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# **Seeds of cosmopolitan future? Young people and their aspirations for future mobility.**

## **Journal of Youth Studies**

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## **Seeds of cosmopolitan future? Young people and their aspirations for future mobility**

Mobility across space is an exemplary characteristic of the global era and an important aspect of the cultural experience of many people in advanced industrialised nations. Mobility evokes powerful images that effectively counter any illusion of stationary life and provide a break from the insularity of the local and parochial. High levels of mobility are simultaneously a fact, a necessity and a cultural aspiration. In recent times, debates about mobility in social theory have considered the relationship between mobility and cosmopolitan culture and identities (Hannerz, 1990, Urry, 1990, 2000, Beck, 2006). Against this backdrop, this paper also draws on some of the more recent discussions about the emergence of globalised and cosmopolitan identities among young people (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2009). Using data from a longitudinal study of young people in Queensland, this paper provides an insight into young people's aspirations about future mobility. The data affirm Skeggs' (2004) comment that mobility is an unequal resource, and demonstrate that aspirations of future mobility reflect numerous social, economic and cultural realities of young people's lives. This inevitably leads us to problematise the established, and often abstract, nexus between cosmopolitanism and mobility in contemporary debates about cosmopolitanism.

Keywords: mobility, cosmopolitanism, young people, aspirations

## Introduction

Few would dispute that our world is characterised by unprecedented levels of mobility. Capital, people, information and objects are circling the globe on a scale unimaginable two decades, let alone two generations, ago. Geographical mobility, including mobility for leisure, work and business, is one key characteristic of the global era and it represents an important aspect of the cultural experience of many people in advanced industrialised nations. According to the *Economist* (2009 p. 85), 'For the first time in history, across much of the world, to be foreign is a perfectly normal condition.' Life increasingly happens on a global scale. Lash and Urry (1994 p. 29-30), for example, describe the professional-managerial classes of the advanced societies as 'footloose'. Similarly, business people, senior public servants, academics and even students have mobility requirements built into their job descriptions. Hannam, Sheller and Urry (2006 p. 1) remind us that 'dreams of "hypermobility" and "instantaneous communication"' drive a multitude of things from business strategies to government policy. The literature on reflexivity and individualisation postulates the idea of the 'life project', in which mobility becomes an essential vehicle for future plans, achievements and happiness. At the same time, in the literature on cosmopolitanism, mobility is seen as a building block, the raw material, of the cosmopolitan experience. Through mobility (both physical and virtual) people are brought 'closer together' and the individual's experiences of mobility can importantly shape one's cosmopolitan openness – the ability to deal with, and possibly embrace, different people and cultures.

Mobility is the stuff that dreams are made of. The word mobility evokes powerful images that downplay the value of stationary life and spatially bounded routines while simultaneously providing a promise of a different life – life dissociated from the insularity of the local and parochial. For young, middle-class people in developed countries, mobility is a given not a privilege and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2008 p. 25) perhaps rightly suggest that cosmopolitan (as opposed to nation-centred) sociology needs to come to grips with the notion of a cosmopolitan. The idea of mobility is also highly charged in a positive direction, meaning that it overwhelmingly evokes positive sentiments and experiences. Unsurprisingly, the idea of mobility has fuelled not only the popular imagination (Nava, 2002, Delanty, 2006) and the imaginations of ordinary citizens (Skrbis and Woodward, 2007) but also that of scholars. So much so that – in social theory at least – the prospect of mobility benefits have unintentionally marginalised those for whom mobility does not mean freedom but its direct opposite, as the stories of refugees poignantly attest to. The excitement about the benefits and opportunities associated with mobility ought to be counterbalanced by acknowledging that aspiration for, and experience of mobility, is contextually and structurally conditioned. Put simply, some people are better placed than others to reap the benefits that flow from mobility opportunities.

