

CHAPTER 7

NEW COMMUNITIES: THE FLOWS OF PEOPLE

Lefebvre (1991) proposes three forms of 'spatial practice', existing interdependently but constitutive of each other. First, he identifies the representations of space; the repertoire of codes, signs and symbols that make up discourses of place and space, and second, representational spaces; the application of these discursive codes to places, in the meanings actually invested in them. These forms are close to Paasi's 'identity of the region' and 'regional identity' respectively and relate to our discussion in chapters 3 and 4 above. But, thirdly, Lefebvre also pinpoints material flows across and in space. These include the movement of capital and goods, topics discussed in the previous chapter. But they will also encompass the movement of people. For meanings and representations of place cannot exist independently of human agency. People reproduced regional identities but people also, in their life courses, were constantly on the move. By focusing in this section on the changing population distribution of people within Cornwall and on the flows of people both within and beyond Cornwall we are reminded of the dynamic aspect of territorial identities. People carry representations of place and construct new representations, simultaneously of new places and of the old places left behind. Their movement, therefore, tells us something of the shifting geography of the Cornish identity in our period, providing a template for the changing representations of Cornwall and the Cornish identified above. We will argue, specifically, that flows of people to new occupational communities carried ideas of 'Cornwall', ideas the heartland of which lay in the mining districts of the west, to new places in Cornwall in the first half of

the nineteenth century. This expanded the popular sense of identity based on the mining region so that it more nearly matched the historic territory of Cornwall that underpinned the literary and antiquarian output of the local intelligentsia. But flows of people beyond the boundaries of the region also bore ideas of Cornwall to places many thousands of miles distant from their origin. These places served as 'reservoirs' of Cornishness, in turn replenishing images of the region at a time when social changes were making these same images less appropriate.

Intra-regional flows

The demand for labour for the booming eighteenth-century copper mines 'could not be recruited from the immediate vicinity of the mines' (Pounds, 1943, 41). Thus, the central mining district between Camborne and Gwennap had to draw in labour from agricultural parishes as well as from the older tin mining districts. Even before 1750 there was a stark contrast between west and east Cornwall. From 1660, the western (mining) hundreds showed a strong population growth at a time when eastern hundreds were losing population. This may be evidence of east-west migration although Barry concludes that natural growth could account for the changing distribution (Barry, 1999, 116-177). Pounds originally suggested that the growing demand for labour from 1750 onwards involved migration from as far away as Devon (Pounds, 1943, 43). However, this seems unlikely as the rate of growth could easily be accommodated by local rises in fertility and short distance migration from other parts of west and mid Cornwall. Rule, in a later study, firmly concluded that 'it would not appear that at any time there was any significant movement into the county from outside' (Rule, 1971a, 6). Comparison of surname distribution changes between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries using the Protestation

Returns and the Census enumerators' books appear to confirm this. For example, preliminary analysis of the surname Jago, almost entirely restricted to east Cornwall in 1641, suggests little movement to the west by 1881. If there was not much movement from east Cornwall then we must assume even less from west Devon.

In contrast, after 1810 the dynamics of expansion flowed from west to east. As mining spread into east Cornwall it took with it a significant proportion of its early labour force. The new mines in the Liskeard district for example attracted only a minority of their labour force from places to the east, the dominant flow being from west to east (Deacon, 1986-87). As a result, in both 1841 and 1861, Cornwall had a higher proportion of native-born among its resident population than any English county, despite the expansion of mining near to its eastern border (Phythian-Adams, 1987, 28). The existence of strongly localised labour markets is indicated by the higher wages paid to farm labourers near the mining districts of Cornwall at mid-century. Hunt estimates that wages in the mining districts were almost 50 per cent higher than in rural Devon (Hunt, 1973, 14). Furthermore, as in industrial northern England, money wages for Cornish agricultural labourers remained stable from 1833 to the 1850s. This was in stark contrast to the experience of southern England where such wages had fallen by 21 per cent (Snell, 1985, 130). So, we might expect a process whereby the core economic area in west Cornwall established links, via migration flows, with a network of parishes for the most part situated entirely within Cornwall.

Before the 1851 Census, when details of the place of birth of individuals become available, it is impossible to identify the parameters of this regional migration network with any degree of confidence. However, sex ratios can be used as a

surrogate indicator of out and in-migration. It might be expected that mining districts, with their demand for male labour, would contain more men than women. Conversely, market towns, where demand for domestic servants was high, would produce a female surplus. For different reasons, linked to the unavailability of work for women, purely farming districts might also show a surplus of men (based on Pryce, 1994, 109). Figure 7.1 shows the districts in Cornwall where the sex ratio differed from the overall English/Welsh ratio by more than two standard deviations in 1801, during a period of rapid population growth. (The territorial units of analysis are based on registration sub-districts.)

Figure 7.1 indicates a block of districts in east Cornwall in 1801 with a surplus of men and some scattered districts in the west with a similar surplus. It is likely that the reasons for these differ. In this period mining activity was extremely limited in the east so the surplus of men is likely to be the result of the exodus of women to the towns in search of work. This is clearly indicated on the map by the sex ratios in the small towns of east Cornwall. And just across the border were the growing towns of Plymouth and Devonport. However, in mid and west Cornwall the male surplus in districts such as St.Austell, Wendron, Hayle, St.Just in Penwith and Towednack may well be the result of mining activity in these areas drawing in men. What is clear is that there was no really large scale gender bias in migration to west Cornish industrial districts in the late eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the female surplus in a belt of

