and appreciation of Australia’s democratic institutions represent substantial push and pull factors respectively. Our results furthermore suggest that politics are at least as important a push factor as they were during the flurry of governmental and scholarly interest in brain drain in the early 1990s.⁶⁶

In order to maximize the number of young, highly skilled Singaporean natives who remain in the country after university, Singapore’s political and educational leaders thus need to make significant changes. To reduce the number of Singaporean students who move abroad for their higher education and then often remain overseas, the city-state needs to increase the number of places available to undergraduates, especially those who plan to concentrate in business or computer science. In addition, this expansion of university capacity could help reduce the unhealthy level of competition for admission to university, which is another major complaint of many Singaporean emigrants.⁶⁷

But the most important change the PAP should make is to open up the political system. As Sullivan and Gunasekaran suggested as early as 1994, increased public debate before decisions are made would help people feel less dissatisfied with the political conditions in Singapore and therefore less likely to leave. Similarly, one of the policies that Yap suggested was “a more open government” to “erase the credibility gap between the government and the people.”⁶⁸ The establishment of true democracy would likely foster support for the government and the political system, as free and competitive elections often create strong national identity.⁶⁹ Such a policy change is not going to bring back the lost generations of politically alienated emigrants, but it is more apt to attenuate future flight of highly skilled citizens to democratic, English-speaking countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. For Singapore’s long-term health, the presence of capable leaders is as necessary to continued economic growth as “high-quality citizens who can maintain the flow of [democratic] accountability in the electorate”⁷⁰ are to an emerging democracy.

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Notes

- @footnotes = 1. Lee 2000; Ngiam 2010.
- @footnotes = 2. Barr 2014.
- @footnotes = 3. Khanna 2011.
- @footnotes = 4. See Lim 2007, 162-74.
- @footnotes = 5. Yap 1999.
- @footnotes = 6. Lewis and Tan 1997.
- @footnotes = 7. Chew 1990.
- @footnotes = 7a. Lee's assumption appears in Leong and Soon 2011. Statistics Singapore 2014 lists the 2013 resident population as 3,844,800, 1.5 percent (i.e., about 4.5 percent of 30 percent) of which would equal 57,672 individuals. According to the inflation calculator of the Monetary Authority of Singapore 2014, \$657,306 in 1995 is the equivalent of \$909,112 in 2013. Across all emigrants, the total cost to the Singaporean economy for 2013 would therefore amount to \$52,430,307,264. @footnotes = 8. OECD 2000; Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1992.
- @footnotes = 9. Seah 2010.
- @footnotes = 10. Yeoh and Lin 2013.
- @footnotes = 11. Seah 2010.
- @footnotes = 12. Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs 1981; see Voola 1997 to distinguish between permanent and temporary movements.
- @footnotes = 13. Leong and Soon 2011, 15; Seah 2010.
- @footnotes = 14. Chew 1990; Zweig 1997.
- @footnotes = 15. Chew 1994.
- @footnotes = 17. Leong and Soon 2011, 16; but see Yap 1994.
- @ footnotes = 17a. Chew 1990.

