

# COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES AND MIGRATION: SOME EVIDENCE FROM CORNWALL

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*Taking its cue from Pooley and Turnbull's (1998) claim that there is no evidence of any difference in the propensity to migrate by region or settlement size, this article investigates the appropriate scale for migration research. It presents some preliminary findings from a micro-level study of three occupationally contrasting communities in Cornwall in the second half of the 19th century. Reconstructing the migration histories of a cohort of children from the 1851 census enumerators' books and making use of local and online census and civil registration index databases, the study identifies some clear differences in migration patterns and propensity at the community level. Moving from patterns to processes it argues that labour markets and occupational structures remain the most important explanatory variables structuring migration, but that these were mediated at the individual level by the influence of the family which played a key role in facilitating or deterring movement.*

## *The problem*

Tapping into the research of thousands of family historians, Pooley and Turnbull (1998: 86–91) conclude that the experience of migration varied little across the regions of Britain. While peripheral regions such as South-West England, South-East Scotland and, most obviously, the Scottish Highlands were the origin of more long-distance migrants, 'the processes operating in each region were remarkably similar'. Furthermore, despite rural depopulation the direction of movement was not strikingly biased towards bigger towns. In all regions before the 1880s movement from smaller to larger places only barely exceeded moves from larger to smaller places; after the 1880s they were in balance (Pooley and Turnbull 1998: 145). A small net movement up the settlement hierarchy in the 19th century disguised large gross circulatory movements both up and down the hierarchy, a pattern replicated across all regions, reinforcing the uniformity of British migration. Their findings led Pooley and Turnbull to claim that 'there is no evidence of any difference in the propensity to migrate by region or settlement size' (Pooley and Turnbull 1998: 326). However, this conclusion would appear to run counter to both intuition and the hitherto-accepted assumptions of migration historians. Jackson and Moch (1989) claimed that migrant selection worked in different ways according to labour markets and geographical location. This is supported by other empirical work on

British late 19th-century migration which, in contrast to Pooley and Turnbull, reasserts the existence of strong migration flows from low wage agricultural districts to high wage urban areas (Boyer and Hatton 1997). Such strikingly different conclusions appear to result from differential foci — on the one hand net and the other gross migration flows.

Although the guru of British migration history, E. G. Ravenstein, said little about the differential tendency to migrate by place of origin — his relevant ‘law’ that the natives of towns were less migratory than those of rural areas being largely discounted by historians (Grigg 1977) — others have been less reticent. Focusing on the process of emigration overseas rather than migration within the UK, Dudley Baines (1991) has pointed to contrasts across Europe, with markedly different emigration rates at both national and regional levels. Within England and Wales significant differences occurred at a county level, with net overseas migration in the later 19th century varying from a high of 10.5% of men in Cornwall to just 1.3% in Bedfordshire (Baines 1985: 150–51). These findings are supported by work on other parts of Europe. For example, emigration rates in the 19th century varied considerably in the Netherlands, where there was ‘great diversity’ (Wintle 1992). Meanwhile, scholars of Scandinavian emigration have found a difference between large and small towns in terms of the decision whether to emigrate or to move within the nation-state (Norman and Rundblom 1988: 79).

While agreeing that most migration cancelled itself out, Whyte (2000: 174) still recognizes that ‘communities which gained or lost population on a significant scale as a result of migration did exist’. The question thus centres on the most appropriate scale for identifying these spatial differences. Baines (1991) has suggested that the real emigration unit may not be the region but the village, or even the family. This is echoed by Pooley and Turnbull themselves, who do ‘not deny the significance of local variations related to particular circumstances pertaining to a village or town’ (Pooley and Turnbull 1998: 90). In consequence, there has been a variety of calls for more local-scale studies of migration that might link population movement to the life-cycle, family background and the social and economic character of communities. Baines concludes that local studies might yield more ‘insight about motivation than large-scale quantitative analyses’ (Baines 1994) and Pryce (2000) supports this, urging that micro-level analyses may help us isolate variables that are hidden at a macro-level while, moreover, encouraging a greater engagement with migration processes rather than migration patterns. Hitherto, such detailed work has been based on family reconstitution methods and been largely confined to the period before 1820 (King 1997a, 1997b). However, the availability of computerized databases of the 19th-century census enumerators’ books (CEBs) and the appearance of digitized indexes to the civil registration records of marriages and deaths, now provide an opportunity to trace individuals over time, using nominal record linkage, and to reconstruct the life (and migration) histories of individuals, families and communities in the later 19th century. This potentially frees the study of migration based on the CEBs from the confines formerly imposed by a necessary focus on one or a few places and, because of the difficulties in terms of time and resources in tracking out-migrants, to in-migration only.

