

South African migrants in Australia: an overview

Romy Wasserman

Department of Geography, Environment and Population at the Faculty of Arts, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia.

E-mail: romy.wasserman@adelaide.edu.au.

Received for publication December 21, 2017.

Abstract

South Africa is a top migrant source country in Australia and has ranked among the top 10 source countries for settler arrivals since the mid-1990s. It stands out in this list as the only country, besides New Zealand, which is not in Europe or Asia, and one that has received little research attention. Yet South Africans form a major migrant group in Australia; and the drivers of their migration and settlement experiences offer important insight into these processes. This paper presents an overview of migration from South Africa to Australia, including a profile of this migrant group. South Africans migrate to Australia for a broad range of reasons, although safety, security and crime influence a high proportion of movers. In part this explains the permanent nature of this movement, with the majority of South Africans seeking to set up new homes and lives in Australia. Still, settlement is not always a smooth process for them despite assumptions that it is.

Keywords

South African emigration, Immigration to Australia, Migrant settlement, Citizenship.

Recently released data from the 2016 Australian Census of Population and Housing confirmed Australia as one of the most multicultural nations in the world with an overseas-born population of 6,163,667 persons comprising 26.3% of the total Australian population, an increase from 24.6% in 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017a, b). It also showed a further shift in the source countries of migrants from the traditional migrant source countries of South and Central Europe to Asian countries, particularly China and India. Also among the top source countries was South Africa, which has long stood out among the top migrant source countries in Australia as the only country, besides New Zealand, which is not in Europe or Asia, and one that has received little academic or other attention. This paper broadly discusses the migration of people from South Africa to Australia, based on the research undertaken for a recently completed PhD thesis. The first section explores South African migration globally, before focusing on

the nature of South African migration to Australia, including a basic profile of this migrant group. The second section briefly looks at key elements of the research design which lead to the collection of primary data on the migration and settlement experiences of South Africans in Australia, and describes some key findings relating to their reasons for migration and settlement experiences.

Background

The rich history of people flowing into Australia has engendered a strong migration-related research tradition with vast amounts published on immigration and its many related issues. Largely absent from this literature is the story of migrants from South Africa. A handful of publications illuminate aspects of this migration (Polonsky et al., 1988, 1989; Simon, 1989; Rule, 1989, 1994; Louw and Mersham, 2001; Forrest et al., 2013), and the work of Lucas (2001, 2006) and

South African migrants in Australia: an overview

Arnold (2011) should be acknowledged, but a broad critique of the existing literature reveals three main issues: generality, a dearth of empirical data and a lack of current analysis. Yet there has been immense growth in this migrant group in recent decades. This paper addresses this neglect, though it is worth considering why this topic has previously only received limited research attention. One reason may be the assumption that South African migrants integrate quickly and easily into Australian society, with shared language and perceived similarities in culture and lifestyle thought to make the transition easier (Davidson, 2006; Forrest et al., 2013). Added to this, the Anglo ancestry of most South African migrants in Australia (Kennedy, 2001; Louw and Mersham, 2001) make them outwardly and culturally less visible in the Australian community. Certainly, in New Zealand, Trlin (2012, p. 57) found that South African migrants have been ignored in research compared to “visible” migrants from Asia and elsewhere. Furthermore, South African migrants are not generally a group who have needs in the sense some refugee groups might, meaning research to inform policy or policy redirec-

tion is not a priority. Together or separately, these factors may have made researching their experiences less attractive.

South Africans globally

Like Australia, South Africa in the post-war period was the recipient of significant settler migration, mostly Western European migrants, predominantly from the UK, who came directly from Europe or elsewhere in Africa as countries to the North gained independence (Mattes et al., 2000). Between 1945 and 1999, South Africa recorded 1.2 million documented immigrants with strong net gains from 1960 through to the early 1980s, which thereafter turned to weak gains and then a net loss after 1995 (Lucas et al., 2006). The latter reflected significant political change in South Africa as the end of apartheid came into view and then made certain by South Africa’s first democratic elections in 1994. For several commentators, the distribution of South Africans abroad has prompted use of the term ‘diaspora’ (Rule, 1994; Louw and Mersham, 2001). Though

