


The appearance of four good monographs on migration within and from Scotland is a welcome demonstration of the power and diversity of scholarship on this important topic. Jeanette Brock delineates quantitatively the broad outlines of migration within Scotland using the evidence of successive census snapshots. Colin Pooley and Jean Turnbull draw heavily on a different source, a database of residential histories drawn from genealogical or family histories, in order to identify and analyze the broad patterns of mobility within Britain. The narrower focus of his study allows Charles Withers to weave together an exceptionally broad range of kinds of information that document highland migrants in lowland life, the importance of lowland cities and especially Glasgow to Gaelic culture and the process of migration itself. Marjorie Harper’s focus on emigration within a shorter period also allows a greater range of sources to be consulted and a more intensive interpretation of these sources.

Brock identifies and contrasts the experience of four regions within Scotland: the Highlands, the Borders, the central lowlands and a more eclectic collection of peripheral districts of which the largest bloc is the northeast. Pooley and Turnbull also identify distinctive regional patterns to the extent that small samples at the regional level will sustain generalization. Most of their analysis contrasts 14 regions of which two are Scottish (northern and southern) although some tables (eg. pp.87-88) distinguish separately six subregions within Scotland. Withers examines separately nine towns and cities, although not surprisingly
Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen receive the greatest attention. Harper considers people moving from all of Scotland to all overseas destinations although the records of people moving to Canada turn out to be particularly rich.

The studies differ as well in their origins. *The Mobile Scot* is an impressive first book, in fact a revised dissertation. The other studies are defining works by mid-career historians who already have established strong reputations and who are summarizing the results of major research projects. Each of the monographs has a highly useful literature survey albeit with particular emphases. Brock does justice to the quantitative-based literature more persuasively than the other scholars. Pooley and Turnbull are especially good on the discussion of sources. Withers situates Scotland in a European context and is more sensitive than the others to cultural and linguistic dimensions of the migration process. Harper's literature review is particularly informative about organized colonization schemes and the relationship among emigration, immigration and return migration.

The core evidence of the Brock study is an estimation of net migration through identification in each of several censuses of the number of people of specific ages and sex in a district. Assumption of a probable ten year mortality rate allows the author to predict how many people in each age and sex category ought to be living in the same district at the next decennial census. The difference between predicted and enumerated population ten years later is interpreted as net immigration to the district or net emigration from the district. Of course, there is no way of knowing if people moved once or several times during the census interval. Indeed, if everyone left a district and then returned within the census interval the measure would show no movement at all. Large-scale emigration which is offset by equally heavy immigration cannot be distinguished from a situation in which people moved very little. Nevertheless, the summary measure of 'net' migration is a commonly-used and valuable barometer of the overall pattern of movement.

Net migration estimates based on Scottish and English census data are especially valuable because enumerators from as early as 1851 reported the parish/district of birth. A migrant, therefore, is anyone not living in the parish/district of birth. The North American censuses typically did not return birthplace at
such a detailed level. Moreover, the evidence of mortality on which the migration estimate is based is more precise for post-1855 Scotland and post-1837 England than anywhere else in the nineteenth-century world. The result is an excellent basis for estimating net migration.

Brock examines migrants through published tabulations from each of the Scottish censuses 1861-1911 and two manuscript samples of individual migrants drawn from the 1861 (19,000 people) and 1891 (40,000 people) censuses. These data permit an exceptionally rich profile of the regional patterns of population movement. There can be no criticism of Brock’s handling of the data; her quantitative methodology is sensitive and careful.

Admittedly, Brock tells us more about migrant departures than arrivals. In part this is because so many Scots went to England and overseas. Brock does not consult the English and North American censuses because they do not distinguish regions or districts of birth within Scotland. The local description of birth place within Scotland is returned only in the Scottish census. The result is that while we can examine in detail migration to Edinburgh and Glasgow from, say, Berwickshire, we can say nothing about migration from the same shire to Newcastle and Liverpool. The underlying problem is that after they leave Scotland those born in Berwickshire cannot be distinguished separately from all other Scots-born. Similarly, we may estimate the number of people who left Berwickshire for non-Scottish destinations, but those who went to Australasia cannot be distinguished from those who simply shifted to a new parish on the other side of the Tweed. Brock recognizes this limitation of the English census and, presumably for this reason, works with Scottish data only.