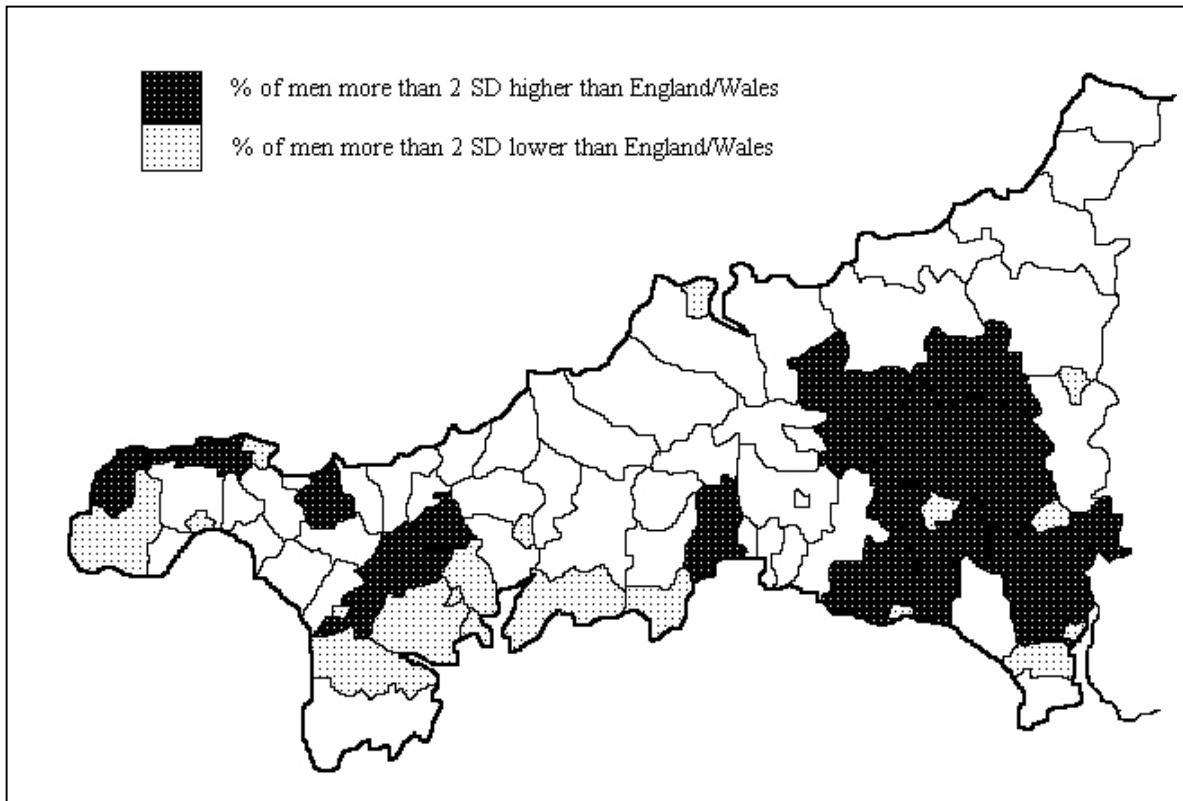


Figure 7.1. Sex ratios, 1801. Calculated from 1801 Census

rural parishes between Mevagissey in the east to St. Buryan in the west may indicate an out-migration of men either to nearby mining districts or to maritime occupations. As Figure 7.2 overleaf indicates, agricultural east Cornwall also experienced a slower population growth after 1801. Those districts with higher population growth correlate closely with the mining industry.

For a clearer picture of the migration system in the second quarter of the nineteenth century we can turn to the census enumerators' books. The method adopted here is based on that used by W.T.R. Pryce in his work on the migration matrix in North East Wales in the mid-nineteenth century (Pryce, 1975). Pryce's work remains the prototype for this kind of research as a literature search rather surprisingly reveals

no other major studies of regional migration networks using the CEBs. This is partly because of the large numbers involved and the time required to extract the data and

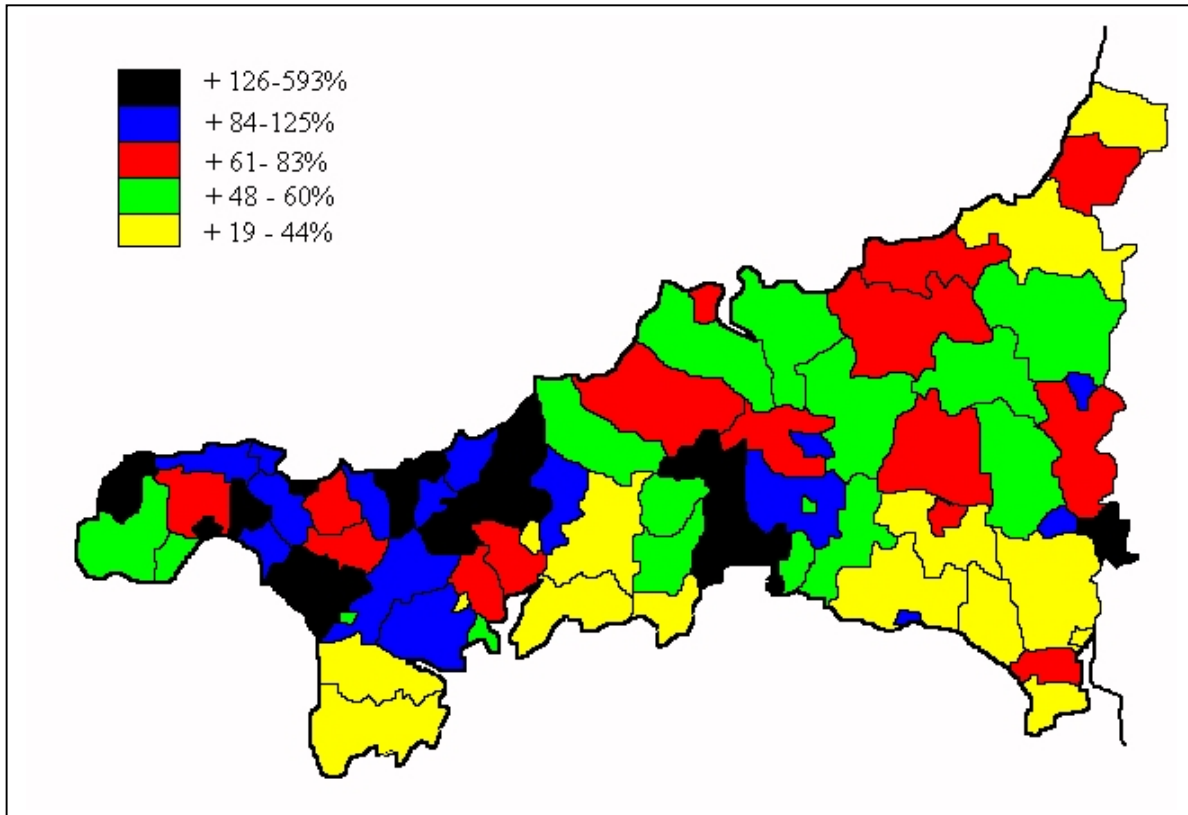


Figure 7.2 Population change 1801-1841. Based on published Census Reports, 1801-1841.

partly because of the difficulties involved in identifying relevant boundaries for the migration network in advance. The second of these difficulties is largely overcome in the Cornish case, as Cornwall is surrounded on three sides by the sea and there are relatively few 'leakages' outside the regional system (The obvious leakage is Plymouth. For information on Cornish migration to Plymouth before 1851 see Brayshay and Pointon, 1984). To some extent, the first problem can be reduced through adopting a systematic sampling method, using the household as the

sampling unit and registration sub-districts as the basic sampling frame. This method has been adopted here with the added refinement that sub-district boundaries were redrawn to allow for the analysis of some of the towns and parishes of more than 3,000 population separately from larger sub-districts. This results in 76 sampling districts within Cornwall. In order to maintain confidence in the sample and reduce sampling error, variable sample proportions were adopted, from one household in two in the less densely populated rural sub-districts of the far north to one in nine in Camborne. These proportions guaranteed total sample numbers in excess of 800 for the vast majority of sub-districts, which meant that 95 per cent confidence intervals for point estimates are mostly within the range ± 4 per cent. The main difference from Pryce's method is that in the present research only those aged 14 or over have been included in the sample in order to focus on voluntary migration.