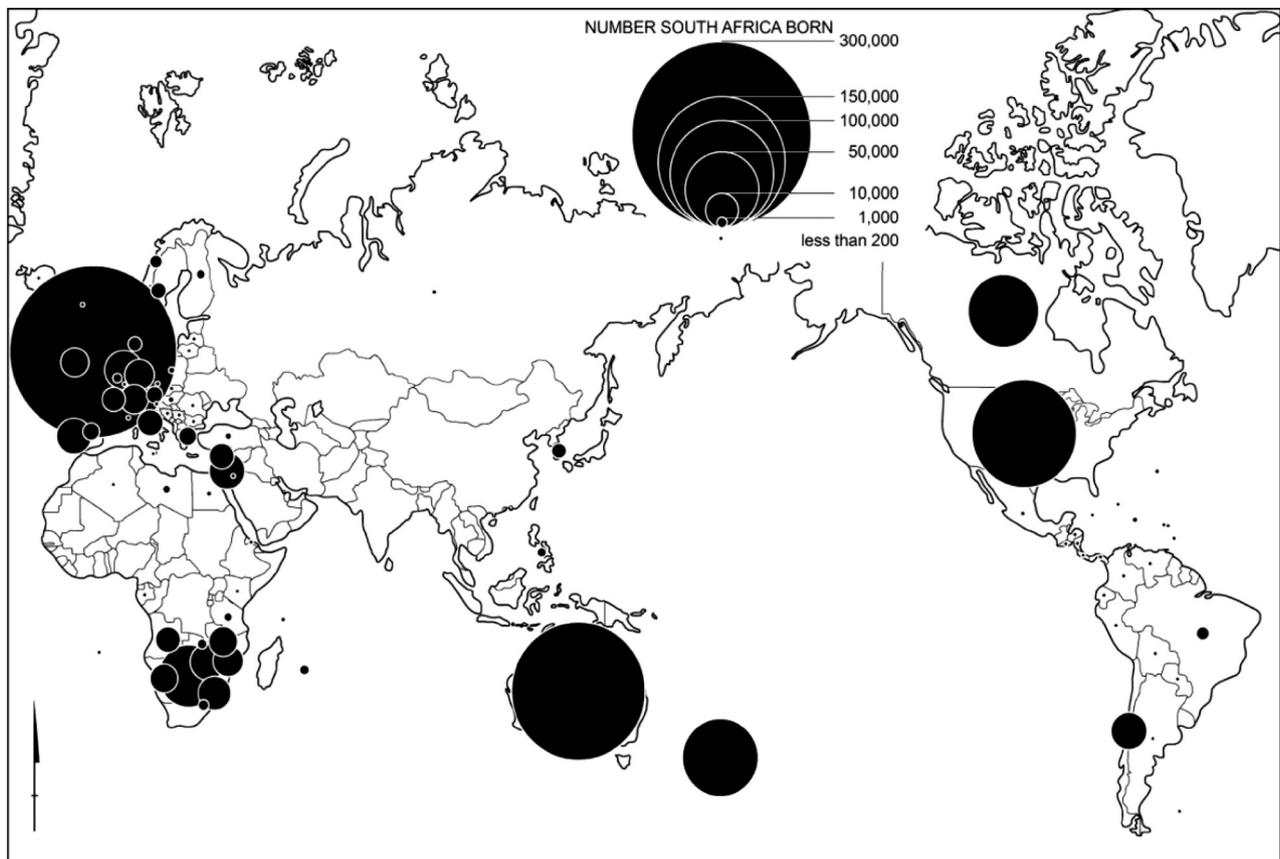


Figure 1: International distribution of South Africa-born migrant stocks, 2013. Source: United Nations (2013).

the notion of diaspora has been conceptualized in many ways (Safran, 1991; Butler, 2002; Reis, 2004; Cohen, 2008), at its most basic level it is understood to be the dispersion of people beyond their original homeland (Butler, 2002), often to two or more destinations (Safran, 1991). Certainly, South Africans outside their origin fit these criteria, and Hugo (2009) has noted South Africa's colonial connections as a former part of the British Empire in the countries in which its diaspora is concentrated. United Nations (UN) data in Figure 1 show the main destination for South African emigrants is the UK (27%), a function of many South Africans' British heritage and subsequent right of abode in the UK (Lucas et al., 2006). Next is Australia (21%), followed by the United States of America (USA) (13%), New Zealand (NZ) (7%), and Canada (6%) (United Nations, 2013). Though the five main destination countries for this migrant group stand out on this map, their dispersion globally is also clear.

South African migration to Australia

Migration between Australia and South Africa began in the colonial era and, from its earliest inception, consisted of flows in both directions as personnel from the British Colonial Office, (who administered both colonies), circulated between them (Davidson, 2006). During the mid-nineteenth century South Africans were attracted to the fields of the Australian gold rush (Tothill, 2000; Kennedy, 2001), but when gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1886 (incidentally, by an Australian), Australians moved in the opposite direction to try their luck (Tothill, 2000). Another wave of Australians soon followed to escape economic depression, drought and high unemployment which plagued Australia's eastern colonies in the 1890s (Kennedy, 1984). At the turn of the century significant flows continued in the direction of South Africa as Australians went to fight in the Boer War (1899-1902). Indeed, more than half the volunteer colonial soldiers who fought this war came from Australia (Kennedy, 1984, p. 17 in Davidson, 2006, p. 695). After the war, some Australian soldiers remained in South Africa. As many as 5,000 Australians were recorded living on 'the Rand' in the 1904 Census (Kennedy, 2001, p. 688), among them were miners and artisans who had moved to Johannesburg at the turn of the century (Davidson, 2006). Over subsequent decades, movement continued in both directions though the dominant stream was in the direction of Australia, a movement that was cemented when political unrest in 1960 "marked the

beginning of an exodus" from South Africa (Tothill, 2000, p. 66).

Table 1 highlights the long-standing nature of South African migration to Australia along with the significant growth in this migrant group through stock counts from Australian censuses since Federation. Except for the first census after the Second World War (1947), the South-Africa born population has increased at every census since 1901 with very rapid growth in recent years, including the doubling of the population in the 15 years between 1991 and 2006. The biggest growth occurred between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses when a staggering 41,557 South Africans made Australia their home. Data from the most recent 2016 Census, however, show a decrease in the number of intercensal additions of South-Africa born between 2011 and 2016 and the lowest intercensal growth rate in more than half a century, though it was still above 10%. This change

Table 1. South Africa-born stocks in Australia since Federation, 1901 to 2016.