### *The method*

Making use of these possibilities, the research on which this paper is based set out to reconstruct the migration history of three economically contrasting districts. To do this

I attempted to trace all those children aged 0 to 9 in the 1851 Census up to 1901 or to their death, identifying the patterns of their movement and relating this to their family and occupational backgrounds. The aim was to try to understand why some individuals moved whereas others stayed. The central sources for the project were the CEBs and the indexes to the civil registration records. The former were accessed through two computerized databases, the first restricted to Cornwall and the second allowing searches across England and Wales. The Cornwall Family History Society (CFHS) has transcribed all of the 1841–91 CEBs and entered the records into an Access database. A search facility has been built into this, allowing rapid searches first by surname and first name and second by first name and parish of birth. Given the combination of transcription errors, spelling changes, name changes, age drift and variations in the parishes of birth that crop up in the CEBs some sort of human checking appears inevitable in order to maximize the traces, which are not infrequently based on the context of the rest of the household rather than the record of the actual individual. Nominal record linkage thus proceeded through a computer mediated manual linkage (for a similar approach, see Tilley 2002).

The first stage of the project traced the age cohort within Cornwall. The second stage involved searching the UK census database available at [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk) for those who had moved outwith Cornwall. Unfortunately, the proportion of transcription errors in the Ancestry database is far higher than in the CFHS database. Crucially, names of parishes suffer particularly from transcription error, either by the enumerator at the time of the Census, especially in the case of those migrating a long distance, or by the transcription process employed by Ancestry. For example, a sample revealed that around 22% of Cornish parish names are misspelt in the Ancestry database. However, many of those spelling differences were minor and many also appear at the end of the word and therefore do not seriously compromise a computer search. Furthermore, a proportion of those which contained a potentially fatal spelling error at the beginning of the word were decipherable on closer inspection with the advantage of local knowledge. For example, someone listed as born in St Tostel was obviously from St Austell. As a result, in practice only around 2 to 3% of placenames remained impossible to interpret.

During both of these stages the partial FreeBMD database of the civil registration marriage and death register indexes was also consulted, supplementing local ecclesiastical parish registers. This was especially important for picking up women's name changes on marriage. While, as we shall see, many female members of the cohort were thus identified, this could never be 100%. This is because of the scarcity of the information in the marriage indexes and the near impossibility of identifying the marriage of women with common names such as Elizabeth Williams, or those who married after moving to a large town or city. A similar caveat applies even more to the mortality indexes. The addition of age of death data after 1865 increases the likelihood of matching a death but for those bearing a common name it is difficult to establish a certain link to an entry in the death index. Absence of age data made it especially difficult to trace those children dying in the 1850s. However, this latter problem was overcome to an extent by searching the parish burial registers of the districts selected and this did allow for the identification of a proportion of childhood mortality.

*The communities*

These sources and methods were applied to three contrasting communities in mid-Cornwall; Falmouth, St Agnes, and a group of nine rural parishes to the east of Truro. Each provided between 1,300 and 1,800 children in 1851. While all three districts have been searched using the CFHS database, tracing via Ancestry is still in progress. Therefore, the preliminary results presented here are based on three smaller areas within these three communities. Each comprises around 270 of the research cohort, in total 808 cohort members, or just over a fifth of the total cohort.