Pryce constructed maps of estimated gross and net migration flows between neighbouring districts based on lifetime migration. Gross flows show the migration process and net flows provide a measure of the outcome. Adopting the same procedure in Cornwall results in the net flows shown in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3 indicates a complex interchange of population with a less obvious directional bias than the clear west-east stream towards the coalfield areas around Wrexham and the south-north movement towards the coast that Pryce discovered in north east Wales. The greater volume of migration west of Truro reflects the larger population in the industrial west. Within this area, the attraction of the towns of Penzance, Falmouth and Truro is clear, whereas Camborne and Illogan are also the foci of moves to the central mining district. Certain remoter or upland rural areas appear to act as a reservoir of migrants, notably St. Buryan in the far west,

Towednack in the north of Penwith, the Meneage peninsula and Wendron/Stithians, a sub-district

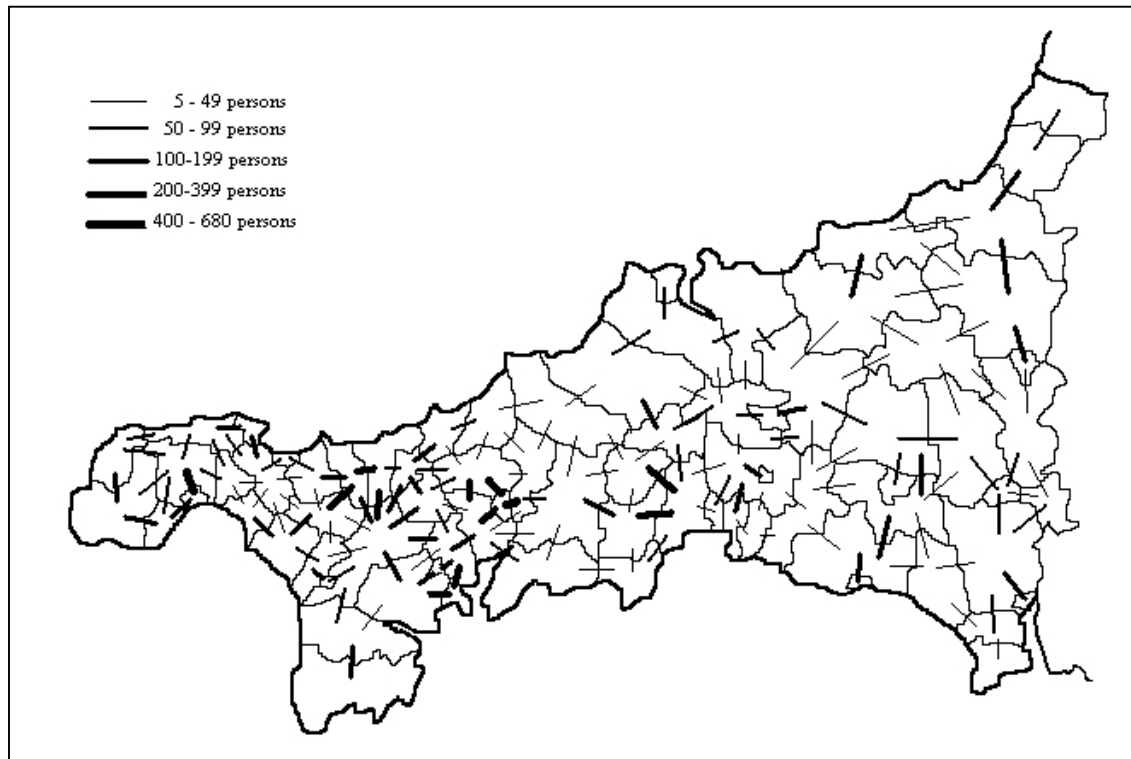


Figure 7.3. Estimated net migration flows between adjacent districts, 1851. Based on sample from Census enumerators' books.

on the Carnmenellis upland. Similarly, in mid-Cornwall St. Stephens in Brannel was also a net supplier of migrants to surrounding districts. Here, the mining area of St. Austell, St. Blazey and Tywardreath is a secondary focus of migration separated from the Truro area by a zone where gross migration flows resulted in a balance of movements in both directions. Further east there is some suggestion of a north-south flow, with the newer mining districts of St. Cleer and Menheniot exerting a noticeable, though hardly spectacular, pull on surrounding areas.

However Figure 7.3 obscures the situation somewhat. If the overall flows are disaggregated by gender two rather different maps result. Figure 7.4 shows the major gross moves of men at this point in the mid-nineteenth century. It also shows all major flows, not just those between neighbouring districts.¹ This can be compared with Figure 7.5 showing the major female gross moves.



Figure 7.4. Gross moves of men, 1851. Estimated from CEB sample.

There are two obvious contrasts. First, women seem to be generally far more mobile. Second, the influence of the towns of Truro, Camborne, Redruth, Penzance and Falmouth on female migration patterns is marked.

¹ In this and the following three maps only moves of 100 or 50 plus are shown. This is done for two reasons. First, including only the major flows makes it easier to highlight those that were significant, decreasing the 'noise' that



Figure 7.5. Gross moves of women, 1851. Estimated from CEB sample.

Rural-urban moves are even clearer when estimated net migration flows of women are mapped (Figure 7.6). There were four major foci for female migrants - Penzance, Camborne, Falmouth and Truro. These towns exerted a pull over a wide area of West Cornwall, with net migration flows to Truro from as far east as St.Columb, to Penzance from the Scilly Isles and to Camborne, Penzance and Falmouth from the St.Keverne district. There were, in addition, net inter-urban flows from places like Redruth and Helston to Falmouth and Falmouth/ Penzance respectively. To the east

would otherwise be present. Second, when analysing sub-sets the smaller flows may be more apparent than real, as the standard error of the sample rises.



Figure 7.6. Net moves of women, 1851, Estimated from CEB sample.

there are no equally strong rural-urban flows, the moves into St.Austell parish from the west being part of a more general shift towards the booming parish of St.Blazey to its east.

