ARTICLES

European Inter-Continental Emigration: The Role of «Diffusion» and «Feedback»

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It has been assumed by the overwhelming majority of writers on nineteenth-century migration that the mass movement under scrutiny was motivated, predominantly, by economic considerations. These essays have found no reason for dissenting from this view, at least if we are considering the nineteenth-century experience, *grosso modo*, in the perspective of other major episodes in the history of world migration. Admittedly the broad classification 'economic', as applied to emigrants' motives, must embrace a considerable variety of objectives and aspirations. There are substantial differences, for example, between the following three exemplars: Norwegian emigrants to the U.S.A. in the mid-nineteenth century, leaving a homeland of poor soil to create new farms for themselves from the wilderness; English and Scots mechanics and skilled artisans moving at about the same time to American industry in the hope, not so much of immediately gaining very much higher real wages, but of encountering a better opportunity for promotion and perhaps for setting up as an independent entrepreneur; and the Italian or Balkan peasant crossing the Atlantic around the turn of the century in search of temporary work at high wages in the secondary and

service occupations of the industrial north-east of the U.S.A. While the motivations involved can in all these cases reasonably be described as 'economic', there are obviously substantial differences of aspiration concealed beneath that umbrella classification, differences which moreover manifest themselves objectively, as we have seen, in such characteristics of the migrant cohorts as their sex and age composition, their destination in the U.S.A., and their length of stay in that country.

Equally, to agree with the proposition that nineteenth-century migration was 'economically' motivated one has to broaden the definition of that adverb to comprehend, for example, the characteristic distribution by age of the population of the country of origin, that distribution working its influence via the pressure on employment opportunities for a particular 'footloose' age group.

Even on the broadest definition of the term, however, 'economic' motives do not exhaust the list of reasons why so many millions left their homeland in the course of the nineteenth-century to try their fortunes in another continent. The most clear-cut illustration of this is provided by the Jews. While the Jews undoubtedly hoped to improve their material lot by fleeing their homes in Russia and Eastern Europe in the quarter-century before World War One, the persecution from which they sought to escape comprehended a deprivation of political and legal rights and harrassment in their social and spiritual life, at least as much as the curtailment of economic opportunity. Indeed, having regard to the condition of the Jews in the U.S.A. on the eve of World War One one would be inclined to say that it was precisely in the *non-economic* dimensions of their lives that the decision to migrate to the U.S.A. proved, in the event, to be most fully justified. It is perhaps significant that the title of a standard text on Jewish nineteenth-century emigration is *To Dwell in Safety*, not *To Dwell in Plenty*.[1]

[1] Wischnitzer, 1948.

Earlier in the century, moreover, the desire to find a less repressive milieu for the practice of their faith had been an important element in pioneer transatlantic migration from a number of European countries. The first organised migration from Norway to the U.S.A., that of the 'Stavanger group' in 1825, had so explicit a religious base that the specially purchased sloop in which they sailed, the *Restauration*, is referred to by some writers as the Norwegian *Mayflower*.[2] From Sweden, too, the 'group emigration' which preponderated before 1860 included a substantial admixture of religious dissenters,[3] while the historian of Danish emigration records an unusually high level of "religious" emigration.[4] Indeed, as another Scandinavian writer has observed, "in the opening phase of emigration in all the Scandinavian countries there is a dissident religious element".[5] These elements were mainly of a revivalist and puritan variety, including in the case of Danish emigrants the Mormons. Similarly in the case of the Netherlands the emigration of the post-1846 years was spearheaded by evangelical secessionists from the State Reformed Church, their efforts to restore the full rigour of Calvinist teaching and Reformation practices being repressed by the State by fines, imprisonment and intimidation.[6]

Religion was not, however, the only dimension of life in regard to which freedom from oppression promised by America was valued. Many emigrant letters in the early and middle decades of the century laid stress on the attractions of the political freedom and relative absence of social constraints to be found in the U.S.A. (It is interesting and instructive to note, however, that such comments were forthcoming chiefly from immigrants from countries which were themselves more than usually liberal

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[2] Blegen, 1969, pp. 63, 161-3; Wittke, 1939, p. 287.
[3] Lindberg, 1930, pp. 39-45.
[4] Hvidt, 1975, pp. 146-55.
[5] Semmingsen, 1972, pp. 55-6.
[6] Lucas, 1955.

in such respects, notably Norway. Note, by contrast, that Italian transatlantic migrants of the late nineteenth-century showed little appreciation of the privileged constitutional position of the immigrant in Argentina, and little disposition to seek the citizenship, easy though it was to acquire, of either that country or the U.S.A.)

Additionally, there were certainly some particular occasions on which political events furnished a motive for emigration. The outflow of German liberals following the '48 and of Polish nationalists after the revolt of 1863 were important for the quality of many of the émigrés and for the publicity their flight generated, rather than for the numbers involved. There was an outflow of Danes from Schleswig because of the policy of "germanisation" which followed the Treaty of Vienna (1864).[7]

Much more important quantitatively than any of these, though posing a more intractable problem regarding the separation of economic from non-economic motives, is the element of ethnic friction which underlay a large fraction of the emigration from Eastern, Central and South-Eastern Europe from the later nineteenth century on. This friction might take the form of discrimination practised on an ethnic minority or it might result from the rule of peasant masses of one nationality by a politically-dominant minority of another. Thus emigration from Russia, as we have seen, consisted overwhelmingly of subjugated nationalities — Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians — even leaving the Jews on one side. The first large-scale transatlantic migration of Poles came from the German-occupied Provinces — not, in general, the most economically depressed segment of the old Polish territory — and was motivated in part by Polish resentment at the policy of germanisation such as the punishing of the use of the Polish tongue in schools, which was stepped up after the formation of the Empire.[8] And throughout Central and South-East

[7] Hvidt, 1975, pp. 138-9.

[8] Zubrzycki, 1952-3, p. 256; Greene, 1961, pp. 51-2; Balch, 1910, p. 19.

Europe the emigration of Slav peoples was fired by resentment at the rule of Vienna or Budapest and the hauteur and insolence of local German, Jewish or Magyar officials. It is noteworthy that there was relatively little emigration in the late nineteenth century from the independent Serb state, although economic conditions there can hardly have been dramatically better than in the neighbouring regions of heavy emigration, where other South Slavs lived under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

It is hard to know just how much emphasis to place on such socio-political reasons for emigration, or indeed to distinguish them at all sharply from the economic disabilities suffered by the subject peoples in such societies of mixed race. Yet the high rates of repatriation characteristic of many of these groups would seem to warn against too heavy an emphasis on non-economic motives. It is easy to accept that South Slavs should react to impoverishment by resort to temporary migration, as South Italians did, but harder to believe that so many would have returned so soon had the avoidance of a hated, but continuing, political regime been the chief motive.

One particular obligation mentioned by many writers as providing at least an ancillary motive for emigration was the obligation to military service. This, again, was one of the complaints of the Slav minorities in the Dual Monarchy, for here the obligation was particularly resented as it of course involved service in the army of the oppressor. The terms were particularly distasteful, too; for example, the period of service was three years, and men were forbidden to marry until the obligation was discharged.[9] Yet in general, the case that military service was a substantial cause of emigration remains to be convincingly made. Where a close study of the age distribution of emigrants

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[9] Govorchin, 1961, p. 23. For statements favouring the view that military service *was* a cause of emigration see, for example, Lochore, 1951, p. 38; Schneider, 1915, pp. 53-4; Lindberg, 1930, p. 213; Saloutos, 1964, p. 31.

is possible, only a relatively slight tendency to "bunching" in immediately pre-service ages is discernible.

One recent study has confronted the question directly, namely Ann-Sofie Kälvemark's essay *Flykten från exercisen*, an investigation of avoidance of military service as a reason for emigration from Sweden in the period 1887-1904.[10] Her overall conclusion is that "liability to military service does not figure during the period investigated as an independent source of emigration".[11] This conclusion is reached by studying the emigration of 20-year old men — men became liable to military service in their twenty-first year — in relation to total (male, and male and female) emigration. It is shown that the number of 20-year-old male emigrants was only a fairly small proportion of total emigration (about 6.1 percent) or even of total male emigration (about 11.4 percent). This in itself is hardly compelling argument, as of course it may be that the emigration of some young males *under* the age of twenty was motivated by a longer-range intention to avoid military service. Pointing in the other direction is the fact that the early twenties were the peak age for emigration anyway, military service apart. A comparison with emigration propensities for neighbouring ages, under 20 and over 21, would surely have been desirable.

More persuasive is the graph comparing the time-shapes of total emigration and of the emigration of 20-year old males. The fluctuations of the latter mirror those of the former very faithfully, and in particular show no distinctive tendency to increase following the introduction of more onerous military service obligations in 1893 and 1902.

A different type of 'cause' of emigration is to be found in the various sorts of inducement and persuasion offered by the

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[10] Ann-Sofie Kälvemark, *Flykten från exercisen: Värnplikten som Utvandringsorsak*, in Kälvemark, 1973, pp. 130-50. See also Kälvemark, 1972.

[11] Kälvemark, 1973, p. 150. (Author's translation.)

governments of, or agencies within, either sending or receiving countries, or by the transport companies — primarily the shipping companies, for which the emigrant traffic was an important and often the dominant generator of revenue. For example, state (central or provincial government) aid to selected immigrants was offered at various times by three major countries of immigration, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand, and more briefly or less comprehensively by Argentina and Canada too. The precise nature of the aid varied from time to time and place to place, but basically comprehended the partial or total payment of the passage money and some help with temporary accommodation and job search after arrival.

The rationale for such assistance was that for one reason or another the areas concerned were at a disadvantage in seeking to attract migrants against the competition of more favoured destinations. Thus one historian of Brazilian immigration candidly writes:

"Accompanying all the vicissitudes through which the history of immigration to Brazil passed, one fact nevertheless leaps to the eyes. Even in the years of maximum immigration, even when the destinies of Brazil were governed by its most able men, Brazil could never compete with the United States or with Argentina. A series of causes, some social, some geo-climatic, generated a preference on the part of European workers for the other American nations." [12]

It should be noted, however, that it was not the Federal Government alone but also the government of São Paulo state which extended this aid, especially in the 1890s,[13] and this reflects the fact that the chief aim of assistance to immigration in the case of Brazil was to ensure an adequate labour supply for the

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[12] Carneiro, 1948, p. 1040. (Author's translation.)

[13] Annual statistics of immigrants and subsidies are conveniently presented in Doria de Vasconcellos, 1940, Quadro A, p. 227 and Quadro B, p. 228.