As noted above, the idea of mobility has attracted a great deal of social science commentary (Hannerz, 1990, Urry, 1990, 2000, Beck 2006), though most of the current contributions are not based on rigorous empirical examination (for an exception, see Savage *et al.*, 2005). This paper makes a case for better understanding of mobility considerations in people's lives by providing data which indicate the extent to which mobility expectations play a role in people's considerations about the future. To do this we use the baseline data from the first wave of an Australian longitudinal study which includes over 7000 students aged 13/14 across a variety of educational sectors. In this study we track young people through their lifecourse and assess their aspirations for the future, including their perceptions and

dispositions regarding aspects of future mobility. This focus on young people is significant because most existing research on geographical mobility has been conducted on adult populations. The data provide us with a unique opportunity to understand the shifts in young people's understanding and valuing of mobility as they grow older.

In exploring these issues we focus specifically on a range of relatively well established socio-demographic, structural and cultural determinants of future mobility. We interrogate the following question: What allows some young people to develop and articulate global mobility aspirations whereas others find it hard to consider opportunities beyond a relatively limited and localised environment? In other words, are their statements simply a product of adolescent dreaming or are there distinct patterns that provide an interesting and telling story about the development of aspirations for mobility?

### **Understanding the significance of mobility: towards a lifecourse perspective**

In the last decade or more the concept of mobility has been used to describe a set of epistemological and material shifts which drastically change the way sociologists might attend to theorising the basic structures of social and economic life. Mobility literatures challenge the 'sedentary' and 'territorial' assumptions of traditional sociology by emphasizing the routine movements of things, people and images across the globe (Urry, 2002, Hannam *et al.*, 2006). Although these literatures provided important new conceptual tools, the ensuing debates provide scant empirical evidence to back up their claims. In theories of cosmopolitanism we similarly find a multitude of references to travel and mobility but they are mostly theoretical or programmatic. In most cases the discussion focuses on whether mobility in itself is a sufficient guarantee that one will develop cosmopolitan values. Authors like Hannerz remind us that simply 'being on the move is not enough to turn one into a cosmopolitan' (1990 p. 241). Yet, various authors are overwhelmingly in agreement, perhaps best epitomised in the work of Hannerz (1990) as well as Szerszynski and Urry (2002, 2006), that it is through corporeal and imaginative engagement with people, places and events outside local and national fields that the cosmopolitan outlook finds its most fertile ground.

Our earlier criticism about the lack of empirical research notwithstanding, we do know quite a lot about the contemporary mobility of broad population groups. This information is often keenly collected because it is essential from the point of view of political governance, security, economic planning and the provision of services. We also know a considerable amount about the reasons for and experience of mobility. This is an aspect of mobility that attracts strong scholarly interest, particularly in the field of migration studies. Studies of lifecourse mobility fall within this later rubric. A good example of these lifecourse mobility studies is research on retirement migration as exemplified in the work by King *et al.*, (2000), Warnes (2001), Gustafson (2001) and Lunt (2008). In the Australian context there is an emerging body of work around so-called sea change migration which is exemplified in the migration of people from metropolitan to non-metropolitan areas but is often associated with lifestyle considerations (Stimson and Minnery, 1998, Burnley and Murphy, 2004, Gurran and Blakely, 2007). This literature contributes considerably to our understanding of lifestyle migration but it approaches these types of migratory experiences *post-festum* and it tries to understand the reasons leading up to migration decisions mostly in a retrospective fashion.

There are two additional points that are worth making. First, the need for better understanding of factors that underpin aspirational and actual mobility is intensified by a commonly shared understanding that being mobile is an important aspect of contemporary citizenship (Cass, Shove and Urry, 2005), an important measure of cultural capital and an indication of a cosmopolitan disposition. In other words, the value of being mobile has been elevated to the point that it is now seen as a fundamental precondition for full social engagement. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2009 p. 34) even talk about a 'human right to mobility'. Second, the lifecourse perspective on mobility is increasingly important given the processes associated with reflexivity (Giddens 1991), de-traditionalisation (Heelas 1996) and deinstitutionalisation (Touraine 2003). What is common to these perspectives is the idea that in the absence of the guiding light being provided by tradition and proscriptive social institutions, people are more likely than ever to rely on their own reflexive powers to evaluate options and make life decisions without the ever-present socialising effects of social structures and institutions. While the death of tradition and the power of institutions may have been prematurely announced, and people are not yet likely to suffer from being abandoned to reflexivity, there is one important lesson that comes out of these discussions: that is, as Beck-Gernsheim (1996) puts it, life is no longer a fate but a 'planning project'. Thus, we are all now 'authors of our own biographies' (Rosenthal, 2005 p. xi) and we ought to pay increasing attention to ways in which people imagine their futures and plan their lifecourse.

