

1

Migration during the Shift from Agrarian to Industrial Societies

1 MIGRATORY TRADITIONS AND SYSTEMS AT THE END OF THE EARLY MODERN ERA

Old Europe was a turbulent world on the streets of which itinerants, vagabonds and distinguished travellers encountered one another daily.¹ In the eighteenth century, the spectrum extended from young aristocrats aboard their coaches on a gentleman's excursion, to travel groups taking a grand tour to Italy, to travelling journeymen and heavily laden itinerant traders, right the way down to all kinds of riff-raff who never let foreign lands seem totally free of danger.²

A wide variety of migrant groups covered great distances in early modern Europe by sea or by land, either temporarily or permanently. There were employment migrations that included architects, artists and technical experts, seasonal labour migrants and itinerant merchants with a fixed residential base, transient labourers and traders without a residence, mercenaries, seamen, those working in colonial service and many others. There were settlement migrations, for example, to populate Prussia and Austria-Hungary, or to settle colonists in the Russia of Catherine the Great. Between overseas labour migration and colonial settler migration were the transatlantic migration of indentured servants, who worked in servitude in the 'New World' to pay their passage, at the end of which they often received a minimum start capital and/or a piece of land. There were also refugees and those expelled for religious reasons whose immigration was frequently viewed by the authorities of the receiving country as a welcome transfer of innovation and a strengthening of the country's industrious reputation, and in any case as an expansion of the working population and thus tax revenue. Huguenots and Waldenses in the seventeenth century and the Salzburgs in the eighteenth are the best

known though by no means the only examples. In addition to the many temporary and permanent migrations over long distances, migrants, both men and women, also covered small to intermediate geographical distances between rural settlements or between the countryside and the growing cities with their enticing labour markets and their offer of 'freedom'. In virtually all areas of life and work, a large number of people covered ground and moved on, in one way or another, either voluntarily or against their will.

The diversity of forms encompassed by the word 'migration' in the highly mobile early modern age can hardly be ignored, and in some areas has not yet been adequately explored. The intention here is not merely to expand the list of works that offer orientation in this regard.³ Let us instead choose two examples to create a bridge back into late Old Europe before the industrial age. We shall examine two widespread, long-established major forms from the area of employment migration: labour migration and itinerant trade. Both emerged largely against the background of a disproportionate relationship between population growth and available work options. This situation had been intensifying especially in rural areas since the mid-eighteenth century. In the demographic '*crise européenne*'⁴ from the early seventeenth to the early eighteenth centuries, numerous wars, principally the Thirty Years' War in central Europe, and the accompanying yet also independently raging famine and epidemics, led in certain regions to a severe population decline. Not until 1700 had a population level around an estimated 115 million been achieved. Even before the mid-eighteenth century, the population started increasing dramatically, once again varying greatly from region to region. The population of Europe rose to about 185 million around 1800 and continued to climb, finally leading to the population boom of the industrial age.⁵

At first this population growth in central Europe essentially filled the gap left by the population decline from the period that became largely symbolized by deserted settlements, with their empty, plundered and dilapidated residences. For survivors, this might have served as a kind of crisis-related social compensation in which the redistribution of goods and opportunities in some regions even took on aspects of an economic miracle. But even in areas that continued to be affected by previous declines in population, the size of especially the landless population increased at the latest as of the mid-eighteenth century beyond the limits of available work. In rural areas, high natural fertility rate among these sub-peasant social classes acted in combination with their increase in numbers as a result of social decline due to exclusion from landholding. Manorial property structures as well as forms of cultivation limited the available agricultural land area. Inheritance rights in which an entire

estate was transferred largely to one heir, usually the first-born, and division of land among all heirs had the same social repercussions in cases of high population growth: whenever offspring were excluded from inheritance or heirs could not subsist from the parcel of land they received, the growing army of those with little or no land continued to multiply through social decline.

In addition, another destabilizing factor, varying in degree from region to region, affected the precarious demographic-economic balance in areas with significant proto-industrial cottage production. These family-run home industries, which also included a large number of poor urban households, were mainly transplanted to the countryside by urban businesspeople and capitalist trade distributors and were ostracized by the urban guilds. They were tied to interregional and even intercontinental markets through trade by the distributors and wholesalers. Proto-industrial cottage production encompassed a broad spectrum of products ranging from linen and blended fabrics to haberdashery, wood, clay, copper and hardware products and all kinds of consumer goods for everyday use. Despite the frequently exploitative nature of the capitalist distribution system, in many areas it was often the only opportunity for those with little or no land to have a sole or additional family income that could remain fairly stable in good economic times. The comparatively secure, albeit low, income and the fact that children did not have to leave the house to work but could be used in the family's own cottage production had immense consequences for natural population developments. In many places, the population involved in cottage industries soon grew beyond the limits of what the domestic production system could absorb.⁶

Where even the proto-industrial domestic system could no longer resolve the disproportionate relationship between population growth and job availability, or if the population dilemma even intensified, the necessity for employment migration grew. If tools and production sites did not belong to the distributor or if credit financing or high debts led to an impossible situation of dependency, cottage producers turned to selling their own products. This usually involved itinerant trading in the local rural area or through sales at nearby city markets. When selling their own products over long distances, some family members became temporarily unavailable for cottage production. These early forms of overlap between independent production and travelling sales were maintained only in isolated cases, however. The situation was similar for labour migrants whose family income was still insufficient despite seasonal migration in summer, and who therefore strove to increase their income in the winter through the sale of cottage industry products. Usually, however, intensive proto-industrial domestic production represented a major wage-earning alternative to labour migration until it was

pushed out entirely by machine competition in the early nineteenth century.