The first was a densely populated enumeration district in Falmouth, centred on High Street, Market Strand and Webber Street, the core of the town of around 8,000 people that had grown up since the 16th century on the banks of one of the world's deepest natural harbours. The people living in these streets followed a range of occupations as the district included the shops fronting the High Street as well as courts and alleys tucked away behind the High Street and in Webber Street, then a packed hive of housing for the poor. Contrasting with this densely populated urban environment, the other two districts were situated in rural Cornwall.

The second district included two enumeration districts in St Agnes, a parish on the opposite, northern coast of Cornwall, 20 miles across country. These districts included a part of the village of St Agnes and a swathe of countryside stretching north-east and south-east from the village. The names of some of the dispersed hamlets of this area — Goonbell, Goonown, Goonlaze — with their common element of *goon*, Cornish for down, hints at the open, largely treeless plateau with its cottages huddled down trying to escape the relentless winds sweeping in off the Atlantic. But up to and beyond the high cliffs fronting the sea, mines were being worked, mainly for tin but with some copper, and the enumeration districts made up an example of a classic mid-19th-century Cornish rural industrial landscape. This was small-scale yet relatively densely populated, with scattered cottages and hamlets linked by paths and lanes snaking their way through a chaotic jumble of smoking engine houses and other industrial buildings, shafts and waste tips.

A third district completes the trio investigated here. Like St Agnes, this was also rural, but it was very different, comprising far less densely populated countryside to the south-east of Truro and the north of the Roseland district. Moreover, it was untouched by Cornwall's ubiquitous mid-19th-century mining industry. Four enumeration districts included five small parishes across a rolling landscape dissected by deep wooded valleys. This was a district of relatively good soils, one of Cornwall's granaries, divided into farms larger than the Cornish norm. It was also dominated by a gentry class, the most visible of which were the Boscauens of Tregothnan, a family that had made its money from tin trading in Truro and then in the 16th century moved to its landed estate on the eastern banks of the Fal. By the 19th century the Boscauens owned virtually all of two of the five parishes in this district — St Michael Penkivel and Lamorran. They were also major landowners in a third, Merther. The other two parishes — Ruanlanihorne and Cornelly — were less directly controlled by the family but were, like the first three parishes, predominantly made up of farmers and their labourers.

These geographical and economic contrasts therefore produced contrasting occupational structures, as Table I indicates. The St Agnes and Roseland districts were

TABLE I: Occupations of Those Aged Over 14 in Study Areas, 1851

Occupations	Falmouth		St Agnes		Roseland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Men						
Crafts and industry	42.5	21	26	13	24	13
Retail	45	22	4	2	9	5
Mining	1	0	134.5	69	0	0
Agriculture	2	1	13.5	7	132	69
Maritime	43	21	1	1	4	2
Other and none	69.5	34	16	8	23	12
Total	203		195		192	
Women						
Crafts	22	26	11	26	4.5	9
Retail	19	22	3	7	1	2
Domestic service	38	45	3	7	18	36
Mining	0	0	17	40	0	0
Agriculture	1	1	3	7	2.5	50
Other	5	6	5	12	1.5	3
Total	85		42		50	

Source: 1851 Census enumerators' books, CFHS database.

dominated by single occupations — mining and farming respectively — whereas Falmouth possessed a more diversified occupational structure and, furthermore, one of the highest proportions of female paid employment in Cornwall.

### *The patterns*

An area where a consensus exists among migration historians is that of age selectivity. People were most likely to move in their early to mid-20s, an age that corresponds with the mean age of marriage and the formation of new households. Pooley and Turnbull point out that this pattern was quite stable over time and varied little between the sexes (Pooley and Turnbull 1998: 207–08). Therefore, given this universal pattern of migration in the early part of the life cycle, if people were to move they were more likely to have done so before they reached their mid-30s. Indeed studies of a wide range of villages in eastern England collated by Dennis Mills indicate that the native-born proportion in the 19th century fell steadily from age 0–4 to 30–34 but then stabilized, suggesting that individuals became less prone to move in their 30s, at least outside the parish (Mills and Schurer 1996: 225). With this in mind I have adopted the location of my cohort in 1881, when they were aged 31–39, as the basis for the analysis below.

