



The Laws of Migration

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At the first glance it would almost appear as if the natives of towns were more migratory in their habits than the natives of the country, for we find that as many as 27·9 per cent. of the natives of the Scotch towns were enumerated outside the town in which they were born, whilst the proportion for the natives of counties averages only 25·6 per cent. But it is evident that towns cannot be compared with entire counties, but must be compared with rural parishes, and were we in possession of information enabling us to do this, we should undoubtedly find that the natives of towns are more sedentary in their habits than are the natives of the country.

As to female emigration we find that females are more migratory than males, for among the natives of the seven Scotch towns there are 111 females to every 100 males, whilst among the native town element there are only 110. For London these figures are 112 and 109.

Female Migration.

Woman is a greater migrant than man. This may surprise those who associate women with domestic life, but the figures of the census clearly prove it. Nor do women migrate merely from the rural districts into the towns in search of domestic service, for they migrate quite as frequently into certain manufacturing districts, and the workshop is a formidable rival of the kitchen and scullery.

Amongst the natives of England and Wales enumerated throughout the United Kingdom in 1881 there were 106 females to every 100 males, amongst the natives of Scotland 108, and amongst those of Ireland 103. The large preponderance of females among the Scotch distinctly points to an extensive emigration to foreign countries; and those who have experienced the ubiquity of the Scot in the military and civil services of his country, in the mercantile marine, in commercial and all other pursuits, will not be surprised at this fact. On the other hand the low proportion of females among the Irish does not by any means prove that emigration is not taking place on a large scale, for we know the reverse to be the case. It proves, however, that females migrate from Ireland much more frequently than they do from Scotland or England. Whilst emigrants from England or Scotland depart in most instances without "incumbrances," it appears to be a common practice for entire families to leave Ireland in search of new homes. At all events the elements which make up families will be found to exist amongst Irish emigrants, and this fact, amongst others, explains their slow assimilation with the peoples among whom they settle.

The following tabular statement exhibits the influence which migration within the limits of the United Kingdom exercises upon the proportion between the sexes:—

	Number of Females to every 100 Males among Natives of			
	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Ireland.	United Kingdom.
Residing in county where born	104	108	104	105
Residing beyond county where born, but not beyond limits of kingdom	112	114	116	112
Residing in other parts of the United Kingdom	81	91	92	90

These proportions show very clearly that females are more migratory than males within the kingdom of their birth, but that males more frequently venture beyond. In other words more females than males leave the county in which they were born in order to seek employment in some other county of the same kingdom, but more males leave the kingdom of their birth for one of the sister kingdoms.

And whilst the migration of females from county to county is proceeding more actively than that of the males, the female migration within the limits of each county is going on at a corresponding if not at a higher rate. In nearly all the towns included in our table, the proportion of females among the native county element is higher than it is in the rural parts of the counties, which proves that a migration of females has taken place into the towns in excess of that of males. Most of these migrants came in search of domestic service, but others, and in several instances no doubt a majority, came also in the hope of finding employment in shops and factories. The only towns which have proved more attractive to males than to females are West Ham, St. Helen's, West Bromwich, Middlesbrough, Airdrie, Hamilton, Greenock, Hawick, and Londonderry. In all these towns male labour is more sought after than female labour. They are in fact great centres of iron and coal mining, of machine building, and of other branches of industry chiefly carried on by men.

When we turn from towns to counties we find the same causes in operation. In most of the counties the proportion of females in the native county element is smaller than it is among the natives of each county enumerated throughout the kingdom. This shows that the migration of females into other counties has been in excess of that of the males. The excess has been greatest in such counties as Rutland, Berkshire, Huntingdonshire, and Shropshire,

Argyll, Linlithgow, and Stirling, Wexford, and Wicklow, in which female labour is not much in demand, or through which strong currents of female migration flow in the direction of the great towns and manufacturing districts.

The counties on the other hand which have retained a larger proportion of their county-born females than of males are either those which in their textile and similar industries afford employment to numerous females, or those which, owing to geographical position, are more or less remote from female labour markets, or, what brings about the same result, hold out inducements to male migrants in search of work in neighbouring iron works or coal mines.

To the first class of counties belong Bedfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire in England; Fife and Forfar in Scotland; Antrim, Dublin, and Cork in Ireland. All these are counties in which female labour is much sought, and where native-born females have consequently little inducement to go elsewhere in search of employment.

The counties which retain a larger proportion of females than males, because the latter are drawn away by promise of employment in quarries, mines, and iron works, are Cardigan, Pembroke, Carmarthen, and Anglesey in Wales; Kinross, Wigtown, Banff, Clackmannan, Kirkcudbright, Perth, Ross, Selkirk, and Roxburgh in Scotland.

The Laws of Migration.

It does not admit of doubt that the call for labour in our centres of industry and commerce is the prime cause of those currents of migration which it is the object of this paper to trace. If, therefore, we speak perhaps somewhat presumptuously of "laws of migration," we can only refer to the mode in which the deficiency of hands in one part of the country is supplied from other parts where population is redundant.

1. We have already proved that the great body of our migrants only proceed a short distance, and that there takes place consequently a universal shifting or displacement of the population, which produces "currents of migration" setting in the direction of the great centres of commerce and industry which absorb the migrants.

In forming an estimate of this displacement we must take into account the number of natives of each county which furnishes the migrants, as also the population of the towns or districts which absorb them.

2. It is the natural outcome of this movement of migration, limited in range, but universal throughout the country, that the process of absorption would go on in the following manner:—

The inhabitants of the country immediately surrounding a town of rapid growth, flock into it; the gaps thus left in the rural population are filled up by migrants from more remote districts, until the attractive force of one of our rapidly growing cities makes its influence felt, step by step, to the most remote corner of the kingdom. Migrants enumerated in a certain centre of absorption will consequently grow less with the distance proportionately to the native population which furnishes them, and a map exhibiting by tints the recruiting process of any town ought clearly to demonstrate this fact. That this is actually the case will be found by referring to maps 3, 4, 8, and 9. These maps show at the same time that facilities of communication may frequently countervail the disadvantages of distance.

3. The process of dispersion is the inverse of that of absorption, and exhibits similar features.

4. Each main current of migration produces a compensating counter-current.

5. Migrants proceeding long distances generally go by preference to one of the great centres of commerce or industry.

6. The natives of towns are less migratory than those of the rural parts of the country.

7. Females are more migratory than males.

These propositions have either been considered, and supported by facts, in the preceding portion of this paper, or they will be considered in connection with the towns.

The Laws of Migration and the Towns.

1. Having thus shown that the bulk of our migrants only move a comparatively short distance from the place which gave them birth, and having suggested a law in accordance with which the displacement of our population resulting from migration is going on throughout the country, we proceed to test the correctness of our conclusions with special reference to the towns. That our great towns and centres of industry are the goal to which the migrants from the rural districts most frequently wend their steps, becomes at once evident when we examine into the composition of our town populations according to birthplaces. The mere fact that most towns increase much more rapidly in population than the rural districts does not suffice to prove this. It is quite true that the town population of England and Wales between 1871 and 1881 increased to the extent of 19·6 per cent., whilst the rural population exhibited an increase of only 7·4 per cent., and that in Scotland the increase of the towns amounted to 18·2 per cent., and that of the remainder of the kingdom to 1·4 per cent. only. But this comparatively large increase might have been brought about