Census year	South Africa-born	Intercensal change (n)	Intercensal gain (%)
1901	1,500		
1911	3,883	2,383	158.9
1921	5,408	1,525	39.3
1933	6,179	771	14.3
1947	5,866	-313	-5.1
1954	5,971	105	1.8
1961	7,896	1,925	32.2
1966	9,692	1,796	22.7
1971	12,655	2,963	30.6
1976	15,656	3,001	23.7
1981	26,965	11,309	72.2
1986	37,058	10,093	37.4
1991	49,009	11,951	32.2
1996	55,821	6,812	13.9
2001	79,425	23,604	42.3
2006	104,126	24,701	31.1
2011	145,683	41,557	39.9
2016	162,450	16,767	11.5

ABS Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2014; ABS TableBuilder, 2016 Census.

Table 2. Top 10 countries of birth in Australia, 2006, 2011, and 2016 Censuses.

	2006		2011		2016	
	Population		Population		Population	
United Kingdom ^a	1,038,156	United Kingdom ^a	1,101,081	United Kingdom ^a	1,087,756	
New Zealand	389,464	New Zealand	483,398	New Zealand	518,462	
China	206,590	China	318,969	China	509,558	
Italy	199,132	India	295,362	India	455,385	
Vietnam	159,854	Italy	185,402	Philippines	232,391	
India	147,101	Vietnam	185,039	Vietnam	219,351	
Philippines	120,533	Philippines	171,233	Italy	174,042	
Greece	109,988	South Africa	145,683	South Africa	162,450	
Germany	106,515	Malaysia	116,200	Malaysia	138,363	
South Africa	104,120	Germany	108,002	Sri Lanka	109,850	

^aUnited Kingdom includes 'United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man nfd,' 'Channel Islands,' 'Jersey,' 'Guernsey,' 'England,' 'Isle of Man,' 'Northern Ireland,' 'Scotland' and 'Wales.'

ABS TableBuilder, 2006, 2011, and 2016 Censuses.

could signify the emergence of a new trend and, though it may be anomalous, warrants monitoring and further investigation.

Despite the decline in stocks, South Africans remained in the top 10 source countries of birth in Australia for the third consecutive census, where it held steady as the eighth largest migrant group (Table 2). However, in numeric terms, the increase in South Africa-born persons between 2011 and 2016 Censuses is relatively small compared to other top 10 countries. The China-born and India-born populations, for example, increased by 190,558 and 160,023 persons, respectively.

In South Australia, South Africans have not been among the top countries of birth but ranked 13th in 2011 and 12th in 2016. Rather, as Table 3 shows, the 2011 Census showed South Australia to be a state where the overseas-born were still dominated by longer-term European migrants from Italy, Scotland, Germany and Greece, though more recent arrivals from Asia were also represented in the top 5 countries of birth. By 2016, there was a shift in the top 10 countries of birth in South Australia to migrants from Asian source countries, particularly India, China, and Vietnam, all populations that have grown significantly.

South African arrivals are dominated by entrants in the Skill stream, reflecting the broader trend in

Australia since the 1990s when Australia's immigration policy shifted to prioritize skills over family reunion (Khoo, 2002). Since the mid-1990s, South African Family entrants have comprised just 13% of South African settler arrivals to Australia, with the remaining 87% comprising Skill stream entrants (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2017b). By contrast, in 2016 to 2017, 67.3% of permanent arrivals to Australia entered via the Skill stream, 30.6% through the Family stream (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2017a). Increasingly, onshore migration, namely, those arriving in Australia on temporary visas who later convert to permanent residency, is a major contributor to migrant stocks in Australia and in the South African case comprised 44.3% of permanent additions in the 2013 to 2014 period (Department of Immigration and Border Protection unpublished data). Globally, there has been a trend in recent years toward greater temporary migration as people look abroad for opportunities to work and study (Khoo et al., 2008). In Australia, Hugo (1999) observed a paradigm shift in immigration from permanent migration to temporary migration was made possible from the mid-1990s by a range of new visa types that allowed temporary migration for work. By the end of the 2000s, Hugo (2009, p. 40) found, "Africa, especially South Africa, has participated in the substantial

Table 3. Top 5 countries of birth in South Australia, 2011 and 2016 Censuses.

2011		2016	
Population		Population	
England	102,681	England	97,392
Italy	20,708	India	27,592
India	18,739	China	24,609
China	15,932	Italy	18,537
Scotland	13,902	Vietnam	14,338
South Africa (13th)	6,210	South Africa (12th)	6,609

ABS TableBuilder, 2011 and 2016 Censuses.

expansion of temporary migration to Australia.” An important question for immigrant-receiving countries is the extent to which temporary migration channels are being used as pathways to permanent residency through the mechanisms their respective migration programs offer. Certainly, this study showed through both primary and secondary data that there is a strong propensity for South African migrants to pursue permanent status in Australia after arriving on a provisional visa, although questions remain as to the extent this is a deliberate strategy in the minds of migrants before they come to Australia or whether it evolves out of their migration experience.

Who are these migrants?

Commensurate with their stream of entry, South African migrants in Australia are highly educated. Census data from 2016 shows the proportion of South Africa-born with a Bachelor degree (25%) is twice that of the Australia-born (11%), and 5% more than the overseas-born in general (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017b). Of course, one reason migrants outdo the Australia-born in terms of qualifications is because the migration system is engineered to admit the ‘best and brightest’ as it focuses on recruiting highly educated, skilled migrants. Importantly, in many cases, Australia benefits from these skills without bearing the costs of migrants’ education. Survey data collected for this study showed 80% of respondents were educated in South Africa. Not only do they arrive with qualifications, but their age at

migration (predominantly between 35 and 55 years) indicates they will have accumulated several years work experience in South Africa before moving, a further asset for the Australian labor market and community at large. In 2016, most South Africans in the labor force worked either as managers (17%) or professionals (35%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017b).