Geographical mobility is, of course, integral to such a life planning project. In most cases, people develop expectations and hopes for future mobility relatively early in life although these aspirations keep changing and shifting through the life course and they shift mostly for tangible demographic or structural reasons. There is currently a small amount of research available on the role of aspirational mobilities in relation to the lifecourse, particularly with regard to young people. For example Hopkins, Reicher and Harrison (2006), using Scottish youth as an example, explore the relationship between young people's social identities and their deliberations on spatial mobility. In a study of Icelandic adolescents in fishing and farming communities, Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006) build on a well-known fact that in some rural areas social mobility is dependent on geographical mobility. The authors show how most of the young people involved in their study expect to live somewhere else and how occupational opportunities predict future mobility. Gabriel's (2006) study of what she calls 'regional youth exodus' provides an Australian example drawing on a similar theme. More recently, Holdsworth (2009) discusses the relationship between higher education and expectations of mobility in England.

These studies are important because they provide a useful insight into the relationship between lifecourse planning and mobility but they are also limited in the sense that they provide static rather than longitudinal insight into how these ideas form and change over time. While acknowledging the value of cross-sectional research, we wish to highlight the benefits that may flow from a lifecourse focused research perspective. Understanding these processes in youth is particularly important because young people can be seen as the 'frontier actors' – people who are born into this increasingly de-traditionalised world. Their generation is more likely than any generation before them to be forced to grapple with the challenges associated with having to make reflexive choices which include the incorporation of mobility options into their life plans. Mobility is a fact of life, an aspiration that has to be reflexively accounted for but also – as Lash and Urry (1994 p. 253) put it – something that has to be 'developed and organised'.

## Data source, key variables and analytic considerations

In 2006, we undertook the first wave of data collection as part of the longitudinal study titled 'Social Futures, Orientations and Identities of Young People in Queensland'.<sup>1</sup> The aim of the study is to understand the aspirations that young people have about their future, taking into account the context of increased reflexivity (Giddens 1990, 1991), de-traditionalisation (Heelas 1996) and de-institutionalisation (Touraine 1997). The study is designed as an infinite wave, multi-cohort study and surveys are being undertaken in two year cycles. While we now have data from further waves of the study, in this paper we report the baseline figures from the first wave.

Our target population in wave 1 of data collection was Grade 8 students (aged 12/13) in Queensland, Australia. The research team approached 386 Queensland schools (out of 457 in the state) for which the relevant governing authorities permitted access. The participation rate of those schools was 55% (ie. 213 from 386 schools contacted). The response rate for individuals within schools averaged 34% per school and this was just under 33% of the student population in these schools. In terms of gender, 42.5% of the students in the sample were male and 57.5% were female, while 50.5% of all students in the sample were enrolled in State schools, 30.5% were enrolled in Independent schools and 19% in the Catholic sector. This means that the study sample overrepresents children from the Independent sector by approximately 13% and underrepresents children from the government sector by approximately 9% (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008). The final dataset includes 7,031 students.

In our analysis, the key dependent variable we interrogate is the aspirational future mobility of young people, in three possible realms. The question used in the survey to gauge aspirational future mobility is: 'When, if ever, do you think these things might happen? a) move to a different state; b) move to a different country; c) move somewhere else within Queensland'. Response categories included: 'within 2 years of leaving school'; 'between 2 to 5 years of leaving school'; 'more than 5 years after leaving school'; 'sometime in the future but I don't know when'; and 'never'. We investigate how various socio-demographic factors shape the anticipation of mobility within and between states and beyond to other countries.

