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French migration to South Australia (1955-1971): What Alien Registration documents can tell us

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ABSTRACT

The present article investigates the demographic characteristics of French migrants to South Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. These two decades are of particular interest because during this period French migration to Australia was strongly influenced by the implementation of a series of assisted passage schemes. As a result, the number of settler arrivals to Australia reached unprecedented heights during this period. This study, based on original data collected at the National Archives of Australia, provides an opportunity to identify migratory and settlement trends and measure the scope of assisted migration. In order to establish the historical context of the present investigation, the paper gives an overview of the composition and development of the French community in Australia from the days of settlement to the 1970s.

Introduction

Unlike the British, the Italians, the Dutch, the Germans or the Greeks the French have never migrated in large numbers to other countries. Yet, in their modest way, they have settled in most parts of the world. While it is true that migration routes have traditionally led French migrants to the United States, Canada, Argentina and the French colonies, the French presence in Australia cannot be discounted. The presence of French migrants in Australia has been recorded since the early colonial days. The legacy of early French migrants and the influence of the French community are felt in many sectors of society, from hospitality and winemaking to banking and communications. Today, Australia is officially home to over 17 000 France-born persons[1] (DIMIA 2004).[2]

While the contribution of the French to the exploration and charting of the Australian coastline has been well documented and has been described in a number of scholarly studies (see [Dyer 2005](#); [Fornasiero, Monteath & West-Sooby 2004](#), for the most recent publications in Australia), the demographic and motivational characteristics of French migration to Australia have not been studied to the same extent. In fact, few

qualitative and quantitative investigations have been carried out in a field where much remains to be researched. Among the limited published body of work on the French presence in Australia, [\[3\]](#) *The French in Australia* by Anny P. L. [Stuer](#), published in 1982, is the most exhaustive, as it analyses and interprets the facts and figures of the French presence from the maritime exploration of the continent and the early colonial days to the 1970s. We are indebted to Stuer's seminal work, to which numerous references are made in the historical section of this paper.

In the present article we investigate the demographic characteristics of French migrants who settled in South Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. These two decades are of particular interest because during this period French migration to Australia was strongly influenced by the implementation of a series of assisted passage schemes. As a result, the number of settler arrivals in Australia reached unprecedented heights during this period. The study presented here provides an opportunity to observe the demographic characteristics of migrants who originated from a wealthy western European nation. It is also the occasion to identify migratory and settlement trends and measure the scope of assisted migration. This study has been motivated by the availability of, and easy access to, post-war migration records at the National Archives of Australia's Adelaide office (NAA). As a result of our archival searches, information relating to over 1 000 French nationals who migrated to South Australia between 1947 and 1971 has now been compiled into a unique database.

We begin this paper by giving an overview of the composition and development of the French community in Australia from the days of settlement to the 1970s, in order to establish the historical context of our investigation. The study of post-war French migrants to South Australia will feature in the main part of this paper, in which our original data collected at the National Archives of Australia will be presented and discussed.

A. Overview of French migration to Australia to the 1970s

1. The colonial period

French migration to Australia began during the late eighteenth century when small numbers of prisoners, refugees from the French Revolution and government officials arrived in the newly established British colony of New South Wales. Between 1830 and 1850, the number of French immigrants in Australia gradually increased to several hundred. Many of the French settlers who arrived during this period were young men who originated from sea-faring regions such as Aquitaine, in the southwest of France, or Normandy in the northwest. These men often belonged to one of four occupational categories, namely government officials, businessmen, whalers and winegrowers (Stuer 1982). These early French migrants integrated well with the Anglo-Australian community and played an active role in the economic and social life of the colony.

Between 1852 and 1871, the Victorian Gold Rush caused a considerable increase in the number of French migrants arriving in Australia; in 1857 there were over 1 426 French people living here ([Jupp & York 1995](#)). Frustrated by political unrest and difficult working conditions in rural France, hundreds of Frenchmen travelled to Australia in the hope of finding their fortune on the goldfields. The majority of them

were young men originating from the southwest of France or from Brittany, where the effects of poverty were particularly severe. Later in the 19th century they also came from Alsace-Lorraine where the Franco-Prussian conflict forced many to emigrate ([Stuer 1988](#)).

The arrival of those who were seeking to make their fortune on the goldfields produced a distinctive change in the composition of the French population in Australia, which prior to 1852 had been dominated by educated young men of high social standing. Following their experience as gold-diggers, those who remained in Australia left the goldfields and found employment as tradesmen, agriculturists, winemakers or traders (Stuer 1982).

Around the turn of the twentieth century the wool trade provided an opportunity for more French migrants to settle in Australia. Prior to 1879, most commercial exchanges between France and Australia were conducted via London (Rosemberg 1978). However, confronted by a shortage of wool caused by an increase in consumption, wool buyers in France had already begun to establish direct links with Australia from the 1860s ([Aldrich 1984](#)). A number of French wool buyers migrated with their families during this period, the majority of whom returned to France regularly.^[4] The emergence of various institutions designed to facilitate the wool trade, such as agencies for the Comptoir National d'Escompte and the French Chamber of Commerce, as well as the signing of a leasing agreement giving ships from La Compagnie Maritime access to a wharf in Sydney Harbour, created new opportunities for employment, which in turn encouraged more French people to migrate to Australia (Aldrich 1984; Stuer 1982).