Labour migration and itinerant trade were the two most important forms of employment migration. They ranged from local movements to long-distance migrations of hundreds of kilometres. Both were stabilized by family or group-related migratory traditions, sometimes over generations. In contrast to the 'floating population' or traders and artisans without a fixed residential base and to other marginal migrant groups⁷ who were mobile or even nomadic more or less as a means of survival, labour migration and itinerant trade refer to employment migration aimed at supplementing a basic – albeit insufficient – livelihood at a fixed location. It originated largely in rural areas, usually consisting of subsistence farming and/or proto-industrial cottage production. On this basis, labour migration was temporary work, preferably in wage-intensive regions with an additional demand for seasonal workers. Itinerant trade refers to the independent sale of goods produced in ('direct trade') or purchased from ('indirect trade') cottage industries, as well as non-self-employed travelling traders ('hired traders') or independent traders, usually established as an amalgamation of equal partners to form so-called trade companies. Rarer mixed forms of labour migration and itinerant trade included travelling sale of goods combined with service offers in the product range, such as tinkers who dealt with both new and used copper goods.⁸

This secondary supplement to an insufficient primary means of income in the place of origin could develop into a second main income source, depending on how much it contributed to the family income. In the absence of the husband as the main breadwinner, agricultural and/or cottage industry production was carried on by the rest of the family, under the wife's direction, who was then no less a main breadwinner. Labour migration and itinerant trade could also become the main income source. In such cases, agrarian subsistence production in the place of origin was downgraded to become a secondary business or subsistence gardening if the migrant labourers spent only the winter months at home, when there was no demand in the destination regions for their labour, which was usually in agriculture or outdoors. The same was true for itinerant traders if the main breadwinner was on the road not only during the spring and autumn months, which were generally favourable for sales since rural customers were more accessible, but was absent most of the year.⁹

In addition to migration by the main breadwinner in order to support the family, younger family members of working age also migrated, sometimes in combination with forms of apprenticeship migration, for the same purpose or to start up their own household. Apart from rural or

agricultural jobs outside the home for young men and women, work was available in the trades or services in nearby cities, while domestic service provided an urban job opportunity especially for young women from the countryside looking for employment outside agriculture.¹⁰ There were also diverse ways of relieving the burden on the family household by temporarily sending younger able-bodied family members off to fend for themselves outside the home. This was a side-effect of journeyman migrations, which in addition to their training purpose also served to exclude the individual for a period of time from the limited and inflexible local job market, in the system that required them to earn their 'honest bread'.¹¹

There were also a number of regionally varied forms of exclusion from the household for the purpose of temporary self-sufficiency and modest supplementary earnings to the family income. Among these were numerous migratory traditions within the area of child labour, especially in barren mountainous regions. Up until the First World War this pertained, for example, to the so-called 'Swabian children' from Tyrol and Vorarlberg who went abroad to work each spring after attending a short 'winter school' at home. After several days' walk, the 'shepherd children', boys and girls from poor mountain peasant families, were offered for work in the countryside until autumn by their 'leaders' at the child markets in Upper Swabia, Friedrichshafen and Ravensburg. The girls generally cared for children and the boys usually worked as shepherds. Many also came alone or in groups to offer their services. Wages included free room and board, new clothing and possibly shoes, and a total remuneration that amounted to about 50–70 Reichsmarks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although this was a desirable additional source of earnings for the mountain peasant families, the main objective was to 'remove the children from the table'.¹² The situation regarding labour migration of children from northern Italy, Savoy and Ticino remained somewhat similar until the Second World War. Especially well known were the movements of 'Ticino chimneysweep children' to European countries north of the Alps from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries within the scope of poverty-induced south-north child migrations.

Labour migration was often not a migration of skilled workers but was instead tied directly to processes of obtaining qualifications. Recent studies of pewterers of Italian descent who spread out throughout Europe, for example, have shown that there was no pewtering or pewterware trade in the small, clearly defined region west of Lake Maggiore from where they originated. Training as a pewterer was generally acquired through an apprenticeship migration, that is, after leaving the homeland. This was true also of brickmakers from Lippe, the leading

brickmakers in north-western Europe. No notable brickwork trade had existed in the small principality of Lippe-Detmold, their place of origin. Over the course of generations the specific 'migrant occupation' of brickmaker was learned in the areas to which they migrated.¹³ Aside from long-distance migrations, there was also a variety of forms of migrant movements over short or intermediate distances. This included countless migratory cycles between small and medium-sized cities and their rural surroundings, in which there was sometimes a blurring of the boundaries between apprenticeship, subsistence and employment migrations.¹⁴ This diversity of migratory patterns will recede to the background in our examination of the two larger movements of employment migration. It should always be kept in mind, however, that alongside and even within major migration cycles, there were usually also many smaller active cycles.