São Paulo coffee plantations in the years when it became obvious that the days of slave labour were numbered, and after slavery was finally abolished in 1888. At first the Brazilians tried to attract Germans to fill this need, but the Germans would not accept the harsh conditions of life and discipline on the plantations, and they returned to Europe or moved on to join the ranks of their compatriots established in the agricultural settlements in the three southern states of Brazil. Publicity given in Germany to the conditions to which Germans had been exposed led to the Heydt rescript of 1859, by which the government of Prussia outlawed the organising by agents and commercial interests of emigration to Brazil. This prohibition was later adopted by other German States, and in 1871 by the Empire; it was revoked for the three southern States in 1896, but not for São Paulo.[14] Failing to attract Germans the planters turned to other nationalities, and from the mid-1880s and especially in the 1890s Italian immigrants formed the bulk of the labour supply. Conditions were always marginal, however, for the Italians too, and when they deteriorated further with the collapse of the coffee boom in the early twentieth century the Italian government, in its turn, prohibited the activities of Brazilian agents in Italy and the granting of free passage to its nationals by the Pirinetti decree of March, 1902. Following this the São Paulo State government cast around for alternative sources of supply, signing an agreement with a Japanese company in 1907.[16] The first immigrants from Japan arrived in 1908, the numbers increasing sharply in the 1920s, which also experienced a large inflow of East Europeans.

The Brazilian case is interesting for a number of reasons. For one thing, the policies both of the Brazilian authorities and of the German and Italian governments suggest strongly that the activities of agents were more effective than some historians

[14] Wätjen, 1923, pp. 608-9; Carneiro, 1948, p. 1022.
[15] Carneiro, 1948, p. 1033.
[16] Smith, 1963, p. 131.

have been prepared to allow. It may well be that in countries such as Great Britain, where there was a widespread and well-informed awareness of conditions in the main immigration countries, the activities of agents were relatively unimportant. (Though even in post-World War Two years complaints have often enough been made by disenchanted immigrants to New Zealand to the effect that their decision to migrate was prompted by misleading information from New Zealand House in London!) But even for a country with as high an educational level as Denmark the leading student of nineteenth-century overseas emigration seems to concede a by no means uninfluential role for emigration agents.[17] At the least, the constant presentation to the public of the opportunities in other countries and the proffer of practical information about ways and means must have been a factor in the diffusion of the habit of emigration on which stress will shortly be laid. Any advertising expert knows that it is the constant repetition rather than the reasoned (or valid) argument which sells the product.

Secondly, the Brazilian experience is interesting as a particularly clear illustration of the fact that receiving countries ranked immigrants of the various nationalities in a clearly-perceived order of acceptability. It now seems distasteful and embarrassing to discuss this aspect of nineteenth-century migration, and doubtless the discriminations present in the minds of policy-makers and administrators before World War. Some were grounded more on perceptions of the differing degrees of economic and social development of the various nationalities and races than on any more abiding cultural differences. The fact is nevertheless that Brazil put Northern and Western Europeans at the top of its list of preferences; Southern Europeans, especially Italians but also Portuguese (the origins of the people notwithstanding) came only in second place, and Asians last — the Slavs, perhaps, being

[17] Hvidt, 1966, p. 175.

bracketed with Asians or, maybe, squeezed in between the last two groups. When in 1934 a " quota " system of limiting immigration was finally introduced, it discriminated against the entry of Japanese, Slavs, and other central Europeans.[18]

Brazil was far from being the only country to harbour such preferences. Thus Argentina, when it finally decided to attempt to implement the maxim of J. Bautista Alberdi, *gobernar es poblar*, tried at first to attract Protestant Germans, but when it became apparent that in fact it was getting Italians and Spaniards, made a virtue of necessity by inventing the concept of " Latinity " and interpreting the result as a culturally praiseworthy achievement.[19] The debates provoked by the " New " immigration in the United States, and the restrictions on immigration imposed by that country and by Canada in the 1920s, reveal of course the same prejudices. In New Zealand, State assistance to immigrants has been confined substantially to those of British stock, with only two periods of fairly substantial relaxation, in favour of Scandinavians in the 1870s and 1880s and of the Dutch in the years since World War Two. Most major countries of immigration introduced more or less severe restrictions on the immigration of Asians in the 1880s and 1890s.

Thirdly, Brazil's experience forms part of a set of evidence which permits a few comments on the role of subsidies to immigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One would theorize that an individual company or other enterprise would subsidize immigrant recruits to its workforce if the discounted value of the additional profits arising from the employment of such workers as against the employment of nationals exceeded the subsidy required. It is apparent that subsidization would not

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[18] Monbeig, 1952, p. 137.

[19] Sánchez-Albornoz, 1974, p. 152. It is worth noting that there were contemporary criticisms of Portuguese emigration to Brazil on the grounds that Portuguese culture there had proved unable to resist the influence of Italian and German immigrant culture: Lucci, 1914, pp. 77-81.

be rational unless immigrant workers were more productive than local workers and/or could be hired at a lower wage-rate, or unless local workers with the requisite skills were simply not available at all. Note that it is necessary not merely for the immigrant labour to be more profitable, but for the subsidiser to be able to retain the services of the subsidised for long enough to more than recoup his investment in bringing that worker in.

These conditions were sufficiently met in Brazil, and especially in São Paulo State, for assisted immigration to achieve a role of dominating importance in the late nineteenth century. The first experiments in replacing slave by imported free labour were pioneered almost half a century before abolition by Senator Vergueiro on his *fazendas* at Ibicaba and Angelica.[20] As it became ever more apparent that the days of slavery were numbered, and especially after the passing of the "Free Womb" law in 1871, others followed his example. Following abolition in 1888, and during the coffee boom of the 1890s, the labour supply of the coffee plantations could not possibly have been sustained without a well-organised, generously financed and vigorously advertised scheme of recruitment of subsidised immigrants. True, neither the State nor the *fazendeiros* succeeded in keeping the bulk of the immigrants for very long on the plantations to which they were sent. The evidence suggests that most assisted immigrants sent to the plantations could not be retained there for more than a few years, neither their bonds to the *fazendeiro*, nor the difficulty they had in saving enough money to leave, nor geographical isolation succeeding in retaining them.[21] The conditions which deterred the immigrants and so angered the governments of Germany and of Italy included not merely the rigours of the climate and of isolation, but the one-sidedness of the contracts under which the immigrants were employed and their

[20] Monbeig, 1952, pp. 90–2; Carneiro, 1948, pp. 1020–1.
[21] Monbeig, 1952, pp. 130–2.

treatment by a class which forgot neither easily nor quickly that it had until recently been a slave-owning aristocracy. At the end of a few years, then, most left to settle in São Paulo city, to move on to southern Brazil or to Argentina or to the U.S.A., or to return to Europe; some, of course, succeeded in acquiring land and becoming *colons* themselves. Yet so great was the shortage of labour that in the years of the coffee boom it was worth paying for a continuous stream of immigrants to supply a "rolling" labour force few members of which lasted more than a year or two.

Reliance on assisted immigration was, however, yet more attractive to the planters in that they were able, because of their political dominance, to pass the costs of recruiting and subsidising the immigrants to the State or Federal Government, thus leaving themselves with only an indirect and fractional responsibility through their role as taxpayers. Naturally, assisted immigration became even more attractive to the class or group to whom the net product of the immigrant labour accrued if it could shift the cost of introducing that labour wholly or partly on to someone else. The great planters also used their political control in another way, namely by persuading the São Paulo State government very severely to restrict the alienation of land to immigrants, in order to reduce the opportunity for plantation workers to leave their jobs, just as the U.S. South opposed the Homestead Act. In the three southern States of Brazil, however, the great pastoral ranch-owners welcomed the agricultural settlements of Germans, Swiss and Italians as sources of cheap food and wine.[22] Naturally these differing attitudes towards land alienation reinforced the dominance of assisted migtation in São Paulo and that of unassisted migration in the south. Thus in the New World as in the Old the interests of the dominant

[22] Avila, 1966, pp. 68–70.

class exerted a powerful influence on the rate and character of overseas migration.

In New Zealand assisted immigration was never as important relative to unassisted as in São Paulo, yet the country resorted to it for fundamentally similar reasons. True, the benefits of immigration could not be so directly appropriated by any individual or class as in São Paulo because of the greater "openness" of the society and the ability of migrants to move from one job or region to another. But aside from their perception of the value of immigrants in keeping down wage rates, the dominant class of great landowners and land companies associated heavy immigration with rising land values. Further, the strong and widespread (if possibly erroneous) belief that large-scale immigration yielded benefits to the economy as a whole helped this politically-dominant class to induce the State to pay for assisted immigration. Since this was paid for out of taxation either directly, or indirectly (via the servicing of government borrowing overseas), and since taxation in late-nineteenth-century New Zealand was chiefly indirect and regressive, the situation was fundamentally that the dominant landed class used assisted immigration to enrich itself at the expense of the poor.

The United States of America was at the other extreme from Brazil. There *was* some potential benefit to be appropriated from employing immigrant labour which, at least for a time and for some nationalities, was available at lower wage rates than native labour. Labour contracts were an attempt to achieve this appropriation in private industry; but even before they incurred the wrath of the labour unions and were made illegal, the contracts were costly to enforce in so "open" a society.[23] There was also some attraction to landowners and speculators in seeking to reap capital gains through the effect of immigration on land values, and this is what the land-grant railway companies

[23] Erickson, 1957, *passim*.

were aiming at in their immigration activities. However, in neither case was it easy to appropriate the value the immigrants created to the enterprise which paid the costs of bringing them, while the stream of unassisted immigrants was sufficiently large and regular to make it likely that competing enterprises could reap similar benefits without incurring the costs. Nor could the costs of recruitment be passed on to the government, as happened in São Paulo and in New Zealand, for State governments were reluctant to spend very much money on attracting immigrants who would not stay in the State if they did not like the conditions they found and who would be forthcoming anyway if the conditions were right. Only in regard to the earlier, pioneering decades and to remote areas, when or from which 'escape' was not so easy, might it be necessary somewhat to modify this conclusion; some of the more active frontier states like the Wisconsin of the 1850s exemplify the first case, and John Steinbeck has immortalised the second (with respect to internal migration) in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

How far did assisted migration increase the total flow of migration, as opposed merely to redistributing it between destinations? To the counterfactual implicit in this question these essays have no solution to propound, though *a priori* it would seem to involve unacceptably restrictive assumptions regarding migrants' response elasticities and preferences to suppose that enticements which had a substantial effect in determining destinations did not also have *some* effect in enlarging the total flow. The writers who explicitly consider the role of subsidies to migration, however, do so from the standpoint of their effect on the volume of immigration to a particular country or State, and thus abstract from the question of separating out the effects on total flows and on redistribution.