During this period the growth of colonial society also attracted French doctors, teachers, tradespersons and merchants who provided fellow colonists with medical, social and commercial services. The French chose mostly to reside in the urban areas of New South Wales and Victoria, where the populations were increasing rapidly, commerce was flourishing and employment opportunities were abundant (Stuer 1982). In 1891, 760 French migrants lived in the rural regions of New South Wales and Victoria, compared to 1 122 migrants who lived in urban areas. By 1911, urban residents continued to outnumber their rural counterparts, 1 210 to 735 (Stuer 1982). This tendency, largely explained by the significant number of French migrants employed in academic, commercial and industrial fields, is more remarkable when contrasted with the demographic distribution of Australian society at this time, given that, before World War I, 60% of the total Australian population resided in rural areas (Stuer 1982).

2. Wartime Migration

The outbreak of World War I forged stronger ties between Australia and France. Thousands of French soldiers encountered Australians for the first time on the battlefields of Europe where both nationalities united against a common enemy. As the war drew to a close, numbers of French people left their homeland in order to start life afresh elsewhere. Among those who migrated to Australia were war brides — young French women who had married Australian soldiers in France and were reunited with their husbands in Australia after the latter had been demobilised. For the

first time, female French immigrants in Australia had begun to outnumber the men, a pattern that continued until 1955 (Stuer 1982).

The inter-war period produced a slight reduction in the size of the French population in Australia that may be explained by several factors. Following the devastation caused by the war, the French government actively encouraged its citizens to return to France in order to participate in the reconstruction effort. From 1929, the crippling effects of the Great Depression began to take their toll in Australia and soaring unemployment ultimately resulted in the repatriation of a small number of French migrants (Stuer 1982).

During World War II relations between France and Australia were strengthened as the Australian government supported the French war effort by providing troops, medical supplies and diplomatic assistance. This spirit of goodwill between the two countries, the considerable increase in the French birthrate, and also the disillusionment of some French people following the war, may have contributed to a significant expansion of the French population in Australia during the post-war years.

3. Post-war migration

The availability of assisted passage schemes for migration to Australia after World War II was perhaps the most decisive factor in the increase in migration during this period.^[5] The greatest number of French migrants arrived in Australia during the late 1960s and the early part of the 1970s. Census data for this period indicate that in 1961 the French population in Australia totalled 5 409 people; by 1971 it had reached 11 845 people (Jupp & York 1995). However, in addition to incentives such as sponsored passages and the certainty of employment, socio-political unrest in France in the 1960s and the development of commercial aircraft may have also been influential in motivating a number of French nationals to migrate to Australia. By 1976, the French-born population in Australia was more than five times as large as it had been in 1947, with 12 066 migrants (Jupp & York 1995).

A free assisted passage scheme for British ex-servicemen and their dependents was signed in 1946. It was subsequently extended to include ex-servicemen and resistance fighters of France.^[6] The patterns of distribution and employment among French arrivals after 1947 reflect those established by their predecessors: a large majority of migrants settled predominantly in New South Wales and Victoria, where, at the time of the 1954 census, there were 2 017 and 1 497 French settlers respectively (Jupp & York 1995). Similarly, most French migrants continued to be skilled or semi-skilled workers (Stuer 1982). During the period immediately following the war, the Australian government also offered free passages to the wives, widows and children of Australian military personnel married overseas, which undoubtedly contributed to an increase in the number of French families that migrated to Australia after World War II.

The *General Assisted Passage Scheme* (G.A.P.S.), introduced in 1954, replaced the ex-servicemen scheme, and was available to approved migrants. In order to qualify, migrants had to be “of good health and character” as well as “the possessor of specific professional qualifications”.^[7] In 1963, for example, recipients of G.A.P.S. assistance were entitled to £71.86 per adult as well as proportionate amounts for

children.[8] Approved applicants received assistance with accommodation and employment on arrival in Australia.[9]

The *Special Passage Assistance Programme* (S.P.A.P.), which took effect on 1 July 1966, provided unilateral assistance to selected migrants living in western European countries who were ineligible for assistance under existing bilateral or international migration arrangements.[10] Approved applicants were required to “represent a useful addition to the workforce” while being capable of □ready integration into the Australian community□.[11] As such, the S.P.A.P. was specifically intended to attract skilled and semi-skilled workers. Between July 1967 and March 1968, France recorded the third largest number of S.P.A.P. approvals providing 1 514 migrants, preceded only by Germany and the Scandinavian group.[12]

The two major socio-political events that affected the French from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s could have played some part in enticing a number of French people to consider emigration. The appeal of assisted migration may have facilitated their decision in favour of Australia. The first event was the independence gained by several former French colonies in Northern Africa, which ended the migration of French nationals to Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, while forcing the repatriation to France of hundreds of thousands of French settlers. Our data for this period confirm that a significant percentage of French nationals migrated to Australia from Northern Africa during the early to mid-1960s.[13] This point is discussed later in this article. The other important event was the protests of May 1968. Political instability in France, which culminated in the revolt of thousands of students, the strike of 12 million workers and the occupation of 122 factories across Paris, may have increased the desire to emigrate. Indeed, the number of arrivals in Australia from France was 2 215 between 1969 and 1970, more than double the figure of 1 018 arrivals for the 1967-1968 period (Stuer 1982).