Before proceeding with some cross-tabulations which elucidate the overall trends in the data, we wish to highlight four important considerations relevant to our inquiry. The first is that we deal with young people, who at this stage of their lives have no, or very limited, independent capacity for geographic mobility. We are therefore not dealing with actual but rather aspirations for mobility. Second, we are asking our respondents to envisage their mobility sometime into the future. Because of this, we can say that we are researching young people's current disposition for mobility, understood as a possible future aspiration, rather than their actual capacity for mobility. Third, adolescence is a demographically dense period of life (Rindfuss 1991), the time when young people experience a range of important life course events, ranging from leaving/completing school to entering the labour force to possibly having children. All of these are, of course, accompanied by intensive and continuous adjustment of aspirations and expectations vis-à-vis structural and personal circumstances at that stage in life. All these factors need to be kept in mind when considering our data. Fourth, the Australian context provides some important and distinct characteristics colouring any

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<sup>1</sup> The project (popularly called 'Our lives') was generously supported by an Australian Research Council grant (DP 0557667). The project website is located at [www.artsonline.monash.edu.au/ourlives](http://www.artsonline.monash.edu.au/ourlives).

discussion on mobility. This relates to a) the vastness of the continent; b) high population density on the east coast of Australia and low population density and remoteness in other areas of the country; and c) relatively high levels of mobility across Australian states and within them - both of which involve large distances.

## Findings

Initially we investigate the data via simple bivariate cross-tabulations, which show how patterns of aspirational mobility vary according to three key structural variables, gender, school sector and geographical location. For ease of presentation, we collapse the 5-point aspirational mobility scales into two categories for display in Table 1, since the key distinction is between those who do and do not anticipate mobility at some time in the future. The first line of Table 1, which contains the responses to the aspirational mobility questions for the whole sample, demonstrates a clear downward trend as the potential move becomes further away from home. Fully 84% of respondents said they anticipated moving within Queensland at some point either sooner or later. When the same question referred to a move to a different state in Australia, this proportion dropped to two-thirds (68%). When asked whether they were likely to move to a different country, fewer than half (48%) of the Grade 8 students said they might do that at least sometime in the future, while 52% thought they never would. This pattern, of course, is only to be expected.

Table 1 about here

But what of differences between groups within the sample? Table 1 shows that, in terms of gender, girls have a more positive mobility outlook than boys and are championing future mobility across all three aspirational mobility variables (within Queensland, between states and to a different country). With respect to school sector, we find that children in the Catholic and State sectors espouse very similar levels of mobility aspirations across all three aspirational variables. In contrast, students from Independent schools are more likely to report considering future mobility internationally and, to a lesser extent, inter-state and seem slightly less inclined to consider moving within Queensland. In terms of remoteness, which we measure using the Australian Standard Geographical Classification of remoteness (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001), we find that living in remote areas increases ambition to move within the state and dampens ambition to move internationally.

## Multivariate analysis and discussion

It is entirely possible, however, that the relationships that are apparent in a bivariate context, might disappear or change in some way once we take a variety of other factors into account. Thus we turn to multivariate analysis. The variables we employ are grouped in four categories, demographic characteristics, school context, parental work status and human and cultural capital. *Demographic factors* include gender, birth order within the family, whether the student or either of their parents was born outside Australia and whether the student is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. *School context* includes the division between State, Catholic and Independent private schools and, secondly, where the student lives, based on the Australian Standard Geographical Classification of remoteness, mentioned above, which runs from major cities, to inner regional, to outer regional, to remote rural locations. The *parental work status* section has measures for whether each of the mother and/or father is in full or part-time employment, is self-employed and is a supervisor of other people in their



workplace. The *human and cultural capital* variables are whether the mother and/or father was university educated, the self-rated scholastic performance of the student, the number of books in the family home and the extent of internet use for social communication, homework and other things.

These factors are related to each of the three mobility variables in turn in a multivariate analysis, the results of which are shown in Table 2. The statistical method used to estimate the equations is ordinary least squares regression analysis, with pairwise deletion of missing data. The results shown in the table are unstandardised coefficients (bs) and standardised coefficients (betas). The three dependent variables are aspirational mobility within Queensland, to a different state and to a different country, respectively. They are scored using the full 5-point scales and rescaled to run from a low of zero to a high of one, with a higher score indicating that mobility is anticipated sooner and the lowest score indicating that the respondent does not ever anticipate moving. All of the independent variables are also scaled between zero and one. Most are dummy variables, the exceptions being birth order, remoteness of location, school performance, number of books in the home and frequency of internet use (the last of which is a three-item scale). This scoring means that the unstandardised regression coefficients can be interpreted as percentage differences in the propensity to be mobile.