In addition to the general 'causes' of emigration discussed so far, there were certainly many more 'specific' causes operating at particular times and in particular areas. Some of these

'specific' causes had, in a certain sense, a greater importance than at first appears in that they *initiated* the process in a potentially emigration-prone area, which then continued, through the momentum of the mechanism of 'diffusion' and 'feedback', to disgorge emigrants even when the 'specific' cause had disappeared. Ireland, after all, continued until World War One to send across the Atlantic annual totals in excess of those of the 1830s, and far higher than those of the first three decades of the century. Yet economic conditions had almost certainly improved before 1914 to a level well above those on the eve of the famine.[24] Within ten years of that catastrophe the population had fallen well below its 1815 level, and before 1880 it was well below the level of 1800. (It is worth recording, too, the statistic that *c.* 1870 the density of population of Ireland was the same as that of France, which was of course the least migration-prone of all the major countries of Europe.)[25]

A few examples may be offered of specific causes which are not quite as well known as the Irish famine of 1846. One was the tariff war between Italy and France following the new Italian tariff of April, 1887. This 'war' cut Italian exports to France by more than 60 percent and was particularly disastrous for small farmers in Venetia, already distressed because of world wheat prices and now suffering the brunt of the collapse of silk prices. The crisis coincided with the peaking of the boom in Argentina, and with the stepping-up of Brazil's search for assisted migrants following the abolition of slavery (1888). Bra-

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[24] Cf. the perceptive comment by Lindberg in his very penetrating study of Swedish emigration:

"The wages regarded as sufficient in 1860 were insufficient a few decades later, when emigration readily arose out of a situation that would have been considered earlier highly satisfactory." (Lindberg, 1930, p. 119.)

[25] This, however, ignores the *regional* variations in Irish population change. Broadly, natural increase was much greater in the west than in the east, but emigration rates about the same. To some extent seasonal emigration to Britain substituted for permanent emigration to the U.S.A. in the west. See Cousens, 1964; Ó Gráda, 1973.

zil's immigration agents deliberately exploited the distress in the Italian North-East, and the consequence was a special orientation of North Italians and particularly of Venetians to Brazil which continued throughout the following decade.[26] A second was the sharp increase in Greek overseas emigration in the 1890s caused partly by the decline in the price of currants, the chief export crop, which in turn was caused by protectionist policies in France and Russia.[27] Thirdly, Dalmatian emigration was sparked by a number of specific sources of distress in addition to the general politico-economic grievances of other South Slavs under Austrian rule: the passing of the sailing ship, the decline of the Adriatic fisheries, and the ravages of phylloxera.[28]

But an exhaustive analysis of such specific circumstances is out of place in an essay such as this. Rather, it remains to give some account of one possibly very pervasive and very important feature of the process of migration which has perhaps been lost sight of in the 'static', single-country analyses which have predominated in the literature. This is what might be called the process of the 'diffusion' of emigration.

In the very broadest interpretation, the growth of European migration in the nineteenth century could be characterised as a process of 'diffusion' in which the original major sources, in North and West Europe, were supplemented as time went on by new origins in the South and in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. These new sources *supplemented* rather than replaced the old, which continued to provide emigrants (not necessarily on a net basis) but at a reduced rate. Plotting the emigration intensities of the leading countries over time on a graph produces a series of "S" curves, though the curves are not smooth because (e.g.) of the influence of "demand side" changes such as the U.S. downturn of the mid-1890s. The aggregation of these

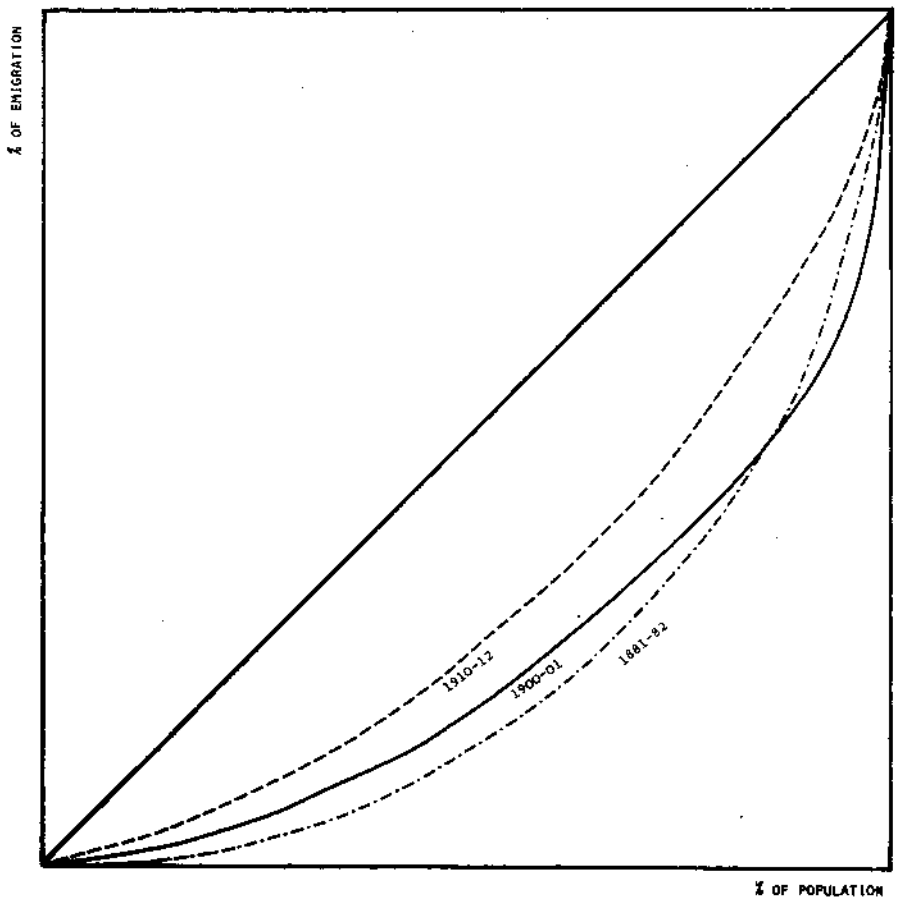
[26] Cf. Essay 4, fn. (2).
[27] Saloutos, 1964 (b), p. 29.
[28] Govorchin, 1961, p. 13.

FIGURE 1

LORENZ CURVES:

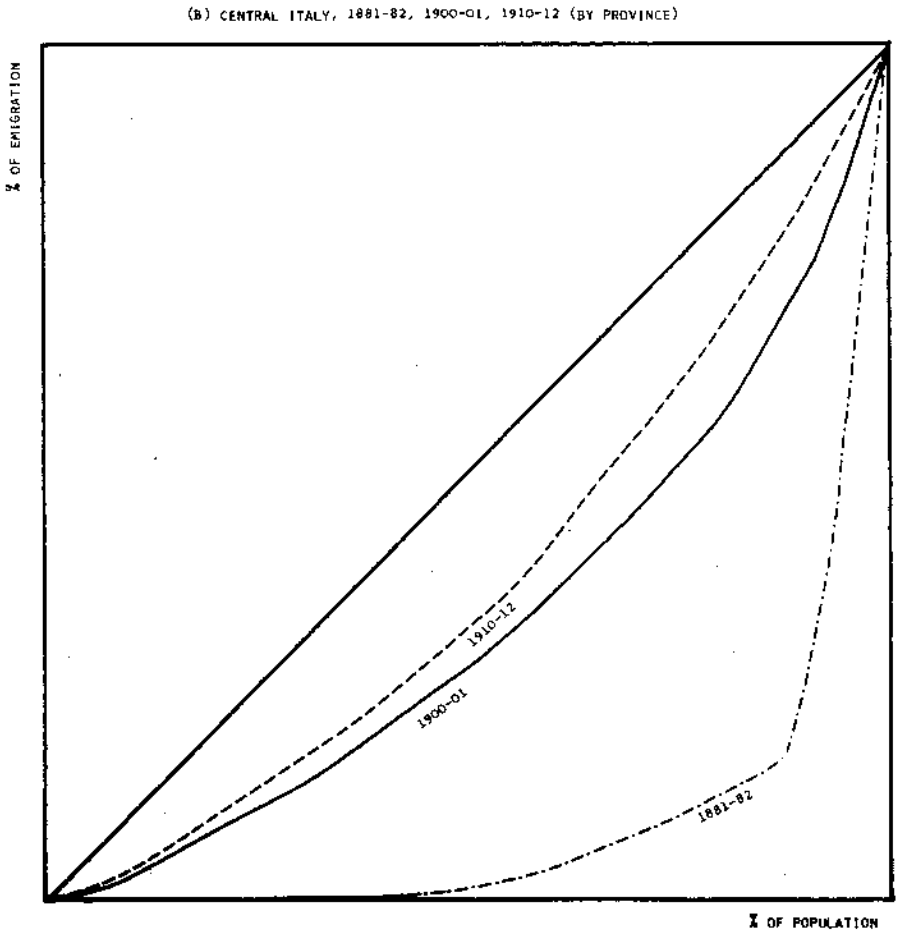
PROPORTIONS OF TOTAL POPULATION AND TOTAL EMIGRATION

(A) NORTHERN ITALY, 1881-82, 1900-01, 1910-12 (BY PROVINCE)



" S " curves implies a maximum outflow in the pre-war decade because of the number of curves which by that time were passing or had passed through the phase of steepest ascent. One might describe this process as one of " diffusion ", at least in the mechanical sense in which a drop of ink on a small piece of blotting-paper gradually " diffuses " over the whole area.

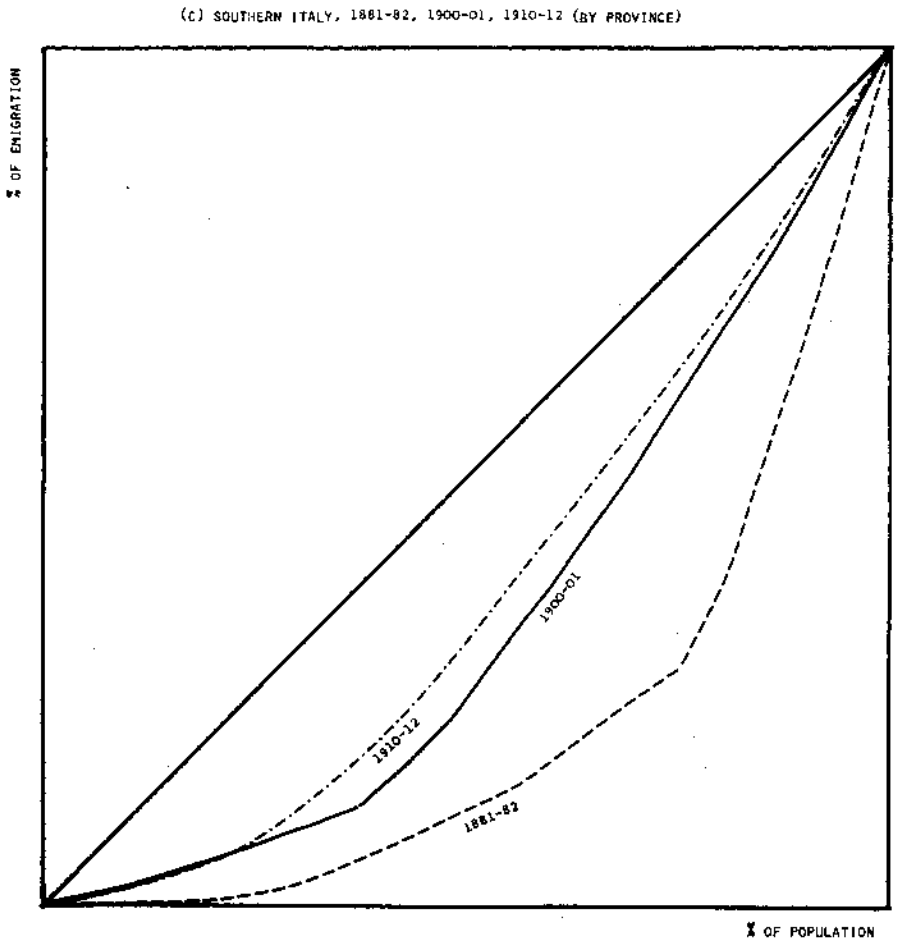
Less well known than the familiar southeastward shift in the origins of European emigration by countries is the fact that in