Another factor favouring migration to Australia was the development of the aeronautical industry during the 1960s. Technological advancements and the expansion of air services lowered transport costs, thus increasing the accessibility of passenger flights, and reducing the long journey between France and Australia to a trip of one to two days by aircraft. According to Rosenberg (1978), by 1966 the proportion of French passengers arriving by air exceeded those arriving by ship.

In the next section, we will compare the results of the analysis of the data collected at the NAA for South Australia with the national trends presented above.

B. The Alien Registration document study

The present study aims to gather and analyse pre- and post-migration demographic information on French citizens who settled in South Australia between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s. As discussed in the previous section, the introduction of successive migration programmes after World War II resulted in unprecedented numbers of French settler arrivals in Australia. The data we have collected through Alien Registration records has provided migratory and settlement information in relation to migrants who claimed French citizenship. To our knowledge some of this information presented in this study is not available from any other source. The [Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs \(DIMIA\)](#), for

example, provides yearly figures of arrival at national level by country of origin but not by nationality. Through the Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) measures periodical population characteristics, including ethnicity, at national and local levels. It does not provide information about residence or professional activities in the country of origin. Although shipping lists provide some information on migrants' characteristics at the time of arrival in Australia, they do not provide settlement information. The originality of the present investigation lies in that, to our knowledge, no one has yet compiled a register of post-war French migrants based on Alien Registration documents.[\[14\]](#)

1. Description of data collected

The data on which the present study is based have been collected from Alien Registration documents[\[15\]](#) ranging from 1955 to 1971 held at the National Archives of Australia, Adelaide office, which are part of the 1947-1971 database compiled by the authors. Two factors have influenced the decision to limit the data range to the 1955-1971 period: 1) the recipients of the French ex-servicemen passage scheme (1947-1954) are not clearly denoted in the sample; consequently, we have had to exclude French nationals listed as arriving during these eight years; and 2) under the Archives Act 1983, NAA records are only available to the public after a period of 30 years. At the time we commenced the data collection the latest records we were able to access were dated 1971. Although the G.A.P.S. was implemented in 1954, owing to the time it took for the migration application to be processed and the sea voyage to take place, these migrants would not have reached Australia until 1955.

The registration documents we have consulted provide information on the migrants' date of birth, birthplace, last residential address overseas, date of arrival in Australia, means of transportation, first and subsequent residential addresses in Australia, type of passage, marital status, accompanying underage children and intended occupation. The names and addresses of Australian employers are also available in some cases.

The data have been collected from two types of registration documents: the RA2 forms used from 1955 to 1964,[\[16\]](#) and the Alien Registration cards used from 1965 onwards.[\[17\]](#) In some cases additional information relative to naturalisation, change of address and departure from Australia and re-entry into Australia was filed with the Alien Registration form or card.

2. How the data were collected

Over 750 individual registration documents relating to French nationals arriving in South Australia between 1955 and 1971 were identified during our archival searches. They were then closely examined for relevance. A number of cards completed by short-term visitors and children less than 16 years were discarded (refer to Note 15). In addition, we excluded from the sample cards that did not clearly indicate a period of residence in South Australia of at least 12 months. We included in our database all individuals 16 years of age and over who resided in South Australia for 12 months or more, regardless of their point of arrival in Australia and whether they moved interstate or overseas after 12 months of residence in South Australia. After careful examination, we retained 677 cards.

It must be noted that, due to the incompleteness of some Alien Registration cards as well as the change from the RA2 form to Alien Registration card, not all documents contained the same amount of information. Some documents (which appear to be replacement cards) contain only basic information such as name, nationality, age, date and place of arrival, and migration status. The more complete cards also include details of migrants' filiation, occupation and residence. In order not to bias the spread of arrivals across the period studied, it was decided that incomplete cards be kept in the sample. As a result, the number of valid cases ('N=') used to perform statistical calculations varies throughout the study according to the availability of information.

3. Estimation of the size of the sample

Once the data were collected we compared the size of our sample with the total number of migrants claiming French citizenship on arrival in Australia likely to have resided in South Australia during the 1955-1971 period. Unfortunately, we were not able to find statistical information limited to South Australia. We resorted to calculating an estimate based on figures from various sources.

Figures released by DIMIA show that approximately 13 000 'France-born settlers' of all ages settled in Australia during this time interval.[\[18\]](#) Census figures for 1954, 1961, 1966 and 1971 indicate that South Australia accounted for an average 7.1% of the total France-born population in Australia.[\[19\]](#) We could therefore estimate at 923 the number of France-born migrants who settled in South Australia between 1955 and 1971.[\[20\]](#)

Our database features 677 valid cases of 'French nationals' 16 years of age and above, 475 (or 70.2%) of whom were France-born. In addition, the France-born children of these migrants must also be taken into account, as they are listed on their parents' forms. By adding the 199 accompanying France-born children to the 475 France-born adults we obtain 674 cases. This represents 73% of the 923 France-born persons who we estimate could have settled in South Australia during the reference period. Even if it is only an approximation, this percentage suggests that the majority of South Australia French settlers are included in our sample.[\[21\]](#)

Following the selection process, information on the French migrants obtained from the registration documents was entered onto a SPSS spreadsheet and coded to allow statistical calculations such as frequencies, means and cross-tabulations. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in the next section.