With respect to medium- and long-range labour migration and itinerant trade, migration cycles could become consolidated into structurally stable, long-term 'migratory systems'¹⁵ with firmly established migratory traditions that often continued over generations. Migration networks in and between the regions of origin and destination were extremely important, not so much for their geographical dimensions as for their communicative and social aspects, which defined the direction of migrations and ensured the continuity of their traditions.¹⁶ Selected examples from the history of labour migration and itinerant trade in Europe at the end of the early modern age will be used to discuss such major systems. In both cases, an overview of the general contexts will be presented first, then some systems will be considered in different European regions, and finally one example of each will be selected and described in detail. Both examples, the North Sea system (labour migration) and the *Tödden* system (itinerant trade), come from north-western Europe and have been chosen because they have been particularly well researched in all their complexity.

Labour migration

Common ground

In rural regions with heavy population growth and insufficient job opportunities, a wide range of labour migrations expanded in the early modern age, and especially since the mid-eighteenth century. Few statistics are available in this area for early modern Europe. A rare exception is the questionnaires on *migration temporaire* drafted towards the end of the period by the French interior minister Comte de Montalivet and used

by the prefects under Napoleon. These questionnaires were designed to make it easier to recruit cannon fodder for the insatiable French army. In his classic study on systems of labour migration in early modern Europe, Jan Lucassen evaluated extant questionnaires in Paris with answers from the years 1808–13. His findings provide the basis for the following discussion.

From around 20 verifiable migratory labour systems around the turn of the nineteenth century in the European realm, Lucassen was able to reconstruct seven larger systems that had been formed significantly earlier. Around the turn of the century, more than 300,000 labourers migrated over distances up to 250–300 kilometres, even across national borders. The questionnaires on home regions and migration destinations enabled Lucassen to distinguish between movements out of ‘push areas’ and into ‘pull areas’ and to devise migratory labour systems of large groups with a work cycle determined by phases of fixed and distant residences, that is, by domestic and non-domestic phases. It was also possible to discern ‘neutral areas’ that were left untouched by the bulk of such systems or any migratory movement whatsoever. Lucassen worked at three analytical levels: macro (home regions/destinations), meso (work cycles) and micro (households). He modelled mirror-images between each of these to demonstrate the ‘symbiotic’ nature of migratory labour systems fixed by established migration traditions.¹⁷ These findings, elaborated through further research and supplemented by other studies, lead to a kind of ideal typology of relationships between home regions and destination regions in migratory labour systems at the turn of the nineteenth century which reveals the following overall picture.

Home regions were generally characterized by structurally deficient options for work owing to environmental, economic, demographic and social factors; insufficient agricultural yield potential, in barren mountainous areas for example, yet also in lowlands with poor-quality soil; inefficient small businesses; excessive land prices; high rents for additional leased land that could be paid only through supplementary earnings; high population density with an upward trend due to high natural growth, and at the same time highly polarized land distribution with large fertile areas in few hands and small infertile areas in many. A decisive factor for seasonal labour migration with a fixed annual rhythm was the existence of a main, if insufficient, financial base in the place of origin with periods when one or more potential workers were available.

For poor subsistence farmers, the time between the end of the spring planting and the late summer harvest was just such a period, when stores were dwindling and food prices were rising. In terms of work yield, in the households of labour migrants the main income in the home region and the supplementary income in the seasonal destination properly balanced

each other out, though as noted above the relationship could also be reversed. Sometimes small farms changed their forms of cultivation and crop rotations in order to improve availability for labour migrations. On the other hand, adapting one's own production to counter the seasonal cycle of large nearby farms with additional labour needs could also serve as an alternative to labour migration, such as in the north of Brabant province and the south of the provinces of Antwerp and Limburg. Sedentary small farmers near major grain farms that offered supplementary income focused on market production of vegetables and potato crops for their own consumption.¹⁸

The predominantly agricultural destinations of rural labour migrants were generally in fertile, high-yield flatlands where market production by large farms was mostly based on monocultures. For grain production and vineyards, for example, the need for year-round labour was limited, but at harvest time labour demand was very high. In order to cover this demand, farmers were willing to pay relatively high wages, which could rise to many times the wages paid in the regions of origin. Such major market-producing farms were frequently located near river or sea ports to facilitate export trade, or larger cities to provide markets. These offered labour migrants additional, often also seasonal, work opportunities, from construction to various services to market gardens.