Turning to the net migration flows of men (Figure 7.7) the role of Truro, Penzance and Falmouth is reduced but the attraction of Camborne and the mining heartland becomes more distinct. Camborne received estimated net migration flows in excess of 50 from eight other districts and there is a particularly strong south-north migration flow from the agricultural Meneage peninsula towards Camborne and Illogan. Furthermore, welded onto this movement to the central mining district and to the towns of Penzance, Falmouth and Truro there is striking evidence of net

long-distance movement from west to east as miners and others responded in the 1830s and 1840s to

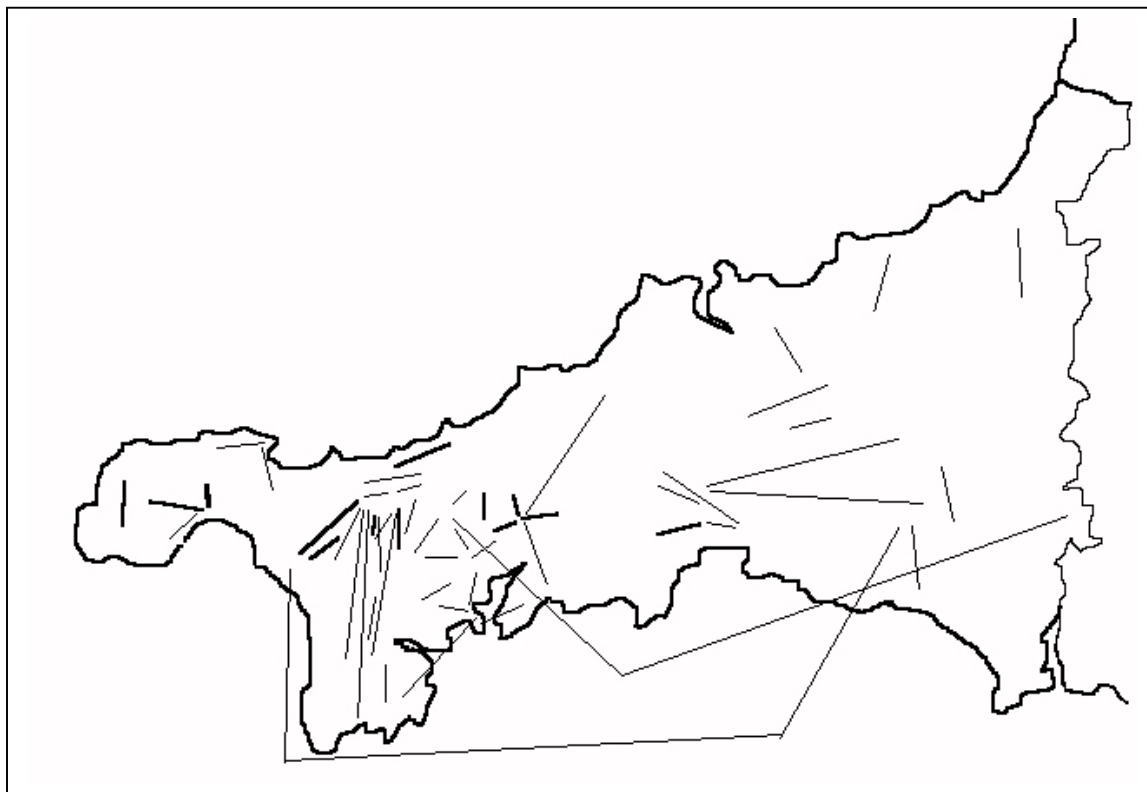


Figure 7.7. Net moves of men, 1851. Estimated from CEB sample.

the expansion of mining in east Cornwall. Net flows from Gwennap to Calstock and from Breage to Menheniot show up on this map, as does the movement from St. Austell in mid-Cornwall to Liskeard and St. Cleer.

Overall, the maps based on the 1851 CEBs portray a labour market for industrial west Cornwall restricted to the western half of the region. However, the long-distance moves from west to east parallel the extension of the industrial region eastwards after the mid-1830s and suggest the labour market for the newer mining districts encompassed the older heartlands of Cornish mining. This was certainly what was most striking for contemporaries like John Allen who, writing in Liskeard

in the early 1850s, noted how 'the dialect of the people grew more provincial and Cornish than before' (Allen, 1856, 398). In this observation Allen both re-emphasised the cultural hegemony within Cornwall of the west and revealed how the operation of the local labour market was extending the cultural patterns most associated with the west to other parts of Cornwall as they too industrialised. It is likely that similar west-east movements accompanied the earlier development of mining in the St.Austell district in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. This is borne out by the fact that many of the apparent long-distance moves to east Cornwall at mid-century were step-migration moves via the St.Austell district (Deacon, 1986-87).

We might conclude, therefore, that the historical geography of the Cornish mining industry helped to disseminate both the representations of Cornwall and Cornishness and the discourses of differentiation that had originally emerged most strongly in the towns and villages of industrialising west Cornwall. Thus, a view of the Cornish as 'paragons of industrialisation' fitted the historic territory of Cornwall much more neatly by the 1850s than it had done in the 1790s. And the migration flows themselves reinforced both local myths of 'industrial civilisation' and the role of mining as an icon of Cornish culture. Indeed, migration links had, by the 1850s, spilled over the administrative border with Devon. As copper mining rapidly expanded in that district from 1844, the industrial proto-region, showing no respect for historic boundaries, was extending its influence into the mining parishes around Tavistock in west Devon.

Some have seen this as pushing 'the frontier of Greater Cornwall' across the Tamar (Payton, 1999, 16). Yet, the interesting contrast here is with the contemporaneous, and quantitatively far greater, movement to Plymouth, also in

west Devon. Nobody makes similar claims for this movement. The reasons are clear. Although important in absolute numbers the relative influence of the Cornish in Plymouth was less marked, being around 10-12 per cent of the city's population in 1851 (Brayshay and Pointon, 1984). But much more important, the gender and status components of this migration stream differed markedly from that to the Tavistock district. Women were far more prominent in the city-ward movement. In addition, those women heading for Plymouth tended to be young single, uneducated and untrained, attracted to Plymouth by the possibility of domestic service (Walkowitz, 1980, 154). Overall, migration to Plymouth seems to have been the option for the very poor and dispossessed, migrants outside networks of strong kin support and lacking the resources to go further afield (for evidence see Smith, 1954). Yet the Cornish identity was, by the 1840s, clearly a male gendered identity, resting on symbols of industrial civilisation and the mining industry. The migrants to Plymouth do not sit happily with the notion of the prototype 'Cornish' skilled mine worker. Meanwhile, by the 1840s, other migration flows were adding to this movement to east Cornwall and west Devon.