Table 2 about here

While the socio-demographic variables as a whole do not predict aspirational mobility strongly, as shown by the R-squared values at the bottom of the table, the results are nonetheless interesting and quite consistent. The possibility of moving to a different country is the most strongly predicted orientation, followed by moving within Queensland, with inter-state mobility the least-well predicted of the three. A number of factors are significant for all three variables, namely gender, among the demographic variables, the human capital variable of mother's education and the cultural capital variables of books in the home and internet use. Reinforcing the preliminary results from the bivariate analysis, we find that female students are more likely to anticipate moving either within Queensland, or to a different state or to a different country, than male students. In other words, this gender difference is not simply a product of other variables to which gender is related. Girls in this sample have higher aspirations for mobility than boys, net of other potentially confounding factors. In addition, having a mother who has been through university predisposes students to contemplate moving away from their current location, either intra or inter-state or internationally. And, having access to the wider world through books or the internet similarly seems to stir a desire to be mobile at any and all of the three different levels. On the other hand, some of the variables in the model have little or no impact at all, for example birth order, school sector and parental work status. And interestingly, in contrast to mother's education, father's education has no impact on any of the three forms of anticipated mobility.

There are, however, some distinctive patterns for each of the three mobility measures. Focusing on moving within Queensland first, we see that being born outside of Australia, or having a foreign-born mother, means students are less likely to want to move somewhere else within the state. Indigenous students are also less likely to anticipate moving. But the big story in these data with respect to within-state mobility is remote location. Those who live in the most remote rural locations are some 18% more likely to anticipate moving somewhere else within Queensland within two years of leaving school (as opposed to never moving) than those who live in the major metropolitan centres of Southeast Queensland. This tendency is

also apparent, albeit to a much lesser degree, when the focus turns to inter-state mobility, as is the tendency for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to be less likely to consider moving, which could be considered surprising given the extent to which informal family networks precipitate geographical mobility in Indigenous students (Taylor 1998). Doing well at school seems to disincline students from wanting to move to another state, although this is a very small effect.

The most distinctive of the three dimensions of anticipated mobility is the question of moving to a different country. For example, those born outside Australia, or with parents born outside Australia, are more likely to anticipate international mobility which is not inconsistent with the research on adult populations (O'Flaherty *et al.*, 2007). The effect for students who have been born overseas themselves is one of the strongest results in the analysis: they are 11% more likely to anticipate moving to a different country in the near future than those born in Australia. This stimulus to aspirational international mobility from overseas birth is in direct contrast to its effect on the anticipation of mobility within the state, on which it has a dampening effect. What the data do not reveal is whether the stated intention to move overseas is driven by a desire to return to the migrant's country of origin.

International mobility is the only case where there is a school sector effect, net of other factors, with students attending Independent schools more likely to anticipate such mobility (suggesting possible class undertones). On the other hand, being of Indigenous origin has no impact on the anticipation of this form of mobility and neither does living in a remote rural area. Students who live a long way from a major population centre demonstrate a desire to move from where they currently live, but their main focus is on moving within their home state and their horizons appear to end at the national border. These results give a possible key to their motivations. They need to move from their remote rural homes to seek enhanced educational and occupational opportunities, but they are only interested in moving as far as is necessary to achieve such objectives. In the multivariate context there is no longer any sign, however, of students from remote areas being less likely to aspire to moving to another country. Finally, in the only significant findings related to parental work status in the analysis, having a working father suppresses the desire to move to another country, while having a self-employed mother enhances it slightly. The absence of a strong association between class predictors and aspirational mobility is surprising (Hägerstrand, 1992).