Pooley and Turnbull work with a very different source, an innovative database of the residential histories of 16,000 people born 1750-1930 who undertook 74,000 moves during their lifetimes. Genealogists and family historians have supplied the basic data. This evidence of residential histories is supplemented with diaries and other information about specific families and particular communities. The ability to track individuals over a lifetime is an unusual and exceptionally valuable complement to the census snapshots of the sort analyzed by Brock.

Again, there is a weakness originating in the nature of the
Pooley and Turnbull demonstrate that the age structure of their genealogy-based sample is similar to that of the population as documented in the relevant censuses (after allowing infant mortality). More worrisome is the revelation that their sample understates the importance of people who never married, people in the larger cities, the poor and women. The biases arise because genealogists most often trace through the male line, because the never-married have few descendents to reconstruct their lives and because the poor and the city-dwellers are difficult to trace (especially so for the big-city poor).

The authors are admirably forthright on the existence of these limitations, although the implications for various analytical purposes remain unknowable. Readers of this journal will take particular note that the data used in Migration and Mobility show no obvious differences in migration that can be attributed to a distinctive 'Scottish effect'. People in southern Scotland and northern England, for example, have similar profiles in the number of their moves, length of residence, distance of moves, etc (pp.87-88). Admittedly, there is no explicit testing of a Scottish effect, perhaps in part because of the difficulty of introducing religion as an analytical category with these data.

The studies by Harper and Withers are more comprehensive insofar as they direct a range of sources at a well-defined topic, rather than addressing a broader topic with a single innovative source. The first part of Urban Highlanders examines the circumstances of Highland society that prompted so many to depart. This discussion is set in the context of the wider literature on migration within Europe. The second part examines the process of migration in a way that separately identifies and considers the inter-relationships among temporary, seasonal and permanent migration. The third part of the book is a rich portrait of Gaelic culture in the cities. The Highlands here are defined as Argyll, Bute, Inverness, Sutherland and Ross and Cromarty together with any other parishes where 25 per cent or more of the population spoke Gaelic in 1891 (according to the valuable enumeration of language in that census).

Harper provides the first comprehensive examination of Scottish emigration during the 1920s and 1930s. The author has rather more to say about the first of the interwar decades, in part
because emigration was much reduced during the international economic depression of the 1930s. Government encouragement of emigration especially during the 1920s generated large collections of government records in Britain and Canada that have been examined by the author. Indeed, one of the attractions of *Emigration from Scotland* is its sophisticated examination of an area of government (and church) policy that was controversial on both sides of the Atlantic. Harper’s examination of contemporary Scottish newspapers provides exceptionally rich material to complement the government records and secondary literature. There is some interviewing of people with personal knowledge or experience of emigration, but not as much as might be expected given the very recent period under investigation.

*Emigration from Scotland* is an unusually rich and multi-faceted study that provides valuable insight into social and economic circumstances in the Scottish Highlands and rural lowlands, the Canadian west and several other overseas regions, as well as government and church responses to rural poverty, and of course the process of migration itself. It is likely to remain the definitive study of Scottish emigration to Canada in the 1920s. *Urban Highlanders* is a comparably definitive examination of the nature, importance and origins of Gaelic culture in urban Scotland. *The Mobile Scot* and *Migration and Mobility* pioneer the use of particular sources which, as the authors demonstrate, have the capacity to describe and contextualize the patterns of migration. Each monograph will be of considerable interest to students of Scottish history and to students of migration. Collectively, they represent a major advance in our understanding of the history of the Scots both in and outside of Scotland.

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