4. Presentation of results

The present investigation aims to construct a quantitative picture of French migration to South Australia between 1955 and 1971. A corollary objective is to compare the results obtained from our investigation with information on French migrants of the post-war period compiled from other sources such as Stuer (1982) and Rosemberg (1978). The data collected from the 677 registration forms constituting our database allowed us to investigate the following topics:

At time of arrival in Australia:

- Personal characteristics (age, sex, marital status, family status)
- Geographic origin (birthplace and last overseas address)
- Occupation in the country of origin
- Type of migration (assisted or self-financed passage)
- Transport to Australia
- Year of arrival and port of arrival
- First residential address

After settlement in Australia

- Change of address
- Occupational activities after arrival
- Interstate relocation

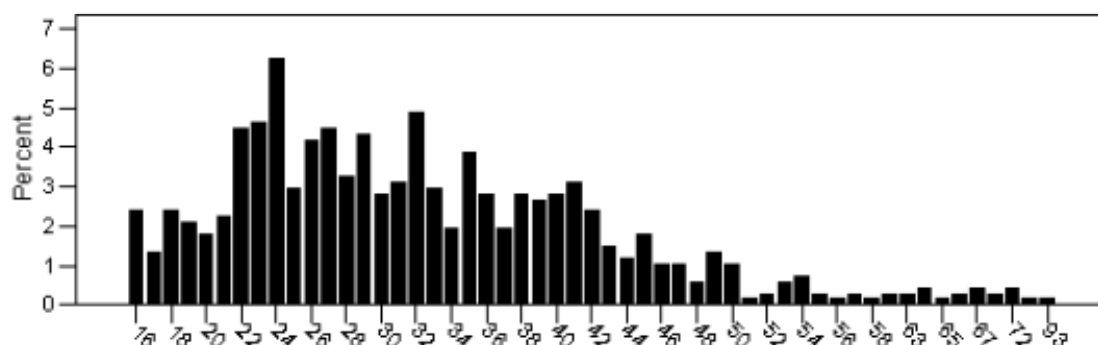
At the time of arrival in Australia

Personal characteristics of migrants

Age and family:

The migrant group included in the sample is globally a young one since 50% of migrants listed were aged between 16 and 30 years when they arrived in Australia. The median age across the sample population is 32.5 years. The median age of the adult population (18 years and above) is 33.1 years.^[22] The male population is slightly younger than the female group: 32.79 years against 33.46 years. This difference may be explained by the presence of several elderly widows in the sample. The following graph shows the age spread across the sample:

Figure 1: Age of French migrants at arrival



It is worth noting that the median age of the adult assisted migrant group is 32.34 years, a figure slightly under the median for the whole population. There is no significant age difference between pre- and post-1960 migrants.

The gender proportion of the sample of migrants is 53.6% male and 46.4% female. The close male and female percentages derived from our data may be explained by the presence of a high proportion of married couples in the sample. Indeed, our data show that 65.0% of migrants stated they were married while 29.2% of the migrants

claimed to be single[23] (2.5% were widowed, less than 1% were divorced, the rest of the sample did not provide this information). Interestingly, Stuer (1982) reports a higher proportion of female migrants at national level at the time of the 1955 census (almost 52%). Could this be the consequence of the settlement of war brides who arrived immediately after World War II?

In the majority of the cases we have studied, husbands and wives migrated together. However, some instances of women who migrated after their partners appear in our data. This observation suggests that in some cases male migrants may have come to Australia first in order to prepare a settled environment for their partner or family.

The study of the composition of the families recorded in the sample shows no evidence of large groups of relatives migrating together, as was often the case for Italian or Greek families in the post-war period. Typically, French families who migrated to Australia were composed of married couples and their young children. A few extended families feature in the database; these consist of husbands and wives, their children, and one of their widowed parents; or husbands and wives, their children and younger brothers or sisters of the former.

Birthplace

All migrants in our sample population, regardless of birthplace, stated that they were French citizens at the time of arrival in Australia. As expected, the majority of migrants were born in mainland France (70.2%). Interestingly however, over half of the migrants not born in mainland France were born in North African French colonies such as Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco (16.2% of the total population). These settlers (known to the French as ‘Pieds noirs’) may have been displaced from the colonies in the late 1950s and early 1960s, at the time these countries became independent. The ‘Pieds noirs’ decision to migrate to Australia may have been prompted by unsatisfactory living conditions in France after repatriation or by the desire to start afresh in another country.

A further 2.1% of French migrants recorded their birthplace as one of the overseas French territories (e.g. New Caledonia or Indochina), while an additional 10.9% of the migrant population declared non-French speaking countries as their birthplace (e.g. Italy, Germany or Egypt).

Migrants □ place of last residence

Many migrants recorded their last overseas address on their Alien Registration documents. This has allowed us to determine which region they came from. The results are reproduced in Table 1 below:

Table 1: French regions of last residence

| | (%) |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Paris area/ Ile-de-France | 24.7 |
| Provence-Côte-d’Azur | 21.7 |
| Midi-Pyrénées-Languedoc-Roussillon | 10.2 |
| Nord-Picardie | 8.2 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Normandie | 5.6 |
| Rhône-Alpes | 5.3 |
| Alsace-Lorraine | 4.9 |
| Pays de Loire | 4.6 |
| Aquitaine | 3.6 |
| Centre-Bourgogne | 3.0 |
| Franche-Comté | 2.3 |
| Champagne-Ardenne | 1.3 |
| Bretagne | 1.0 |
| Elsewhere (e.g. overseas departments) | 3.0 |
| Not stated | 0.6 |

A quarter of the migrants in our database originated in the Paris region (24.7%), followed closely by the Provence-Côte-d'Azur region (21.7%). The Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Rousillon area, in the South-west of France, was the third largest exporting region claiming 10.2% of the France-born migrants. All the other French regions produced modest numbers of migrants, including traditional regions of emigration such as Brittany (1%) and Normandy (5.6%).