- @footnotes = 18. Yap 1994.
- @footnotes = 19. Tan and Chew 1991.
- @footnotes = 19a. *Straits Times* 2008.
- @footnotes = 20. Huff 2001; but see Chee 1959.
- @footnotes = 21. *Straits Times* 2011.
- @footnotes = 22. Hui 1998; Leong and Soon 2011; Teo 2007; Yeoh 2007.
- @footnotes = 23. Chew 1990; Yeoh and Lin 2013.
- @footnotes = 23a. *The Economist* 2011.
- @footnotes = 24. Barr 2014; Fetzer 2008; Tan 2013.
- @footnotes = 25. *The Economist* 2011.
- @footnotes = 26. *Straits Times* 1990.
- @footnotes = 27. Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1994.
- @footnotes = 28. Leong 2001; see also Leong and Soon 2011; Lim 2007.
- @footnotes = 29. Yap 1991, 33.
- @footnotes = 30. Tan and Chew 1991.
- @footnotes = 31. Tan 2005; Leong and Soon 2011 appear to have collected relevant data on Singapore residents' political attitudes and propensity to emigrate, but the researchers' official report does not seem to contain a direct measure of the relationship between these two variables.
- @footnotes = 32. *Ibid.*, 92-3; the relationship between political alienation and the variable "emigration orientation" is statistically significant but still substantively weak according to Tan.
- @footnotes = 33. Solimano 2003, 6.
- @footnotes = 34. Hirschman 1970.
- @footnotes = 35. Schneider 2007.
- @footnotes = 36. Miller 2010.
- @footnotes = 37. Palmier 2006.
- @footnotes = 38. Simon 1985.
- @footnotes = 39. Sullivan 2001.
- @footnotes = 40. Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Thurston 1999; United States Senate 1991.
- @footnotes = 41. Chang 1992; but see Millan and Fetzer 2008.
- @footnotes = 42. Citizenship and Immigration Canada 1996; Employment and Immigration Canada 1991.
- @footnotes = 43. Donadio 2011.
- @footnotes = 44. Bertonecello 1985.
- @footnotes = 45. Zolberg 1989.
- @footnotes = 46. *Ibid.*; Chang 1992; Portes 1976.
- @footnotes = 47. Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1992; 1994.
- @footnotes = 48. Appold 2005; Borjas 1989; Chang 1992; Chen 1995; Ho 1975; Inglis and Wu 1992; Khoo et al. 2009; Sassen 2001.
- @footnotes = 49. Hawthorne 2010.
- @footnotes = 50. Pillai 1995.
- @footnotes = 51. Chang 1992; Tsai 1989.
- @footnotes = 52. *Ibid.*; but see Ravenstein 1885.
- @footnotes = 53. Leong and Soon 2011, 9.
- @footnotes = 54. Bellows 1970; Mauzy 2002; Mutalib 2000; Roy 1994.
- @footnotes = 55. Tan and Chew 1991.
- @footnotes = 56. Barnhill 2001; Ho 1975; Portes 1976; Ravenstein 1885.
- @footnotes = 57. Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1993; Zweig 1997.
- @footnotes = 58. The analysis and interpretations in this article in no way reflect the opinions of the Asian Barometer Survey, Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, or the producers or collectors of these data.
- @footnotes = 59. As LaPiere (1934) might suggest, this question does not necessarily predict actual migration behavior with precision. This dataset nevertheless represents on the most reliable information sources we could find in Singapore.
- @footnotes = 60. Some might argue that, in the Singaporeans context, propensity to emigrate is merely a proxy for opposition to the PAP. Empirically, however, the correlation between these two variables is only .172 ($p = .002$), suggesting that they are not identical. When we ran a regression parallel to that in Model 4 of Table 1 using two-stage least-squares (instrumental variables were all regressors in Model 4 except for filial piety and PAP support plus two forms of religiosity, whether neighbors or friends were present at the interview, whether the interviewee

was the head of the household, the number of generations and people in the household, and whether “cruel criminals should be punished” sans judicial process), the effect of PAP support remained statistically significant ($p = .085$) and became even stronger substantively ($b = .694$). These results therefore suggest that concerns about simultaneity are exaggerated.

@footnotes = 60a. Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs 2002. We specifically analyzed files Wdpa0209 and Wdmu0209 from the Australian Data Archive’s version of this survey.

@footnotes = 61. For ease of interpretation, Table 1 presents results based on OLS regression. Methodological purists might nevertheless prefer ordinal Logit given the 4-point dependent variable. When we ran an ordered-Logit model parallel to that in column 4 of Table 1, however, the resulting coefficients were substantively almost identical to those from OLS.

@footnotes = 62. Nonetheless, we do not believe that emigration or emigration-related attitudes would plausibly *cause* significant changes in one’s degree of support for this Confucian virtue.