Extra-regional flows

The 1851 CEBs, with their suggestion of complex short-distance moves between adjacent mining parishes do not support Burt's contention that in Cornwall 'extreme parochialism restricted such short-distance movements, with many miners preferring to emigrate to distant villages rather than the next village' (Burt, 1984, 197). The original informant for Burt's comment, L.L.Price, was writing towards the end of the century and was imbued by a romanticism (as the title of his work *West*

Barbary suggests) that preferred to view widespread overseas emigration, rather oddly, as an example of parochialism (L.L.Price, 1891. And see Baines (1985, 159). But what is important here is the reminder that, after the 1830s, internal migration in Cornwall co-existed with major emigration flows. It is the volume of these latter that made Cornwall distinctive in comparison with most other industrial regions. However, it was not 'parochialism' that caused this emigration. Rather, it was the location of the Cornish miner in a wider labour market, one that, by the 1830s, should be seen in global terms, resulting in the observation by Robert Louis Stevenson in 1857 that the Cornish were 'the most locomotive of mankind' (cited in Rowe, 1967).

First, we need to put these patterns of emigration in context. As already noted in chapter 6, the population of Cornwall rose at a rate similar to the English and Welsh norm in the first decades of the nineteenth century. In the 1820s and 1830s this growth rate fell slightly below the English level but if Cornwall is compared with other counties and regions it can be seen from Table 7.1 that it was still growing considerably faster than the neighbouring agricultural counties to the east.

Table 7.1: Population growth rates in selected areas, 1801-1861 (%)

	1801-21	1821-41	1841-61
England and Wales	+ 34.9	+ 32.6	+ 26.1
Cornwall	+ 35.8	+ 31.1	+ 8.0
Devon	+ 28.8	+ 21.6	+ 9.6
Somerset	+ 30.1	+ 22.4	+ 2.1
Dorset	+ 26.6	+ 20.8	+ 7.8
Northumberland and Durham	+ 27.9	+ 41.3	+ 48.4
Lancashire and Cheshire	+ 52.8	+ 55.9	+ 42.3
West Riding	+ 41.5	+ 43.8	+ 29.6
Glamorgan and Monmouthshire	+ 52.8	+ 71.9	+ 61.1
Shropshire	+ 17.2	+ 13.9	+ 6.7

Source: Census 1861: Summary tables, xiv

Nevertheless, Cornwall's rate of population growth after the 1820s did not keep up with the larger industrial regions. Before 1821 Cornwall's population grew faster than that in north east England and only a little slower than the west Midlands but these latter regions surpassed Cornwall during the third decade of the century. And after the 1830s, Cornwall's growth rate was not much different from the levels in agrarian regions like south west England or the failed industrial region of Shropshire.

Overall, the declining growth rate in Cornwall, from 18.4 per cent in the 1810s to 13.6 per cent in the 1830s, fell more quickly than the English rate. After 1841 this divergence became much more marked, as Table 7.2 shows.

Table 7.2: Decadal Population change, England/Wales and Cornwall, 1801-1861

	(%)		
	England/Wales	Cornwall	Percentile difference
1801-11	+ 14.6	+ 14.7	+ 0.1
1811-21	+ 18.1	+ 18.4	+ 0.3
1821-31	+ 15.8	+ 15.4	- 0.4
1831-41	+ 14.5	+ 13.6	- 0.9
1841-51	+ 12.7	+ 3.9	- 8.8
1851-61	+ 11.9	+ 3.9	- 8.0

Source: Census 1861: Summary tables, xiv

The decades of the 1840s and 1850s, decades during which the output and income of Cornish mining continued to rise at least until the mid-1850s, was a period when Cornish population growth slowed dramatically. This relative slowdown prefigured the absolute fall in numbers after the mid 1860s as the mining sector contracted.

This changing demographic pattern was symptomatic of growing numbers choosing to leave Cornwall after the late 1830s. Baines has demonstrated how Cornwall after 1861 was the major emigration region of the UK outside Ireland (and, presumably, the Scottish Highlands) with migration rates for both men and women that were three times the mean for England and Wales (Baines, 1985, 152-153).

Cornwall alone lost 118,500 people (overseas), the equivalent of over 40% of its young adult males and over 25% of its young adult females ... Assuming that the rate of return to Cornwall was about the same as to England and Wales as a whole, gross emigration must have been about 20% of the male Cornish-born population in each decade and about 10% of the female. This is not as high as from the famous regions of Italy, some of which achieved emigration rates of 30% or more per decade, but it must be remembered

that mass emigration from Italy lasted for not much more than twenty years (Baines, 1985, 157).

In a footnote Baines further points out that, as the numbers returning to Italy were far higher, the difference was narrower than this. Cornwall lost about 8 per cent of its population per decade over a period of 40 years, compared with a loss of 15 per cent per decade from southern Italy in a period of less than 20 years.

But this emigration was not triggered by the economic crises heralding the beginnings of de-industrialisation in the later 1860s. It was the continuation of an earlier process that can be dated back at least to the end of the 1830s (Payton, 1996c). Some of the earliest emigrants went to South America, but the two principal destinations were North America and Australia. Rowse has suggested that the USA was the place 'to which the Cornish have emigrated in larger numbers than anywhere else' (Rowse, 1967, ii). More recent work suggests that, while North America was the most popular destination in the 1840s, it was overshadowed in the 1850s by a buoyant emigration stream to Australia (Payton, 1987, 114-115; Lay, 1995).

However, the total number of emigrants cannot easily be aggregated from the fragmentary evidence of the various individual migration streams. An alternative method is to estimate flow volumes from the published Census figures. The results are shown in Table 7.3 below. This indicates that overseas emigration was more significant than migration to England and Wales before the 1870s. Allowing for return migration possibly as many as 60,000 people left Cornwall for overseas destinations in the 1840s and 1850s. It was only with the onset of economic crises that migration to England and Wales (temporarily) exceed emigration. (For details of the Cornish migration to England and Wales see Deacon, 1998b).

Table 7.3: Net migration from Cornwall, 1841-1900

	net Cornish migration to counties in England and Wales (% of population)	net Cornish emigration (% of population)	total net out- migration (% of population)
1841- 1851	16300 (4.76)	21300 (6.22)	37600 (10.98)
1851- 1861	18400 (5.17)	24100 (6.78)	42500 (11.95)
1861- 1871	26200 (7.09)	38100 (10.72)	54300 (17.81)
1871- 1881	40800 (11.26)	35600 (9.82)	76400 (21.08)

Source: 1861-1881 from Baines, 1985, 289; 1841-61 calculated from published Census and Registrar-General's Annual Statistics. For method see Baines, 1985.