To be significant these figures must be related to the population density of each region. For example, the greater Paris area, which accounts for 24.7% in our sample, represented 18.6% of the French population in 1968. The Provence-Côte-d'Azur region, which represented only 6.7% of the national population in 1968, accounts for over 21.7% of migrants to South Australia. However, Brittany, where 5% of the French population resided in 1968, accounts for a mere 1.0% in the sample. Similarly, the Rhône-Alpes area, the region of residence of 8.9% of the French population in the 1960s, accounts for only 5.3% of the sample ([Frémy 1996](#)).

The importance of the Provence-Côte-d'Azur region as a major provider of French migrants in the 1960s may be explained by the relatively high number of Pieds noirs who resided in the Mediterranean south of France once they were repatriated from the North African colonies. It was attractive to them because it offered a similar environment in terms of climatic and geographic conditions, (rural and urban landscape) to that of the region they had been forced to leave ([Garnier 2004](#)). Our data show that 42% of the migrants born in the French North-African colonies resided in the Provence-Côte-d'Azur region immediately prior to migrating to Australia.^[24] It is also interesting to note that 89.8% of Pieds noirs arrived in Australia from 1962 onwards, as opposed to 78.2% for the France-born population and 71.5% for the overseas-born population.

Occupation in the country of origin

Among the migrants in our sample, 30.3% (or 205 persons) recorded the occupation they had before their arrival in Australia. After classification according to professional sectors, the data show the prevalence of skilled or semi-skilled occupations. In this respect our South Australian sample reflects the trends observed at the national level for the same period. Trades (e.g. electricians, mechanics, cabinet-makers, painters) are the largest professional category, accounting for 34.6% of statements. In addition, 19.0% of professions relate to clerical, sales and service activities (e.g. sales assistants, sales representatives), and 18.5% of professions are linked to production

work (e.g. welders, turners, fitters). Non-skilled labour (e.g. labourers, apprentices) represents 14.1% of the cases. Managerial, professional and technical or scientific occupations (e.g. company managers, university lecturers, geologists, engineers) are far less represented than the previous groups and account for only 13.2% of all the professions declared.

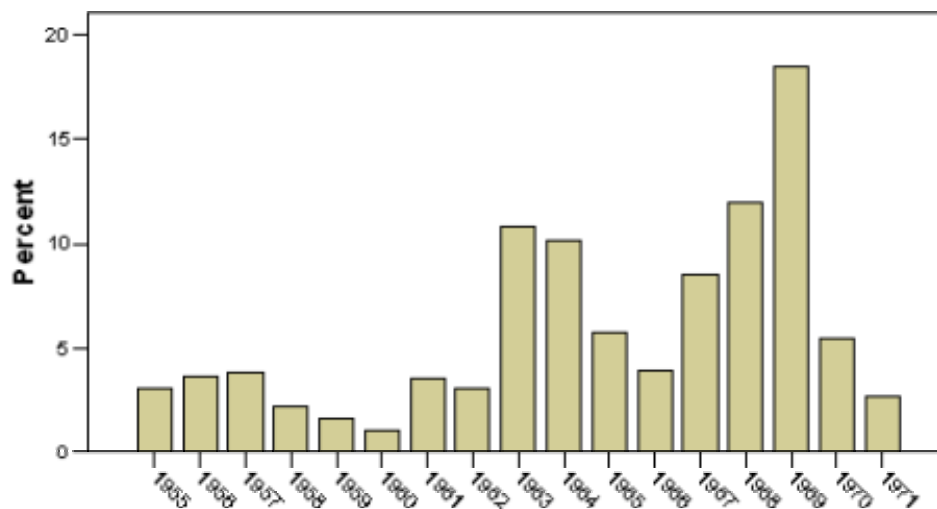
Type of migration

It has been possible to measure the proportion of government-assisted migrants in our sample. The migration status of the travellers was indicated on 386 Alien Registration documents (by way of a stamp or a handwritten note on the cards). Within this group our results indicate that 71.0% of migrants were financially assisted (G.A.P.S. or S.P.A.P.). Based on a portion of our migrant population, this percentage appears to be consistent with the national average calculated by Stuer (1982), which stands at 72.1% for the period between 1955 and 1976.

