

# FRENCH MIGRATION TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA (1955-1971): WHAT ALIEN REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS CAN TELL US \*

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## 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 French-born persons.<sup>1</sup>

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,<sup>2</sup> 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,<sup>3</sup> *The French in Australia* by Anny P. L. Stuer, published in 1982,<sup>4</sup> 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 French migration to Australia during this period 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. 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 to 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. 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, however, 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.

## 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, their number gradually increased to several hundred. Many of the immigrants were young men who came from sea-faring regions such as Aquitaine, in the South-West of France, or Normandy in the North-West, and they often belonged to one of four occupational categories, namely government official, businessman, whaler or winegrower (*S*, chap. 3 *passim*). These early French settlers integrated well into 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 led to a considerable increase in the number of French migrants arriving in Australia; by 1857 there were over 1,426 French people living in the country.<sup>5</sup> 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, many of whom originated from the South-West of France, partly because of easy access to the port of Bordeaux; from Brittany where the effects of poverty were particularly severe; from Paris, because it had been affected by political crises; and from Alsace-Lorraine, a region with a high population density (*S*, pp. 71–73).

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 (*S*, p. 85).

Around the turn of the century the wool trade provided an opportunity for more French migrants to settle in Australia. Prior to 1879, most commercial exchanges between the two countries had been conducted via London; as early as the 1860s, however, confronted by a shortage of wool caused by an increase in consumption, wool buyers in France had begun to establish direct links with Australia.<sup>6</sup> A number of French wool buyers migrated with their families during this period, the majority of whom returned regularly to France.<sup>7</sup> 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,<sup>8</sup> created new opportunities for employment, and this in turn encouraged further immigration.

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. In 1891, 1,122 French migrants lived in the rural regions of New South Wales and Victoria, compared to 1,750 living in urban areas. In 1911, urban residents continued to outnumber their rural counterparts, 1,210 to 735 (*S*, p. 146). 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 overall demographic distribution at this time: before World War I, 60% of the total Australian population resided in rural areas.<sup>9</sup>

## 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 demobilized. For the first time, female French immigrants in Australia began to outnumber males, a pattern that continued until 1955 (*S*, p. 169).

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 (*S*, p. 173).

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 after World War II was perhaps the most decisive factor in the increase in French migration during this period.<sup>10</sup> 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; by 1971 it had reached 11,845.<sup>11</sup> 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, numbering 12,066.<sup>12</sup>

A free assisted-passage scheme for British ex-servicemen and their dependents was signed in 1946, and was subsequently extended to include ex-servicemen and resistance fighters of France.<sup>13</sup> The patterns of distribu-

tion and employment among French arrivals after 1947 reflect those established by their predecessors: the majority settled in New South Wales and Victoria, where, at the time of the 1954 census, they numbered 2,017 and 1,497 respectively.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, most French migrants continued to be skilled or semi-skilled workers. 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* (GAPS), introduced in 1954, replaced the ex-servicemen scheme and was available to approved migrants.<sup>15</sup> In order to qualify, migrants had to be "of good health and character" as well as "the possessor of specific professional qualifications".<sup>16</sup> In 1963, for example, recipients of GAPS assistance were entitled to £71.86 per adult as well as proportionate amounts for children.<sup>17</sup> Approved applicants received assistance with accommodation and employment on arrival in Australia.<sup>18</sup>

The *Special Passage Assistance Programme* (SPAP), 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.<sup>19</sup> Approved applicants were required to "represent a useful addition to the workforce" while being capable of "ready integration into the Australian community".<sup>20</sup> As such, SPAP was specifically intended to attract skilled and semi-skilled workers. Between July 1967 and March 1968, France recorded the third largest number of SPAP approvals, providing 1,514 migrants, outranked only by Germany and the Scandinavian group.<sup>21</sup>

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 them 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.<sup>22</sup> 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 twelve 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 period 1967–1968 (*S*, p. 199).