The age structure of South Africa-born migrants in Australia is dominated by people of working age. In 2016, more than a third of the South Africa-born were aged between 35 and 54 years (40.1%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017b). The small number of South African migrants aged between 0 and 9 years (3.2%) tells us few migrants make the move with very young children. However, primary data from this study suggest migrants tend to move as family units with older children, rather than starting families in Australia, a hypothesis supported by the oft-cited reason for emigrating from South Africa, namely to provide children with a secure future and better opportunities.

Most migrants from South Africa are White, English-speakers of European background (Abdurahman, 1974; Van Rooyen, 2000; Kennedy, 2001; Visser, 2004; Lucas et al., 2006; Jakubowicz, 2010), though early studies noted the presence of other groups, particularly colored South Africans (Abdurahman, 1974; Polonsky et al., 1989; Keese, 1998; Arnold, 2011). Among white arrivals there has been a smaller, steady flow of Jewish South Africans (Tatz et al., 2007; Arnold and Lewinsohn, 2010; Arnold, 2011) and increasing numbers of Afrikaans-speakers (Van Rooyen, 2000; Arnold, 2011). More recently, research has shown that skilled black South Africans are just as likely to emigrate from South Africa as other members of the community (Crush et al., 2000; Mattes and Richmond, 2000; Mattes and Mniki, 2007; Ellis, 2008), and the present study used Census data on ancestry, language, and religion to show there is, indeed, increasing diversity among the South Africa-born in Australia. For example, 2016 Census data on language spoken at home shows growth in the number of South Africa-born who speak one of South Africa’s 11 official languages other than English or Afrikaans, including speakers of Zulu, Xhosa, and Ndebele, though together they number just over 450 people.

In South Africa, Perth has become a symbol of South African migration to Australia and the city is synonymous with Australia as a whole, as epitomized in the expression ‘Packing for Perth,’ which has considerable currency in South African lingo (Pryor, 2008). The term refers to emigration from

South Africa generally, but has also been used pejoratively ('Packing for Perth (PFPs)') to describe 'disloyal' South Africans emigrating to Australia in the 1980s (Louw and Mersham, 2001; Davidson, 2006). In Australia, Perth is also symbolic among the expatriate South African community as a place with a large South African population, although in absolute terms Sydney is home to more South Africans, their presence is more keenly felt in the smaller city (Louw and Mersham, 2001). In fact, 2016 Census data shows South African migrants have settled throughout Australia, though they are concentrated in New South Wales (28%), Queensland (24%), and Western Australia (24%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017b). A high proportion of South African migrants are sponsored by employers or State governments, determining their initial settlement location, and research has shown migrants in Australia tend to stay in the place they first settle (Richardson et al., 2002). For those that do move on, and for independent migrants, factors that influence where they choose to live include the location of family members or people with the same ethnic background, the economic attractiveness of a destination in terms of employment opportunities, and other specific amenities. The substantial populations of South Africa-born in Sydney, Brisbane, and Perth are a strong indicator that South African migrants follow family and friends who move before them.

Intent of the study and methodology

In a bid to understand the movement of people between Australia and South Africa and demonstrate the complexity of this migration, the study discussed here had several objectives centered on establishing the nature and extent of migration between these countries as well as revealing the motivations and settlement experiences of South African migrants in Australia, and the links they maintain with South Africa, including the extent of and reason for any return migration. Research carried out for this study employed specific strategies to address these objectives, guided by a mixed methods approach which utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to enable "fuller and richer analysis of the research questions" (Hall, 2008, p. 56). Mixed method research approaches offer an important third research paradigm, which is highly appropriate in the field of migration research (Findlay and Li, 1999). In this study, secondary administrative data (quantitative) from censuses and other sources provided a critical framework within which primary data (quan-

titative and qualitative) from two online surveys and semi-structured interviews could be contextualized and validated through triangulation.

The larger survey in this study was aimed at South African migrants in Australia and elicited crucial demographic data from 501 respondents, as well as details on their motivations for migrating and settlement experiences in Australia. This survey was national in focus and, using non-probability, purposive sampling, was distributed through South African expatriate clubs, organizations, and online forums. Participants were encouraged to nominate other migrants to participate and so the sample grew through a snowball sampling technique. Ultimately, the online methodologies were successful in reaching migrants in all Australian States and Territories, though Queensland and Western Australia were overrepresented. The second survey was of return migrants. It was smaller, struggling to locate returnees overseas and returning just 22 responses from South Africans who had previously migrated to Australia but since returned permanently to South Africa. Primary qualitative data were collected through 20 semi-structured interviews with South African migrants in Australia, stakeholders within the South African community in Australia, and other key informants from government and the business sector.

Respondents to the larger survey bear a striking resemblance to the total South African population in Australia in terms of the time of arrival in Australia, age, religion, level of education, and occupation, although the study population had arrived more recently, were younger, and Jewish South Africans were underrepresented. Furthermore, the survey elicited few responses from black, Indian or colored South Africans¹, despite extensive effort to contact a culturally diverse combination of South Africans through as many channels as possible. Interestingly, other migration researchers have also reported difficulties recruiting non-white South African participants (Khawaja and Mason, 2008; Phillip and Ho, 2010). This is unfortunate given these groups have historically had vastly different experiences, including being systematically disadvantaged under the Apartheid regime, which is likely to result in different reasons for emigration (where the opportunity for emigration existed), as well as different experiences of migration and settlement.