Somewhat paradoxically, more is known of the destinations of emigrants than of their precise origins within Cornwall. The 1841 Emigration Census suggests that the bulk of Cornish emigrants in that year were miners from the Camborne-Redruth district or farmers from the Lizard. The location of applicants for free passage to South Australia in 1836-40 also suggests that those districts in Cornwall that saw the greatest relative demand either were urban (Launceston, Penryn) or mining (St. Blazey, St. Agnes, Gwennap) or both (Redruth) (from Payton, 1987). The main exception to this pattern was a group of rural districts to the north and east of Bodmin Moor: Altarnun, Linkinhorne and Stokeclimsland. Sub-Districts where

applicants for free passage amounted to more than 0.5 per cent of the 1831 population are shown in Figure 7.8.

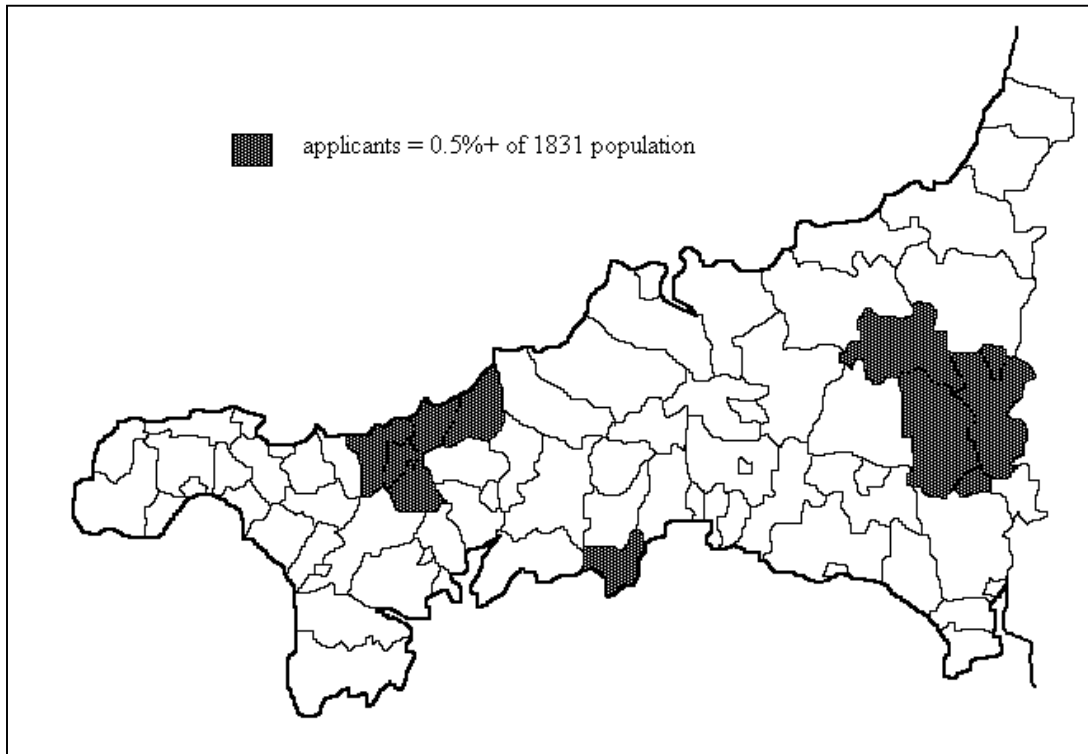


Figure 7.8. Origins of applicants for free passage to South Australia, 1836-40 (calculated from Payton, 1987).

However, if we look at another migration stream to Australia, over a longer and later period, then we find a rather different picture. Assisted emigration to New South Wales over the period 1837-60 (with the bulk of arrivals during the 1850s) was much less dominated by miners, who accounted for a mere 15 per cent of male emigrants in this period (Lay, 1995). The origins of those immigrants who provided details of parish of origin for the official records in New South Wales indicate that urban places such as Penryn, Truro and Helston were still prominent, as were mining districts such as Kenwyn/Chacewater, Gwennap and Perranzabuloe. But

rural, agricultural districts more peripheral to the industrial region also figure in this emigration stream, notably St. Keverne and St. Buryan, districts we have already identified as sources of net internal migration within Cornwall in this period.

Having outlined the major patterns of emigration before the 1860s how might these trends be explained? Historians have explained overseas emigration in two main ways. First, they have adopted what Baines calls 'determination of migration models', attempting to relate changes in emigration rates to changes in economic conditions either in the country of origin or the country of destination or both (Baines, 1994). This emphasis on relative economic conditions (whether wages or employment opportunities as the main driving force has remained a subject of some debate - see for example Gould, 1979) clearly has affinities with earlier push/pull models of emigration. Although these are now regarded as problematic because of the difficulty of differentiating between push and pull effects and because of the undynamic view of migration that it implies (Pryce, 1994, 13), push/pull classifications are still the main explanatory device used by writers on Cornish emigration.

For example, Newell uses a simple explanatory framework of the push factors of depression in the Cornish economy interacting with the pull of attractive employment opportunities overseas (Newell, 1988, 61). While in a broad sense this was no doubt the case, it cannot explain the strength and the continuity of the Cornish emigration process in the 1850s when the Cornish economy was hardly depressed and when Cornish mining reached new production peaks. Similarly, Payton sees rural poverty in the 1830s and the 'hungry forties' combining with the discovery of mineral reserves in Australia and the United States (Payton, 1995b, 61-62). As Baines suggests, such 'economic' frameworks may to some extent

explain the timing of migration (Baines, 1994, 528), particularly the onset of mass emigration streams in the 1830s and 1840s, but cultural factors and emigration networks (implying feedback of information and chain migration) were probably more important factors by the 1850s. Indeed, it has been argued that, because of its costs, overseas migration peaked not at times of crisis but in good times and among the relatively socially privileged (Wintle, 1992). Certainly, after the 1860s emigration was strongest not in the worst years of recession but in years after severe recessions or in the intermittent boom periods (Duncan, 1963-64; Deacon, 1986b, 47).