Migratory labour systems were maintained through long traditions of seasonal migration. In the regions of origin there were additional needs for income which could be satisfied under poor wage conditions, if at all, and a seasonally available labour pool. In the destinations there was, conversely, a large additional seasonal need for labour and, as a rule, wages were clearly often many times higher than in the place of origin. The heart of this structural 'symbiosis' (Lucassen's term) was a reciprocal dependence through the labour market that had a different weight for each of the two sides. In the destination regions, which tried to lower their risks through planned labour recruitment, it was an economic question of yield for the family households; in the home regions, on the other hand, it was a matter of survival. Migratory traditions that became established often over generations led to fixed migration routes over long distances, frequently hundreds of kilometres, and just as fixed migration forms. The dominant form was groups or work brigades, many of whom stayed together in the destination, often under the direction of a brigade leader who knew the country and was an experienced negotiator.

To a different extent in the individual systems, there were often transitions from seasonal labour migrations to definitive immigration in the destinations, which in turn could trigger chain migrations. This was more the case with labour markets for urban trades than with agricultural labour markets, in which the additional need for labour and wages

generally declined in the off season. The temporary nature of the high wages and the permanently high standard of living in the destinations were essential factors for the long-term continuation of seasonal labour migration. They provided the background for the notable fact – one that never ceases to provoke outraged incomprehension – that areas with the highest seasonal wages and temporary high numbers of labour migrants could simultaneously experience underemployment and social impoverishment among local labourers and their families.¹⁹

Based on the Napoleonic figures, we will review six of Lucassen's seven major western and southern European systems around the turn of the nineteenth century in synchronic cross-section as part of a brief *tour d'horizon*. We will then conduct an in-depth diachronic longitudinal examination of the North Sea system in order to follow the development of a migratory labour system starting in the early seventeenth century.

Regional examples

Aside from the North Sea system there were two other examples of migratory labour systems in north-western Europe around the turn of the nineteenth century, namely in eastern England and the Paris basin. In all three systems, a total of more than 100,000 male and female labourers migrated annually. At the same time there were four active migratory labour systems in southern Europe: in Castile (*c.*30,000) and on the Mediterranean coast of Catalonia, Languedoc and Provence (*c.*35,000). The system along the Po plain was considerably larger (*c.*50,000), and about double the size of that was the system in central Italy (*c.*100,000).²⁰

Roughly 20,000 workers moved annually to eastern England, especially to the major grain farms in Lincolnshire and East Anglia that had a high seasonal demand for additional labourers. The labourers there assisted in the harvest; in the environs of London they also worked in horticulture, and in the city itself they were employed in a wide range of jobs, including municipal construction projects. They came from Scotland, Wales, England, and most of all from western Ireland, especially Connaught, where the agricultural industry was dominated by small potato farms whose oppressive and exorbitant rents could be paid only by earning additional income through labour migration. Lucassen determined that an Irish labour migrant earned about one-quarter of the entire household income in the grain season in eastern England, which fell between the sowing and harvesting of potatoes at home, while the rest of the family stayed behind and took care of the small estate. In the non-productive winter months, additional earnings were acquired

through spinning, fishing and production of seaweed ash, which was high in potash and iodine and therefore important for field fertilizers and iodine extraction.

About 60,000, or three times as many labour migrants as in eastern England, came each year to the Paris basin and especially within the Paris city limits, where there was employment in public jobs, trading and services of all kinds. In addition the *départements* surrounding Paris, which secured the food supply for the metropolis as East Anglia did for London, were dependent on a supplementary seasonal army of labourers, especially in grain cultivation. A considerable portion of labour migrants to this area came from the Alps and western France, but most were from the Massif Central, or French central highlands, where grain production was insignificant and of mediocre quality. Small farms at higher elevations thus strove to improve their insufficient yields with milk products, chestnuts and turnips; those at lower elevations, with potato crops.

The destination of the third migration system was Castile, with its urban centre in Madrid. At least 30,000 labour migrants from regions with few work opportunities came each year. They found jobs working in the grain harvest on the Castilian plateau, or as construction workers in state and municipal projects, or as servants and maids in the capital. Most of them came from the mountainous region of Galicia where, in the second half of the eighteenth century, not even half of the agriculturally productive land was cultivated; besides, most of it was in the hands of large landowners, especially monasteries. Dwarfholdings (*minifundio*), with on average hardly more than half a hectare of productive land, required additional income from outside. Usually the husband went looking for work as a labour migrant in order to pay the rent and debts. The rest of the family, under the wife's direction, continued to operate the small estate, seeking to increase its meagre income with cottage industries, especially flax spinning.

Galicia was the classic home region of the labour migrants later referred to as *golondrinas* (swallows). Not without justification were they compared to birds of passage; every spring, men as well as single women formed migrant groups called *cuadrillas* (fixed group, community or working group), often along family lines. The stages of their migration followed climate-related differences in the harvest seasons. In early summer the *cuadrillas* harvested wheat in the environs of Madrid, Toledo and Guadalajara in New Castile. The harvest ended there on 25 July, St James's Day, which the *cuadrillas* celebrated even away from home, and then continued in Ávila and Segovia and ultimately farther north in the Old Castilian city of León. Later transatlantic seasonal migrants moved between Spain (and Italy) and Argentina, which also led to the term *golondrinas*. This migration became possible in the

nineteenth century when steamers shortened the transatlantic journey time and lowered the cost so that harvest jobs could be taken in the Argentinian summer during the European winter (see chapter 2, section 2). Besides Galician workers in Castile and Madrid there were also labour migrants, although fewer in number, from other areas of northern Spain such as the mountains of León, Asturia and the Basque country, as well as from France.