¹The study used the same categories as the 2011 South African Census – Asian, black, coloured, Indian and white – to describe different population groups from South Africa.

Still, although there is a bias toward white South Africans, the sample does resemble the South African community in Australia which, it has been noted, is largely white, a point corroborated by Australian Census data. Of the white respondents in the study population, 59.7% spoke English, while 38.2% were Afrikaans-speakers, a greater proportion than Afrikaans-speakers among the total South Africa-born in Australia in 2016 (23.7%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017b). The survey also captured migrants on both permanent and temporary visas, as well as South Africans conferred Australian citizenship.

Reasons for migration

A significant focus of primary data collection was on understanding migrants' reasons for moving to Australia. To date, nearly all work on migration from South Africa to Australia has given reasons for this movement, but there is an overall lack of empirical evidence for these claims.

A handful of now out-dated primary studies suffered from small samples or only focused on a narrow section of the South African population or migration process (Polonsky et al., 1988, 1989; Simon, 1989; Rule, 1989, 1994; Khawaja and Mason, 2008; Arnold, 2011). Of course, South Africa's fraught political history offers an easy explanation as to why people might decide to leave that country, and many people have used it, though, on its own, it proves rather blunt, disregarding the nuance in people's reasons for migrating. Survey and interview data collected for this study provided significant insight into migrants' reasons for moving their families and starting their lives again in a new country. Overall migrants revealed an astoundingly broad range of motivations and many respondents cited multiple reasons for migrating, although key themes were consistently raised, as the following selection of responses show:

Concern about economic and political future in RSA. Australia offered a more stable environment for children [...] Crime in RSA also played a role.

(Respondent #257 permanent skilled, migrated 1997, age 50, male)

Apartheid and the bleak future for my kids.

(Respondent #316 permanent family, migrated 1987, age 55, male)

Crime, unemployment and economic situation [...].

(Respondent #217 temporary skilled, migrated 2006, age 35, female)

I was a victim of a serious car-jacking in Oct 2003. Decided that there was no future for me or my family.

(Respondent #242 temporary skilled, now permanent, migrated 2004, age 42, male)

Transferred with company.

(Respondent #323 temporary skilled, now permanent, migrated 2009, age 49, male)

I was always ashamed of the situation in South Africa and the fact that it was written in Law to discriminate against people of color [...] investigated opportunities to move abroad in 1986.

(Respondent #73 permanent family, migrated 1993, age 48, female)

Better opportunities for my children when they grow up and perception of political mismanagement in South Africa and violent crime levels increasing.

(Respondent #209 permanent skilled, migrated 2004, age 42)

Political. Being of 'mixed' heritage, we suffered from discrimination...under the apartheid regime. The level of violence by the army and security forces, banning orders, killings by government agencies and the level of injustice entrenched in legislation made life unbearable.

(Respondent #464 permanent skilled, migrated 1988, age 64, female)

We were looking for an adventure, we did not flee [...] We [...] always dreamt about living and working in other countries. We were very aware of South Africa's problems and unsure how it would end up, so we jumped at the opportunity to come and work here.

(Respondent #456 permanent business, migrated 2008, aged 42, female)

Textual analysis of migrants' open-end responses identified the main themes in their reasons for migrating, which could be summarized as five main issues, each complex but also interrelated: crime and violence; better opportunities for children; employment-related motivations; political instability, and discrimination. A further question asked survey respondents to identify from a list factors that did

or did not influence their migration decision. These data confirm a high proportion of migrants influenced by personal safety and security (83%) and the related issue of crime (79%). Uncertainty about the future also ranked highly in this list (80%) as did better opportunities for children (79%). An important finding related to factors that influence temporary migrants to migrate, which differ very little from the reasons given by permanent migrants, except for the order in which the top influences were ranked. Reasons that might usually be associated with temporary migration – employment, career, education – appeared further down the list, suggesting the surveyed temporary migrants had a permanent move in mind when they made the decision to migrate. Significantly, the top 6 influences on migration were push factors in the origin country; civil, social, and political drivers. Lifestyle in Australia was the most commonly cited pull factor. Economic factors, so often thought to drive migration (Herman, 2006), and the focus of most theories of migration (Sjaastad, 1962; Todaro, 1969; Piore, 1979; Stark and Bloom, 1985; Massey et al., 1993) were not entirely absent from South Africans' reasons for migrating, but served rather as necessary but not sufficient factors for moving.