Table II shows the proportion of the cohort that has been traced over a generation to 1881. Their location is expressed as a percentage of the estimated survivors in 1881, calculated by applying the age-specific survival probability of the Registration District to each male and female cohort (for the method adopted, see Hinde 2004). Of those expected to survive, the hit rates vary between just under a half in the case of women in St Agnes to over three-quarters for men in Falmouth. In both St Agnes and north

TABLE II: Study Area Cohorts Traced to 1881

	<i>Cohort</i> 1851	<i>Expected</i> <i>survivors</i> 1881	<i>Traced</i> <i>to</i> 1881	<i>Location</i> 1881 ( <i>% of expected survivors</i> )				
				Study area	Other Cwll	Other UK	at sea	untraced
<b>Men</b>								
Falmouth	131	81	63	41	10	21	6	22
St Agnes	144	91	48	26	14	11	1	47
Roseland	129	90	62	22	34	11	1	31
<b>Women</b>								
Falmouth	136	90	55	33	10	18	0	39
St Agnes	133	86	42	27	15	6	1	51
Roseland	135	95	62	19	40	6	0	35

Source: Census enumerators' books, CFHS and Ancestry UK Census databases.

Roseland the proportion of women traced is not greatly lower than that for men, suggesting the method employed has succeeded in picking up a high number of those surviving women who had married and changed their surname. But in Falmouth there is a stark gender difference. However, this results more from the very high proportion of males traced than females untraced. At present it is unclear why Falmouth should be so exceptional in the proportion of men traced, although this is probably linked to the higher number of the cohort who stayed in the town. For both men and women, the St Agnes cohort was least likely to be traced.

If we turn our attention to the location of the cohort in 1881, the traces reveal significant differences, more obvious across communities than by gender. Both girls and more especially boys born in Falmouth were most likely still to be living in the town 30 years later, an indication of the more dynamic demand for labour there. Of those who had moved, about a fifth went out of Cornwall and only 10% were to be found west of the River Tamar. The St Agnes cohort was somewhat more likely to be found in other parts of Cornwall and less likely to have persisted in St Agnes, where income in real terms from the dominant mining industry had fallen by 22% from the mid-1850s to 1881 (calculated from Burt, Waite and Burnley 1987). Both St Agnes and Roseland cohorts were much less likely than their Falmouth counterparts to have migrated out of Cornwall, although here we find a gender difference, with men twice as likely to leave Cornwall as women. Moreover, Roseland cohort members were less likely still to be living in the study parishes but much more likely to be found in other parts of Cornwall, a pattern reflecting the agricultural population's greater rate of circulatory movement around the countryside.

When we focus on the direction of the flows of migrants clear differences emerge. Sixty-three per cent of the males and 70% of the females from the agricultural parishes were living in other rural parishes, while nearby Truro was home to the largest number of rural-urban migrants from these parishes. Of those who left Cornwall, eight of the nine Roseland men had gone to London and the south-east of England, but only one of the seven women, who were scattered singly from Liverpool to Lifton, just across the border in Devon. Men from St Agnes also shared in a predilection to migrate to other rural parishes, with nine or 69% of the 13 migrants within Cornwall making such a

move. For women, however, the towns were more popular. In contrast to the agricultural Roseland only five, or 38%, of women from rural mining St Agnes were still living in rural parishes. Also, when men left St Agnes for destinations outside Cornwall they were much more likely to move northwards to other mining regions; five of the eleven moved to Northumberland, Durham and Cumbria, and another three to South Wales. This was less the case for women. Only one woman was traced to those regions; instead three of the six long-distance female migrants were found in the south-east of England.