What relative income models do not explain is why some people emigrate and others do not and why, given similar economic circumstances, some regions had higher emigration rates than others. Because of these problems historians have become more attracted to the ideas implied in a 'chain migration model' that focuses on the flows of information between origins and destinations. Put simply, this suggests that once a migration route is established the information conveyed back to the originating region by letters and by return migrants stimulates a continuing chain of migrants (Baines, 1991). Therefore, differences in levels of migration are explained to a large extent by differences in previous levels of migration. Such an approach emphasises the dynamic nature of the migration process and also the continuities and networks involved in this process (Jackson and Moch, 1989). It also focuses attention on the family as the key social institution in which migration decisions were taken and suggests that perceptions of conditions overseas may have been more important in the migration decision than some 'objective' economic reality.

Locally, a variety of emigration routes had already been established from Cornwall before mass emigration set in after 1830. For example, as early as 1819 passages on emigration boats from Cornwall to Quebec were being advertised in local newspapers (James-Korany, 1993, 38). In 1817 Richard Trevithick was in South America erecting pumping engines and in 1826 returned emigrants from Central America astonished the natives (at Redruth) by appearing in the street in the dress usually worn by Mexican miners (Payton, 1992a, 110; Michell, 1978, 94). These early pioneers were establishing the networks that enabled others to follow in much larger numbers during the 1840s and 1850s. Nonetheless, the chain migration/flow of information model is not without its own problems. What is difficult to explain, given the model's prediction of continuity (as migration flows grow so information grows and so further migration is stimulated) is how migration streams end and how one chain replaces another. To make this more concrete what made someone in Cornwall emigrate to South Australia rather than North America? Was this just a matter of local fashion or were there different chains for different families or communities? The answers to such questions await more detailed data, particularly about migration streams to North America.

Cornish historians have, until recently, failed to put the Cornish experience of emigration in its proper context. There has been little comparison with other groups or with the broader literature on overseas emigration. However, in the 1990s there was a move towards a more holistic approach to Cornish emigration, one that prioritises synthesis and the drawing together of hitherto compartmentalised strands. Payton (1995b) was among the first to call for this and followed it up by his overview monograph on the Cornish overseas, which deals with most of the major emigration streams (Payton, 1999). Until this point there had been several

studies of individual overseas flows and, while Payton claims they have 'by and large, avoided the worst of the filio-pietistic, antiquarian and parochial approaches that have sometimes marked (and marred) the study of other emigrant ethnic groups in new lands' (Payton, 1999, 27), they remained resolutely idiographic in their methodology, giving pride of place to movements of miners and to conditions in the countries of destination (Payton, 1984; Rowse, 1967; Todd, 1977; Rowe, 1974; Dickason, 1978). Texts on Cornish emigration, sometimes referred to as the 'Great Migration', find it difficult to escape the influence of a heroic tradition that viewed 'emigration (as) the crown of Cornish accomplishment' (Pearce, 1964, 27), a symptom of Cornish energy and enterprise. As a result the hitherto considerable stress on the life histories of individual permanent colonists can still leave a demand for a 'piecing together of a general picture of Cornish emigration, a picture which can then be juxtaposed with other emigrant groups' (James-Korany, 1993, 44). And, it might be added, a picture which can be related to relevant social theory.

One such attempt to put Cornish emigration in its broader context was made by Gill Burke. She argued that the Cornish mineworker played 'a crucial part in the expansion of world metal production during the nineteenth century', being 'a segment of the labour force which could be flexibly deployed wherever there was a need for labour to enable commodity production to expand' (Burke, 1984, 65). Burke's view, in her own words, 'poses a challenge to individualist perspectives' on labour migration and 'to those who interpret labour migration in terms of betterment' (1984, 74/75). Eschewing push and pull factors, Burke insisted that Cornish emigration was 'determined by international development and investment with concomitant shifts in international demand for labour' (1984, 75). It was the particular location of Cornwall's economy in the global activity space of metal

mining that opened it up relatively early to globalising influences. Within these arenas Cornish labour moved overseas, apparently freely, but within a structure determined by Cornwall's place in the international mining economy. Nevertheless, Burke's neo-marxist approach, while having strengths in locating Cornish emigration within the territorial expansion of capitalism, is over-reliant on economic factors and ignores the role of culture as an independent variable. Migrants were not forced to emigrate. They still made choices about whether to go, where to go and, once gone, whether to stay.

To pursue the role of human agency in this process, it is helpful to try to put this Cornish experience into its European context. The older view that emigrants to North America in the first half of the century were those on the margins of industrial society, fleeing bad times and rural poverty, has now been largely undermined (for the earlier view see Jones, 1973, 46). Charlotte Erikson has found that, in 1841, immigrants to the USA were more likely to have been farmers than agricultural labourers while, in proportion to their strength in the whole English labour force, industrial workers were over-represented (Erikson, 1990, 26, 30). With the significant exception of post-famine Ireland, the new explanatory orthodoxy stresses that 'the majority of emigrants must have come from places that were in the mainstream of economic change, not, for example, from the remote rural areas' (Baines, 1985, 281).

The well documented wave of emigration from the remoter agricultural districts of North Cornwall and the Lizard in the early years of mass emigration may go some way towards suggesting that, in contrast, in Cornwall, rural areas peripheral to the major centres of economic change were involved in early emigration (Rowe, 1953, 238/239 and 252. And see Rowe, 1996; James-Korany, 1993). However, this

could itself be a reflection of cultural networks already in place and operating between these places and the industrial areas of Cornwall through chains of internal migration. Furthermore, this emigration was soon swamped by mass emigration of miners and town dwellers.

It has been suggested that industrial emigrants might have been more likely to originate from sectors 'where growth was relatively fast but where technological change was threatening some occupations' (Baines, 1994, 537). Both in Britain and in Germany a large number of emigrants came from declining proto-industrial as opposed to either entirely agricultural areas or from areas of mechanised industry (Erikson, cited in Baines, 1994, 537). Hence it is speculated that population pressure may have been a major cause along with declining demand for particular skills. This is an intriguing suggestion which links back to Burt's speculation about the proto-industrial status of western districts of Cornwall in an earlier period (Burt, 1998). However, there is no obvious case of de-skilling of particular sections of the mines labour force in the 1840s. Nevertheless, the role of population pressure is perhaps one that requires further investigation.

Comparative work has only recently noted this really striking demographic difference between Cornwall and other British industrial regions in the second quarter of the nineteenth century (Deacon, 1998b; Payton, 1999). As we have seen, here was a region where the dynamic sector was still growing yet which was beginning to experience mass emigration on a scale totally unknown in most other industrial regions. In the later nineteenth century when more reliable statistics are available, people were twice as likely to emigrate from Cornwall as from the other industrial regions most prone to emigration, north east England and south Wales. Emigration from the textile regions of Lancashire and Yorkshire and from the west

and east Midlands was, in turn, much lower and ran at rates lower than the mean for England and Wales (Baines, 1985, 152-153. For emigration from Wales see Thomas, 1954 and 1962).

