Chapter 11 - Migrants in Scotland's population histories since 1850

Introduction

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Professor Michael Anderson was Senior Vice-Principal of the University from 2000 to 2007. He has served as a member of the Economic and Social Research Council, the Council of the British Academy, the Council of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and the British Library Board, and he chaired the Board of Trustees of the National Library of Scotland for 12 years.

Michael is currently a member of the Office of National Statistics UK Population Theme Advisory Board and the Advisory Board for the ESRC Centre for Population Change, but devotes the majority of his time to finishing a wide-ranging comparative study of the population histories of the different parts and occupational groups of Scotland for the period since c1850, in the context of wider British and European population change, issues he has been working on for more than thirty years. This invited chapter draws on material from this project, exploring some of the key patterns and roles of migration in Scotland's population histories since the middle of the nineteenth century[8].

Footnote

8) The writing of this chapter has been hugely assisted by help from Victoria Avila and Jay Gillam, Assistant Statisticians at National Records of Scotland. In particular, Jay has not only challenged me to produce a much more reader-friendly text, but has also asked many probing questions and supplied a number of corrected and/or updated statistics. Victoria has turned my tables and draft graphs into the carefully crafted, simple and clear Figures that accompany the text. Any remaining errors and lacks of clarity are of course entirely my responsibility, not least because I have not always followed their advice!

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Migration trends in recent years

Since the start of the twenty-first century, a mass of detailed information on migration in Scotland has been summarised by National Records of Scotland (and previously General Register Office for Scotland).

In Scotland's Census 2011, just under 600,000 people living in Scotland (11 per cent of the population) reported that they had changed their place of residence in the previous year. Of these, almost half a million had moved within Scotland, and three quarters of those who had moved within Scotland had done so within the same local authority area.

The 2011 Census also revealed that just over 100,000 people had migrated into Scotland in the previous year, three fifths of them from outside the UK and the rest from England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Census data for other parts of the UK showed that about 43,000 people had moved from Scotland to England, Wales or Northern Ireland over the same period. Censuses make no attempt to record migrants who move outside the UK, but estimates based primarily on the International Passenger Survey suggested that around 16,900 people had emigrated overseas between mid-2010 and mid-2011.

In the year to mid-2011, the net inflow to Scotland from the rest of the UK and overseas was estimated to be the second highest since the general trend of Scottish net migration became positive in mid-2000, at around 30,200 people. The mean estimated net inflow between mid-2010 and the latest mid-2015 estimates was around 19,700 people per year.

According to the 2011 Census, almost exactly one person in six resident in Scotland had not been born here. By far the largest group of immigrants were the nearly 477,000 people born in England and Wales, who made up nine per cent of the total population. Of the rest, about 37,000 had been born in Northern Ireland and 23,000 people had come from the Republic of Ireland. The largest non-UK immigrant group in the population on census day 2011 was the 55,000 people born in Poland, followed by migrants who had come from India, Germany and Pakistan, as shown in Figure 11.1.

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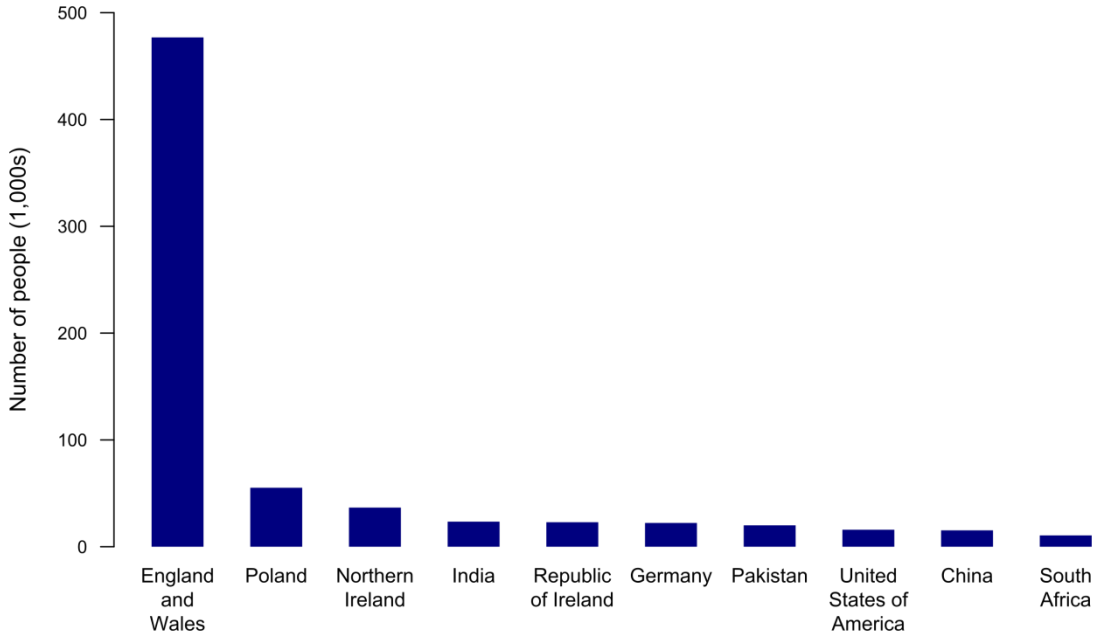
Figure 11.1: Top ten countries of birth for persons not born in Scotland, 2011 Census



This Scottish pattern was very different from that shown by the 2011 Census in England and Wales. Over 733,000 Scots-born people were living in England and Wales, but they made up only one per cent of the total population; by contrast, 13 per cent of the population of England and Wales had been born outside of the UK. Nevertheless, including immigrants from the rest of the UK, Scotland had a slightly higher immigrant share in its population than its southern neighbour, a pattern reported at every census since 1851.

Internal migration, reported in both Scotland's Census and the mid-year population estimates, shows a marked variation in propensity to move by age. At Scotland's Census 2011, 33 per cent of 20 to 24 year olds reported that they had moved to a different address in the previous year; 22 per cent of those aged 25 to 34 and 20 per cent of those aged 16 to 19 had also changed address. By contrast, just four per cent of people aged 50 and over had changed their place of residence in the last year.

A similar pattern can be seen for moves into and out of Scotland. In the year to mid-2015 the estimated peak age for movement into Scotland from elsewhere in the UK was 19 and the peak age for leaving was 24; this is clearly a reflection in great part of the movement of undergraduate students. Overseas in- and out-movements peaked at ages 23 and 24. Also reflecting a strong element of student movement, Scotland's Census 2011 showed that the largest share of all movements was to and from Glasgow City, the City of Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee and Stirling. There were also significant outflows from these cities to their residential suburbs.

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The previous 160 years: how much has changed?

While all the recently published figures on migration still contain some margin of error, the sources available to National Records of Scotland today are far more comprehensive and reliable than those available for earlier periods. The first Scottish census that provided reasonably reliable information on where people were born and their ages was that of 1851. Civil Registration did not begin in Scotland until 1855, so the first decade for which we can compare population change with natural change, and thus estimate net migration, is 1861-71.

We have little quantitative data on overseas emigration by Scottish natives until 1853, and even then some big groups were not counted[9]. We have to wait until 1895 before figures become available on numbers of returners, thus allowing net overseas emigration rates to be calculated. Precise estimation of migration rates to and from other parts of the UK remains a problem even today. Census tables on movements within Scotland have mostly been limited to county (or, sometimes, city) of birth with no information about when cross-county movement occurred nor of how many moves people had made between the time they were born and any census day.

However, in spite of this, it is possible to chart some of the major movements to and from Scotland over the past 160 years, and to make some reasonably firm statements about who went where, when and at what ages within the country as well as into and out of it.

People living in Scotland have always experienced high levels of mobility. A significant component of this mobility in the past was seasonal or temporary rather than with any intention of a permanent change of home. Notable here were: west coast men and women joining the annual migration around Scotland and down into England of the herring fishing fleet; men from Orkney recruited each year to work on whaling boats and for the Hudson Bay Company; crofters' children moving every summer from the north-west to work on farms in the south and east; crofting families moving with their cattle to live for the summer in shielings on the high pastures; and huge gangs of navvies working on Scotland's new railway lines and labouring at different times on other massive infrastructure projects. Much of this seasonal migration was missed by the censuses which, in the period covered by this chapter (except for the post-war census of 1921), were always held in the early spring.

Sample data on nearly 54,000 people, drawn from the manuscript enumerators' books for the 1851 Census of Scotland, suggest that almost half the 1851 population were living in a parish or town/city in Scotland different from that of their birth. Even allowing for some place identification errors, at least one in ten of those in their first year of life had already moved from their place of birth by the 1851 census day, more than a fifth of children aged five had moved parishes at least once, and more than

Footnote

9) Before 1853, the available sources do not include Scots emigrating from non-Scottish ports, and until 1863 mail packets and smaller ships were excluded, and often only 'steerage' passengers were counted, ignoring both 'cabin' passengers and those who worked their passage as crew members. Emigrants to European ports were not counted until 1890. Visitors and transient migrants were not estimated until 1912. For details see Flinn et al. (1977): 94-6 and Baines (1985): 44-45. More detailed information can be found in Carrier and J R Jeffery (1953).

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one in three had done so by their early teens. Nearly two thirds of those aged twenty and over had moved across a parish boundary at one or more points in their lives.

Similar data at parish level are not yet available for later years, but we know, for example, that nearly 24 per cent of Scots-born people living in Great Britain in 1881 (about 865,000) were recorded at the census of that year as having moved at some point from their Scottish county of birth to another county in Scotland; another seven per cent (nearly 254,000) were living somewhere in England and Wales. The percentages were almost exactly the same in 1911, but the numbers had risen to over 1.13 million and nearly 324,000 respectively. Over the next fifty years, the percentage of Scots-born people living in Great Britain who had moved county within Scotland fell slowly to 20.5 per cent in 1961, but the share living in England and Wales grew to over 12 per cent. Over this period, the number of Scots-born people living in England and Wales more than doubled to nearly 654,000. It peaked in 1991 at nearly 767,000, before falling to just over 733,000 by 2011.