@footnotes = 63. For alternative explanations, see Chew 1990; Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1992; 1993; Tan and Chew 1991.

@footnotes = 64. Neither the producers nor distributors of the World Values Surveys are responsible for our analyses or interpretations in this article.

@footnotes = 65. Of course, one might also argue that the Singaporeans in the 2002 World Values Survey were only pretending to support Singapore’s authoritarian political system out of fear of retribution. We would not dismiss this hypothesis out of hand, but the soft-core one-party state of Singapore is a far cry from the brutal regimes found elsewhere in the region. Methodologically correcting for such possible response bias is also beyond the scope of this short essay.

@footnotes = 66. Arunachalam 1992.

@footnotes = 67. Lewis and Tan 1997; Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1994, 14-15.

@footnotes = 68. Yap 1991, 41.

@footnotes = 69. Ting 2010; although counter-examples to the proposition that democratization fosters civil peace certainly come to mind (e.g. South Asia, the Balkans), so too do positive outcomes (e.g. South Africa). In the Singaporean case, we believe that the most prominent minority, Malays, would be better off with some political voice in a perhaps unconsolidated democracy rather than essentially none under the current political system.

@footnotes = 70. Chang 2010.

Table 1. Determinants of Propensity to Emigrate from Singapore (2006 Asian Barometer)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Hypothesized Sign	Respondent						
Economic								
Professional/Manager	+	.224* [.110]	+	.231* [.110]	+	.183 [.110]	+	.192 [.110]
Unemployed	+	-.072 [.071]	+	-.073 [.071]	+	-.087 [.071]	+	-.084 [.071]
Out of Labor Force	-	-.217* [.094]	-	-.217* [.093]	-	-.230* [.095]	-	-.230* [.095]
Income	+	.004 [.025]	+	.005 [.025]	+	.001 [.025]	+	.002 [.025]
Ethno-Cultural								
Catholic	+	.116 [.118]	+	.109 [.118]	+	.129 [.116]	+	.119 [.116]
Protestant	+	.094 [.090]	+	.104 [.090]	+	.116 [.090]	+	.123 [.090]
Muslim	-	.012 [.074]	-	.001 [.074]	-	.060 [.075]	-	.048 [.075]
Hindu/Sikh	-	.087 [.111]	-	.072 [.112]	-	.086 [.116]	-	.072 [.116]
No Religion	+	.135 [.082]	+	.142 [.082]	+	.133 [.082]	+	.140 [.082]
Demographic								
Education	+	.077* [.016]	+	.077* [.016]	+	.070* [.016]	+	.071* [.016]
Age	-	-.013* [.002]	-	-.013* [.002]	-	-.014* [.002]	-	-.014* [.002]
Female	-	-.072 [.055]	-	-.062 [.055]	-	-.050 [.056]	-	-.042 [.055]
Ideological								
Filial Piety			-	.061 [.033]			-	.067* [.034]
Political								
PAP Support					-	-.211* [.044]	-	-.209* [.044]
Democracy Support					+	.114* [.033]	+	.118* [.033]
Constant		2.444* [.157]		0.195* [.182]		2.350* [.194]		2.537* [.217]
N		906		903		869		867
R ²		.190		.195		.222		.227

TABLE 2: ROLE OF POLITICS AS MOTIVATION FOR EMIGRATION FROM SINGAPORE
(2002 LONGITUDINAL SURVEY OF IMMIGRANTS TO AUSTRALIA, PHASE 2)

		Perceived ability to influence one's government decisions			
		A great extent	Moderate extent	Little or no extent	Not stated
Emigrants from Singapore	Principal	0 (0%)	7 (21%)	26 (79%)	0 (0%)
	Spouse	0 (0%)	2 (17%)	9 (75%)	1 (8%)
	TOTAL	0 (0%)	9 (20%)	35 (78%)	1 (2%)