Roughly 35,000 male and female labour migrants in the Spanish-French Mediterranean descended each year to the coastal regions between Catalonia, Languedoc and Provence to work, especially in the grain harvest for large farms but also in grape picking. On both the Spanish and French sides, the port cities of Barcelona and Marseilles seem to have attracted only a handful of the rural labour migrants who came to the coastal plains from Alpine regions and the Massif Central as well as from the Pyrenees. Here, too, the migratory labour system was kept intact owing to the seasonal dependence on supplementary labour, especially on the part of large farms in the plains, and the structural dependence on supplementary income on the part of dwarfholdings and cottage industries in the primarily mountainous regions of origin.

Similar conditions brought around 50,000 labour migrants, both men and women, to the Po plain from their mountainous home regions extending from the Bergamo Alps in the north to the Ligurian Apennines in the south. Work was also available in public construction and the service sector in cities such as Milan and Turin, but by far the largest portion of rural labour migrants worked in rice production on the western Po plain. This was carried out from planting to harvest almost exclusively by external labour, in which groups of six men and six women each worked as cutters and threshers, or in packing and storing.

The sixth and by far the largest migratory system, greatly exceeding even that of the Paris basin, was destined for central Italy and encompassed the southern part of Tuscany, Latium, Corsica and Elba. Around 100,000 labourers made their way to central Italy each year. A considerable portion sought work in construction and the urban service sectors, especially in Rome. Most of the labour migrants to central Italy were involved in agriculture, especially the harvest of grain and other crops, and in other areas of agricultural work, in part also in the winter months. The migrant field workers on the big *latifundios* came largely from poorer subsistence farming regions in the east and south. They offered their labour under the direction of a *caporale*, or work brigade leader, who negotiated jobs and wages. Sometimes boundaries became blurred between the destitute landless, who came in rags, and labour migrants from borderline subsistence farms. It was not uncommon for dwarfholders or tenant farmers to end up in a kind of temporary indentured

servitude with meagre supplementary earnings since profits from their small estates were insufficient to maintain their families, thereby forcing them to go into debt to purchase extra agrarian products and to pay off their debt by working in the harvest for large farms. A system of recruitment resulted that in some ways resembled indirect forced labour, and the agents who granted credits on behalf of the *latifundio* owners earned a premium for each labour migrant they mustered in this way. Harsh working and living conditions, intensified by climatic conditions and malaria, which was widespread, were the subject of repeated yet fruitless complaints by prefects in the destination regions in the largest migratory labour system of the time.

The North Sea system and the Holland migrants (Hollandgänger)

An extensive migratory labour system existed from the early seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries in the coastal region of north-western Europe, with its centre – based on today's national boundaries – in the coastal areas of the Netherlands and north-western Germany and its areas of departure in Germany, Belgium, the Dutch interior and France. We shall now carry out a detailed longitudinal examination of what Lucassen called the 'North Sea system'.

The system's destination area was a commercial magnet, including one of the wealthiest trade and industrial areas in Europe, covering more than 200 cities; its tax revenue once brought the Spanish crown seven times the value of the silver it acquired from Central America. Rotterdam and Antwerp were the hubs of European world trade, with a total share of 50 per cent of all goods; Antwerp's stock exchange was also the centre for the European money market. During the prolonged Dutch war of independence against Spanish rule, which started in 1568 with the uprising of William I (the Silent, Prince of Orange) and ended in 1648 when Spain recognized the Republic of the Netherlands in the Peace of Westphalia, the centre of trade and commerce gradually shifted north to Amsterdam, especially after Spain's pillaging of Antwerp in 1585.²¹

The North Sea system developed in the final decades of the Netherlands' struggle for independence, in which the Dutch colonial empire also assumed firm structures through the founding of the Dutch East India (1602) and West India (1621) Companies. We shall return later to the Dutch empire with respect to its labour systems. Both the shifting of industry and commerce to the north and the global expansion of the Dutch labour market to include the colonies were definitive in establishing the migratory cycles of the North Sea system. The destination region of the North Sea system extended from Calais to Bremen; it had a number of sub-centres and continued beyond zones in between that

were scarcely affected by the migration. By far the majority of labour migrants, male and female, in the North Sea system came from north-western Germany. There were also migrants from the Dutch provinces of Gelderland, Overijssel and Drenthe, from Flanders, Brabant and Limburg, as well as from the lower Rhine region and the environs of Lille.