Falmouth was different again. Here all but one of the migrants who stayed in Cornwall went to other towns in Cornwall. This striking propensity to move to other towns is also noticeable when we look at the destinations of the Falmouth cohort who left Cornwall. Almost a third of the men moved to the naval ports of Devonport and Portsmouth, with another three traced on board Royal Navy ships. Another five were living in London and the south-east in 1881 with four more found in Lancashire and South Wales. Just over half (8 of 15) of the Falmouth long-distance female migrants were living in Devonport, Plymouth, Portsmouth and Southampton. Two others were found in other parts of Devon and Somerset, although one of these was an involuntary migrant incarcerated in Exeter Penitentiary, and five were in London, the south-east and East Anglia. Not one woman from Falmouth had made the move to the north of England or to Wales.

Although numbers are small, these findings imply a significant difference in the direction of migration out of our communities. Around half or more of the male and female migrants from the rural districts moved to other rural places. In contrast, migrants from urban Falmouth were much more likely to move to other urban places or up the settlement hierarchy. Very few moved to rural parishes as Table III indicates.

Finally, the significantly higher proportion of the St Agnes cohort that is untraced must include an unknown proportion migrating overseas. The strong correlation that exists at a Registration Sub-District level between emigration to North America and the

TABLE III: Moves from the Study Areas by Destination Settlement Type

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
Falmouth			
to rural areas	2	1	3 (6)
to small towns	11	16	27 (54)
to large towns	13	7	20 (40)
total	27	24	51
St Agnes			
to rural areas	11	11	22 (51)
to small towns	9	8	17 (40)
to large towns	4	0	4 (9)
total	24	19	43
Roseland			
to rural areas	34	36	70 (61)
to small towns	19	17	36 (32)
to large towns	6	2	8 (7)
total	59	55	114

Source: Census enumerators' books, CFHS and Ancestry UK Census databases.

mining industry reinforces this conclusion and St Agnes consistently experienced an emigration rate at least double the Cornish norm in the four decades between the 1850s and 1880s (Deacon 2007 forthcoming). More difficult to explain is the higher untraced residual amongst Falmouth women, who were much less inclined to move overseas. It is thus more likely to be a function of the quality of the data in the historical record, resulting in more ‘lost’ cohort members.

### *The processes*

There were marked differences in the propensity to migrate and the direction of migration between the study areas that were clearly related to their occupational structures. In order to test this further the cohorts were combined and the location of those traced and alive in 1881 calculated by occupational group of the head of the household in 1851. Table IV shows the numbers traced and their location in 1881 for the principal occupational groups.

Those from mining backgrounds were more prone to disappear whereas the sons and daughters of farmers, shopkeepers and craftsmen and especially those with maritime occupations were more traceable. A retail background increased the likelihood of persistence within the district, with agricultural labouring and maritime backgrounds least associated with persistence. Agricultural labouring backgrounds resulted in predominantly short distance moves as did farmers, though to a lesser extent. Those with maritime backgrounds were, on the contrary, much more likely to undertake long-distance migration. These results support the conclusion that occupational background was a major explanatory variable at both community and family level.

But how far were other variables involved? Were, for example, those from a non-traditional family background more or less likely to move? Table V extracts those cohort members who in 1851 lived in non-nuclear families, defined here as those families where neither mother nor father were present, and compares this group with the rest of the total cohort. Although the two patterns are not statistically significantly different there is a suggestion that those from non-nuclear backgrounds were less likely to have stayed put in the parishes under review. Finally, Wojciechowska (1996) found that those who

TABLE IV: Location of Cohorts in 1881 by Occupational Group of Heads of Household in 1851

	Number 1851	% traced to 1881	Location in 1881 (% of those traced)			
			District	Cornwall	UK	dead
Retail	83	53	48	18	16	18
Crafts	161	57	39	20	21	21
Maritime	82	76	23	11	32	34
Labourers	41	63	27	12	19	42
Mining	196	44	38	20	15	27
Ag Labs	168	48	26	54	5	15
Farmers	47	57	37	41	11	11
Other	30	60	11	28	17	44
Total (N)	808	331	144	113	74	105

Source: Census enumerators' books, CFHS and Ancestry UK Census databases.