Year of arrival and port of arrival

The following graph shows the spread of arrivals by year across the period:

Figure 2: French migrant arrivals by year



The graph shows a moderate number of arrivals between 1955 and 1962. The volume of arrivals then increases substantially from 1963 and reaches its peak in 1969. The increase in arrivals in 1963 and 1964 may be due to the migration to Australia of North African-born Pieds noirs following the independence of Algeria in 1962 and their resulting repatriation to France.[\[25\]](#) The implementation of the S.P.A.P. in July 1966 (possibly combined with the effects of the May 1968 protest movement, to which some sections of the French population were opposed at the time) resulted in record numbers of arrivals in 1968 and 1969.[\[26\]](#)

The arrival pattern established for South Australia is similar to the distribution of arrivals for France born settlers at national level.[\[27\]](#) It displays moderate numbers of

arrivals in the 1950s; a sharp increase from 1967-68; a peak in 1969-70 followed by a steady decline in the early 1970s. There is, however, a marked difference between the national and South Australian arrival profiles. Unlike the South Australian profile, the national pattern of arrivals displays only a very moderate increase in the years following 1962. This is explained by the fact that DIMIA figures are based on arrivals of settlers *born in France* only and, unlike our data, exclude arrivals of French nationals born elsewhere (e.g. in the French colonies).

Transport to Australia

Given the high percentage of assisted passages, it is no surprise that 73.3% of migrants came to Australia by ship. However, according to our sample, the ratio of travel by air to travel by sea increases noticeably in the 1960s. Between 1955 and 1959, only 9.3% of migrants travelled by plane. In the 1960-1971 period 29.5% of migrants flew to Australia. However, the higher proportion of migrants arriving by air-travel from 1966 onwards observed by Rosemberg (1978) is not reflected in our sample. In terms of point of disembarkation in Australia, 33.6% of the migrants in our population arrived in Sydney, either by ship or by plane, while 33.4% disembarked in Fremantle, 20.1% in Melbourne and 7.7% in Adelaide.

First residential address

Details of prospective first residential address were provided by 392 of the migrants studied. These were addresses of sponsors or relatives, or of Commonwealth Migrant Centres in the case of government-assisted settlers. Upon arrival, 63.1% of migrants declared that their first residence would be in South Australia; 27.3% stated their intention to reside in Victoria; 4.9% in New South Wales; and 2.6% in the other states and territories. While 54.6% of the migrants in our sample provided private addresses (including the business addresses of their employers), 44.6% declared they would reside at Commonwealth Migrant Centres, such as Bonegilla in Victoria or other hostels in Glenelg and Woodside in South Australia (72.3% of these were assisted migrants).

An analysis of the geographic location of the first private addresses in South Australia provided by the migrants shows that a large majority of them (85.0%) intended to reside in the Adelaide metropolitan area. However, these addresses were spread across the Adelaide suburbs; 28.1% of them were located in inner Adelaide, 19.6% in the western suburbs (excluding beachside suburbs), 12.4% in the southern suburbs, 7.2% in the northern suburbs, and 3.9% in the eastern suburbs (excluding the Adelaide Hills). A small number of first private addresses were located in the beachside suburbs (7.8%) and in the Adelaide Hills (3.9%). The remaining migrants (3.0%) recorded addresses in Adelaide's outer suburbs. In addition, 15.0% of addresses were in rural areas of South Australia.

After settlement in Australia

Approximately once a year following their arrival in Australia, alien residents were requested by the immigration authorities to provide details of their place of residence and employment. As a result, the Alien Registration documents were regularly

updated for several years after arrival. This has allowed us to analyse the changes in residential addresses and professional activities of the migrants in our sample.

Change of address

For many French migrants, the first address after arrival was temporary. Data suggest that they tended to change residential address after a few months as they obtained employment or settled in their professional activities. When available, the residential information provided by the migrants in our group allowed us to map out the location of second addresses in South Australia, most of which were private residences given that many migrants had moved out of Commonwealth Migrant Centres. Table 2 compares the geographical location of migrants' first (often intended) addresses to their second (actual) addresses when available in terms of frequency.

Table 2: Geographic location of migrants' addresses

| | N=153 | N=302 |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | 1 st address | 2 nd address |
| | % | % |
| Inner Adelaide | 28.1 | 1.7 |
| Adelaide east | 3.9 | 7 |
| Adelaide west | 19.6 | 9.9 |
| Adelaide south | 12.4 | 20.5 |
| Adelaide north | 7.2 | 16.6 |
| Adelaide beachside | 7.8 | 10.9 |
| Adelaide outer north | 1.3 | 7.6 |
| Adelaide outer south | 0.8 | 7.6 |
| Adelaide hills | 3.9 | 0 |
| Country SA | 15.0 | 18.2 |

The results appearing in Table 2 suggest a redistribution of residential addresses. The most obvious difference between first and second addresses is a sharp diminution in the number of inner city residences. One explanation could be that, in some cases, migrants provided employers' places of business as a contact address rather than a residential address. These were generally located in, or close to, Adelaide's central business district. Similarly, we have recorded several addresses of private boarding houses and youth hostels located in the city and inner suburbs. These places of residence provided only short-term accommodation for young single migrants. Table 2 also shows a decrease in the number of western suburb addresses as well as an increase in the number of residences in the northern and southern suburbs. As they settled in their professional activities, migrants appear to have moved closer to their place of employment. After World War II, the main manufacturing zones were in the west and north-west suburbs of Adelaide. However, new factories were also being established in the south along South Road, particularly in the suburbs of Edwardstown and Clovelly Park. Similarly, there was industrial development in the north along Grand Junction and Main North Roads.

An analysis of the street locations included in the migrants' second and subsequent addresses does not suggest any conglomeration of French migrants in the Adelaide area beyond the extended family. The settlement pattern of post-war French migrants, unlike that of other migrant groups, was not community driven. Interestingly, it must be noted that 61.8% of those who provided country South Australia addresses lived in, or close to, Whyalla where a large majority were employed by BHP.