So, why Australia? After all, Jupp (2011) and Arnold (2011) agreed that there is no reason to think South Africans choose Australia for reasons that are unique when compared to other English-speaking countries. Overall, survey respondents selected social and environmental factors, rather than economic ones to explain their choice of migration destination and Australia was the preferred destination for just under 90% of survey respondents. Lifestyle followed by a perception that Australia is similar to South Africa were the top reasons for choosing Australia, while peace and climate also ranked highly. Except for climate, none of these factors make Australia particularly unique among the main receiving countries of South African migrants, all English-speaking nations with either current or past ties to Britain. However, one point of difference is the family and friends people already know living in a particular place, sometimes called the 'family and friends' effect or 'chain migration' (Boyd, 1989; Massey et al., 1994), these networks underpin Network theory which has been used to explain migration (MacDonald and MacDonald, 1964; Massey and Espana, 1987; Boyd, 1989; Gurak and Caces, 1992; Massey et al., 1993; Haug, 2008). Migration networks are social (family or personal) networks based on household, friendship and community ties and relationships which can serve as conduits of information as well as provide social

and financial support, thus shaping migration outcomes (Boyd, 1989, p. 639). These social networks can "increase the likelihood of emigration by lowering the costs, raising the benefits, and mitigating the risks of international movement" (Massey et al., 1994, p. 728). Though only a small proportion of the study population selected family reunion as a factor in choosing Australia as a migration destination, they may have had a more formal type of reunion in mind because the survey also showed that over half the respondents had family or friends in Australia prior to migrating (54 %), and almost half of them (44 %) said their decision to migrate was influenced by these networks.

Settlement experiences

Researchers (Louw and Mersham, 2001; Davidson, 2006; Forrest et al., 2013) have found that South African migrants integrate into Australian society, preferring not to be noticed and therefore assimilating. They are also considered successful migrants in respect to indicators of settlement and adjustment (employment outcomes, income and home ownership), and the rate at which they take up Australian citizenship (Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1994; Lucas, 2001; Lucas et al., 2006; Forrest et al., 2013). Ease of settlement for this group has been attributed to similarities in educational, occupational, and cultural systems in South Africa and other Commonwealth countries (Meyer, 2001; Forrest et al., 2013). However, this study showed that more than one-third of the study population found the overall migration experience easy (37%), while almost half found it difficult (47%). Indeed, an important finding was the disjuncture between migrants' expectations of migration and their actual experience. South African migrants tend to be well-informed about the migration process and the destination country through family and friends in Australia, previous travel and the internet, particularly online forums where prospective and newly arrived migrants can ask questions and share information. Notwithstanding their preparation, nearly half the study population found migration harder than they expected (48%), while almost one-third found it matched their expectations. The most difficult aspects of migration for survey respondents was the wrench from family and friends and, conversely, making new friends in Australia. Many survey respondents also struggled to adjust to a different culture, while one in four survey respondents said finding a job was among the hardest aspects of migration.

Yet despite challenges in the early settlement phase, South African migrants persist in setting up new homes for their families in Australia. In 2015 to 2016 a total of 133,126 people became Australian citizens from at least 190 countries (Department of Home Affairs, 2018). South Africans were among the top 5 countries of conferral, comprising 4% of the total with 5,629 people taking up Australian citizenship (Department of Home Affairs, 2018). In 2016, nearly three quarters of South Africa-born were Australian citizens (73%), a relatively high rate among the total overseas-born (59%) and third highest of the top 10 source countries behind Vietnam (76%) and Italy (75%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017a). Certainly, the push factors behind emigration from South Africa, and the low propensity for return migration, contribute to this high rate of citizenship for a migrant group of whom many are strategizing to secure a new home and future. Of the permanent migrants surveyed in this study, more than half (55%) were Australian citizens, while the rest were too recently arrived to be eligible to apply. However, of the respondents who were not yet Australian citizens, 86% intended to become a citizen, while 10% were unsure. Survey data on citizenship again highlighted temporary migrants' intentions to transition to permanent status, with 70% of temporary migrants stating they intend to become Australian citizens.

Survey data showed that South Africans become Australian citizens for mostly intangible, emotional reasons based on their sense of home and desire to be part of Australia, to integrate and belong. For some, this sense of belonging extended to respondents' identifying as Australian and expressing pride in Australia, as well as a desire to integrate. For others, citizenship was the obvious next step in the process of their permanent relocation. Some wanted to 'give back' to Australia, a country they feel indebted to for allowing them a chance at a new life. Thus, reasons for becoming Australian citizens strongly relate to their main reasons for migrating, with many migrants feeling that Australian citizenship provides security and stability, as well as a better future. For example, respondents said:

I want to secure a future for my child and the only way to do that is to get him Australian citizenship.

(Respondent #445, temporary now permanent, migrated 2009, age 34, female)

Secure my family's future in our adopted country.

(Respondent #16, temporary student now permanent, migrated 2008, aged 37, male)

Less common reasons for becoming an Australian citizen were benefits such as access to passports, easier travel (including access to consular assistance abroad), education, and the right to vote. An interesting finding in this study was the hybrid identity of survey respondents, with 40% identifying as both South African and Australian. Fewer respondents identified solely as South African (34%), fewer again as solely Australian (17%). Some respondents indicated that they felt they were South African-Australians or citizens of the world. Incredibly, only half of the temporary migrants identified as South African, and 35% identified as both South African and Australian. Thus, despite only having the right to stay in Australia on a provisional basis, they show a decidedly strong commitment to Australia.