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 sea journey between France and Australia to a trip of one to two days by air. According to Rosemberg, by 1966 the proportion of French passengers arriving by air exceeded those arriving by ship.<sup>23</sup>

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 is not available from any other source. The Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA),<sup>24</sup> for example, provides yearly figures of arrival at the 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, but 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.<sup>25</sup>

## 1. Description of Data Collected

The data on which the present study are based have been collected from Alien Registration documents dating from 1955 to 1971,<sup>26</sup> held at the National Archives of Australia, Adelaide office, and forming 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. Firstly, 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. Secondly, 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 GAPS 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.<sup>27</sup>

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,<sup>28</sup> and the Alien Registration cards used from 1965 onwards.<sup>29</sup> In some cases additional information relating to naturalization, change of address and departure from 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. These were then closely examined for relevance. A number of cards completed by short-term visitors and children less than 16 years were discarded (cf. note 27). 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, owing to the incompleteness of some Alien Registration cards as well as the change from the RA2 form to the Alien Registration card, not all documents contain 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 period 1955-1971. Unfortunately, we were not able to find statistical information limited to South Australia, and 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 the period under study.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> We could therefore estimate at 923 the number of French-born migrants who settled in South Australia between 1955 and 1971.<sup>32</sup>

Our database features 677 valid cases of "French nationals" 16 years of age and over, 475 (or 70.2%) of whom were French-born. In addition, the French-born children of these migrants must also be taken into account, as they are listed on their parents' forms. By adding the 199 accompanying French-born children to the 475 French-born adults we obtained 674 individuals. This represents 73% of the 923 French-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 Australian French settlers are included in our sample.<sup>33</sup>

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:

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**At the 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

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**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.<sup>34</sup> 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. Figure 1 shows the age spread across the sample. 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 (2.5% were widowed, fewer than 1% were divorced, while the rest of the sample did not provide this information). 70% of single migrants were males. Interestingly, Stuer (1982) reports a higher proportion of female migrants at the 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, there are some instances of women migrating after their partners. This suggests that men sometimes came to Australia first in order to prepare a settled environment for their partner or family.

A 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, which 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-Ardennes	1.3

Bretagne	1.0
Elsewhere (e.g. overseas departments)	3.0
Not stated	0.6

A quarter of the migrants in our database came from the Paris region (24.7%), followed closely by the Provence-Côte-d'Azur region (21.7%). The Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Roussillon area, in the South-West of France, was the third-largest exporting region, claiming 10.2% of the French-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.<sup>35</sup>

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 had been 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.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> It is also interesting to note that, of the total French population in our study, 89.8% of *Pieds noirs* arrived from 1962 onwards, as opposed to 78.2% of the French-born population and 71.5% of 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 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 as 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 (GAPS or SPAP). 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*

Figure 2 shows the spread of arrivals by year across the reference period. 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.<sup>38</sup> The implementation of SPAP 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.<sup>39</sup>

The arrival pattern established for South Australia is similar to the distribution of arrivals for French-born settlers at the national level,<sup>40</sup> which displays moderate numbers of arrivals in the 1950s; a sharp increase in 1967–1968; a peak in 1969–1970; and then 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, whereas in the 1960–1971 period 29.5% of migrants flew to Australia. Interestingly, the higher proportion of migrants arriving by air from 1966 onwards observed by Rosemburg (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; while 27.3% stated their intention to reside in Victoria, 4.9% in New South Wales, and 2.6% in the other states and territories. 54.6% of the migrants in our sample provided private addresses (including the business addresses of their employers), and 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 of the South Australian migrants shows that a large majority of them (85.0%) intended to reside in the Adelaide metropolitan area. These addresses were spread across the Adelaide suburbs: 28.1% 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**

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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 into 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 the migrants' first (often intended) addresses with their second (actual) addresses, when available, in terms of frequency.