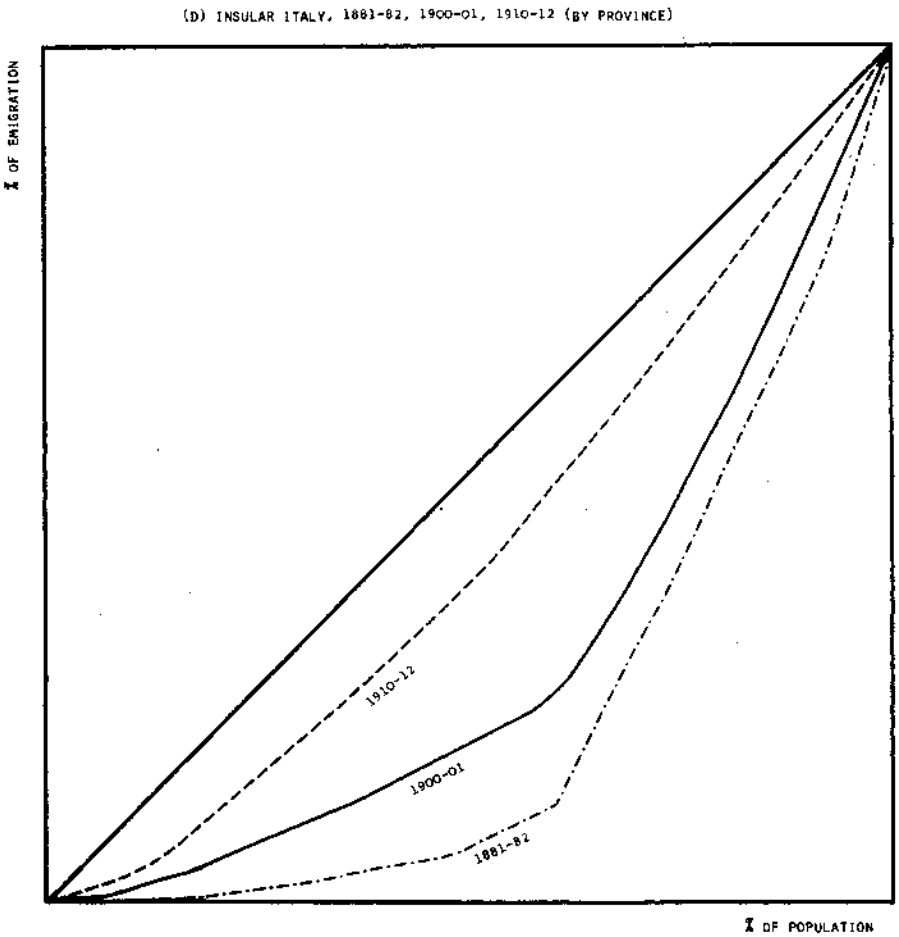
several countries, at least, there was a similar 'diffusion' from regional and local origins *within* the country. According to the Italian statistics, the rate of emigration (all destinations) from Italy per thousand of the inhabitants of each major regional subdivision progressed in the following manner:

Average annual emigration from Italy per °/₀₀ of population

Years	North	Centre	South	Insular Italy
1881-82	8.3	2.2	4.1	0.6
1900-01	14.2	9.1	18.6	7.9
1910-12	17.3	15.4	21.1	19.5



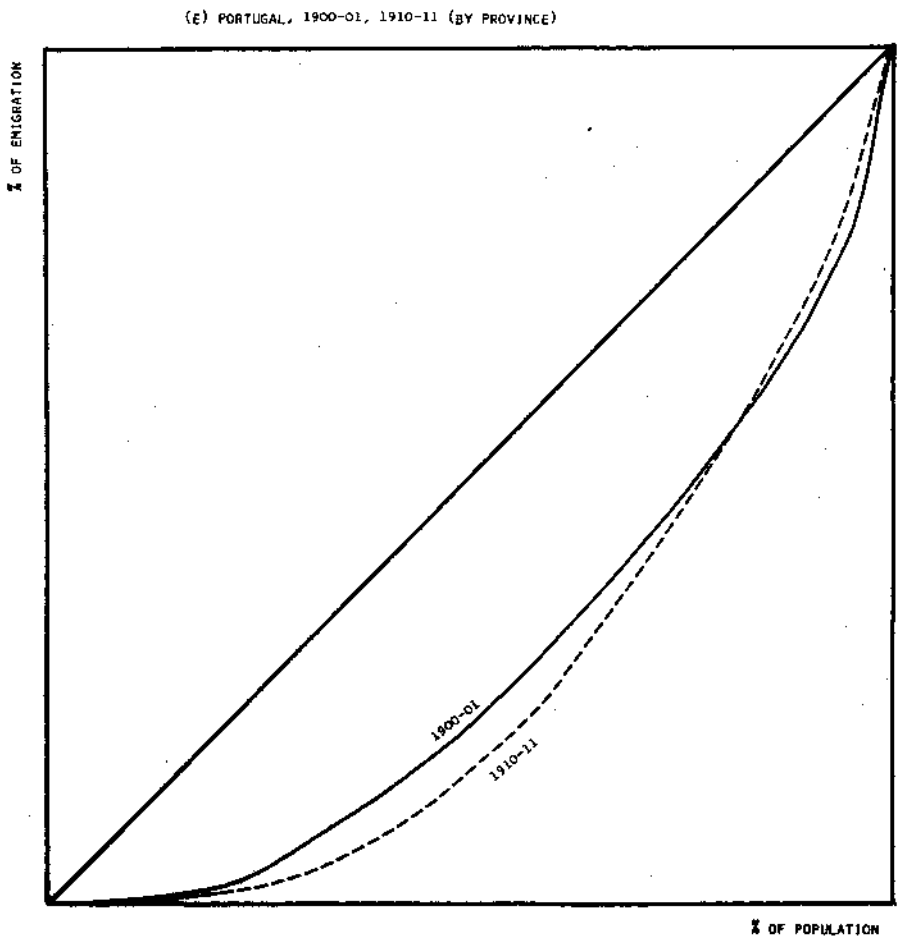
While the intensity of Italian emigration from all four subdivisions increased through time, the increase was much greater in the South, the Centre, and especially in Insular Italy, than in the North, and the process was one which involved a marked levelling of striking disparities of regional emigration intensities and a movement towards the situation in which, in 1910-12, the major subdivisions of the Italian peninsula were contributing to emigration not very sharply differing proportions of their populations. This process can also be seen on a more local level. For instance in Molise 37 of the 133 communes, with more than one quarter of the provincial population, produced no emigrants



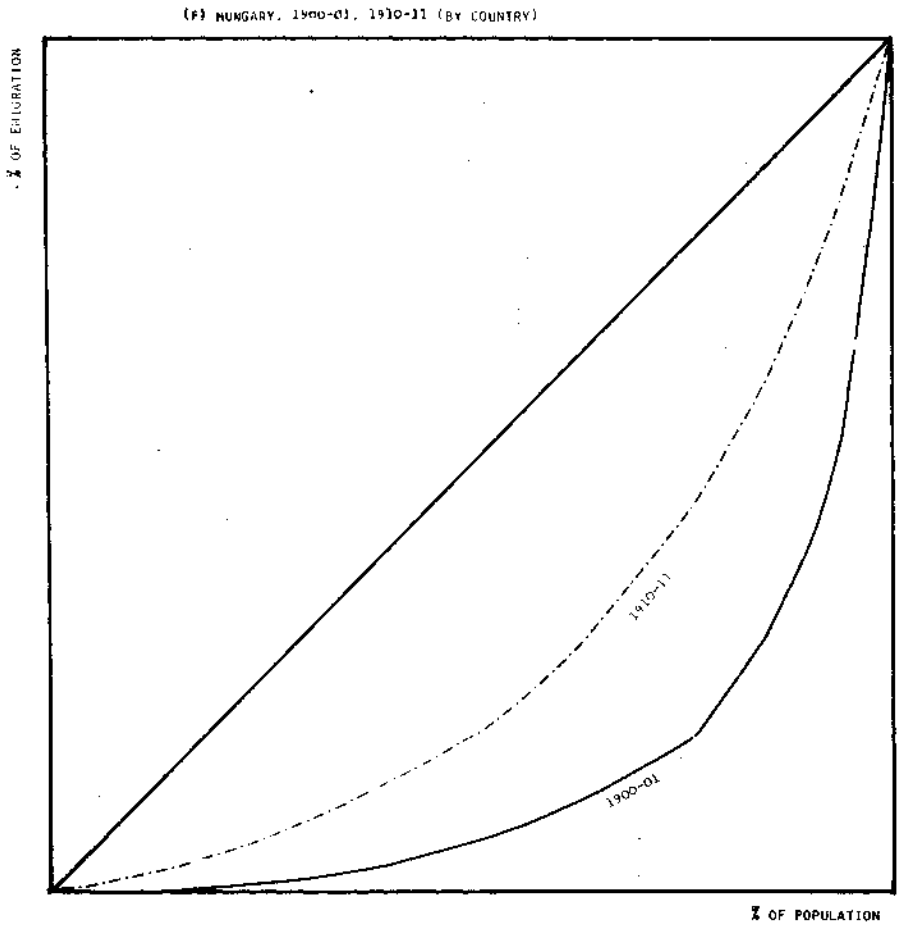
at all in 1884–85, even though the provincial migration intensity was already higher than the national average. By 1900-01 there were only three communes recording no emigrants, and ten years later, no commune had fewer than ten emigrants per 1,000 of the population.[29]

What increases the resemblance between such local patterns and the all-European pattern is that in some cases, at least, the

[29] This information, and much of that in the following paragraphs, is borrowed or calculated from Bruno, 1960. Bruno's essay is an informative and innovative study which has contributed substantially to my own understanding of the process of diffusion of emigration.



spread of emigration to hitherto untouched localities and the sharp increase in intensity of emigration from those from which emigration had been only slight was accompanied by an actual *decline* in the numbers leaving the areas of pioneer emigration. Thus, for example, the increase of some 34 percent in the total regional outflow from Northern Italy between 1900-01 and 1910-12 was achieved largely by an increased intensity of emigration from the less-affected Provinces; in the Provinces of highest emigration intensity, namely Belluno and Udine, the numbers leaving had in fact declined dramatically, by some 37.1 and 19.9 percent respectively.