Payton's recent work expands on this comparative perspective, contrasting the Cornish experience with emigration from other parts of 'so-called "Celtic Britain" and Ireland' (Payton, 1999, 22). In particular, he draws attention to the one other part of Britain where high levels of emigration co-existed with industrialisation. Devine has argued that in nineteenth century Scotland emigrants were as likely to be from the industrial Lowlands as the rural Highlands and that Scottish emigration was 'professional and entrepreneurial' in nature, with a high proportion of skilled emigrants (Devine, 1992). This 'distinctively Scottish' emigration experience had its roots in a culture of mobility, established well before the peak years of emigration in the later nineteenth century. Industrialisation combined with cultural expectations, relatively low wages and an open economy to produce an international labour market in Scotland and, unlike in England and Wales, served to stimulate emigration. There are certainly intriguing parallels between Lowland Scotland and Cornwall, although the considerable differences in industrial context and scale and the contrasts in the relative propensity to emigrate need further and more detailed exploration

The Scottish comparison might also raise questions about the homogeneity of the Cornish emigration experience. For example, Hornsby (1992) proposes that there were two distinct Scottish emigration streams to Canada. Emigration from the Highlands was concentrated in a few major channels whereas that from the Lowlands was diffuse. This he links to 'the community nature of Highland emigration, as compared with the more individualistic Lowland movement'

(Hornsby, 1992, 387). Is this similar to the Cornish case? Was there one type of community based migration, predominantly overseas or to industrial regions within the British Isles, originating from rural-industrial parishes and the mining towns, and another, more individualistic, emanating from market towns and coastal districts and supplying a more diffuse migration stream to England? Moreover, does this help to explain why the Cornish identity flourished in some overseas arenas, creating a myth of 'Cousin Jack' that rested on mining skills and culture, and yet not in others?

The openness of the Cornish economy and the global links of its leading sector, metal mining, laid down the necessary conditions for movements overseas. The exploitation of new mining districts during the eighteenth century and the demand for labour in them helped to foster a 'tradition' of mobility. As the mining frontier expanded with late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century colonialism, capital and labour became even more mobile. By the time this happened Cornwall was the major dynamic region for metal mining. So it is unsurprising that the dominant mining region was the source of the relatively skilled labour that newer mining regions sought. In this way Cornish miners acted, in Marx's telling phrase, as the 'light infantry of capital' (cited in Burke, 1984, 65).

Yet this 'light infantry' was also the advance guard for the massed ranks of emigrants, miners and non-miners who travelled the routes established by the expanding mining frontier. Therefore, Payton, in his recent writings on the Cornish emigration, is right to stress the role of an 'emigration culture' which, reinforced by an active 'emigration trade' had been established as early as the 1840s (Payton, 1995b, 61-62). This 'emigration culture' was itself part of a broader regional popular culture, and should be seen as part of a complex of factors including

systems of land tenure, employment relations, the role of Methodism and the absence of a large town to soak up potential emigrants (Baines, 1994, 538). In this last respect it provided a marked contrast to urbanising Scotland. The factors that acted to establish and perpetuate emigration as a popular strategy are explored further in chapters 8 and 9 below.

Conclusion

We can conclude this chapter by tracing the links between this Cornish 'culture of mobility' (Payton, 1999, 29-30) and the territorial identity. Payton suggests that the Lowland Scots 'deployed [their] ethnic identity to assert their particular suitability to the rigours of life on the frontier, stressing thrift, hardiness, determination; their Protestant work ethic' (Payton, 1999, 26). Cornwall's predominantly Methodist culture, committed to self-help, improvement and individual salvation, was also especially suited to this self-image and the Cornish carried this aspect of their identity with them to their communities overseas. Self-help joined with mining prowess to form elements of the 'Cousin Jack' myth overseas (Payton, 1999, 34). In this sense the narrative of Cornwall as 'industrial civilisation' produced in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were important enabling factors in the culture of emigration that was established after the 1830s.

As emigrants carried representations of themselves and of Cornwall with them, the identity of industrial prowess seems to have become more assertive and more sharply delineated on the mining frontiers of South Australia and the United States. It also heightened the distinctiveness of the Cornish experience during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, opening up new family and community links that

were not bound by the parameters of the British nation-state or even the British Empire. These links established inter-connected reservoirs of Cornishness scattered across the globe, reservoirs that, after the 1860s, when de-industrialisation set in at home, acted to replenish myths of 'industrial civilisation' through the mechanism of return migration. Then, the existence of Cornish industrial communities overseas acted to conserve representations that were becoming increasingly inapplicable to a de-industrialising society.²

In terms of the definition of identity established in chapter 1 migration patterns are one aspect of the context of the formation of the Cornish identity. But movements of people did more than just provide a context. They added to integration, by drawing parts of east Cornwall and even west Devon into the mining region through incorporating new districts into the regional labour market after 1830. They produced new elements of distinction, by creating an emigration pattern markedly different from most other industrial regions in Britain. They also carried narratives of Cornishness and Cornwall to other places, and especially overseas, where such narratives fed back via return migration to a later Cornwall in the stages of de-industrialisation. Finally, because of different propensities to emigrate, they alert us to micro-geographical and intra-Cornwall variations. In particular, localised economic difficulties in the mining industry in the 1840s and a noticeable rural-urban tendency in short-distance migration patterns meant that those rural-industrial districts where, as we shall see, the distinct 'proto-industrial' society of eighteenth century Cornwall had most deeply embedded itself were exactly those places that tended to experience the greatest degree of out-migration

² For an analysis of the contrasts between the Cornish identity in Cornwall and overseas at the end of the nineteenth century see Payton, 1999, 374-378.

after the 1830s. This was in turn one factor reinforcing the mid-century process of change already identified in economic terms in chapter 6.

Using Paasi's model, internal migration patterns reinforced the territorial shape of the region in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, aligning the informal institutions of the industrial region with the more formal institutions of the administrative county. At the same time mass emigration flows produced new elements for the symbolic shape of the region, elements that established themselves as part of Cornish identity and that, indeed, continue to resonate in the early twenty-first century (see the growth of Cornish-American and Cornish-Australian societies since the 1980s (Payton, 1999) or the 'Dewhelans' (Homecoming) planned for 2002).

The next chapter turns to another element in the context of Cornish identity and another dominant nineteenth century narrative of Cornishness. In doing this we return to interrogate in more detail the concept of a proto-industrial society in the early nineteenth century Cornish 'region'. The parameters of this society will be ascertained and the pressures leading to structural change from the 1840s identified.