Conclusion

This paper has summarized South African migration to Australia and introduced recently undertaken research into this migrant group. South Africans are a major migrant group in Australia that receive very little academic or other attention, and possible reasons for this were discussed here. Yet there is much to be learned by focusing on the experiences of one migrant group, to inform both practice and theory. As James Jupp observed in the Forward to *Worlds Apart*, "The more we know about the myriad nations, religions and cultural groups that go to make up Australia, the better" (Tatz et al., 2007, p. 10). While the study described here filled a gap in the literature and provided a timely and comprehensive overview of South African migration to Australia, there remains tremendous scope for further research into this group and their lived experiences. To name just two areas where research attention could be focused, first, more work needs to be done to locate black, colored, Indian, and Asian South Africans, who were underrepresented in this and other studies, so that their experiences of migration and settlement can be better understood. Historically, these groups were systematically disadvantaged in South Africa. Coupled with cultural differences, it stands to reason they will have different experiences of migration. Second, comparative studies are crucial to understand the Australian setting within the context of global movements of South Africans. More work should be done to compare the experiences of South Africans in various nodes of the diaspora. Indeed, the notion that this migrant group even forms a diaspora is open to debate and should be taken up at a future time.

References

- Abdurahman, Y. 1974. South Africans in Australia, in Stevens, F. S. (Ed.), *Racism: the Australian experience*, 2nd ed., Australia and New Zealand Book Co., Brookvale, 135–40.
- Arnold, P. 2011. *A unique migration: South African doctors fleeing to Australia*, CreateSpace, New South Wales.
- Arnold, P. and Lewinsohn, D. 2010. Motives for migration of South African doctors to Australia since 1948. *The Medical Journal of Australia* 192(5): 288–90.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014. Australian historical population statistics, Catalogue No. 3105.0.65.001. available at: www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3105.0.65.0012014?OpenDocument (accessed December 20, 2013).
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017a. TableBuilder, 2011 census. available at: www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20TableBuilder (accessed 18 November 2017).
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017b. TableBuilder, 2016 census. available at: www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20TableBuilder (accessed 18 November 2017).
- Boyd, M. 1989. Family and personal networks in international migration: recent developments and new agendas. *International Migration Review* 23(3): 638–70.
- Butler, K. 2002. Defining diaspora, refining a discourse. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 10(2): 189–220.
- Cohen, R. 2008. *Global diasporas: an introduction*, 2nd ed., Routledge, Abingdon.
- Crush, J., McDonald, D. and Williams, V. 2000. Introduction: is South Africa losing its minds? in Crush, J. (Ed.), *Losing our minds: skills migration and the South African brain drain*, migration policy Series No. 18, Southern African Migration Project (SAMP), Idasa and Queen's University, Cape Town and Canada: 1–8.
- Davidson, J. 2006. 'Same difference': Australia and South Africa. *Round Table* 95(387): 693–704.
- Department of Home Affairs 2018. Australian citizenship statistics. available at: www.homeaffairs.gov.au/Trav/Citi/Lear/Facts-and-statistics (accessed January 8, 2018).
- Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2017a. 2016-17 migration programme report. available at: www.border.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/statistics/report-on-migration-program-2016-17.pdf (accessed November 12, 2017).
- Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2017b. Historical migration statistics. available at: www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/reports-publications/research-statistics/statistics/live-in-australia/historical-migration-statistics (accessed December 20, 2017).
- Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs 1994. Community profiles 1991 census, South Africa born. in Bureau of Immigration and Population Research and Statistics Section (Eds), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra).
- Ellis, S. 2008. South Africa and international migration: the role of skilled labour. in Kabwe-Segatti, A. and Landau, L. B. (Eds), *Migration in post-apartheid South Africa: challenges and questions to policy-makers*, Agence Française de Développement, Paris: 115–133.
- Findlay, A. and Li, F. 1999. Methodological issues in researching migration. *Professional Geographer* 51(1): 50–59.
- Forrest, J., Johnston, R. and Poulsen, M. 2013. Middle-class diaspora: recent immigration to Australia from South Africa and Zimbabwe. *South African Geographical Journal* 95(1): 50–69.
- Gurak, D. T. and Caces, F. 1992. Migration networks and the shaping of migration systems. in Kritz, M. M., Lim, L. L. and Zlotnik, H. (Eds), *International migration systems: a global approach*, Oxford University Press, Oxford: 150–76.
- Hall, R. 2008. *Applied social research: planning, designing and conducting real-world research*, Palgrave Macmillan, South Yarra.
- Haug, S. 2008. Migration networks and migration decision-making. *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies* 34(4): 585–605.
- Herman, E. 2006. Migration as a family business: the role of personal networks in the mobility phase of migration. *International Migration* 44(4): 191–230.
- Hugo, G. 1999. A new paradigm of international migration in Australia. *New Zealand Population Review* 25 Nos 1&2: 1–40.
- Hugo, G. 2009. Migration between Africa and Australia: a demographic perspective. Paper for Australian Human Rights Commission, Australian Human Rights Commission, available at: www.hreoc.gov.au/africanaus/papers/africanaus_paper_hugo.html.
- Jakubowicz, A. 2010. Australia's migration policies: African dimensions. African Australians: a review of human rights and social inclusion issues, Australian Human Rights Commission, available at: www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/african-australians-project-australia-s-migration-policies-african-dimensionsaustralia (accessed January 19 2016).
- Jupp, J. 2011. Forward. in Arnold, P. (Ed.), *A unique migration: South African doctors fleeing to Australia*, CreateSpace, New South Wales: 9–12.
- Keese, J. 1998. African migration to Australia: an overview, unpublished Honours thesis, Adelaide: Flinders University.
- Kennedy, B. 1984. *A tale of two mining cities: Johannesburg and Broken Hill, 1885–1925*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton.