A more general illustration of this pattern is given by the case of Hungary during the first decade of the present century. Thus in 1900-01, according to the national statistics, eight of the 72 counties, with barely 7 percent of the total population, accounted for well over 50 percent of total emigration. By 1910-11 the eight most emigration-prone counties produced only 22.1 percent of a total which had increased by about 70 percent. There had been, moreover, two changes in the composition of this leading group, two of the eight most emigration-prone counties of 1900-01 having dropped out of that list ten years later. In

1910-11 the eight leaders of 1900-01 produced only 20.8 percent of the total, an *absolute* decline of nearly one third.

This, of course, is an exact intra-national replica of what was happening to the national contributions to the all-European totals. There is, moreover, another important similarity which it is convenient to emphasize at this point, and that is that at all dates, though more strikingly in the earlier decades, the map of emigration was characterised by sharp spatial variations in the intensity of emigration. It is well known that there were large differences in the *national* intensities of emigration, extreme positions being occupied by Norway with an annual average of 6.6 emigrants per 1,000 of the population over the years 1861-1910 and France with 0.2 per thousand over the same interval.[30] Even larger differences are to be found between smaller localities within single countries — necessarily, of course, since differences in the intensity of emigration could not be *greater* between the larger units than between any smaller units into which the latter might be disaggregated, and would be *smaller* to the extent that there was a tendency towards an "averaging" of intensities at higher levels of spatial aggregation.

Thus in Northern Italy in 1881-82 provincial intensities of emigration ranged from 0.05‰ for Bologna to 46.4‰ for Belluno: county rates in Hungary in 1900-01 ranged from 0.4‰ from Somogy to 24.8‰ from Saros; provincial outflows from Portugal, 1900-01, were 0.08‰ for Evora and 19.3‰ for Ponta-Delgada (in the Azores). The map showing the intensity of emigration by county throughout Scandinavia for the years 1885-1920, based on material emerging from the *Nordic Emigration* project, also reveals substantial variations within all four countrues.

We are in fact approaching the situation in which it should become possible to map the intensity of emigration from most of Europe by province, county, or similar subdivision — though not as yet for the same year or years in every case. The chief

[30] Easterlin, 1961, Table 1, p. 335.

features which such a map will reveal, however, are already clearly apparent. Six of the eight leading Hungarian counties of emigration in 1900-01 were in the High Tatry-West Carpathian mountain area, on the northern border of the Kingdom, and a seventh was in the mountainous area of what is now north-west Yugoslavia and was then Croatia-Slavonia, overlooking Fiume.[31] In Italy, the highest emigration intensities in 1881-82 were to be found in the Provinces straddling the Alpine valleys in an arc from Sondrio round to Udine (and thus adjoining at its eastern extremity the region of high intensity in Carniola-Croatia); in the Massa Carrara-Lucca area on the southern flanks of the Appenines; and in the Salerno-Potenza-Cosenza arc of the southern Appenines. (By 1910-11, however, Italy was one of the countries whence emigration was more evenly spread, emigration intensities of 15‰ or more being characteristic of most of the country except the floor of the Po and Arno valleys and the plains around Naples and on the heel of Italy.) In Spain and Portugal the pattern was particularly clearcut: maximum intensities were to be found on the Atlantic Islands, the Canaries and the Azores, and in the inhospitable mountain region occupying the extreme north-west of the Iberian peninsula and accounting for perhaps only 6-8 percent of its total area.[32] (In this region the political boundary between Portugal and Spain had little relevance to emigration levels, like the boundaries between Norway and Sweden, between Italy and the Dual Monarchy, and in much of Eastern Europe.) In Scandinavia the maximum intensities were to be found in the mountains of south-central Norway and the hills of south-central Sweden, on Oland Island,

[31] Data in Bruno, 1960, pp. 149-50, drawing on the original data published by the Central Statistical Office for Hungary in *Kivándorlása és Visszavándorlása, 1899-1913.*

[32] For Spain, emigration intensity maps are available in *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, sub. verb. *Emigración*, and 1885-86 intensities are given in tabular form in Vicens Vives, 1959, p. 34. See also Nadal, 1971, pp. 167-9. For Portugal, Lucci, 1914, pp. 62-4, 73-5; Taft, 1923, pp. 33, 52-3; Bruno, 1960, p. 147. On the irrelevance of the political boundary for human geography and geomorphology, cf. Bettencourt, 1959, pp. 594-5.

and in the central portion of Finland's Gulf-of-Bothnia coast.[33] In Greece it was the offshore islands, the Cyclades, the Aegean and the Ionian, which yielded most emigrants per mille.[34]

In all of this there is apparent a recurring geographical theme: maximum emigration intensities were typically found in mountainous areas and on the smaller islands. This generalisation holds true for other countries than those mentioned and for earlier decades — for example, the heavy losses from the Scottish Highlands exacerbated by the clearances of the early nineteenth century.[35] Even in Denmark, a small and relatively very homogeneous country, there was a marked tendency for the smaller islands, Laaland-Falster and especially outlying Bornholm, to be characterised by well above-average intensities.[36]

Mountain valleys and small islands offered a minimal variety of employment and were often over-populated relative to resources. Moreover, because of transport difficulties and remoteness their inhabitants were denied access to urban or industrial jobs elsewhere save at the cost of more or less definitive, that is permanent or at least seasonal, emigration. We find by contrast much lower emigration rates, in general, in areas of easier relief and better transport (even when of higher population density), whether in central and southern Portugal, in the Po valley, on the Central Hungarian Plain or on the plains of Thessaly or Thrace. The contrast is particularly marked where there was also a growing industrial centre to compete with overseas destinations, such as around Stockholm, on the floor of the Po valley, or in the central provinces of what had been Poland.

From the particularly 'emigration-prone' areas, however, whence overseas emigration in some cases supplemented or re-

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[33] See the series of maps in Runblom and Norman, 1976, following p. 128.

[34] Polyzos, 1947, p. 183.

[35] E. RICHARDS, *The Leviathan of Wealth*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1973, p. 157.

[36] Hvidt, 1975, pp. 40-2.

placed traditional seasonal movement over shorter distances, as in Northern Italy, the practice of emigration spread to areas where the conditions making for mass emigration were less compelling (though still sufficient). Just as on the European level emigration gradually spread, as everyone knows, from North and West to South and East, so was there a comparable 'diffusion' at regional and local levels. We see for example Italian transatlantic emigration spreading in the last two decades of the nineteenth century from the North to the Centre and South and finally, in the first decade of the present century, to Sicily and Sardinia. On the local level, one observes — as in the case of Molise, already referred to, or in Calabria or in Hungary — the spread of the practice from its earliest sources in the mountainous localities of poor soil and deficient transport to less-disfavoured areas on the coast or the plain. The increase in the overall provincial or national emigration intensity then results *not* from a uniform increase in intensity in all geographical subdivisions of that larger unit, but rather from a disproportionately large increase in areas which conditions made less emigration-prone and which had previously been less affected, or not affected at all, by emigration. The increases in such areas countervailed a slower growth or stagnation, or even — as in the cases already documented — an absolute decline in the emigration-prone areas where the process had begun and matured earlier. In terms of the 'S' curves which, it was suggested earlier, characterise in an ideal fashion the progress through time of emigration intensities, the increase in intensity for the larger units comes through local communities entering on a steeply-rising portion of their 'S' curves in sufficient numbers to outweigh the retarding effect of other communities approaching, or passing, the apogee of their curves.

This is what is meant here, arithmetically and geographically speaking, by 'diffusion'. In terms of psychology of motivation, 'diffusion' reflects the fact that some lapse of time was required

for the idea of emigration to become implanted in the minds of the members of a community, for its net benefits to be firmly demonstrated by the experience of those who had gone first, and for those pioneers to set in train that process of encouragement and financial help which forms the links constituting what we call 'chain migration'. In a small rural community 'diffusion' may occur very rapidly, because of the closeness of the relationships of its members; but *between* communities — especially remembering the marked tendency for heavy emigration rates to appear first on islands and in remote mountain valleys — the process was slower because the links were relatively less numerous. However once the process started it grew, or more accurately had the potential to grow, in some sort of exponential fashion, for each successful pioneer emigrant had the ability to inform, encourage, and even finance more than one follower. Beyond a certain point, however — which in a few, isolated cases in e.g. Southern Italy involved the complete depopulation of a locality and in more cases (but still a minority) involved a cessation or reversal of population growth — emigration levelled off, as the number of potential emigrants still remaining declined and the conditions of those left behind improved by virtue of the reduced pressure on resources at home and the remittances of those who had emigrated successfully.

When a given area reached the stage at which all of its geographical subdivisions were fairly launched on their 'S' curves, which is not necessarily to say that they had all attained the apogee of such curves, we may speak of emigration being thoroughly 'diffused' through that continent, country, or province. Or perhaps an easier metaphor is to say that that area was 'saturated' by emigration. To what extent was Europe as a whole 'emigration-saturated' before World War One?

Disaggregating the continent only as far as countries, one must surely reply: "completely". In the years before World War One some countries — Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, Ger-

many — were on the declining segment of their 'S' curves; others were perhaps just about at the apogee; still others may still have been on the rapidly-rising segment further to the left. But surely every *country* in Europe was sufficiently exposed, before 1914, to the possibility of overseas emigration and to the essential 'ways and means' thereof; every country had already a sufficient number of its sons — not in all cases daughters — in the New World, to have fairly entered on the process of exponential ascent which would take it more or less irresistibly to the area of asymptotic deceleration.

Even at the provincial or regional level a similar judgment can be made with almost equal confidence. Certainly of all the regional divisions of North-West Europe, of Scandinavia and of Italy and Portugal; a shade less certainly, perhaps, but still probably, of those of Spain, of Austria-Hungary, of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Only at the local level, and only then in parts of Southern and Eastern Europe, is it likely that there were still some scattered areas which had yet to get launched on their 'S' curves.