*Table 2: Geographic Location of Migrants' Addresses*

	N=153 1 <sup>st</sup> address	N=302 2 <sup>nd</sup> 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 into 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 northwest 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.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup>

*Table 3: Stated Occupational Activities Pre- and Post-Migration*

	Original (%) N=205	In Aus. (%) 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 gives 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 outside 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
Specialized 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 contrasts

with occupational profiles of French-born people living in present-day Australia. According to DIMIA figures, for example, the proportion of French-born managers, administrators and professionals was 31.9% in 1996, whereas the figure produced by our data was only 6.3%.

#### *Interstate relocation*

Our data show that 140 migrants relocated interstate after twelve months or more of residence in South Australia.<sup>43</sup> 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 relocations could have taken place some years after arrival, thus falling outside the period we are investigating. For these 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, they can still provide information on migrants' interstate destinations. New South Wales was the most popular, 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, the ACT and the Northern Territory.

#### *Naturalization*

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

#### **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 these 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 and Rosemberg 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 Paris and areas of the South-East. A substantial number of migrants were born outside metropolitan France—in particular, 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 employment.

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

In an attempt to explain why small numbers of French people chose to emigrate to Australia, a country so far away from France, Stuer 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 the 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" (S, pp. 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, in which people migrated independently of 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 French 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*,<sup>44</sup> will be the subject of another article.

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#### Notes

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- 1. The Consulate General of France estimates that the French community of Australia comprised 70,000 in 2006: "The French Community in Australia" <[http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id\\_article=604](http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id_article=604)> (accessed 13 May 2008). This figure would include French-born nationals as well as nationals born outside France. By comparison, 119,233 French-born persons were living in the USA in 1990 (A. Foucier, *Le Rêve californien*, Paris, Belin, 1999, p. 23).
- 2. The most recent publications in Australia are Colin Dyer, *The French Explorers and the Aboriginal Australians 1772–1839*, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 2005; and Jean Fornasiero, Peter Monteath and John West-Sooby, *Encountering Terra Australis: The Australian Voyages of Nicolas Baudin and Matthew Flinders*, Adelaide, Wakefield Press, 2004.

3. See for example Robert Aldrich, "Commercial Relations between France and Australia: An Historical Overview", in A. M. Nisbet and M. Blackman, eds, *The French-Australian Cultural Connection*, Sydney, School of French, University of New South Wales, 1984, pp. 71–83; A. P. L. Stuer, "The Settlers: French", in J. Jupp, ed., *The Australian People*, North Ryde, NSW, Angus and Robertson, 1988, pp. 472–477; D. Baggioni, *Francophonie et multiculturalisme*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1987; A. Barbe, in Nisbet and Blackman, pp. 9–21; and J. Rosenberg, "A Steady Ethnic Group: Role of the French in Australia", *Ethnic Studies: An International Journal*, 2, 3, 1978, pp. 52–57.
4. Anny P. L. Stuer, *The French in Australia*, Canberra, Department of Demography, Institute of Advanced Studies, Australian National University. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as S plus page number.
5. J. Jupp and B. York, *Birthplaces of the Australian People: Colonial and Commonwealth Censuses, 1828–1991*, Studies in Australian Ethnic History 8, Canberra, Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, Australian National University, p. 13.
6. Aldrich, "Commercial Relations", pp. 73, 74.
7. National Archives of Australia (NAA), D4880, 503585.
8. Aldrich, "Commercial Relations", pp. 74–75; Stuer, *The French in Australia*, p. 115.
9. Ibid., p. 147.
10. NAA, D4880, 503585.
11. Jupp and York, p. 50.
12. Loc. cit.
13. The scheme was also extended to ex-servicemen from Poland, the USA, the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark.
14. Jupp and York, p. 50.
15. Postscriptum: At the time this article was written, it was assumed that GAPS had been extended to France in 1954. The date 1954 marking the commencement of the scheme in France appears on page 56 of *Australia's Immigration Programmes for the Period 1968–1973: A Report to the Minister of State for Immigration* (Canberra, Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council, 1968). However, documents contained in the NAA file A1838, 25/1/3/10, Part 1 have made clear that negotiations to extend GAPS to France took place only in 1959. The scheme was subsequently made available to the French in 1960: see Eric Bouvet, "French Migration to Australia in the post WWII Period: Benevolent Tolerance and Cautious Collaboration", *FULGOR [Flinders University Languages Group Online Review]*, 3, 2, August 2007. Available at [http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/deptlang/fulgor/latest\\_issue.htm](http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/deptlang/fulgor/latest_issue.htm) (accessed 15 May 2008).
16. Australian Embassy in France, *Australie: les faits et les chiffres*, Paris, Ambassade d'Australie, 1963, p. 72.
17. *Australia's Immigration Programmes [...] Report to the Minister*, p. 56.
18. *Australie: les faits et les chiffres*, p. 72.
19. *Australia's Immigration Programmes [...] Report to the Minister*, p. 67.