In sum, while some of the most important and interesting results, relating to gender and human and cultural capital are common to all three dimensions of aspirational mobility, the intra and inter-state forms have more in common than the international form. Remote rural location and Indigenous origin impact on the two domestic forms of aspirational mobility, but not at all on the international version, while having an overseas connection via birthplace of either the current or previous generation increases the prospects for international mobility but decreases the prospects for intra-state mobility.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper we interrogated the question about what allows some young people to develop and articulate mobility aspirations whereas others find it hard to consider significant mobility opportunities. We focused on a range of relatively well established socio-demographic, structural and cultural determinants of future mobility. This sets us up to think about the

relationship between ways in which the aspiration for mobility reveals a degree of openness to other cultures.

While we are not in a position to answer this question directly, the data that underpin our argument provide some important insights although they also pose a number of important questions about the limits of our research. For example, we do not know how young people in our study imagine mobility and the extent to which they are discerning about their mobility destinations – eg. would Hong Kong prevail over Lima, Paris win over Jogjakarta? Do they see mobility as a ‘break’ or as a ‘time bubble’, a type of liminal experience (Cohen, 2003)? Are they thinking of mobility as a rite of passage (Richards and Wilson, 2004), something to be done alone, with friends, or their families? Regardless, our research provides some interesting and empirically grounded answers. Three are particularly worth mentioning.

The first one is that our data affirm Skeggs’ (2004 p. 49) comment that mobility ‘is a resource to which not everyone has an equal relationship’ (cf. Sheller and Urry 2006). This is particularly clearly seen in relation to gender where mobility aspirations are unequally shared between females and males across all three mobility measures. Students who live in remote locations and Indigenous students also show some consistent patterns. The tendency we see for those from remote areas to want to move elsewhere within the country reinforces evidence from earlier studies (Bjarnason and Thorlindsson, 2006, Gabriel, 2006). Interestingly, although school sector could be seen as a class correlate it actually appears that aspirational mobility is relatively school sector blind. But the development of cosmopolitan intentions in terms of mobility is considerably patterned which is what one would expect. However, this finding highlights the need to move away from abstract admiration of mobility to much more sociologically qualified statements about mobility as a contextually and structurally conditioned resource and opportunity.

Second, in terms of human and cultural capital, the use of the internet and number of books at home are important determinants of mobility across all three aspirational measures. Having access to the wonders and enticements of the outside world through books or the internet appears to stimulate a desire to be mobile. This supports the argument that corporeal mobility is as important as virtual mobility and that the two are difficult to separate (Hebdige, 1990, Urry, 2000, Szerszynski and Urry, 2006). The question about the number of books at home is commonly used in survey research as a measure of cultural capital, including educational household investment. It appears that such investment pays dividends in terms of the development of mobility aspirations.

Third, this paper has provided baseline data on how young people in Queensland, Australia, think about their future mobility aspirations within the context of the state, the nation and more globally. While acknowledging the limitations associated with the age of respondents and their travel opportunity horizons, the data nonetheless provide a unique insight into the mobility aspirations of young people. Data from further waves of the study will enrich and extend this initial portrait. The advantage of the ‘Our Lives’ data and research design is that it allows us to track mobility aspirations of students at the cohort and individual level, thus allowing us a privileged point of entry into our understanding of mobility.

Overall, the findings in this paper suggest that the seeds that may grow into cosmopolitan experiences and aspirations are likely planted early. At the tender age of twelve or thirteen, it is likely that survey responses are going to be coloured by an image of life not tainted too heavily by a conscious understanding of the realities of the world around them. Yet, this

paper suggests that in terms of young people's assessment of future mobility, many already recognise that theirs are limited horizons.

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## Seeds of cosmopolitan future? Young people and their aspirations for future mobility