The other, and most discussed, major Scottish migrant flow out was emigration not to England and Wales but to other parts of the world. We have no way of knowing at any point in time how many Scots-born people were living in most other countries around the world, (though one estimate for 2007 put the figure at a very precise 467,500[10]). However, we do have some minimal figures[11] of the numbers who embarked on ships taking them to destinations outside Europe between 1853 and 1950 (Carrier and Jeffery 1953). Overall, between 1861 and 1911 a minimum of 1.23 million people who said they were resident in Scotland emigrated in this way, and they were followed by almost 800,000 more by 1930 and, excluding the war years, probably at least another 100,000 by 1950.

The earlier figures need to be treated with some caution, because they do not take account of the many thousands who returned. Indeed, by the 1890s relatively cheap and fast steam shipping allowed some Scottish workers in skilled seasonal trades to go to the United States just for their quiet months in the year, while others went for a few years in a trade depression, returning when business picked up again. No robust estimates for migrant returners are available before 1895, but between then and 1930 the published data suggest that net emigration was about two thirds of the gross figures. In the peacetime years between 1931 and 1950 the net figures are unlikely to have been more than a tenth of the gross because there was net inflow in every year between 1931 and 1938 at least.

From 1951 onwards the Registrar General for Scotland published estimates of net migration to and from overseas and other parts of the UK. Figure 11.2 shows that both were almost consistently negative until the late 1980s.

Footnotes

10) D Ancien, M Boyle and R Kitchen, The Scottish Diaspora and Diaspora Strategy: Insights and Lessons from Ireland, Table 2, citing a Scottish Government internal working paper by Eirich and McLaren.

11) These do not include all emigrants who embarked on ships to destinations outside Europe, but only those included in the returns to the Board of Trade (refer to Footnote 2).

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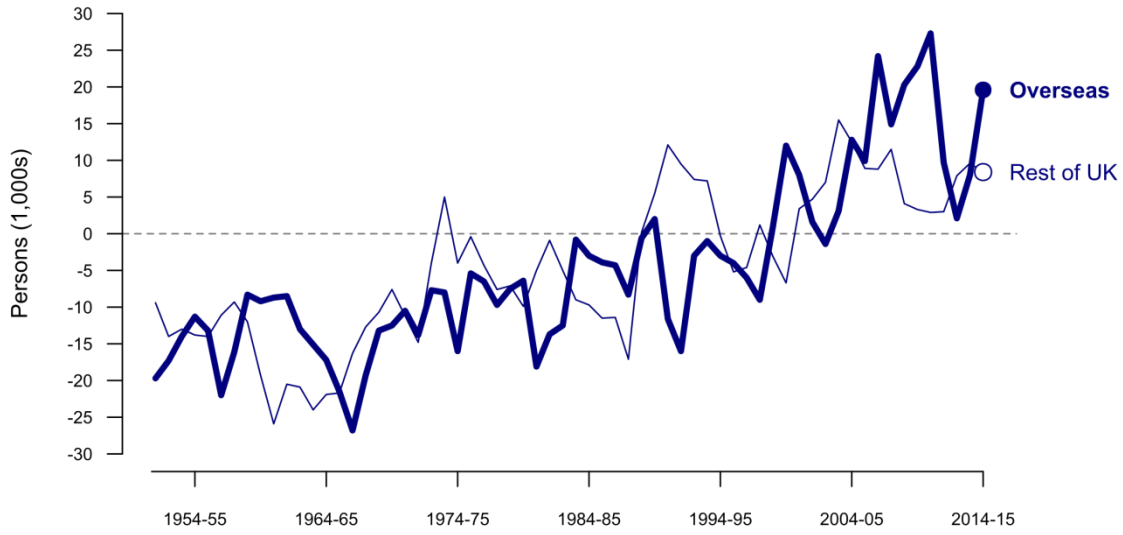
Figure 11.2: Net rest of UK and overseas migration, 1951 to 2015



Net movement to the rest of the UK exceeded 20,000 in every year from mid-1961 to mid-1966 and net moves to the rest of the world peaked at around 26,800 in the year to mid-1967. These were years when the UK unemployment rate averaged below two per cent, but when the Scottish rate was typically around double that of the UK as a whole.

Thereafter, with the exception of the year to mid-1990, total Scottish net migration remained negative (though generally at a lower level) until the last years of the century when a sudden and unprecedented change occurred. In the year to mid-1999, about 1,000 more people are estimated to have moved into Scotland from overseas than left for overseas, and for mid-1999 to mid-2000 the estimate was 12,000. Thereafter there has been positive migration between Scotland and overseas in every year except mid-2003 and the average figure for mid-2009 to mid-2011 was around 23,500. From the year to mid-2001, there has also been net in-movement from the rest of the UK. Together with net inflows from the rest of the world, this was the key factor turning Scotland's overall population change to positive in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the first positive growth decade since the 1960s.

Net migration and natural change (the difference between birth and death rates) affect the overall rate of population change. Throughout the period covered by this chapter, net migration has been the key factor differentiating the rate of Scottish population growth from that of England and Wales and, indeed, from most of the rest of north-west Europe. Figure 11.3 shows the relative impact on overall population change of natural change and of net migration. For each decade Scottish experience is contrasted with that of England and Wales. Note that because there was no census in 1941, the rate for 1931-51 is the mean across the two decades.

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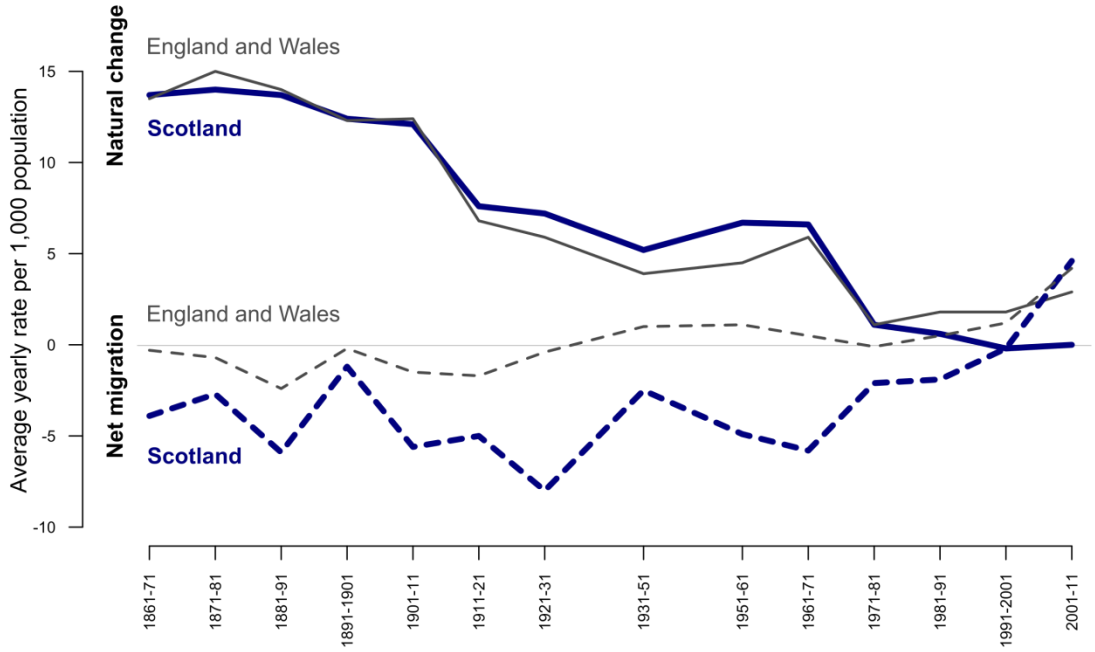
Figure 11.3: Average yearly rate of natural change and net migration, by decade, Scotland and England and Wales, 1861-2011



Note
Net migration includes movements to and from overseas and the rest of the UK and 'other' changes such as changes in the numbers of prisoners and armed forces and the unattributable components of population change and rounding adjustments when mid-year population estimates are revised following census years. There was no census in 1941, so a mean across the two decades from 1931 to 1951 has been included. Data up to 2001 are from successive volumes of the Annual Abstracts of Statistics, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The components of change for 2001 to 2011 are from the Mid-2002 to Mid-2010 revised population estimate publications produced by National Records of Scotland and the ONS

As a consequence of the similarity in birth and death rates north and south of the border through to the 1970s, natural change was fairly similar in the two parts of Great Britain. However, migration rates were dramatically different. At a decadal level, Scotland did not experience the positive inflows that England and Wales experienced in most of the post-World War Two period until the first decade of the twenty-first century. Indeed in the 1950s and 1960s, when England and Wales was seeing strong immigration, almost six per cent of the population left Scotland per decade.

Even in decades when England and Wales experienced net emigration, Scotland's net emigration rate, controlling for the size of the population, was never less than two and a half times that of England and Wales. In the 1880s and the first decade of the twentieth century, Scottish net migration loss exceeded 5.5 per cent of the population in each decade, and it remained high right up to World War One. By contrast, even in these two decades, the net English/Welsh losses were only the equivalent of 2.4 per cent and 1.5 per cent of the population. Even more remarkably, in the 1920s, when Scottish net emigration averaged 0.8 per cent of the population in every year, England saw modest immigration (though in this decade and even more in the 1930s, Wales had an even higher rate of loss than Scotland).