These judgments are of course tentative and in part impressionistically based, and not only because of the acknowledged element of vagueness in the definitions the writer is applying. Yet there is ample qualitative evidence from all parts of Europe that before World War One living and working conditions in the United States were so thoroughly known, and the presence in local communities of people who had spent some time in America so widespread, that ignorance and fear can no longer have been the major deterrents to emigration which they had been only a few decades earlier. I have already quoted Coletti (writing in 1911) on this theme in reference to Italy. For similar reasons Meenan writes of the Irish peasantry that "... emigration to New York or Boston was much less of a journey into unknown territory than looking for work in an Irish city." [37] In

[37] In Thomas, 1958, p. 80.

Sweden, Gerhard Magnusson wrote in 1907 that it was easier to borrow money for a ticket to the United States than for one to Stockholm, and easier to go there, too, when friends and relatives were already there.[38] Even in Hungary, late entrant to the transatlantic circuit as it was, there were villages in Upper Hungary in which, according to Schneider (writing in 1915), all adult males had already been in the United States; [39] while in Norway, characterised though it was by very low levels of repatriation, there were areas in which, according to the 1920 Census, one in every four adult males had spent some time in America.[40]

Some statistics may, in one sense, add an element of greater precision to the exposition. (In one sense, because the precision resides in the facts and their statistical manipulation, rather than in the links from those manipulations to the concepts under discussion.) Figure 1 displays a series of Lorenz curves portraying the cumulative proportions of total populations and of total emigration from the four major regions of Italy and from Portugal (by province) and from Hungary (by county) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[41] 'Curves' coincident with the 45° diagonal would indicate that each province or county furnished emigrants exactly in proportion to its share of total population; a curve which followed the two sides of the square to the right of that diagonal would mean that just one county or province furnished *all* the emigrants. The bigger the area between the curve and the 45° diagonal, the more uneven the distribution of emigration intensities. The same feature can of course be portrayed numerically by the Gini coefficient, and Gini coefficients based on the same data are provided in Table 1.

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[38] Janson, 1931, p. 434; Lindberg, 1930, pp. 198-9. As early as 1868 a Swede returning for a visit after 18 years in the United States found the labouring and middle classes with "a pretty correct idea of America", Abbott, 1926, p. 164.

[39] Schneider, 1915, pp. 39, 53.

[40] Semmingsen, 1961, p. 44.

[41] Calculated from data in Bruno, 1960, pp. 147; 149-50; 153-4.

TABLE 1

SHARE OF POPULATION AND SHARE OF EMIGRATION: ITALY (by province); PORTUGAL (by province); HUNGARY (by county)

	Gini coefficients 1881-82	1900-01	1910-12
Italy			
Northern	.557	.516	.376
Central	.813	.340	.242
Southern	.573	.316	.256
Insular	.548	.412	.169
Portugal	.433		.492
Hungary	.720		.453

Source: Calculated from data in Bruno, 1960.

Some interesting and instructive inferences can be drawn with the aid of these graphs and the Table. Over the thirty-year interval in question, all four Italian regions witnessed a marked narrowing of the dispersion of provincial rates of emigration intensity. The smallest degree of 'narrowing' occurred in Northern Italy, which was left with the most unequal distribution of emigration in 1910-12. Are we to conclude that Northern Italy lagged behind the rest of the country in respect to the extent to which it was 'saturated' by the idea of emigration? Quite the contrary, as we know from other evidence, including the fact that in the 1880s it had by far the highest emigration intensity of the four regions. The truth is that the relatively high degree of unevenness of distribution in 1881-82 and 1900-01 reflected the economic geography of the region, with areas of overwhelmingly high emigration intensities in the Alpine foothills and valleys on the one hand, and Italy's largest area of low emigration intensities, the Po plain, on the other. The appreciable narrowing of these differentials in the first decade of the twentieth century arose in considerable part from the marked *fall* in the

intensity of movement from some areas of high emigration as the Italian industrial take-off progressed, and Milan and Turin replaced Switzerland, Germany and Austria-Hungary as the destinations of more and more of Northern Italy's seasonal migrants.[42]

In all three remaining regions of Italy there was a very marked narrowing of differentials which, however, was largely accomplished before 1900 in the Centre and South but was delayed until the first decade of this century in Insular Italy. By 1910-12 the degree of variation of emigration intensities from province to province was exceptionally small in Italy, except for the North, a fact which reflected the relatively homogeneous socio-geographic nature of most of the rest of the peninsula.

For Portugal, by contrast, the Gini coefficients are relatively high, especially in 1910-11, and there was actually a small movement towards *greater* inequality during the first decade of the century. As in Northern Italy, there was a sharp contrast between on the one hand the poor and overpopulated North coast and the mountains behind it, together with the Azores with their very high population density, and on the other the more hospitable and less densely-populated Centre and South. This contrast, and thus Portugal's relatively high dispersion of migration intensities, was persistent, and the lack of any downward movement between the two dates reflects the fact that this contrast not withstanding, Portugal was already completely habituated to emigration by the end of the nineteenth century. How could it be otherwise? Portugal had been a nation of seafarers, of explorers, of colonisers, since the middle ages, a natural destiny for a country virtually all of whose inhabitants lived a score or two miles from the world's greatest ocean of commerce and migration.

In Hungary the Gini coefficient was very high in 1900-01,

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[42] Some of the points made in this paragraph are usefully mapped in Faidutti-Rudolph, *n.d.*, *carte* 29, p. 33 and *carte* 31, p. 34.

and again for the same reason as in Northern Italy — the sharp contrast between high emigration intensities in the poor, peasant farming, mountainous areas in the Slav North and South-West, and very low emigration rates from the predominantly-Magyar Danube plain. Here, however, there was a sharp drop in the coefficient by 1910–11, albeit to a level still well above that of most of Italy. Again this came about as a result of some increase in migration intensities in the less emigration-prone regions, together (as in Northern Italy) with a sharp *fall* in those intensities in some of the mountainous counties where emigration had already passed its peak before 1900.

Summing up, we may therefore say that of our three countries Portugal was fully 'emigration-saturated' by 1900, and in all probability long before that; *Northern* Italy was fairly well so by the 1880s, Central and Southern Italy became so between 1880 and 1900, but Insular Italy only between 1900 and 1910; while Hungary was certainly *not* so saturated in 1900, and possibly not fully so even in 1910.

I have not yet been able to assemble data which would permit the construction of similar graphs or the calculation of Gini coefficients for other countries. But it is hardly likely that the picture already sketched will be shown to be at fault in its broad outlines. The whole of northern and western Europe, including Portugal, all of Scandinavia (with the possible exception of Finland) and the whole of Germany, was thoroughly 'emigration-saturated' well before the end of the nineteenth century. Presumably these countries will reveal greater or lesser degrees of inequality in their regional intensities of emigration in accordance with their physical and economic geography, as do Portugal, Italy and Hungary. In Germany it is quite conceivable that the Gini coefficient may be found to have *increased* in the later nineteenth century, since emigration from all the western States of the Empire (the earliest source of German emigration) had virtually dried up at a time when it was still high in the east.

At the other extreme, parts of south-east and eastern Europe, like Hungary or Insular Italy, were only becoming 'emigration-saturated' in the first decade of the present century, and perhaps had not become fully so by 1910. Greece, for example, reached a substantial level of emigration intensity only after 1900, though emigration to the U.S.A. was pioneered in the 1870s.[43] As already mentioned, there are indications of very substantial differences in intensities as between some of the islands and the plains of Thrace or Thessaly. In the sprawling territories which had constituted Poland before the eighteenth-century partitions there was a clear chronological pattern to the diffusion of emigration. That process first attained large proportions in the area under German rule, the Poles having ample opportunity to become exposed to the possibilities of emigration through the example of their German fellow-citizens. It has been calculated from German census data that the (net) emigration intensity of Poles from Eastern Germany peaked, at about 12.3 per mille per annum, in the 1880s, fell somewhat in the 1890s, and then fell more sharply in the 1900s — a pattern very similar to that, it will be noticed, of the Germans themselves. By the end of the nineteenth century more and more German Poles were finding ample opportunity of well-paid jobs without leaving Germany, in the burgeoning mines and industries of Westphalia and the Ruhr.

From the Poles of Pomerania and Poznan the habit of overseas emigration spread to the Poles of Galicia, and from them to the other Slav races in that province. Here, the Austrian census data suggest that the overseas emigration intensity of Poles increased from virtually nil in the 1880s to a modest peak, well below the maximum intensity of East Germany, in the first decade of the present century, and thereafter at best stagnated. The emigration intensity of Poles under Russian rule in the

[43] Saloutos, 1964 (b), pp. 22-4.

Congress Kingdom cannot be assessed by similar methods as there is only one Russian census, that of 1897, to go on, but it is clear that a substantial outflow only developed in the first decade of the twentieth century. Only in the years immediately preceding World War One did the Congress Kingdom become the major source of overseas Polish emigration. Thus, 'Poland' constitutes in itself something of a microcosmic exemplar of the process of diffusion under discussion in this essay.[44]

The hint of a new explanation for the increase of European overseas migration in the decades before World War One is now broad. By 'new explanation' one intends, to be sure, only a *supplementary* explanation, for it is not suggested that the mechanisms of diffusion and saturation were alone responsible for what happened. It is clear that European emigration was checked in the 1890s by the U.S. depression in the middle of that decade and by the abrupt collapse of the boom in both Australia and Argentina. Equally clearly, the return of migration to new, record heights in the early twentieth century was made possible by the recovery of the U.S. economy from the trough of the 1890s, the revival of growth in Argentina and Australia, and the trade and capital formation boom which elevated Canada, for the first time in half a century, into the ranks of the countries of massive net immigration.

Nor is it intended to deny that factors other than the mechanisms under discussion here were at work in Europe, too. Clearly the decline of emigration from many parts of Northern and Western Europe was due in part to the effects of industrialisation on the domestic demand for labour, while in South and East Europe the march of the Malthusian devil, at a time when there were still insufficient opportunities for making a living

[44] Fogelson, 1938; Greene, 1961, pp. 48-50; Ruziewicz, 1930, *passim*, Balch, 1910, p. 132. Note that the emigration intensities for Poles from East Germany and Galicia are based on total net emigration (that is, including the very sizeable net outflow to Europe, including the non-Polish provinces of Germany).

outside of agriculture, can be credited with some of the responsibility. Only in a few areas — in Ireland, in parts of Southern Italy and of the Iberian peninsula — was net emigration large enough to outweigh natural increase, so that population actually fell. Elsewhere only a fraction of the natural increase, though in many places a large fraction, was siphoned off, and as the fall in the death rate reached South-East Europe some decades before the fall in the birth rate, rates of natural increase rose dramatically in the thirty years or so before World War One.