TABLE V: Traces of Cohort Members in 1881 Living in Non-Nuclear Families, 1851

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Traced dead (%)</i>	<i>Traced alive (%)</i>	<i>Living in study area</i>	<i>Living in other Cornwall</i>	<i>Living in other England/Wales</i>
Non-nuclear family	51	22	33	18	59	24
Nuclear family	757	12	41	45	33	12

Chi<sup>2</sup> = 4.06 (not significant at 95% confidence level)

Source: Census enumerators' books, CFHS and Ancestry UK Census databases.

already made long-distance moves were more likely to move again. There were insufficient numbers of those with a family history of long-distance moves to differentiate here between long and short-distance moves. Therefore, all those with a previous move of any kind, indicated by the birthplace of elder siblings, were aggregated. The result (Table VI) shows a significant difference, with those from families that had experienced a previous move more likely to have moved again than the norm, though not more likely to have made a long-distance move.

Jackson and Moch (1989) pointed out how the analysis of return migration and multiple moves is most lacking in historical studies of migration streams. This means that the fluidity of the migration process tends to be lost, replaced by an overly static picture. To some extent Pooley and Turnbull's work has modified this situation. They emphasize frequent unfocused short-distance moves and they give examples of multiple moves, one being John James from Cornwall, who moved both overseas and within the British Isles from the 1850s to the 1880s. They also found that 20–25% of transnational migrants returned home (Pooley and Turnbull 1998: 294–98, 285).

Overall, in these enumeration districts at least 13% of the men who were still living in their original parishes in 1881 and have been classed as non-migrants were in fact return migrants. But only 5% of women fell into this category. These figures are obviously a minimum, based on either their appearance elsewhere in the 1861 and 1871 censuses or the birth of a child in another place. Return migration was more frequent to the agricultural parishes where 21% of 'non-migrants' in 1881 had in fact lived in other parishes. Most of this reflects that short-distance circulatory movement typical of the agricultural population. But not all. Charles Langdon was one of at least four children of an agricultural labourer and his wife living in Merther parish in 1851. In 1861 the family were living in neighbouring St Michael Penkivel. Leaving the family home, Charles

TABLE VI: Traces of Cohort Members in 1881 Living in Families with History of Previous Move, 1851

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Traced dead (%)</i>	<i>Traced alive (%)</i>	<i>Living in study area</i>	<i>Living in other Cornwall</i>	<i>Living in other England/Wales</i>
Previous family move	119	10	38	20	53	27
No previous family move	689	13	42	48	29	22

Chi<sup>2</sup> = 13.72 (significant at 99% confidence level)

Source: Census enumerators' books, CFHS and Ancestry UK Census databases.

became a carpenter and moved to Truro, where he was living in lodgings in 1871. By 1881 he had married and was settled in a court there with children of his own. Yet this unspectacular migration history disguised a trip to the shores of Lake Erie in the United States. For his eldest daughter's birthplace in 1881 was given as 'Erie, USA'. After marrying, Charles and his wife Mariana had moved to the US sometime between 1871 and 1876, but had returned before the birth of their second child in 1878.

Other mining families provide evidence of multiple moves within Cornwall. Susan Cock was born into a mining family in the hamlet of Goonbell in St Agnes in 1850. By 1861 the family had moved, but only within the same parish, and were living at Wheal Butson, about a mile away. In the late 1860s Susan married Francis Aver, a lead miner from neighbouring Perranzabuloe and moved to Silverwell in that parish. At some time before 1878 they had moved back to St Agnes parish, but then between 1878 and 1880 made a longer move west to the heart of the mining district at Illogan parish, where Francis was described in 1881 as a tin miner. They then stayed in that parish, although at each of the 1891 and 1901 censuses they were living in different places.