In the post-Second World War period, the differences continued. In the 1950s and 1960s, a higher birth rate meant that Scottish natural increase was somewhat above

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that of England and Wales, but population grew much more slowly than south of the border. This was because, in spite of high levels of emigration of native-born people, England gained population through even higher inward migration, while Scottish net outflow returned to something near the 1920s level. In the 1970s, as the birth rates fell rapidly, the natural change gap narrowed, but Scotland continued to have net outflow above natural increase in most years, so population north of the border decreased. From the mid-1980s, Scottish natural increase fell nearly to zero and eventually became marginally negative, and, although net out-migration also decreased, the population continued to decline. By contrast, south of the border, not only did natural increase remain positive but net immigration rose, giving a further boost to population growth. Only in the first decade of the twenty-first century did net immigration move Scotland back to positive population change.

Scotland's net emigration flows have not just been above those of England and Wales. Taking the whole period from the 1850s to 2001, and excepting only Ireland, they were markedly above those of any other country in north-western Europe for which we have consistent data, as shown in Figure 11.4[12]. Elsewhere in Western Europe, Germany and France did not experience emigration rates anywhere near as high as Scotland's prior to World War Two, and though Italy and Spain had higher overseas outflows in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they also had much higher rates of return so their net figures never surpassed those of Scotland.

Footnote

12) Note that Norway and Sweden had higher rates of net outflow in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but lower rates overall.

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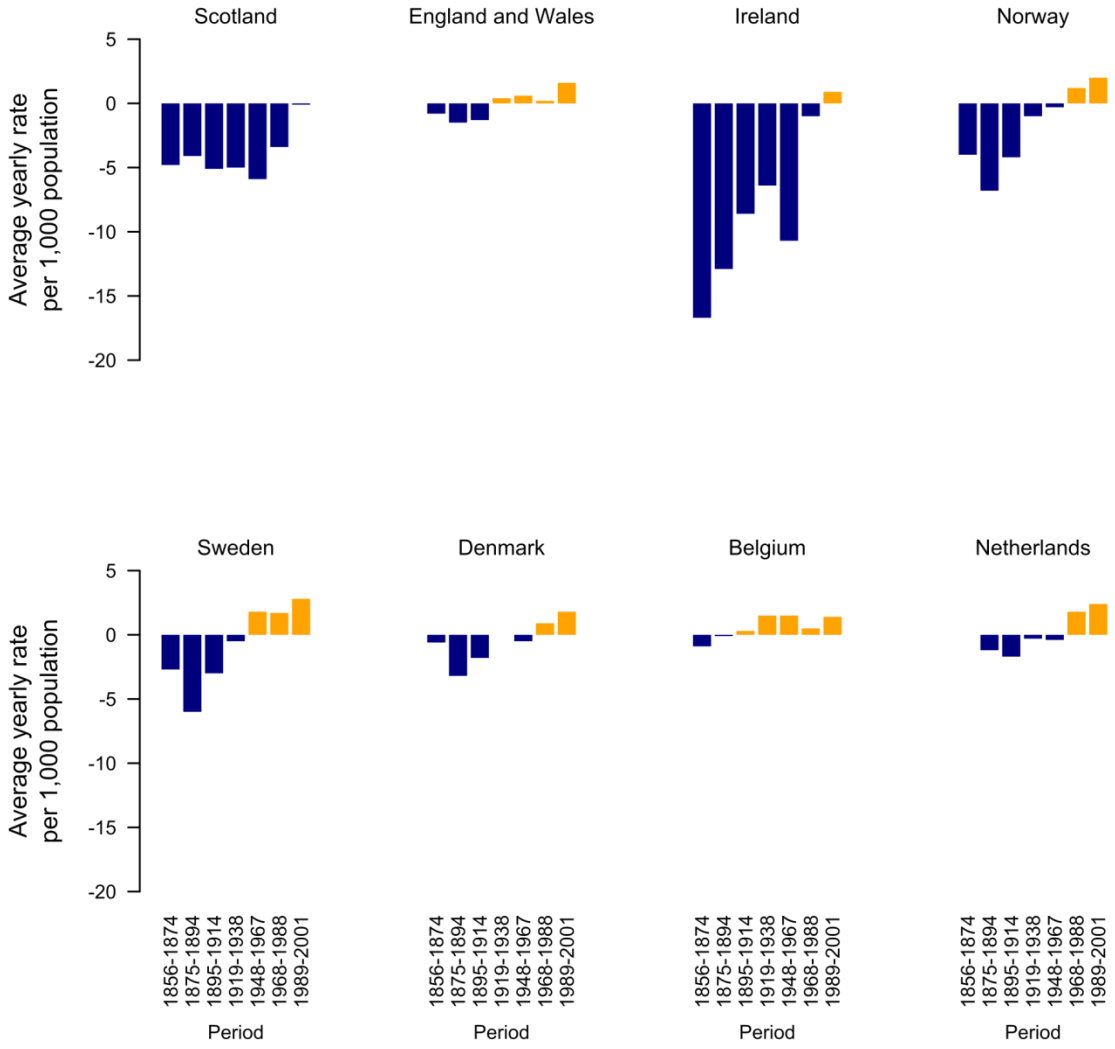
Figure 11.4: Average yearly net migration rate, Scotland and selected north-west European countries, selected periods from 1856-74 to 1989-2001



Note
Net migration includes 'other' changes in population, for example changes in the numbers of prisoners and armed forces. Data for years up to and including 1993 are selected from F. Rothenbacher's *The European Population 1850-1945* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) and F Rothenbacher's *The European Population since 1945* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Post-1993 figures are mid-year estimates produced (UK constituent countries) and compiled (other European countries) by the Office for National Statistics and published in Population Trends.

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Movements within Scotland

As we saw in an earlier section of this Chapter, Scots did not just emigrate; they were also highly mobile within the country. Successive census reports show that there were significant in- and out-movements between every pair of counties, and also migration both into and out of every parish that has so far been studied. The scale of movements revealed at each census by the census county of birth versus county of residence tables is remarkable. For example, in 1911 there was not a single county anywhere in Scotland that did not have at least one resident born in every other county. Every county except Shetland, Nairn and Orkney had more than 200 people born in Lanarkshire. Nairn, the second smallest county in Scotland, was the only one with less than 200 inhabitants born in Midlothian. At the other extreme, in 1911 in Lanarkshire (which included almost all of Glasgow) there were nearly 22,000 people born in Midlothian (which included Edinburgh), and in Midlothian over 26,000 born in Lanarkshire.

Nevertheless, while every county and probably every settlement had in- and out-flows, these movements were not entirely random. For the decade 1861 to 1871, birth, death and population change figures were published separately for the more than 900 registration districts in Scotland in the 1871 Census. From these data, it can be estimated that over 90 per cent of registration districts in Scotland, containing more than 60 per cent of the population, experienced a net loss of population through out-migration. While these net out-migration parishes were mainly in rural areas, even this early there was also significant net outflow from many urban and industrial parishes, among them nine with populations of more than 20,000, the largest of which was Paisley.

At higher levels of geography, analysis of net decadal migration by county is possible from 1861 to 1971. After this, because of local government reorganisation and the change of registration geography from the 33 county councils to 12 regions, county of birth data was no longer included in the censuses. Figures 11.5, 11.6 and 11.7 show average net migration by county, as a percentage of (average) population, for the periods 1861 to 1871, 1901 to 1911 and 1961 to 1971.

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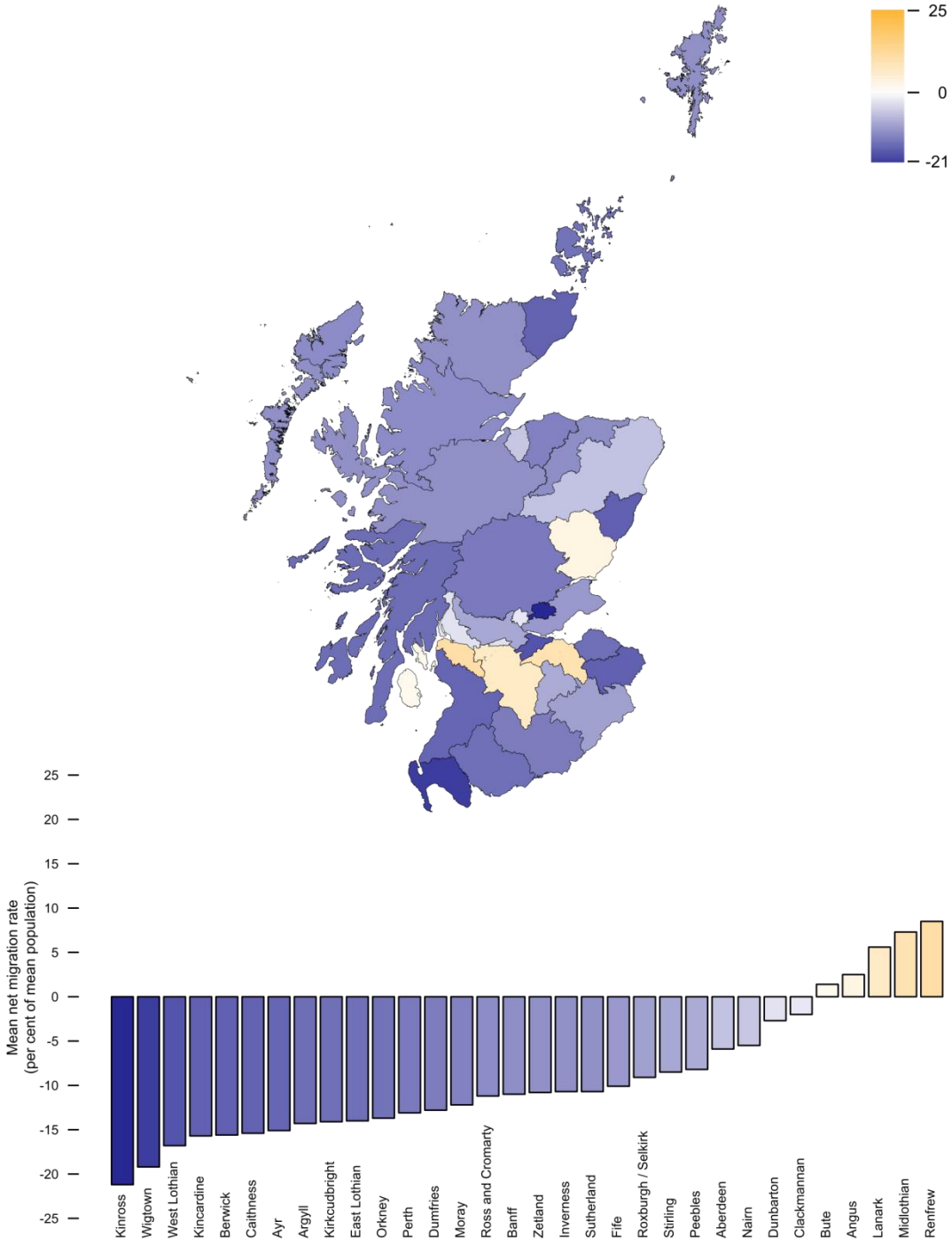
Figure 11.5: Average net migration by county, per cent of average population, 1861 to 1871