**Table 1 Aspirational mobility by gender, school sector and location (percentages)**

|                      | Planning to move:     |       |                       |       |                        |       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
|                      | Within Qld            |       | To a different state  |       | To a different country |       |
|                      | Sometime <sup>a</sup> | Never | Sometime <sup>a</sup> | Never | Sometime <sup>a</sup>  | Never |
| <b>Whole sample</b>  | 84                    | 16    | 68                    | 32    | 48                     | 52    |
| <b>Gender</b>        |                       |       |                       |       |                        |       |
| Male                 | 81                    | 19    | 64                    | 36    | 46                     | 54    |
| Female               | 86                    | 14    | 71                    | 29    | 49                     | 51    |
| <b>School Sector</b> |                       |       |                       |       |                        |       |
| State school         | 85                    | 15    | 66                    | 34    | 44                     | 56    |
| Independent school   | 81                    | 19    | 71                    | 29    | 55                     | 45    |
| Catholic school      | 84                    | 16    | 65                    | 35    | 44                     | 56    |
| <b>Location</b>      |                       |       |                       |       |                        |       |
| Major city           | 81                    | 19    | 68                    | 32    | 52                     | 48    |
| Inner regional       | 87                    | 13    | 70                    | 30    | 47                     | 53    |
| Outer regional       | 87                    | 13    | 64                    | 36    | 36                     | 64    |
| Remote               | 94                    | 6     | 68                    | 32    | 37                     | 63    |

<sup>a</sup> Combines 'within 2 years of leaving school', 'between 2 to 5 years of leaving school', 'more than 5 years after leaving school', 'sometime in the future but I don't know when'.

**Source: Our Lives School Survey, 2006 (n = 7031).**

**Table 2 Multiple regression analysis of socio-demographic predictors of aspirational mobility**

|                                   | Planning to move: |        |                      |       |                        |        |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------|----------------------|-------|------------------------|--------|
|                                   | Within Qld        |        | To a different state |       | To a different country |        |
|                                   | b                 | beta   | b                    | beta  | b                      | beta   |
| <b>Demography</b>                 |                   |        |                      |       |                        |        |
| Female gender                     | .04               | .07**  | .04                  | .07** | .02                    | .04**  |
| Birth order                       | -.01              | -.01   | .01                  | .00   | -.00                   | -.00   |
| Born outside Australia            | -.04              | -.04*  | -.01                 | -.01  | .11                    | .15**  |
| Mother born outside Australia     | -.03              | -.04*  | .01                  | .02   | .02                    | .03*   |
| Father born outside Australia     | -.02              | -.03   | .01                  | .02   | .04                    | .08**  |
| Indigenous Australian             | -.06              | -.04** | -.04                 | -.03* | -.00                   | -.00   |
| <b>School Context</b>             |                   |        |                      |       |                        |        |
| School sector (ref: state school) |                   |        |                      |       |                        |        |
| Independent school                | -.01              | -.02   | .02                  | .03   | .02                    | .05**  |
| Catholic school                   | .00               | .00    | .01                  | .02   | .01                    | .01    |
| Remote location                   | .18               | .16**  | .06                  | .06** | -.01                   | -.02   |
| <b>Parental Work Status</b>       |                   |        |                      |       |                        |        |
| Mother working full/part-time     | .00               | .01    | -.00                 | -.01  | .00                    | .01    |
| Father working full/part-time     | -.01              | -.02   | -.01                 | -.02  | -.03                   | -.05** |
| Mother self-employed              | -.02              | -.00   | .01                  | .01   | .02                    | .03*   |
| Father self-employed              | .01               | .02    | -.01                 | -.01  | .01                    | .01    |
| Mother supervisor                 | .01               | .01    | .00                  | .01   | .00                    | .01    |
| Father supervisor                 | .01               | .01    | .01                  | .02   | .01                    | .02    |
| <b>Human and Cultural Capital</b> |                   |        |                      |       |                        |        |
| Mother university educated        | .03               | .04**  | .02                  | .04*  | .03                    | .05**  |
| Father university educated        | -.00              | -.00   | .02                  | .02   | .01                    | .02    |
| School performance                | -.01              | -.01   | -.03                 | -.03* | -.02                   | -.02   |
| Number of books in home           | .03               | .03*   | .05                  | .05** | .05                    | .06**  |
| Internet use                      | .08               | .05**  | .10                  | .07** | .09                    | .07**  |
| Constant                          | .32**             |        | .18**                |       | .09**                  |        |
| R-squared                         | .05               |        | .02                  |       | .08                    |        |

\* p < .05; \*\* p < .01.

Source: Our Lives School Survey, 2006 (n = 7031).