Occupational activities after arrival

When available, information provided by the migrants on their prospective professional activities on arrival in Australia, combined with their actual occupation/s as recorded after settlement by the immigration authorities on registration forms, allowed us to determine the occupation of French migrants over 16 years of age after they had settled in South Australia.[28] Table 3 indicates the occupational categories in which the migrants in our group were employed before and after migration. The results show a predominance of skilled and semi-skilled occupations over managerial and professional activities, with trade, production work and labour work together constituting 68.8% of the professions reported. A comparison between pre- and post-migration activities shows an increase in semi-skilled professions as the number of production-related occupations almost doubles to 35.4%, while the reported number of trade-related occupations is halved. The figures in Table 3 clearly suggest a shift towards less qualified occupations, from trades to production work.[29]

Table 3: Stated occupational activities pre- and post-migration

| | Original (%) N=205 | In Australia (%) N=240 |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Managers and professionals | 9.3 | 6.3 |
| Technician and associate professionals | 3.9 | 3.7 |
| Tradespersons | 34.6 | 17.9 |
| Clerical, sales and services workers | 19.0 | 17.5 |
| Production workers | 18.5 | 35.4 |
| Labourers | 14.1 | 15.4 |
| Inadequately described | 0.6 | 3.8 |

Table 4 provides the distribution of professional and non-professional occupations. Home duties, for example, was stated in 27.8% of the cases and was the occupation of 64.4 % of women in the valid sample (N=374). This indicates that a large majority of migrant women were not in employment.

Table 4: Repartition of professional/non-professional activities after arrival

| | (%) N=374 |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Home duties | 27.8 |
| Factory work | 21.7 |
| Trade | 11.5 |
| Non-skilled labour | 8.8 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Studies | 5.9 |
| Office work | 4.8 |
| Professional work | 3.2 |
| Hospitality work | 2.7 |
| Teaching | 2.4 |
| Retail | 2.1 |
| Retirement | 2.1 |
| Sales and service work | 1.6 |
| Agriculture | 1.1 |
| Apprenticeship | 1.1 |
| Medical professions | 0.7 |
| Specialised scientific work | 0.5 |
| Military | 0.3 |
| Unclassifiable occupations | 1.7 |

According to our data, some of the major companies with which migrants had employment contracts included BHP at Whyalla (metal workers), CITRA Australia and French Petroleum Limited (technicians, engineers), Ford Motors and Chrysler Australia (assemblers), Orlando Wines and Hardy's Wines (winemakers), Balfours (bakers), and Harris Scarfe and David Jones (salespersons).

It must be noted that the large proportion of post-World War II working-class migrants observed in our sample and at the national level contrast with occupational profiles of France-born people living in present-day Australia. According to DIMIA figures, for example, the proportion of France-born managers, administrators and professionals was 31.9% in 1996, whereas the figure produced by our data were only 6.3%.

Interstate relocation

Our data show that 140 migrants relocated interstate after 12 months or more of residence in South Australia.^[30] It is unlikely that this number of relocation cases is representative of the actual proportion of relocations within the sample. In fact, we believe the figure to be higher. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, many original cards have been replaced by simplified cards that do not contain all of the information appearing on the standard documents. Secondly, some interstate relocation could have taken place some years after arrival, thus falling outside the period we are investigating. For the above reasons, departures from Australia and access to citizenship have not been investigated in this study.

If the relocation data are not reliable as a means of comparison between those migrants who left South Australia and those who settled for longer periods of time, it can still provide information on migrants' interstate destinations. New South Wales was the most popular interstate destination attracting 32.9% of cases, followed by Western Australia (23.6%), Victoria (20.0%), and Queensland (12.1%). The remaining 11.4% was shared between Tasmania, ACT and Northern Territory.

Naturalisation

Information about naturalisation applications and access to citizenship has also been gathered from our sample. However, for the reasons of unreliability and incompleteness of the data stated above, this topic will not be discussed in this paper.

Conclusion

Based on data collected from Alien Registration documents available at the National Archives of Australia, we have investigated several demographic characteristics of a large group of French migrants who arrived in Australia between 1955 and 1971 and settled in South Australia. Despite variations in the format of the Alien Registration documents collected and the resulting fluctuation in the number of valid cases used for statistical treatment, we have been able to establish a number of trends and patterns relating to the places of origin, travel conditions, places of settlement, and professional characteristics of migrants.

Using an original source of data, our investigation of South Australian French migrants tends to corroborate the findings of other studies such as those by Stuer (1982, 1988) and Rosemberg (1978), carried out at the national level. Our study confirms the influence that assisted passage schemes had on post-war migration to Australia. Assisted migration resulted in a substantial increase in the number of migrant arrivals over two decades, which peaked in the late 1960s.

The French migrant population was young and arrived in Australia in small units, as single men and women or as nuclear families. The migrants originated from various regions in France, however many came from the Paris and Southeast areas. A substantial number of migrants were born outside of metropolitan France; some in particular originated from the former North African colonies from which they had been displaced.

The study of numbers of arrivals per year suggests a possible correlation between socio-political events occurring in France, such as the May 1968 protests, and the increase in the volume of migrants reaching Australia. However, this is only speculative, as no study has provided any hard evidence to prove such a link.