Note
Net migration includes 'other' changes in population, for example the number of armed forces and prisoners, and is calculated from estimated population change and natural change. The four cities are included in their pre-1930 counties and, because of major boundary uncertainties and change over time, Selkirk and Roxburgh are combined. Data are plotted in Civil Counties. The figures for 1861 to 71 are calculated for Registration Counties; however, the differences are not large enough to cause any major distortions.

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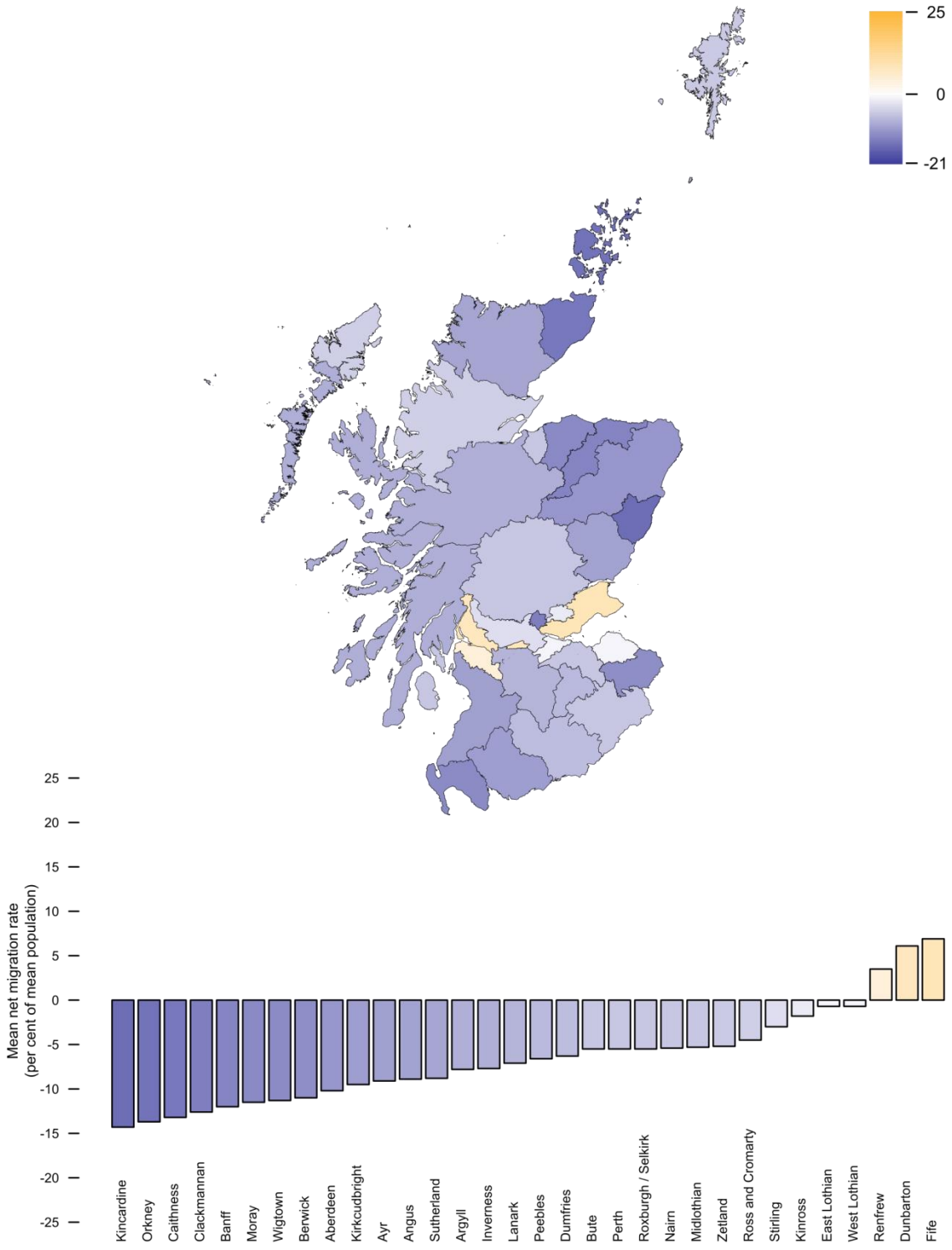
Figure 11.6: Average net migration by county, per cent of average population, 1901 to 1911



Note
Net migration includes 'other' changes in population, for example the number of armed forces and prisoners, and is calculated from estimated population change and natural change. The four cities are included in their pre-1930 counties and, because of major boundary uncertainties and change over time, Selkirk and Roxburgh are combined. Data are plotted in Civil Counties.

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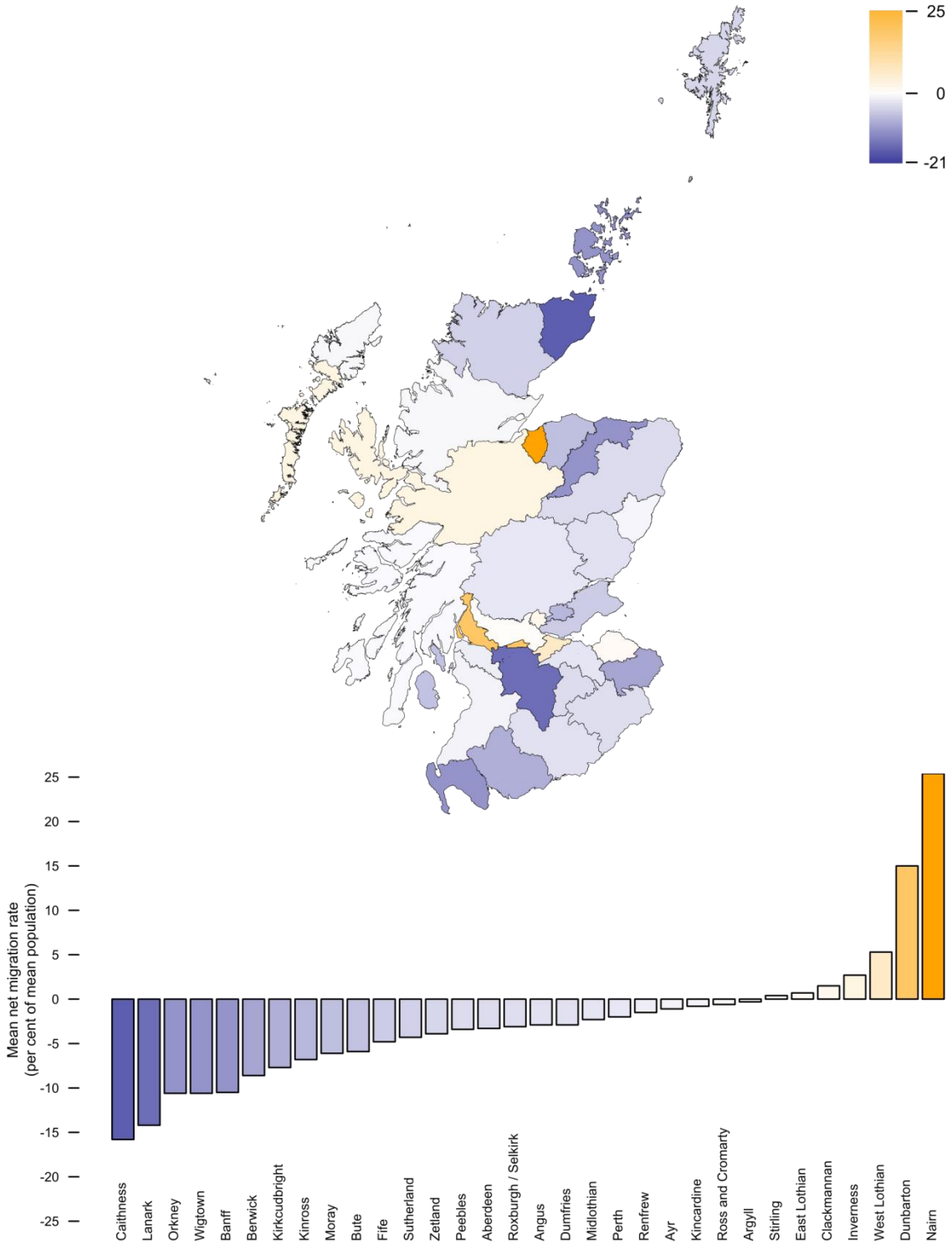
Figure 11.7: Average net migration by county, per cent of average population, 1961 to 1971



Note
Net migration includes 'other' changes in population, for example the number of armed forces and prisoners, and is calculated from estimated population change and natural change. The four cities are included in their pre-1930 counties and, because of major boundary uncertainties and change over time, Selkirk and Roxburgh are combined. Data are plotted in Civil Counties.