20. Loc. cit.
21. Ibid., p. 69.
22. NAA, D4880, 503585.
23. Rosemberg, "A Steady Ethnic Group".
24. Postscriptum: DIMIA officially changed its name to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) on 27 January 2006 and then to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) on 30 January 2007.
25. It must be acknowledged that a similar database has been compiled by Desmond O'Connor (Flinders University) for 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 its Record Search, from which an index of French migrants may now be generated.
26. Non-British migrants of 16 years of age and over 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.
27. See note 15 above.
28. Series D4878 of the NAA Adelaide Office.
29. Series D4881 of the NAA Adelaide Office.
30. This figure was communicated to us by DIMIA after enquiry.
31. 1954: SA = 134, AUS = 4,699; 1961: SA = 331, AUS = 5,409; 1966: SA = 533, AUS = 6,637; 1971: SA = 1,032, AUS = 1,1845 (Commonwealth Census figures quoted in Jupp and York, *Birthplaces of the Australian People*).
32. We acknowledge that DIMIA and census methods of data collection and interpretation may be different; we are merely trying to obtain a rough estimate.
33. 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.
34. Today, according to the French Consulate-General in Australia, the "average age of adults is 36 years old": "The French Community in Australia" <[http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id\\_article=604](http://www.ambafrance-au.org/article.php3?id_article=604)> (accessed 15 May 2008).
35. D. and M. Frémy, *Quid 1996*, Paris, Robert Lafont, 1996.
36. E. Garnier, "La Reterritorialisation de la population française d'Algérie ou comment conserver un particularisme culturel et identitaire", in *Espaces et sociétés d'aujourd'hui*, Actes du colloque, Rennes, 21–22 octobre 2004. Available as a PDF at [http://eso.cnrs.fr/evenements/rennes\\_10\\_04/resumes\\_10\\_2004.html#ge](http://eso.cnrs.fr/evenements/rennes_10_04/resumes_10_2004.html#ge) (accessed 15 May 2008).
37. According to Garnier, 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.
38. An influx of French nationals repatriated from Algeria into California in the 1960s is also noted by Fournier, *Le Rêve californien*.

39. Interestingly, the highest number of settlers to arrive in Australia in any one year was in 1969–1970 (DIMIA, “Fact Sheet 2—Key Facts in Immigration”, available at <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/02key.htm> (accessed 15 May 2008)).
40. These figures are provided by DIMIA, whose distribution is based on financial years.
41. It must be noted that owing to lack of precision, some of the occupational activities stated by migrants have been difficult to categorize (e.g. *a painter* could be a tradesperson, an artist, or a factory worker).
42. In *Australia’s Immigration Programmes [ . . . ] Report to the Minister*, tabled in the House of Representatives on 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).
43. The words “documents transferred to [ . . . ] Capital city” would appear on the documents.
44. This French term refers to the three decades following World War II, a period of sustained economic growth.