Yet, even so, it is hard to believe, for example, that the increase in the population of Sardinia between 1886 and 1910 by about one sixth, or indeed any other source of increased economic pressure which may have afflicted the island, can fully explain a situation in which, in the former year, not a single transatlantic emigrant was recorded, while by 1910 an intensity of nearly five per thousand was attained. On the continental level, of course, there is little if any correlation between population densities and emigration rates. France, certainly, was one of the least densely-populated countries, and the least emigration-prone. But it was closely rivalled in respect of the latter characteristic by Belgium and the Netherlands, with their extremely high population densities, while Ireland, as already mentioned, continued to send forth large numbers even after its population density fell below that of France shortly after 1870. As we saw in Essay 2, the majority of econometric studies have strengthened this sceptical view of the role of the Malthusian devil, though it must be emphasized that since emigration intensity varied so much from region to region, all inferences as to causality derived from *nationally*-aggregated data are suspect.

Nor is it obvious, though careful statistical testing yet remains to be carried out, that the income differential will fare any better as an explanation of the massive upsurge of emigration from South and East Europe in the quarter century before World War One. The new estimates of the national product of Italy

which became available only recently confirm previous impressions, that it was in the last 20 years before the War that the Italian economy really 'took off'. After stagnating, with a very faint suggestion of a downward trend, from unification to the mid-1890s, real Italian per capita product surged ahead from that date to the War at a compound rate in excess of 2 percent.[45] In short, Italian emigration to the United States reached massive proportions in precisely those years when the income differential between the two countries, measured algebraically, had ceased to widen and was indeed tending to narrow slightly. Are we then driven, in order to explain these perplexities, to exclusive reliance on the 'pull' factors mentioned above? The answer to which the argument of this essay and of its predecessors points is no. What is suggested here is that the great upsurge in emigration from South and East Europe was caused, in large part, by the progress of the diffusion of emigration in potentially emigration-prone areas, the achievement of 'saturation' levels in which occurred almost simultaneously in the ten or fifteen years before the outbreak of War.

The dramatic changes which caused the explosion of emigration from south and east Europe occurred not in the quarter century before World War One, but in the period from 1848 to the 1880s. It was in this period that serfdom and labour services were abolished, at dates ranging from 1848 in Austria-Hungary to 1864 in Rumania; that the bonds of the village community, *mir* or *zadruga*, were gradually loosened; that permission was given for the subdivision of peasant holdings. It was in this period, too, that the main railway lines were constructed, speeding up and cheapening transport to the ports and advertising the attractions of foreign lands in the hope of boosting passenger revenues.

These events loosened the constraints on emigration previously

[45] Calculated from Fuà, 1969, Vol. III, Tables XII. 1.1.A and XII. 2.1.

imposed by the law, by isolation, by the bonds of local society and economy and — most fundamentally of all — by ignorance. In doing so they created the probability that south and east Europe would eventually follow the north and west and become the source of mass transatlantic emigration. That probability did not wait upon such *further* deterioration in economic conditions in those parts as occurred very late in the nineteenth, or in the twentieth, century. In some areas, granted, such deterioration did occur, through growing population pressure in areas of peasant farming, through the destruction of local industrial and transport employment opportunities by the railways, through the 'de-industrialisation' caused in the Mezzogiorno by Italian unification. But such deterioration was not universal, as industrialisation 'took off' in Italy and in Hungary, as the Mediterranean and Balkan lands found new export products which faced better demand conditions, as agricultural prices generally revived after the mid 'nineties.* The truth is that in these parts of Europe, or more accurately in the limited regions of them which, through relative backwardness and overpopulation, were to become the main sources of emigration, poverty and lack of economic op-

* M. Palairet offers his study of the development of Serbia's plum-based trades as one example of "the tremendous expansion, within the area which may be described broadly as Mediterranean Europe, of the export of specialist and industrial crops" (Palairet, 1977, p. 582). Though these were mainly non-cereal cash crops — plums, wine, tobacco, olives, currants — there was also a widespread expansion of the cultivated area and some increase in grain yields, so that there were some dramatic rises in grain production in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Berend and Ránki, 1974, pp. 53-5). Stock numbers were also high in relation to population (*ibid.*, p. 57); Serbia led the world in the number of pigs per 1,000 inhabitants, and was third in cattle behind the U.S.A. and Denmark. Doreen Warriner points out that many foreign visitors thought the Balkan peasantry of the late nineteenth century better off than the pauperized working classes of Western Europe (Warriner, 1965, p. 23).

The chief point is the essentially *localized* nature of emigration from South-East Europe, the chief sources of emigration being the more rugged mountain areas and the smaller islands. Beyond that there was also some distinction between the countries of medium-sized peasant farms and those, especially Hungary and Rumania, with a bi-modal structure of land distribution, inadequate peasant holdings in the mountains contrasting with great estates on the plains, and relatively little in between.

portunity were *already* sufficiently severe early in the second half of the century to justify mass emigration. But it was not enough, in the south-east any more than in the north-west, for the external and psychological restraints on emigration to be lifted. It took time for the pioneers to show the way, for the mechanisms of feedback and diffusion to come into operation, and, by their power of exponential growth, to convert the emigration of the pioneers into a mass movement. Even in Ireland, the flight following the potato famine did not erupt suddenly as a totally new phenomenon, but followed on three decades of gradually increasing transatlantic migration. The same comment is true when applied to the flight of the Jews from eastern Europe following the pogroms.[46] The pioneer transatlantic emigrants of 1816-17 from Germany, of 1824 from Norway, of the 1830s from Sweden, were not followed by anything that could be called a 'mass' movement for at least thirty years.

Several writers, both contemporaries of the nineteenth-century migrants and scholars of our own day, have likened the lure of emigration to a 'fever'. The metaphor is well-chosen, not only because it appropriately conveys a sense of psychological excitement, but for the implicit suggestion that the spread of the idea is achieved by personal transmission between men and women in intimate contact with each other. Like a society in the grip of a contagious disease, not all of Europe was affected at the same time, or in the same degree, by emigration fever. Some parts of the continent had a greater capacity to resist infection than others, and since the disease spread by personal contacts, it did so more quickly in tightly-knit communities, occasionally leaping over considerable distances to initiate a new centre of infection. The number of those affected naturally reached its maximum value when the whole continent was

[46] Wischnitzer, 1948, p. 28. It is worth noting that Wischnitzer cites harsh treatment under military service as one reason for early nineteenth-century emigration of Jews from eastern Europe.

infected, just before World War One, but by that time the virulence was clearly on the wane in the original area of infection and, indeed, in some of the secondary centres.

It deserves to be stressed here that it was the maturation of emigration in populous parts of Europe in the early twentieth century which generated the record numbers leaving the continent at that time. While in the areas of " Old " emigration some countries, such as Great Britain and Norway, experienced in the immediate pre-war years a recovery of emigration rates — in the case of the former, to new record levels — in others, such as Germany, Sweden and Switzerland, emigration levels continued their secular decline. Further, and perhaps less well known, even in the countries of " New " immigration emigration rates per mille of the population did *not* generally rival those of the countries of the " Old " emigration when they had been at their peak. None of the " New " countries, even at their times of peak emigration, approached the level of the Irish outflow in the five years following the Famine, and only Italy, with a *gross* outflow of 11.9 emigrants (annual average) per mille of population for the years 1905-09 rivalled Norway's peak of 11.7 per mille in 1880-84. In general, the maritime lands — Portugal, Spain and Greece, as well as Italy — showed much higher rates of emigration per head than did the more landlocked countries: Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and the independent Serbian Kingdom. In none of these, even Hungary, did gross emigration rates at their peak attain the same level as from Ireland, Norway or Sweden at *their* peaks.

Further, these comparisons are on a basis of *gross* emigration rates; allowing for the much higher rates of repatriation in the later period and from the " New " countries, it seems safe to say that Ireland, Norway, Sweden and probably Great Britain had experienced substantially greater net losses per mille of their population at the times of their maximum net outflow than did *any* of the countries of the " New " immigration, even the mari-

time ones.[47] Thus inter-continental emigration from central and eastern Europe and the Balkans was both more shortlived, of lesser intensity, and of less permanent character than that from the major sources of north-west Europe.

To liken emigration to a fever suggests an irresistible question: would then emigration, like the spread of an infectious disease, have withered of its own accord, at some time not too long after the War, had the various governments not passed the restrictive measures they did in the twenties and thirties? The question must at once be rephrased, for in fact, as already shown, it was not those measures which led to the collapse of inter-continental migration in the 1930s. The counterfactual inviting consideration is rather, had the World War and the Depression of the 1930s not occurred, would the propensity to emigrate have declined as it did by the 1930s?

A rigorous answer to this counterfactual cannot at present be attempted, and indeed if and when it is attempted it is not likely to be as rigorous as it will perhaps appear at first sight. The answer will demand not merely a precise specification of the assumed course of income levels (and distribution) and of employment in the various European countries as well as in the countries of immigration, but the assumption of constant migrant elasticities of response, or of elasticities changing over those income and employment levels in some systematic, and known, way. A great deal of evidence reviewed in these essays suggests that in many cases such elasticities were *not* constant even over the range of incomes and employment levels actually encountered in the period before 1914, and the assumption that they would have remained constant at, or changed systematically from, some known level thereafter is not likely to carry much conviction. But in less rigorous, " common-sensical " vein there is a great deal to be said in favour of the provisional assumption that the countries of the " New " immigration, given a reasonably favour-

[47] Cf. Essay 4, fn. (8).

able development of their economies in the absence of war (and revolution), would have followed those of the "Old" in re-directing growing fractions of their "surplus" population into new employments at home.

Of course, the analogy breaks down at this very point, for whereas in the case of the spread of a contagious disease the natural increase of the population can be ignored, as being relatively too slow to influence the situation, in the case of emigration this assumption is not warranted. As we have seen, in the majority of countries emigration, even in the years before World War One, siphoned off *only a fraction* of the natural increase. It is therefore possible that emigration measured in absolute terms may have continued to increase even though emigration rates *per mille* of the population levelled off asymptotically or even declined. But two considerations pointing in another direction have to be borne in mind: first, that not merely economic development and emigration but also the fall in the birth rate were moving swiftly southwards and eastwards in the Europe of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and secondly, that the whole of our discussion of "diffusion" and "saturation" has been couched in terms of *gross* emigration intensities. There is every reason to believe that had the proportion of total emigration deriving from south and east Europe continued to increase beyond 1914, and had the speed of oceanic transport continued to increase and its cost, relative to income, to decline, *net* emigration rates for Europe as a whole would have fallen relative to *gross*.