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Several points emerge from these maps and from a more general survey of changes over this period:

- As Figure 11.5 shows, only five counties experienced net in-migration between 1861 and 1871. Thereafter, analysis of successive censuses shows that there were net inflows into five counties between 1871 and 1881, just two between 1881 and 1891, seven between 1891 and 1901 and, as Figure 11.6 shows, three between 1901 and 1911. The data for the 1920s are complicated by the timing of the 1921 census in a peak holiday period, but in that decade there was probably net in-migration into only one county (Roxburgh, by a tiny amount). In the 1950s there were just two counties with net inflows and still only seven in the 1960s (Figure 11.7). These almost entirely (as with Nairn or East Lothian) reflected suburban development around Inverness and Edinburgh, or moves, largely from Glasgow, to New Towns like Livingston in West Lothian and Cumbernauld in Dunbarton.

- In the 1860s, as Figure 11.5 shows, while all the more rural counties experienced high levels of outflow, the very highest rates were not from the Northern Isles and the crofting counties of the north-west as might perhaps be expected but from counties like Kinross, Wigtown, West Lothian, Kincardine, Berwick and Ayr. The main areas with significant inflow in this period were still the heartlands of the first phase of Scottish industrialisation: Lanark and Renfrew (with movement both into Glasgow and into some of the surrounding mining and heavy industry parishes). There were also inflows into Midlothian (where there was strong net migration into Edinburgh but even larger movement into some of the mining communities outside the city). There was also a small inflow into Angus, almost entirely focused on Dundee.

- Over the next four decades there were significant changes in both the intensity and patterns of in-and out-migration. In the 1870s, modest inflow continued into Dundee, Aberdeen and Edinburgh, but even this early there was net outflow from Glasgow equivalent to almost nine percent of its mean population. However, Lanarkshire as a whole and also Renfrewshire continued to attract modest net in-migration, as shipbuilding, mining and heavy metal manufacturing continued to grow at the expense of textiles. By far the biggest gainer by migration in this decade was Dunbarton, where net inflow, driven by the expansion of shipbuilding and Glasgow suburbanisation, reached 11 per cent of the mean population per decade, followed by seven per cent in the next ten years. Modest inflow continued in Dunbarton in the 1890s, and then accelerated in the first decade of the twentieth century. Figure 11.6 shows Dunbarton as one of the two largest inflow counties, along with Fife, where much of the inflow was stimulated by rapid development of new coalfields (note also, comparing Figures 11.5 and 11.6, the marked declines in the rates of net outflow from other newly developing mining counties and notably East and West Lothian and in Kinross).

- More generally, however, comparison of Figure 11.5 and Figure 11.6 shows a widespread trend for net rates of outflow to be lower between 1901 and 1911 compared with the 1860s. The 1901 to 1911 net outflows were smaller in 22 of the 33 counties including almost all rural areas of the country. In spite of

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this, the national rate of net out-migration was markedly higher in the first decade of the twentieth century than in most earlier decades. This was entirely because net migration had turned negative in Lanarkshire and Midlothian, which made up almost exactly two fifths of the total Scottish population in both 1901 and 1911 (it had been 30 per cent in 1861). It is clear, therefore that events that affected migration in these two counties were having a disproportionate impact on net migration rates for Scotland as a whole.

- This became even clearer in the 1920s. Rates of net outflow from the key heavy industry and mining areas in the decade 1921-31 were extremely high: Lanarkshire had net outflow which removed the equivalent of seven per cent of the mean population over the decade, Dunbarton 11 per cent (but some of this was due to the holiday-timing of the 1921 census), Renfrewshire 12 per cent, Fife 14 per cent and West Lothian 16 per cent. Given that these five counties contained more than 55 per cent of the national population in 1921, the very heavy rates of net national emigration shown in Figure 11.3 were almost inevitable.

Local government reorganisation and the introduction of new registration geographies in 1975 and again in 1996 make it difficult to present net migration flows by counties after 1971. However, the impact in the 1970s of oil development on migration to the Aberdeen area and to the Highlands and the northern and western isles is very clear. So too is the subsequent out-movement from Shetland, in particular as the main construction phase came to an end (net out-migration from Shetland for mid-1981 to mid-1986 was the equivalent of 33 per 1,000 population per year). The most marked contrast compared with earlier decades comes from the shift of most of rural, central and eastern Scotland into positive migration starting in the 1970s and persisting through to the 1990s. This was nevertheless accompanied by continued national net outflows, almost entirely due to the continuing outflow from the west Central Belt areas. Rates for today's post-1996 single tier local authorities from mid-1991 to mid-2002 show net outflow for all the council areas in and surrounding the City of Glasgow, excepting only East Renfrewshire. Glasgow City and Inverclyde on average lost the equivalent of more than five per cent of their population through out-migration in these years.

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Who moved, when and why?

Prior to 2001 little data is available on the age profiles of migrants between Scotland and the rest of the UK and Scotland and overseas. For movements to and from the rest of the world, limited use was made in some years after 1912 of information from the Board of Trade returns and, after 1967, from the International Passenger Survey[13].

It is, however, possible to make approximate estimates of the age pattern of total net migration to and from Scotland by using a technique known as 'age-cohort depletion'. This involves comparing the number of people stated to be in each age group at each census with the number who stated their ages as ten years older in the subsequent census, and then making allowance for the numbers in each age group who are likely to have died between any pair of census dates[14].

The results of this method are subject to a margin of error, but the scale of the differentials that are shown clearly suggest real contrasts in patterns of net migration. Figure 11.8 shows examples of estimates of net migration by age group and sex, for those aged from 5 to 9 to 30 to 34 at the first of each pair of censuses, and compares Scotland with England and Wales[15].

Until 1921 to 1931, for males, the highest rates of Scottish emigration in almost all decades occurred among those who were aged between 15 and 24 at the start of the decade. For females, the highest loss rates were nearly always among those a few years older, those aged between 20 and 29, but the numbers leaving were always lower than for men[16].

Footnotes

13) Summaries of the Board of Trade data up to 1950 are in Carrier and Jeffery (1953). Thereafter, a limited amount of information was included in some but not all of the Registrar General's Annual Reports from 1967 to 1978.

14) This method relies on ages being recorded with a reasonable degree of consistency between censuses, which was not entirely the case especially in the nineteenth century when significant numbers of people rounded their ages to the nearest ten years, but did so more commonly at some ages than others. The assumptions that must be made to estimate numbers likely to have died also introduce an element of uncertainty, because we do not know exactly when within any decade people left or moved to Scotland, nor the degree to which prospective emigrants and arriving immigrants had different mortality chances compared with non-mobile Scots.

15) No data are shown for those who were aged 0 to 4 or 35 and over at the first of any pair of censuses, because of the uncertain impact of mortality on these results; for most of the period at least, death rates at ages between 5 and 44 were sufficiently low that the results can be considered with reasonable confidence.

16) It is worth noting that Scotland was used to massive excess losses of young men relative to young women, and highly skewed sex ratios as a result, even before the high death rates of World War One. For example, the sex ratio in 1921 for ages 20 to 34 was 866 males per thousand females, but this had been pulled down not only by war deaths but also by the very large emigration of young men in the years 1910 to 1913; the number of men per thousand women in these age groups had been 913 in 1911, 899 in 1891 and 807 in 1861.

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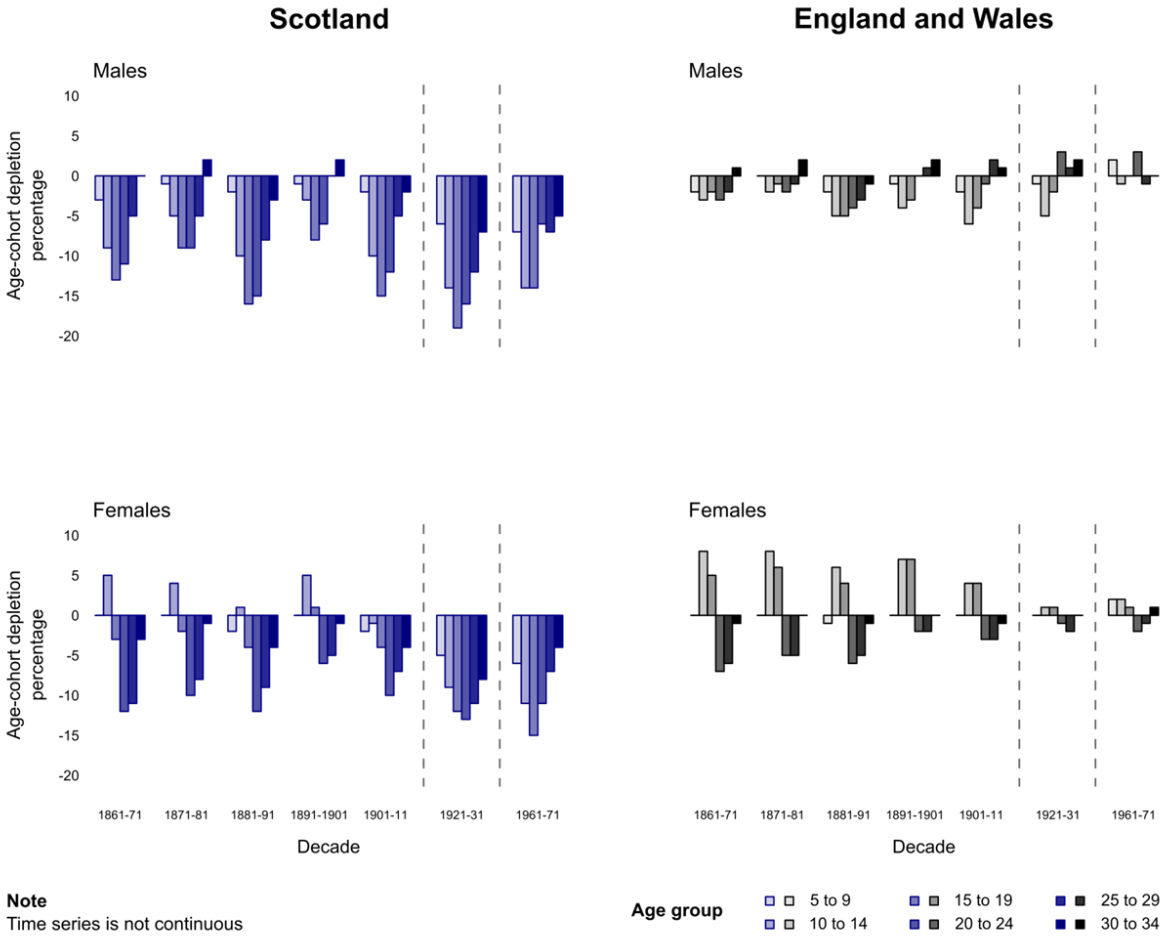
Figure 11.8: Age cohort depletion between census populations, percentage by age group and sex, Scotland and England and Wales 1861-71 to 1961-71