Let us examine more closely the largest group of labour migrants, the *Hollandgänger*, or 'Holland migrants',²² from north-western Germany. The first traces of 'Holland migration' in this area go back to the late Middle Ages, but a clearly defined migratory labour system did not develop until the early seventeenth century, when for the first time larger numbers of workers from the prince-bishopric of Osnabrück and the northern part of the bishopric of Münster migrated to Holland and West Friesland. After the Thirty Years' War ended in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia, which was drawn up in Münster and Osnabrück, the Holland migrants' home regions in north-western Germany continued to expand. A similar situation occurred in the eighteenth century when the destination area along the coast expanded to the south-west and north-east.

The classic symbiotic character of labour market relations between a densely populated home region with insufficient work opportunities and destinations with a seasonal need for additional labourers that offered, in this case, wage levels four times higher at a piece rate also existed with respect to Holland migration. There were diverse other reasons for labour migration in addition to the dominant pressure to support the family through external supplementary income. Young, unmarried migrant workers, both men and women, wanted to earn the means to start their own family household, and the search for a spouse itself also played a role.²³

The total proportion of Holland migrants in the regions of origin in north-western Germany was generally around 3 per cent, but in isolated cases it could also reach 12 or even 26 per cent. In evaluating the French figures, Lucassen discovered, on the one hand, major home regions in Westphalia and Lower Saxony; on the other hand, there were also 'neutral' areas with hardly any migration in either direction. This was the case, for example, in the Ruhr valley, which would later overtake the North Sea system in the course of industrialization, and in the Bielefeld 'corridor', Halle and Warendorf, as well as east of Tecklenburg. This was due to the great expansion of proto-industrial cottage production in these areas, which needed workers even outside the agricultural season. In addition to metalworking, other important fields were flax spinning and linen weaving, as in the Bielefeld (and Flemish) 'corridor'. There were about 50 looms to 1,000 inhabitants there, amounting on average to a loom for every fourth household, which, including setting up the

loom, required at least four workers in the family. In addition, six to ten spinners were needed to supply enough raw materials for weaving.²⁴

In the home regions, however, there were distinct differences between, and even within, villages with regard to the ratio of sedentary to travelling labourers, even in cottage industries providing supplementary income to the main agricultural work. This was presumably due to milieu-specific differences in cottage production. Intensive cottage production of linen, which was often a main source of income for non-landholding families or had become the main source of income where agricultural subsistence production was insufficient, seems generally to have been incompatible with labour migration for months at a time. Holland migrants, however, came predominantly from households whose supplementary income was earned not through weaving but through spinning. Unlike the cottage linen industry, spinning was possible without capital investment and was the more poorly paid cottage industry of poor households. It was carried out mostly in the winter and thus did not overlap with seasonal labour migration. This was significant, for example, for the tenant farmers who made up a large share of Holland migrants. In the early nineteenth century, they still cultivated barely more than an average of one hectare on their small leaseholdings. They were obligated to work on the farms that their leaseholds belonged to, but could arrange with their farmers to be available between planting and harvest to migrate to Holland in order to supplement the family income.²⁵

Before the era of mass overseas emigration and the coal and steel industry or repeated and temporary shuttle migrations ('industrial hirelings') in the nineteenth century, small tenant farmers in rural north-western Germany who required supplementary income had several options. In addition to intensive cottage industry production and seasonal migration to Holland, another possible source of income outside the home was itinerant trade. Let us look more closely at this type of migration based on the *Tödden*,²⁶ itinerant traders from the northern Münster region, also a region of origin of Holland migrants. A report by District Councillor Culemann, who was commissioned by the Prussian king to travel through the Tecklenburg region in 1749–50, confirms that Holland migration and *Tödden* migration were significant and often completely distinct sources of income in the communities of origin in the eighteenth century. The report states that in towns with *Tödden* migration there was hardly any Holland migration, and vice versa.²⁷

The North Sea system, spanning roughly three centuries, was primarily a rural, agrarian migratory labour system with a seasonal structure. This was particularly true for the Holland migrants from north-western Germany, more than three-quarters of whom worked in agriculture or peat bogs. Most of the agricultural workers did grass pasture work in dairy

farming in Holland, West Friesland and the marshlands to the east. At first the north-west German grass workers went from farm to farm in Holland and West Friesland offering their services. Later there were often fixed employment agreements between the Dutch farmers and the brigades of grass mowers from north-western Germany who were summoned for the harvest period through a contact in the home region. Newcomers outside such groups still had to travel through the destination area offering their services themselves or going to municipal labour markets, referred to in West Friesland as *Poeppenmärkte* (people markets), where a surplus of labour seekers could lead to severe wage competition. The relatively short work phase in the pastures in the destination region lasted from late May to early July, and the small yield from the second hay harvest in September was largely brought in by local labourers. Pasture jobs, mostly mowing and turning hay, were carried out under harsh conditions as piece work according to the rhythm set by the 'stroke'. Apart from Sundays, work continued from sunrise to sunset with breaks kept as short as possible; in June that meant up to 16 hours a day. Food was either made available by the farmers or brought by the labourers, who slept on hay in the barns.