Two points arising from the foregoing discussion deserve emphasis. First, it alleviates in some degree the puzzle of a conundrum which has not yet been fully recognised only because so far the econometric historians have done virtually no work on the causes of the "New" immigration — namely, *why* did emigration from south and east Europe increase so suddenly and in such a massive proportion in the couple of decades immediately

before World War One? The standard answer in terms of income differentials is hardly likely to prove satisfactory on its own, in so far as these countries were almost certainly considerably poorer, at least in certain regions, than most of those of north and west Europe which provided the bulk of the " Old " immigration in the decades preceding 1890; so that on this score, mass emigration should have *started* in the south and east and then moved north and west. To the question, what great change occurred in south-east Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to justify the development in question, the answer suggested here is, none. Economic deterioration there was in some places and in some respects, but it was at least partly balanced by economic improvement in other respects and places, and on balance there is not enough change of this sort to carry so large a burden of explanation. Here we believe that the big changes, changes essentially of a permissive and facilitating rather than an actively causal kind, had come earlier, well before 1890 for the most part; and that the massive increase in emigration rates which took place *after* that date reflected the slow but exponentially accelerating growth initiated in areas already potentially ' emigration-prone ' by the pioneer movements which had followed these permissive developments.

In the second place, our discussion focuses attention yet once more on the critical role of " feedback " in the migration process. To say this is not, to be sure, to make any striking revelation, for traditional and econometric studies have agreed in finding the number of previous migrants from a given area to be one of the major determinants of later emigration. Further, the influence of the former is not confined to helping determine the *number* of later emigrants, but extends also to their choice of destination and, to some extent, of occupation. The strong momentum of locational concentration of Norwegian migrants to the U.S.A. has already been discussed, and innumerable other examples can be found in the literature, from the tendency of

Irish immigrants to the U.K. to cluster, not just in Liverpool but in particular streets in Liverpool,[48] to the Genoese, Calabrian or Sicilian blocks on New York's Lower East Side, or Rivington Street, 'only a suburb of Minsk', and the "Little Bohemia" around the Second Avenue-75th Street intersection.[49]

An interesting implication is that a strong locational pattern in the settlement of migrants from a particular part of Europe may reflect nothing more than the momentum arising from an original choice which was itself determined by some quite minor, adventitious circumstances, or indeed quite random. A rather extreme example is the small Italian community in Island Bay, Wellington, all of whose ancestors came to New Zealand from Stromboli, the tiny island off the toe of Italy, and were brought to New Zealand by a process of "chain" migration initiated by a seaman who had been put ashore at Wellington after breaking a leg. Finding conditions to his liking after his release from hospital, he went back to Italy and persuaded his brother to return with him to New Zealand. These two then financed the emigration of a cousin, then of friends, until the crew of a fishing boat was complete; then, finally, the wives were persuaded to follow.[50]

Some instances, however, are of greater consequence than this. For instance, emigration from both Spain and Portugal was strongly localised as to destination, but in a peculiar way, there being a sharp distinction in each case between emigration

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[48] Lawton, 1959, pp. 48-50.

[49] Taylor, 1971, pp. 210-11; Wittke, 1939, p. 413. Perhaps the most interesting evidence in favour of the influence wielded by previous migrants comes from Nilsson's study of emigration from Stockholm to the U.S.A. Nilsson reports strong positive correlation between the ranking of Swedish provinces by intensity of direct overseas emigration and the ranking by the intensity of emigration from Stockholm when the emigrants from that city are grouped by province of birth. Presumably the number of friends and relatives from the provinces of birth already in the U.S.A. influenced the latter *rather* than economic conditions in those provinces: Nilsson, 1970, pp. 314,366.

[50] Lochore, 1951, pp. 23-4; on "chain" migration with reference to Australia see Price, 1963, pp. 107-39.

from the mainland and that from the Atlantic islands. Thus in the case of Spain emigrants from the Canaries overwhelmingly chose destinations in Cuba and in Latin America, whereas from the mainland the preferred destination was the United States. In the case of Portugal — and this is the most curious feature — preferences were oriented exactly the other way about: the island emigrants, that is from the Azores and Madeira, overwhelmingly chose the United States, whereas from the mainland they went even more overwhelmingly to Brazil and to Portuguese overseas possessions. It seems probable that the origins of these preferences lay in earlier historical contacts; in the case of the Azores, for example, the preference of Portuguese migrants for New England and California originated in the links established with these areas by whaling ships as early as the late eighteenth century.[51] Such purely incidental connections were then reinforced by the process of feedback to build enduring locational patterns.

It is important to emphasize that the "standard" array of factors invoked to explain migration patterns — income differences, employment opportunities, population pressures, and so on — is quite powerless to explain the sharp contrast in destinations as between the island and the mainland emigrants for either Spain or Portugal separately. Still less can those factors explain why the choice of destinations by these two groups should be exactly *reversed* as between the two countries. There is an important moral to draw here, and that is that one should resist the temptation of supposing that big historical results necessarily spring from equally imposing "causes". The events which caused the sort of locational preference under discussion were not only adventitious with respect to the future determinants of migration, but often in themselves historically trivial, as with the injured Italian sailor. Yet at a later date, the large numbers

[51] Taft, 1923, p. 97; Bettencourt, 1959, p. 69.

of emigrants displaying these strong locational preferences may mislead us into supposing that there must be some enduring fundamental determinant which continues to differentiate sharply between the Canaries and Pontevedra, between the Azores and Braganza. History may not be, as H.A.L. Fisher once suggested, *merely* the outcome of the play of the contingent and the unforeseen; but its greatest events and processes have often originated in the trivial and the adventitious to a much greater extent than historical determinists of all casts of thought would allow.

And yet one should not end on a seemingly cynical note. For the fact is that viewed *grosso modo* the history of European migration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries gives ample proof of the play of purpose, rationality, and discrimination. Starting from inauspicious beginnings in the early decades, with emigrants driven by starvation and despair towards largely unknown goals, the nineteenth century ended by seeing huge numbers of men and women moving not only across the seas, but within Europe itself, in complicated patterns designed to enable them to "find their own levels". Thus Germans would not work the Brazilian coffee plantations, but Poles and Japanese would, and also Italians, though the latter only for a while and only when the going was good. The Germans were happy enough, however, establishing agricultural communities in the south of Brazil where they were long permitted to use their own language, religion and customs. The attempts on the part of the early German migrants to the United States to maintain a similar cultural independence was largely a failure, given the more irresistible domination of the American way of life. German or any other immigrant culture could be fully sustained only in a location so remote and unattractive that it was sheltered from the march of American civilisation, and such a location offered little hope that the transplant would flourish.[52]

[52] Hawgood, 1940, p. 187.

The Italians and other nationalities of the "New" immigration were more ready than the Germans to achieve a partial respite for their own language and customs at the price of living in ethnic enclaves in the big industrial cities; for the North Italians and other for whom this price was too high, there was always Argentina where the immigrants were relatively more numerous, and where the native ruling class retreated into land ownership and politics, leaving the immigrants to dominate business life and set the tone of *bourgeois* society. Argentina did not have, in the immigrants' view, "a superior culture to be imitated",[53] or indeed to be rammed down one's throat, like the North American, whether one wanted it or not.

The Scandinavians, with a less powerful culture than the Germans, adapted in a less prickly fashion to the American style, though the isolated conditions in which the first generations, especially of Norwegians, lived eased the transition for them. The Swedes however quickly became clear that harvesting sugar-beet for German farmers was beneath them,[54] when the latter began to feel the pinch of the labour shortage as German industrial growth lured away their agricultural labourers and they had to cast around for an alternative supply. Disappointed by the Swedes the farmers first sought to enlist the most sizeable and depressed ethnic minority within the borders of the Empire, the Poles of the provinces snatched by Prussia in the eighteenth-century partitions, but the Poles were quick to learn that there was better-paid work going in Westphalian industry to which, as German citizens, they were quite free to move. The breach was filled by the importation of cheaper temporary workers from the Polish provinces of Austria and of Russia. In order to prevent these workers slipping away into urban or industrial

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[53] Germani, 1970, p. 309.

[54] Janson, 1931, pp. 269-71.

jobs elsewhere in Germany and to perpetuate their unorganised and almost servile state, and also to save the costs of employing them during the slack season, the Germans organised a system of entry permits which lasted for less than a full year, imposing a *Karenzzeit* of a few weeks over the Christmans period during which the labourers had to return home.[55] For the most part Polish males, even from Galicia or the Congress Kingdom, scorned such conditions and left it to their women and children to harvest the Germans' sugar beet, while they themselves migrated temporarily in search of better-paid industrial work in the U.S.A., in France, or even in Russia.

Of all the nationalities of Europe, the Italians achieved the most sophisticated and complicated alignment between their skills and preferences and their emigration practices. The alignment was not always a matter of choosing the destination in the light of the skill, for in the north the skill was often chosen to suit the destination. Seasonal migration to neighbouring European countries was the foundation of local economy in the Alpine valleys to such an extent that young men were apprenticed to crafts which there was no opportunity for them to practise at home, but only in the countries to which seasonal emigration was the norm. Their specialisations varied from one destination to another. Thus in France the Italians were the seasonal service workers on the French Riviera, in Alpes Maritimes, Var, and Bouches-du-Rhône.[56] In Austria-Hungary and parts of Germany the Italians were the skilled craftsmen of, especially, the building industry: masons, stoneworkers, decorators. In Switzerland, however, the German immigrants, dominating in the most industrialised part of the country, monopolised the skilled jobs,

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[55] Ruziewicz, 1930, *passim*; Rabinovitch, 1932.

[56] Faidutti-Rudolph, *n.d.*

and most Italian furnished unskilled labour, digging out the great railway tunnels under the Alps.[57]

There is no conflict between this picture of sophisticated adjustment between demand and supply in the international market for migrant labour and the emphasis placed earlier on a "follow-my-leader" diffusion process. The numbers involved were sufficiently large and the patterns of demand sufficiently stable over sufficiently long periods to permit the opportunities to be throughly researched by pioneers. If patterns of demand became more complicated and changed more rapidly as the century wore on, so did the numbers seeking to detect those patterns increase and the stock of knowledge grow.

The process of diffusion, on which stress has been laid in this essay, did not *guarantee* that pioneer migration would be followed by a mass movement increasing in some predetermined mathematical progression. If the conditions were not propitious: if the income gain was insufficiently large, for example, or the conditions of the migrant community unacceptable in some other way, the pioneer movement would prove still-born, as did that of the Germans recruited to the Brazilian coffee or the West Indian sugar plantations, or the Swedes who tried harvesting sugar-beet in Saxony. But where conditions fundamentally favoured mass emigration in a particular direction it still took time for the pioneers to establish that fact, for their example to spread to others in their own community, and then — more slowly at first — to other communities.

The latter part of this essay has concerned itself with the massive growth of transatlantic movement from the countries of the "New" immigration in the quarter century before World War One. It suggests that the neglected factor in that process is that the period mentioned witnessed the near-simultaneous

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[57] Soldini, 1970, p. 25.

maturation and coalescence of streams of migration from south and east Europe. These streams had their origin in earlier *successful* pioneer migration from regions and along routes where the conditions favoured mass emigration well before 1890, but had earlier been restrained by barriers of a legal, geographical or mental kind. If this interpretation is anywhere near the truth then explanatory schemes based on the assumption of instantaneous response and constant elasticities of response are doomed to failure.