In contrast, from the 1920s until the 1960s (and this continued through to the 1980s) significant numbers of young people who were under the age of nine and women in their later twenties and thirties at the start of each decade, are also revealed as emigrating. This reflects a marked increase in family emigration in these years. Except in the interwar period and to a lesser extent in the 1950s and 1960s, net emigration fell markedly after the age of about 30 and was very low or even negative by the time people reached their forties; although some of this may reflect increasing numbers of return migrants. From the 1980s, however, both age groups began to have low levels of net in-migration, a point that will be returned to below.

Figure 11.8 also allows us to compare the Scottish age-cohort depletion with England and Wales. The contrasts are extremely marked. For males, English net outflow was much lower at all ages and, indeed, there was actual net inflow in the 1890s, the 1900s and the 1920s among men of 30 and over. The rising numbers of Scots-born people living south of the border makes it clear that many of these immigrants came from Scotland.

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The figures for women show net inflow among teenagers to an even greater extent than in Scotland; some of this probably reflects young women moving from Ireland into service and other jobs of this kind[17].

The most remarkable contrast, however, is in the 1900s, 1920s and the 1960s (and indeed also for later decades) when, as was suggested above, the age-profile of migrants provides a strong indication of significant net family emigration from Scotland, but almost none from England and Wales. By the 1960s England and Wales was already experiencing very significant immigration from the new Commonwealth, a migration flow which, as we shall observe below, was almost unknown in Scotland at that time.

Some local examples of patterns and impact of migration: rural counties

The availability from 1851 onwards of age by sex data at county level (and, between 1861 and 1911, also at parish level) shows how different rural areas were affected by out-migration over time. It also shows how industrial expansion and contraction affected in- and out-movements of people of different ages (discussed in the next section). No attempt has been made here to adjust for mortality because the most important net flows are very large relative to the population and the effect of age-specific death rates, and the pattern of movement over any decade is unknown and no age-specific mortality data are available below county level.

It is well-known that the crofting counties saw very significant population decline through out-migration in the decades after the failure of the potato crop in the late 1840s. What is less well-known, however, is that population losses on at least the same scale occurred widely across almost all parts of rural Scotland in these years.

Figure 11.9 examines, for four predominantly rural counties in different parts of the country, the decline of the cohort who were aged five to nine at the 1851 Census of Scotland. Figure 11.9 also shows a rough estimate of the losses that would have been attributable to mortality if these counties had shared the Scottish national age-specific death rates in these years; in practice, their mortality was somewhat lower, and many of those who died would in fact have done so after their out-migration, so the mortality figures plotted are an extremely conservative upper bound.

Footnote

17) A smaller part of this apparent net immigration seems likely to have resulted from some young women who were aged eight or nine at the first census of a decade returning themselves as 20 or 21 ten years later.

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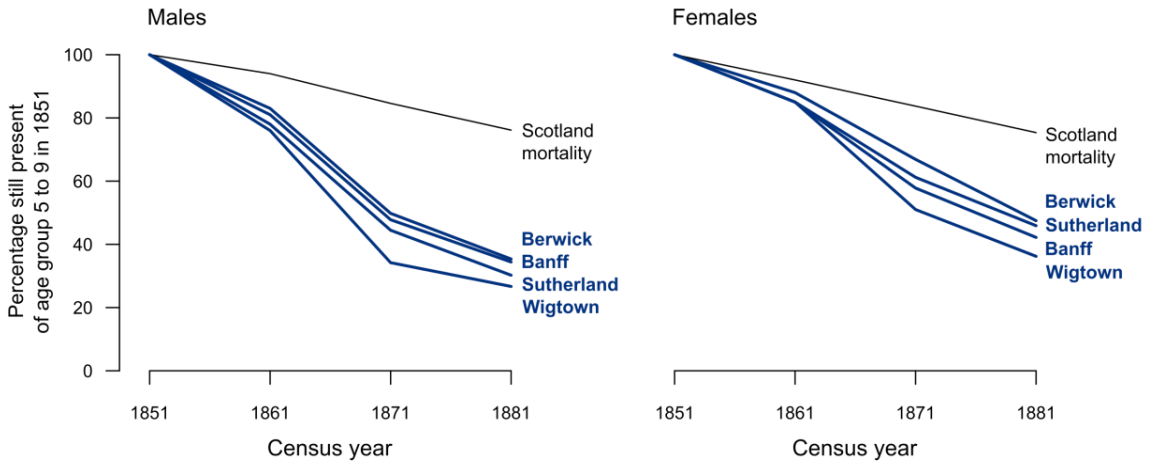
Figure 11.9: Decline of the population cohort aged 5 to 9 in the 1851 Census of Scotland, percentage still present, 1851 to 1881



The graphs show that by 1861 the equivalent of around 19 per cent of boys who had been aged five to nine in 1851 had disappeared from the core crofting county of Sutherland, but it also shows that 24 per cent, 17 per cent and 22 per cent were already missing from Wigtown, Berwick and Banff respectively. These are net flows, and the actual numbers leaving would have been somewhat higher. By the time they were aged 35 to 39, just over a third of the 1851 cohort were still living in Sutherland, Berwick or Banff and just below a third remained in Wigtown. The proportions remaining for women of the same age cohort were a little higher than for men.

A fuller account for other age cohorts, for a larger number of rural counties, and for most decades from 1851 through to the 1960s can be found in the forthcoming book, but the overall picture is very similar: almost all rural counties and not just the crofting areas of north-west Scotland and the islands experienced massive population outflows of young men and women for most of the century after 1851 and beyond.

Some local examples of patterns and impact of migration: manufacturing and mining areas

A second example looks at how, in a period of rapid population and employment growth, different kinds of core industries produced very contrasting patterns of net migration flows by gender by age.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, there was a rapid expansion of coal mining in a number of parishes in western East Lothian. Between 1901 and 1911 the combined population of Ormiston, Pencaitland and Prestonpans grew by nearly 34 per cent. Most of the new jobs were for fit young men; there was very little employment for women in these communities. Most of the women who were there were married.

The result of these very different employment demands for men and women was, as would be expected, a markedly skewed sex ratio at young adult age groups (in 1911,

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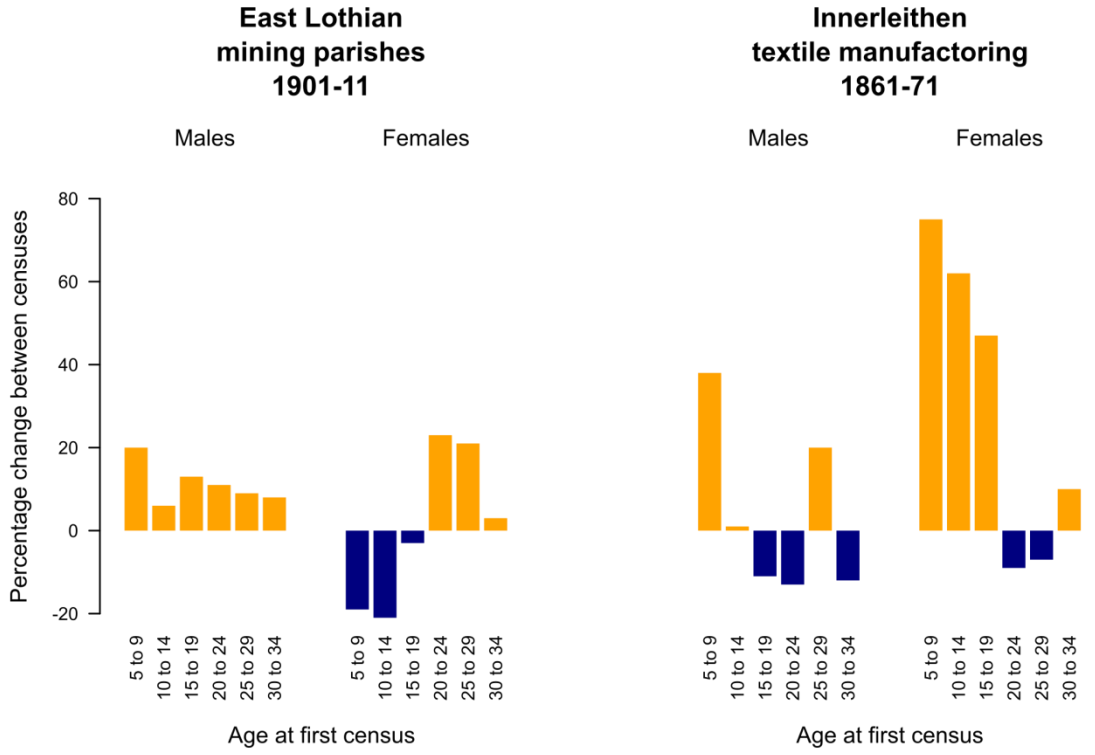
there were 137 men per 100 women aged 15 to 19 and 136 men per 100 women aged 20 to 24, for example).