Women could also experience long-distance multiple moves. Emma Paine was an 8-year-old in 1851 living at Webber Street, Falmouth. In 1861 she was living in the same street but working as a servant to Joanna Pascoe, a grocer. By 1871 Emma had married and was described as a 'waterman's wife', having moved to Runcorn in Cheshire. Her husband was not recorded as present on the census night. We lose sight of Emma in 1881 but in 1891 she turned up at the opposite end of the country, living with her younger sister, herself born in London, at Brighton in Sussex. There is no mention of Emma's marital status in this census and we are left to speculate on what happened to her elusive husband.

### *Conclusions*

This preliminary analysis of life histories in three micro-districts within these three communities introduces some potential qualifications to the findings of Pooley and Turnbull, based on aggregate life histories. The general circulatory short-distance movement that they find is indeed present, although much more transparent in the rural, agricultural districts. However, movement does not seem entirely random or unrelated to the settlement hierarchy. There is evidence from these initial results that those living in Falmouth moved sideways to other towns or up the urban hierarchy. Very little movement down the hierarchy has so far been discovered from this community. Conversely, those in the rural parishes were up to twice as likely to have moved to other rural parishes than they were to towns, although there is more than a suggestion that women from mining parishes were more prepared to move to Truro, which was the clear urban destination of choice for women in the rural parishes, whether mining or agricultural.

While this suggests a rural-urban drift in the migration pattern there are clear differences across these three communities in terms of propensity to migrate, destinations and the degree of return migration, although the numbers of the latter are still too small to draw hard and fast conclusions. The Falmouth cohort was more likely still to be in Falmouth in their 30s. If they were not then they had probably made a long-distance move. In contrast, the cohort from the agricultural north Roseland was more likely to have made a short-distance move. And, although it cannot be conclusively proven, the lower trace rates achieved for the mining district strongly imply a greater likelihood of

overseas migration. While the gender differences look small, when we tabulate propensity to migrate and the destinations there are important differences at an individual level. For example, men from St Agnes were much more likely than women to have made the move from a declining Cornish industrial region to still growing industrial regions in South Wales and the north of England.

These often marked contrasts between communities separated by no more than 20 miles from each other reinforce the suspicion that the really important spatial unit for studying the migration decision is the locality or community rather than the region or county or even the Registration District in the 19th century. Very different migration streams could flow from neighbouring communities. These differences are explained to a large degree by occupational backgrounds, with intersecting labour markets helping to structure discrete and contrasting migration flows. However, while at the community level occupation appears to be the most important variable, this is mediated by other factors. The preliminary results here introduce one of these — those who grew up in a family with a previous history of migration were more likely themselves to move.

The latter implies that labour markets, skill resources, gender or occupation were all themselves mediated at the individual level by the influence of the family. Over and over again, the data uncover family links explaining individual instances of migration. For example Elizabeth and Mary Hodge and their mother Elizabeth made the move in the late 1860s from Webber Street in Falmouth to Nelson Street in Plymouth. They were able to do this by following or accompanying their brother Joseph, who was working as a cabinet maker and had moved to Plymouth via Camborne sometime after 1867. Joseph's move thus facilitated the moves of his sisters and his mother. In St Agnes in 1851, James and John Rogers were brothers and sons of William, a brass and tin moulder, and his wife Mary. The family had moved to industrial Camborne by 1861 and then again to nearby Illogan in the 1860s. During the 1870s James and John left the family home. James made a long-distance move to Gateshead in Durham where he obtained work as a foreman in an iron foundry, working his way up to manager by 1881. His brother John had married and set up a household in Redruth by 1881. But by 1891 he had followed his brother to Gateshead, working as an engine fitter, possibly in the same foundry. In that census year their widowed mother had also made the long move north and was living with her eldest son James.

Family connections thus invariably eased the transition from one place to another, whether near or far, and were central to the decision to move or to stay. This might suggest that the decision to move was often made at the level of the family and that the presence of kin was an important enabling factor in the background of the migration decision. Their presence could trigger a move and conversely their absence may have deterred moves. Clearly, the role of kin and family in the 19th century and their relationship both to individuals' decisions to migrate and to the structural constraints and possibilities presented by the socio-economic context requires further investigation.

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