- Kennedy, B. 2001. Southern African immigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. in Jupp, J. (Ed.), *The Australian people: an encyclopedia of the nation, its people and their origins*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, NY, and Oakleigh: 688–9.
- Khawaja, N. and Mason, L. 2008. Predictors of psychological distress in South African immigrants to Australia. *South African Journal of Psychology* 38(1): 225–46.
- Khoo, S. 2002. Immigration issues in Australia. *Journal of Population Research and NZ Population Review*, Vol. Joint Special Issue: 67–78.
- Khoo, S., Hugo, G. and McDonald, P. 2008. Which skilled temporary migrants become permanent residents and why? *International Migration Review* 42(1): 193–226.
- Louw, E. and Mersham, G. 2001. Packing for Perth: the growth of a Southern African diaspora. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 10(2): 303–34.
- Lucas, D. 2001. Southern Africans in Australia in the 1990s. in Jupp, J. (Ed.), *The Australian people: an encyclopedia of the nation, its people and their origins*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, NY, and Oakleigh: 689–90.
- Lucas, D., Amoateng, A. Y. and Kalule-Sabiti, I. 2006. International migration and the rainbow nation. *Population, Space and Place* 12(1): 45–63.
- MacDonald, J. S. and MacDonald, L. D. 1964. Chain migration ethnic neighborhood formation and social networks. *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 42(1): 82–97.
- Massey, D., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A. and Taylor, J. 1994. An evaluation of international migration theory: the North American case. *Population and Development Review* 20(4): 699–751.
- Massey, D. and Espana, F. G. 1987. The social process of international migration. *Science* 237(4816): 733–8.
- Massey, D., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pelagrino, A. and Taylor, J. 1993. Theories of international migration: a review and appraisal. *Population and Development Review* 19(3): 431–66.
- Mattes, R., Crush, J. and Richmond, W. 2000. The brain gain: skilled migrants and immigration policy in post-apartheid South Africa. in Crush, J. (Ed.), *Migration Policy Series No. 20*, Southern African Migration Project (SAMP), Idasa and Queen's University, Cape Town and Canada: 1–35.
- Mattes, R. and Mniki, N. 2007. Restless minds: South African students and the brain drain. *Development Southern Africa* 24(1): 25–46.
- Mattes, R. and Richmond, W. 2000. The brain drain: what do skilled South Africans think? in Crush, J. (Ed.), *Losing our minds: skills migration and the South African brain drain*, *Migration Policy Series No. 18*, Southern African Migration Project (SAMP), Idasa and Queen's University, Cape Town and Canada: 9–34.
- Meyer, J. 2001. Network approach versus brain drain: lessons from the diaspora. *International Migration* 39(5): 91–110.
- Phillip, A. and Ho, E. 2010. Migration, home and belonging: South African migrant women in Hamilton, New Zealand. *New Zealand Population Review* 36(1): 81–101.
- Piore, M. 1979. *Birds of passage: migrant labor in industrial societies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Polonsky, M., Scott, D. and Suchard, H. 1988. Motivations of South African emigrants. *Applied Economics* 20(10): 1293–315.
- Polonsky, M., Scott, D. and Suchard, H. 1989. A profile of emigrants from South Africa: the Australian case. *International Migration Review* 23(4): 933–44.
- Pryor, L. 2008. The African migrants who fear a lower standard of living. *Sydney Morning Herald*. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/the-african-migrants-who-fear-a-lower-standard-of-living-20080607-gdsgxh.html> (accessed 30 June 2014).
- Reis, M. 2004. Theorizing diaspora: perspectives on 'classical' and 'contemporary' diaspora. *International Migration* 42(2): 41–60.
- Richardson, S., Miller-Lewis, L., Ngo, P. and Ilesley, D. 2002. The settlement experiences of new migrants. Adelaide, and Canberra: National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University, Commonwealth of Australia.
- Rule, S. 1989. South African emigration to Australia: who and why? *South African Geographer* 17(1-2): 66–75.
- Rule, S. 1994. A second-phase diaspora: South African migration to Australia. *Geoforum* 25(1): 33–9.
- Safran, W. 1991. Diasporas in modern societies: myths of homeland and return. *Diaspora* 1(1): 83–99.
- Simon, A. 1989. *Ous in Oz: South African immigrants in Melbourne*, Chisholm Institute of Technology, Caulfield East.
- Sjaastad, L. 1962. The costs and returns of human migration. *Journal of Political Economy* 70(5): 80–93.
- Stark, O. and Bloom, D. 1985. The new economics of labor migration. *The American Economic Review* 75(2): 173–8.
- Tatz, C., Arnold, P. and Heller, G. 2007. *Worlds apart: the re-migration of South African Jews*, Rosenberg Publishing, Sydney.
- Todaro, M. 1969. A model of labor migration and urban unemployment in less developed countries. *The American Economic Review* 59(1): 138–48.
- Tohill, D. 2000. Early Australian–South African connections up to the establishment of official relations in 1945. *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 54(1): 63–77.
- Trlin, A. 2012. 'It's all so different here...' initial employment and social engagement experiences of South Africans in New Zealand. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 21(1): 57–81.

South African migrants in Australia: an overview

United Nations 2013. 'Trends in international migrant stock: migrants by destination and origin', Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, viewed 20 September 2014, <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimatesorigin.shtml>.

Van Rooyen, J. 2000. *The great new trek: the story of South Africa's white exodus*, Unisa Press, Pretoria.

Visser, B. 2004. From braai to barbeque: South African migration to Australia. PhD thesis, Adelaide: School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management, Flinders University.