Despite the back-breaking work, meagre provisions and unhygienic living conditions, the level of work-related sickness among grass workers was far lower than for the second-largest group of Holland migrants, the peat workers. Their areas of work were the bogs and fens in Holland, West Friesland, Overijssel, Utrecht, Groningen, Drenthe and East Friesland. Peat cutting remained one of the most significant economic branches until peat was superseded by hard coal as an energy source towards the end of the nineteenth century. Peat was the main source of fuel for domestic heating and for industries such as brickworks, distilleries, bleacheries, breweries and sugar factories, and it was also an important export product. Its extraction was combined with agricultural use, which is why it was doubly productive.

The peat season was twice as long as that for grass labourers. It usually lasted from two and a half to four months, beginning in March, when the cool damp weather in the coastal regions gave way to spring, and ending in July, when the heat on the fens became intolerable. Yet there were also Holland migrants who endured the bogs and fens from February to autumn, where the work – despite similar conditions as regards work hours and piece rates – was incomparably harsher and more dangerous than the already arduous piecework in the pastures. This applied in particular to the fens, where two-thirds of all Holland migrants who worked in peat cutting were employed. While the bogs were drained so that the peat could be cut, in the fens it had to be dug from the water using brute strength. In the fens that were far from settlements and

accessible only by water, Holland migrants laboured in their boats for up to 16 hours a day, sometimes in stifling heat, engaged in extreme physical exertion. Their accommodation was in draughty peat huts on the work site, where they often slept in drenched work clothes. In addition to this health hazard, labourers were frequently malnourished since their food, partly brought with them and partly bought at exorbitant prices in their surroundings, was generally inferior in both quality and quantity. Among the risks presented by such working and living conditions were dangerous, often fatal or chronic diseases, ranging from rheumatism and gout to lung disease and mosquito-transmitted fever diseases, such as the notorious malaria known in the Holland migrants' home regions as 'Ems region malaria'.²⁸

One in four Holland migrants worked outside agriculture as labour migrants in trades or crafts and in maritime work. Those employed in trades and crafts included especially brickmakers and the building trades, such as stonemasons, bricklayers, carpenters and plasterers, but there were also weavers, bleachers, gardeners, servants, maids and employees in other service sector occupations. Construction labourers and brickmakers, including the Lippe brickmakers who were esteemed as specialists far beyond the North Sea system, and most other Holland migrants who had non-agricultural outdoor jobs were still seasonal labour migrants, since there was little or no work in the destination region during the winter. This situation applies only partially if at all to urban domestic personnel; there was a long tradition of labour migration of German maids to the Netherlands that started in the early seventeenth century and lasted until the mid-1930s, and even experienced a revival after the Second World War.²⁹

Seasonal maritime labour migrants in the North Sea system included the domestic crews of Dutch and East Frisian whalers and herring boats. Also called 'Greenland drivers' after the fishing grounds of their fleets, they usually left their villages in February or March for seven or eight months. This form of labour migration at sea reached its height in the eighteenth century. It was severely restricted in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by various naval wars and ultimately by the Continental system from 1806 to 1814. Increasing once more after the Wars of Liberation, it never again reached the level it had attained in the eighteenth century, although there was even a German nautical school in Mühlen (Vechta) for maritime labour migrants from the interior in the nineteenth century.³⁰

In the Netherlands, foreign sailors within the range of the North Sea system were also used in intercontinental merchant shipping, especially on board the East Indian vessels of the United East India Company or those of the West India Company and other shipping companies operat-

ing in the Atlantic region. This was true of the Dutch naval warships involved in numerous wars at sea in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (for example, against England 1652–4, 1665–7, 1672–1714, 1780–4). At least they had one thing in common with merchant shipping companies: low pay, poor working conditions and a high mortality rate. A macabre gauge of the share of foreigners aboard Dutch ships in the eighteenth century could be expressed as: ‘The bigger the ships and the longer the voyages, the lower the remuneration and the higher the percentage of foreigners.’ For the Dutch East India Company, with its own war fleet, for example, about 40 per cent of its sailors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were foreigners, at least half of whom were from Germany. The proportion of German seamen on Dutch ships declined significantly in the nineteenth century. Being hired on board an intercontinental sailing vessel was like having a temporary contract job and, because the overseas passage depended on seasonal wind and weather conditions, it was seasonal as well. But sailors’ expectations of returning to the home village after a long journey at sea with a tidy sum of money saved from their pay were often disappointed. Frequently, pay and possessions returned home unaccompanied, since one-third of the seamen aboard Dutch East Indian vessels in the eighteenth century perished during the voyage.³¹

The status of foreign mercenaries with Dutch military forces at home and in the colonies resembled that of foreign seamen aboard Dutch merchant marine and navy ships more than that of North Sea system labourers in agriculture, the trades and commerce. Mercenary soldiers, unlike sailors, came from the northern areas of the Holland-migration sphere, and from Westphalia, the Rhineland and southern Germany. Recruitment of foreign soldiers and civilians for the Dutch army, which continued until the early nineteenth century, reached its zenith during the combative reign of governor-king William III (William of Orange) around the turn of the eighteenth century, when the Dutch army numbered some 100,000 men, most of whom were foreigners. The area from which foreign soldiers were recruited for the colonial army also lay largely within the sphere of the North Sea system. Recruitment of colonial mercenaries of foreign origin was organized from the seventeenth century by the East and West India Companies, which made direct efforts to enlist them, and in the early nineteenth century by the Colonial Enlistment Depot on Harderwijk on what was then the *Zuider Zee*.³²