Unlike many other migrant groups, the French did not form community clusters in terms of geographical settlement. The majority of the working population arrived in Australia equipped with a variety of professional skills. This allowed them to be employed across many professional sectors, even though a shift towards less qualified occupations was generally observed when comparing pre- and post-migration employments.

Due to the fact that the data are time-framed, we have not been able to comment on access to naturalisation and return migration.

In an attempt to explain the reasons why small numbers of French people chose to emigrate to Australia, a country so far away from France, Stuer (1982) has argued that French migrants had particular interests here: "(...) it was for the land (the early settlers); sperm oil (the whalers); gold (the gold-diggers); wool (the wool buyers, appraisers and others involved in French-Australian trade); to look after their interests in the Pacific (missionaries and merchants); to use their expertise in winegrowing,

science, technology and art; to promote their language and culture” (Stuer 1982: 218-219). Stuer’s argument stresses the opportunistic nature of French migration to Australia. Unlike most other migration groups, the French were driven by entrepreneurial and business interests as well as, for many, a spirit of adventure.

The demographic data presented in this article point to the individualistic nature of the French migration movement, where people migrate independently from each other. Notwithstanding a significant number of professional migrants identifiable in the data (e.g. company executives, engineers, scientists and academics), the 1950s and 1960s, probably more than any other period in the history of French migration to Australia, was also, however, a time of working class migration. For two decades, thousands of skilled and semi-skilled men and women, supported by assisted migration, came to Australia. It is likely that many of these young migrants had no other interest than that of starting a new life in a new country. An investigation of the motivational characteristics of these migrants, who left France in the context of *les Trente Glorieuses*, [31] will be the subject of another article.

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NOTES

[1] In 1990, 119 233 French-born persons were living in the United States (Foucrier 1999).

[2] The French Consulate General estimates that 42000 French nationals live in Australia today. This figure would include France-born and non France-born nationals. (<http://www.consulfrance-sydney.org/presence/pages/communaute.en.htm>).

[3] See Aldrich 1984; Stuer 1988; Baggioni 1987; Barbe 1984; Rosemberg 1978, for example.

[4] NAA, D4880, 503585.

[5] NAA, D4880, 503585.

[6] The scheme was also extended to ex-servicemen from Poland, the USA, the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark.

[7] *Australie: Les faits et les chiffres*, p.72.

[8] *Report to the Minister of State for Immigration*, p.56.

[9] *Australie: Les faits et les chiffres*, p.72.

[10] *Report to the Minister of State for Immigration*, p.67.

[11] *Report to the Minister of State for Immigration*, p.67.

[12] *Report to the Minister of State for Immigration*, p.69.

[13] NAA, D4880, 503585.

[14] It must be acknowledged that a similar database has been compiled by Desmond O'Connor (Flinders University). It contains data collected from 40 000 Italian migrants in South Australia. It must also be noted that the NAA has been entering some Alien Registration data on their Record Search, from which an index of French migrants may now be generated.

[15] Non-British migrants of 16 years of age and above were requested to register on arrival in Australia. From 1947 two types of documents were issued: The RA2 Alien registration form from 1947 to 1964, and the Alien registration cards from 1965.

[16] Series D4878 of the NAA Adelaide Office.

[17] Series D4881 of the NAA Adelaide Office.

[18] This figure has been communicated to us by DIMIA after enquiry.

[19] 1954: SA= 134, Aust.= 4 699; 1961: SA=331, Aust.= 5409; 1966: SA=533, Aust.=6 637 ; 1971 : SA=1 032, Aust.=1 1845 (Commonwealth Census figures quoted in Jupp & York (1995).

[20] We acknowledge that DIMIA and census methods of data collection and interpretation may be different; we are merely trying to obtain a rough estimate.

[21] It seems plausible that a number of French Alien Registration documents were transferred to other NAA offices. At this stage we are unable to estimate their number. The limited resources allocated to this project did not allow us to track down the missing documents.

[22] Today, according to the French Consulate-General in Australia the “average age of adults is 36 years old” (<http://www.consulfrance-sydney.org/presence/pages/communaute.en.htm>).

[23] 70 % of single migrants were males.

[24] According to Garnier (2004) 39.8% of the total population of Algerian Pieds noirs repatriated in France resided in the Provence-Côte-d’Azur and Languedoc-Roussillon regions in 1999.

[25] An influx of French nationals repatriated from Algeria into California in the 1960s is also noted by Foucrier (1999).

[26] Interestingly, the highest number of settlers to arrive in Australia in any one year was in 1969-1970 (DIMIA, “Key facts in immigration”, <http://www.immi.gov.au/facts/02key.htm#1>).

[27] These figures are provided by DIMIA. The DIMIA distribution is based on financial years.

[28] It must be noted that due to lack of precision, some of the occupational activities stated by migrants have been difficult to categorise (e.g. *a painter* could be a tradesperson, an artist, or a factory worker).

[29] In *A report to the Minister of State for Immigration, Australia’s immigration programme 1968-1973*, tabled in the House of representatives 10 September 1968, the Committee noted that “some migrants who had been recognised as tradesmen in their own countries were not accepted as tradesmen in Australia, because of the differences in trade practice or because in other ways they were marginally unacceptable under Australian requirements” (p. 39).

[30] The words □ documents transferred to □ Capital city □ would appear on the documents.

[31] This French term refers to the three decades following World War II, a period of sustained economic growth.

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