However, the age cohort depletions plotted in Figure 11.10 reveal that these sex ratios were not just the result of a pattern of inflow dominated by young men. Young women (aged under 20) growing up in the community could see no prospects in staying and left. However, as they got older, the men wanted to marry and it is presumably this that encouraged significant numbers of women in their twenties to move in. Patterns of movement very similar to this can be found in many other heavy industry areas in this period, notably, for example, in the shale oil communities in West Lothian.

Figure 11.10: Age cohort depletion in East Lothian, 1901 to 1911 and in Innerleithen between 1861 and 1871, percentage change



What happened in Innerleithen in the 1860s was in many ways the reverse. This was a period of major expansion in woollen textile manufacturing in the parish, and the largest share of jobs in this industry was for young women, though there were also some jobs for teenage boys. The population of the parish rose by 52 per cent between 1861 and 1871, the number of women aged 15 to 19 increased from 92 to 193, but the number of men in this age group only rose from 89 to 107. As Figure 11.10 shows this involved a 75 per cent net increase in the number of women aged 15 to 19 in 1871 compared with the number of girls aged 5 to 9 ten years earlier and a 62 per cent increase for women who by 1871 were aged 20 to 24 (note that this is a net figure and it also does not take account of mortality, so the actual numbers moving in would have been markedly higher). By contrast, even allowing for mortality, it seems that there was a small outflow of men in their teens and early

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twenties (though an inflow of men in their late twenties, possibly skilled workmen recruited to maintain the growing amount of steam engines and mill machinery).

The final example examines what happened in the Burgh of Clydebank in the 1920s, when it was dramatically hit by the collapse in demand for some of its principal products, and notably ships and marine engineering. The age cohort depletions over this period are shown in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1: Age cohort depletion and population change, by age group, Clydebank 1921-1931

	Per cent depletion by age cohort, 1921-1931							
Age group 1921	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44
Age group 1931	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54
Male	-8	-12	-21	-24	-21	-19	-17	-14
Female	-12	-18	-15	-16	-17	-15	-14	-19

	Per cent population change by age group, 1921-1931							
Age group	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54
Male	-4	-2	-2	-4	-7	-6	-7	16
Female	2	4	-1	1	5	3	4	21

Note
Age cohort depletion is estimated as the difference between the number of persons in each age group in the first census population and those aged 10 years older in the next census population. No attempt has been made here to adjust for mortality because the most important net flows are very large relative to the population and the effect of age-specific death rates, the pattern of movement over any decade is unknown and no age-specific mortality data are available below county level.

The top half of Table 11.1 shows substantial net out-migration by males and females at all the age groups up to those who had been 40 to 44 in 1921. The number of young people involved and the inclusion of large numbers of women as well as men strongly suggest major family out-migration. What is of particular interest here is that in spite of this heavy out-migration, the lower half of Table 11.1 shows that numbers present in each age group hardly changed at all between 1921 and 1931. Indeed, the total population of the burgh as reported in the censuses actually rose from 46,506 to 46,952 over the decade, though some people will almost certainly have been away on holiday in 1921.

Nevertheless, the clear conclusion is that in Clydebank the previous rapid expansion of the town, plus the very high fertility of many of those employed in its principal industries, had given its population an in-built propensity for rapid population growth which could only have been absorbed by continuing major expansion of employment opportunities. In the absence of such expansion, many young men and women would have had to leave to look for employment elsewhere. In fact, what happened in Clydebank and in many other parts of industrialised Scotland in the 1920s was that employment collapsed, thus producing a double pressure for massive out-migration.

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From which social groups did the most emigrants come?

It is clear from the discussion so far that Scots over the whole of our period have been a very migratory people and that Scottish emigration has had a very different history over the past 160 years from that of England, or, indeed, any other country in Europe. We have also seen that migrants were at most periods concentrated particularly among young adults of both sexes (though family emigration increased over time), and that they moved in large numbers from all parts of the country, including the cities and the most industrialised areas.

As far as international emigration was concerned, in the decades leading up to World War One, men and women born in Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire, the heartlands of the first Scottish industrial revolution, had among the highest emigration rates in Scotland outside the Borders and the Northern Isles (Brock 1999). In an area where a large part of the labour force was engaged in heavy industries, and where marital fertility rates were well above the Scottish average, the high rate of emigration appears to be a direct consequence of the inability of the manufacturing areas of the West of Scotland to provide employment for all their potentially available locally born skilled labour force. This is also reflected in the quite high rates of migration from these areas recorded in the 1911 census for England. People born in the seven most industrialised counties in Scotland made up 44 per cent of all Scots living in England and Wales (though this was less than their 56 per cent of the population of Scotland at this date).

Moreover, and in contrast to the situation for English (and especially Irish) migrants, around half of all Scottish emigrants to the United States in most years between 1875 and 1913 were classified by the US authorities as 'skilled', and more than 40 per cent in most of the 1920s - and we know that very many of these came from the West Central Belt[18]. Skilled workers from these areas were especially over-represented in the high emigration years (almost 63 per cent in 1906-07 and 56 per cent in 1910-11) (Thomas 1973)[19]. In the severe depression and high emigration years of 1921-24, 74 per cent of Scottish male emigrants to the United States who gave an occupation to the UK authorities were classified as skilled (49 per cent had previously been employed in skilled mining, quarrying, metals and engineering jobs), and skilled workers continued to make up more than half of all emigrants to the USA in the years 1925-30 (when 38 per cent of those going to Canada and 49 per cent going to Australasia also declared that they had been in skilled jobs) (Carrier and Jeffery 1953: 116-20).

Similarly, in the post-1950 period, when data from passenger surveys are intermittently cited in the Annual Reports of the Registrar General for Scotland, the principal occupational groups of all emigrants nearly always included men engaged in engineering, professional and managerial, clerical, and building and carpentry employments. In the years 1967-1971, when much less detailed occupational groupings are provided in the Annual Reports, around a fifth of all male net emigration was from professional and managerial employments alone, and these high levels of skilled and professional emigration continued into the 1980s (Lindsay 1992).

Footnotes

18) Thomas (1973), Table 83. Note also important discussion of these issues in Evans (2006).

19) In addition, between 1904 and 1913 an average of six per cent were classified as 'professional;' and this rose to nine per cent for 1919 to 1930.

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Conclusion: how might we explain Scotland's high rates of out-migration and emigration?

It is within this context that we need to consider the 'explanations' offered in the past for the high levels of Scottish emigration. Most of these are ultimately based on simple push-pull models, for example: comparing Scottish wage rates with North American; pointing to particular periods of deeper depression in Scotland than in England (for example in 1907-08 or the early 1920s); noting the appalling state of, and shortages in, Scottish urban housing (though there was also much appalling housing in many English mining and industrial areas and certainly much in many continental cities).

No doubt each of these factors had a role to play in encouraging some people to emigrate from Scotland, but, crucially, none of these arguments answer the question as to why Scotland's emigration should be so much higher than England's. Certainly, in some periods and some jobs, Scottish wages were lower than English, but this was by no means universal. Certainly, unemployment in recession years in Scotland was almost always rather worse than in England and Wales, but the actual rates of contraction in jobs in the staple industries in the 1900s and 1920s were not markedly greater. Moreover, in every decade except the 1920s, there was significant net migration of English-born people of working age into Scotland. In 1911 a quarter of men employed in mining, metal manufacturing and engineering in Scotland had been born in England or Wales. So had more than 2,700 men in professional and related activities, over 4,200 men in the commercial sector, more than 1,100 women school teachers and 574 men employed in printing and lithography. This pattern of skilled and professional migration into as well as out of Scotland has continued to the present day. The 1991 Census of Scottish recorded over 22,000 English born 'corporate managers and administrators', over 9,600 science and engineering professionals, 11,780 teaching professionals, over 14,900 clerical workers and around 10,000 men employed in iron and steel, electrics and electronics and other engineering employment (Watson 2002: 38-39). If life was that much worse north of the border, why did they come?

What is undoubtedly true is that Scotland, right through to the 1970s at least, had a more recession-prone occupational structure. At all periods from the 1850s to the 1950s, compared with the picture for Great Britain as a whole, a markedly higher percentage (typically about ten percentage points more) of Scottish men were employed in the most recession-prone industries of mining, metal manufacturing, shipbuilding and textiles (Lee 1979; Kendrick *et al.* 1985). There were, of course, also some areas of England and Wales which had high proportions of their local populations in these industries, but there is one particularly notable feature of Scotland: the geographic spread of these industries across an almost continuous band through the whole of the Central Belt from Dundee in the east to Ayrshire in the west. The counties most involved comprised a huge share of the total population of Scotland (for example 72 per cent in 1921). Within this area only a few places and relatively few occupations were not directly or indirectly affected in some way.

At its most extreme, the impact in the inter-war years on the minds of those most affected right across this vast almost uniformly depressed environment has been summed up by Devine as a 'national malaise', 'collapse of confidence' and a descent

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into 'pessimistic introspection' at all levels of society[20]. Its widespread effect on 'the attitude of the people' was commented on by a senior official in 1921. In 1923, the Secretary for Scotland noted a 'spirit of hopelessness and sullen discontent' across Glasgow and the Clyde in 1923, and in 1928 the Report of the Cabinet Unemployment Policy Committee on Industrial Transformation, referring to the large numbers 'permanently surplus to the requirements of their industry', commented that 'There is no ground for hoping that if these people remain where they are they will ever again obtain employment'[21].

