

Population Mobility in Developing Countries: A Reinterpretation

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Belhaven Press
(a division of Pinter Publishers)
London and New York

Changing mobility patterns in the developed world: France and Japan

France

The case of France in a discussion of changing patterns of migration is important because of the enormous volume of research that has been carried out on both historical and present population movement. I will make reference to only two sources as these appear to synthesize the results of this formidable body of literature. The first is perhaps the most detailed examination of long-term trends of mobility to have been made to date for any part of the world: Abel Chatelain's posthumous *Les migrants temporaires en France de 1800 à 1914*.⁴⁶ This monumental work, a supreme example of French scholarship, utilizes diverse sources of data for the period and reviews over 800 studies that touch upon the chosen themes. The time-period considered is wider than is suggested in the title as the author often looks backwards into the eighteenth century and beyond, and forwards towards the mid-twentieth century. It is perhaps an unfair criticism of this exhaustive study to note that it is entirely insular; the author is never tempted to look beyond the boundaries of France or to consider sources other than those in French. Yet the discussion of change in mobility over the '*longue durée*' in France has clear parallels in many other parts of the world and relates to almost every theme that is raised in the present book.

The second work, by Daniel Courgeau, adopts a broader perspective and specifically sets out to examine Zelinsky's hypothesis of the mobility transition in the light of three centuries of changing mobility in France.⁴⁷ Courgeau establishes structured changes in the spatial pattern of migration over time, although these differ from Zelinsky's format. In accounting for these variations, Courgeau links the evolution of mobility to changes in family structure, the economy, and political and institutional factors which suggest 'that societies are confronted not by a single path development which all must follow but by a more complex range of possibilities'.⁴⁸ In a few paragraphs I can only hope simply to outline the principal findings of these studies and those that can be clearly related to the foregoing discussion of mobility in other parts of the world.

One of the basic themes of Chatelain's work is the coexistence and constant relationship between temporary and what he calls 'more definitive migration' over several centuries in France. More than this, he identifies periods when first one, then the other, dominates mobility. In assessing temporary migration, Chatelain reviewed the debate between those who considered that it acted as a brake to permanent migration by helping to preserve a rural way of life and those who saw it as a precursor of permanent outmigration which would lead eventually to the destruction of the rural way of life. In a debate that preoccupied French scholars in the early decades of this century, Chatelain argued that, until the middle of the nineteenth century, the former view was essentially correct while later, with the increasing development of industry, new forms of transport, and urban places, the latter interpretation became correct.

Seasonal and temporary migration from villages to other rural areas was