However, the problems did not just relate to crisis years. More generally, young adults in Scotland for most of our period faced a real shortage of opportunities to establish themselves at home. This is a well-known and continuing problem in the north-west of the country, made worse in the nineteenth century by landlords seeking to downsize their local populations, and old people clinging onto crofts. But there were wider problems also. Throughout our period, because of its more open education system, Scotland markedly over-produced professionals and those with the skills required to enter employment where good levels of literacy and numeracy were needed, such as clerks, bankers, teachers and other professionals. To take just one example, Walker's work reveals that 37 per cent of Scottish chartered accountants qualifying between 1904 and 1914 went overseas, most because there were no jobs for them at home (Walker 1988: 44).

There was also an underlying demographic component to this surplus. Basically, because of Scotland's poor record in developing new industries from the later nineteenth century onwards, and the failure to continue to expand its older ones, the number of young adults of any skill level looking for work grew much faster than job opportunities. One extreme example of this, as was illustrated by the Clydebank example cited above, was that the rapid expansion of heavy manufacturing/mining areas, with their very high birth rates, produced major excesses of young adults in the next generation in these areas. This, however, was a national not just a local problem.

Simple modeling suggests that, had there been no emigration, in 1891 there would have been around 190,000 more males aged 20 to 29 looking for employment in Scotland than the number of vacancies created by both the number of deaths over the decade of men aged 20 to 54 in 1881 and the total or partial withdrawal from the labour force of men aged 55 to 64 in 1881. This 190,000 means that the number of jobs available to this age group would have needed to expand by 22 per cent compared with the number available in 1881; this is a far larger figure than the Scottish economy could possibly have supplied at this time. A similar calculation for 1921 to 1931 suggests there would have been an excess of around 200,000 (17 per cent) men in this age group looking for jobs in 1931, at a time when the number of available jobs had fallen over the previous decade by at least 250,000. Of course, England and Wales also faced a similar problem, but similar modeling of the percentage excess comes out lower in most decades while employment growth was faster[22].

Footnotes

20) Cited in Devine (2000) 318-20.

21) Cited in Levitt (1992) 146-9, 150, 164.

22) There is an excellent discussion of this issue for England in Lawton (1968): 16.

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The key next question is: what were these surplus young adults to do? Over the second half of the nineteenth century, trade union and other bodies developed a range of support mechanisms which provided at least some minimal short-term support for an increasing range of unemployed skilled workers in recession-prone industries, and the very skilled were often supported by employers afraid that their skills would be lost if they moved away. From 1905, the beginnings of state-provided unemployment insurance became available for some workers to supplement this system, though it only extended to a fuller range of the labour force after World War One, and even then only provided full rate support for 13 weeks. Behind all these systems in England lay the Poor Law, which increasingly provided out-relief payments to industrial and other workers during periods of mass unemployment.

These systems were, however, of limited use to the excess labour force of young adults in Scotland. If they were not already well established in employment, they would not have been eligible for most of the trade union relief funds, nor would they have been able to build up much in the way of insurance records. Also crucially, until 1921 the Scottish Poor Law did not normally allow the payment of relief to any able-bodied person, or to their families, except sometimes on a transitional short-term basis. Even through to the 1930s, many parishes were reluctant to do more than an absolute minimum in the way of support for such people. Under these circumstances, many of the unemployed had no alternative but to try to move elsewhere. In addition, in rural areas most houses for agricultural workers went with the job or the tenancy to a plot of land; if one had no job or no tenancy (and numbers of both declined steadily over time), one had to move on.

A key reason for Scotland's large surplus of young adults was the poor development of new industries. From the late nineteenth century through to the 1950s, the share of Scotland's industrial employment which was in the expanding areas of chemicals, vehicles and electrical engineering was at best about half the English level[23]. In parallel with this Scotland never developed the large clusters of new consumer goods industries which underpinned so much of the twentieth century population growth of the English south midlands and the south-east. It was to these areas and industries that many of the surplus young adults south of the border moved especially in the inter-war and post-war periods.

Some Scots did the same, but, faced with poor opportunities at home, far more of them than of the English went overseas. There is at present too little research to be absolutely certain why this might be, but some insight can possibly be gained from work done in the 1930s and the 1950s into the reluctance of English and Welsh men to move from high unemployment regions to the expanding areas of the south. One factor that becomes very clear in this literature is the disincentive of long spatial distance, but moves into what was in many ways also a rather different community environment and culture were also cited as important. If this was the case for unemployed men from the England and Wales, it seems likely to have applied even more to Scots, for whom the

Footnotes

23) In 1931 less than nine per cent of industrial employment in Scotland was in newer manufacturing areas such as chemicals, vehicles and electrical engineering, compared with 16.7 per cent in Britain as a whole. In 1951 the situation was even worse: 13.6 per cent and 28.1 per cent. (Kendrick et al. (1985): 70 and 79).

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spatial and cultural difference would arguably have been even larger (Makower *et al.* 1939; Levitt 1992: 29, 162).

It has been suggested (Devine 1992) that there is an interesting paradox in the history of Scottish emigration: why, unlike most of the predominantly rural major outflow countries of Europe, did Scotland, one of the most industrialised, have such high rates of net loss. This analysis rather suggests that the high emigration rates were in fact a direct result of Scotland being a highly industrialised country, but one where opportunities for early marriage in one generation produced, in the next generation, a surplus of young adults that its economy was unable to absorb. It is only within this wider set of demographic, employment, and welfare contexts that I believe that the English-Scots differences in diaspora are crucial. Culturally, Scots certainly had long traditions of mass international emigration – and also of movement to England. Indeed, emigration had become part of Scottish culture in a way that was much less true south of the border. This also meant that Scots had much better contacts abroad, indeed, arguably better in most cases than they mostly had in the south midlands or most of the home counties of England. As a result, by the 1880s emigration was both culturally and practically easier, should circumstances at home force people to look elsewhere – and crucially at certain periods this became the case, even more so in the post-Second World War years, as many Scottish industries went into terminal decline. Culture and diaspora are certainly important, but provide only part of the explanation for Scotland's high emigration rates.

Immigration into Scotland, in contrast to England and Wales

There is one final question that requires more attention than it has so far received in either academic or the popular writing on Scottish migration. The key reason why England had net immigration flows from the 1950s onwards was not that its natives did not emigrate in large numbers: they did, though not on as large a scale as from Scotland. England also attracted growing numbers of immigrants from outside the UK; by contrast, until well into the twenty-first century, disproportionately far fewer of these migrants came to Scotland.

Writing in the early 1990s, Coleman and Salt identified three significant streams of immigrants into Britain over the previous forty years. Of their first group, asylum seekers, very few were settled in Scotland in this period. Coleman and Salt's second strand were workers, above all from Europe and the USA, who brought a wide variety of skills which were in demand in the UK economy. At UK level, these people were actually part of an almost balanced two-way flow of skilled migrants in and out of the country, and as a result their share of the UK population changed relatively little over these decades. However, people born in Europe and the USA always made up a smaller proportion of the population of Scotland than of England and Wales, above all because of their heavy concentration in Greater London (where, for example, they comprised 3.0 per cent of the population in 1971; the figures for England and Wales, Scotland, and Edinburgh were 1.4 per cent, 0.8 per cent and 0.9 per cent respectively).

The big difference between Scottish and English/Welsh immigration flows in the second half of the twentieth century lay within Coleman and Salt's third category: immigrants from what came to be called the New Commonwealth, and especially from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the West Indies, and parts of East Africa. In the immediate

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aftermath of World War Two, and excepting a significant number of people, many of them white, who had been born in India under the Raj, the numbers living in any part of the UK who had been born in any of these countries were very small. Thereafter, however, parts of England experienced significant inflows from all these areas but only relatively small numbers from any of them came to any part of Scotland. Even by 1981 the percentage of the Scottish population reported in the census of that year as born in Jamaica, Pakistan and India, for example, had only reached 0.01 per cent, 0.14 per cent and 0.18 per cent respectively, up from 0.01, 0.02 and 0.16 per cent twenty years earlier. Over the same twenty years, however, the England and Wales figures for those born in Jamaica increased from 0.22 per cent to 0.34 per cent, Pakistan and Bangladesh from 0.02 to 0.47 per cent and India from 0.34 to 0.79 per cent.

Migrants from different parts of the New Commonwealth showed a marked tendency to focus initially on different and highly specific labour markets, to which they were often attracted by targeted recruitment campaigns in their country of origin or by high demand for low paid semi-skilled labour. These labour markets were almost entirely in a relatively small number of major metropolitan areas of England. None were in Scotland - and interestingly there were also some English regional centres like Tyneside and Merseyside which also offered few jobs to immigrants from these countries in these years. So, for example, in 1971, 55 per cent of all the West Indies-born migrants in Britain were living in Greater London, and another 33 per cent in Birmingham - but just 0.1 per cent in the Central Clydeside Conurbation (and 0.5 per cent in the whole of Scotland). Of migrants born in Pakistan living in Britain in the same year, 22 per cent were in London, 16 per cent in Birmingham, 16 per cent in the West Riding of Yorkshire, but less than 2 per cent in the Clydeside Combination (and less than 3 per cent in Scotland). A similar pattern continued into the 1970s, with major flows of East Africans highly focused on Leicester and Peterborough in England, and south Asians into the Lancashire textile areas.

The low levels of New Commonwealth immigration into Scotland in the last half of the twentieth century can therefore largely be explained by the fact that, in an economy with higher unemployment and collapsing textile industries, employers did not wish or need to target new sources of immigrant labour. This in turn was one key reason why Scotland continued to see net out-migration in these decades, while migration south of the border was persistently positive or at least roughly in balance.

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