Holland migration reached its greatest intensity in the second half of the eighteenth century, when each year more than 40,000 labour migrants from a catchment area of up to 300 kilometres found work in the North Sea coastal areas. The only comprehensive and detailed statistical record that exists is from the aforementioned survey conducted by

the French administration in 1811, when the North Sea system was already in gradual decline. In 1811, approximately 35,000 labour migrants in the North Sea system were registered, of whom about 21,000 worked in agriculture mowing grass, turning hay and harvesting grain; about 10,000 were employed in peat cutting; and another 5,000–6,000 worked in a wide range of trades. For the maritime labour migrants, however, their work sphere had almost totally disappeared during the time of the Continental system.³³

Interregional movements of tens of thousands of seasonal Holland migrants, most of whom worked in the grasslands and peat bogs, led to fixed migratory routes in the North Sea system that in turn also became significant in terms of seasonal work, especially for innkeepers, transport companies and ferrymen. Based on our present state of knowledge, this applied less for the southern regions of the North Sea system, where migration distances were relatively short, generally within at most three days on foot, and where there were hardly any natural barriers forcing the routes to join together. In the northern and eastern catchments of the North Sea system, on the other hand, distances were far greater and migratory routes were characterized by natural obstacles, especially bogs and fens, which were passable only at a few locations. Fixed routes thus developed in the migration tradition of the Holland migrants with virtually ritual resting habits at particular sites marked by cliffs, trees, forests or inns. There was a northern route for Holland migrants from East Friesland and the northern Ems region, northern Oldenburg and Bremen-Vörden, and a far more travelled southern route from the Osna-brück region, Lingen, Meppen, South Oldenburg and Diepholz and the adjacent regions of origin to the east and south-east.

In the destinations of the Holland migrants, not only seasonal wages but living costs as well were up to four times higher than in the areas from which they came. In order to spend as little as possible of their savings in their place of work, labour migrants brought with them not only equipment such as scythes and their work clothes as well as a skein of linen to sell at their destination, but also a considerable quantity of food that would keep for some time. The heavy baggage was transported over considerable distances on special wagons in lengthy convoys, of which up to 900 supposedly stood ready at times in Lingen in the Ems region. Transport of the Holland migrants' baggage was also an important source of business for ferry operations at the Ems River and for shipping along the Vechte River to the port cities on the Zuider Zee. There, the baggage was reclaimed and the journey by sea on livestock carriers set off in different directions, for example to Amsterdam, where the paths branched further after a night spent in a *Moffenbeurs*,³⁴ a trade centre for Holland migrants. The peat diggers travelled on by boat to the

fens; the grass mowers continued north on foot. The journey was long and meant a loss in wages and additional costs for food along the way. For this reason, the Holland migrants were always in a hurry along their foot marches, which could lead to rough brawls at bottlenecks at the ferries and riverboat docks.³⁵

The Holland migrants' seasonal migratory cycle was of interest not only for innkeepers, transporters by land and sea, employers in the destination region and the labour migrants' households. Other businesses in the places of origin were also affected, since their own sales were subjected to a kind of secondary seasonal dependence by the seasonal Holland migration. Consider, for example, the textile city of Bramsche in the Osnabrück region, which became known for 'Bramscher Red', a plain, hand-woven red woollen fabric that was used for the uniforms of both the Hannover and English armies as well as for everyday clothing in the region. Local sales were influenced not only by the agricultural season in the countryside of the Bramscher clothworkers, but also by the Holland migrants; seasonalization was so severe, in fact, that state intervention seemed necessary.

In the 1780s, the clothworkers' guild in Bramsche complained that the peak sales period for the red fabric had narrowed down in the region to the months from September to February, 'because in autumn farmers as well as tenant farmers got money from linen or crops, etc., or earned money in Holland and so they were then in a good position to buy and pay for the clothing they needed'. The cloth producers of Bramsche thus faced a lean period between the buying season for wool in spring and the season for selling the fabric woven from the wool in autumn and winter. To compensate for this delay, the prince-bishopric government in Osnabrück established a storehouse in Bramsche that served a dual function. First, the wool, the raw material used by the Bramscher clothmakers, could be bought up in larger quantities at more favourable prices, stored there, and then bought as needed. Second, the woven fabric could be stored at low cost until the sales season in order to keep the price stable. Such mercantile intervention by the Osnabrück government had its origins in the secondary seasonalization of the goods market in the home region due to the labour migration of the Holland migrants.³⁶

As the authorities in the places of origin disapprovingly noted, seasonal labour migration also influenced the ways of thinking of the Holland migrants and of the itinerant traders who also preferred to work in the Netherlands, who will be discussed below. Not only did they dare to violate the ban, issued in 1742 in the county of Lingen, on the 'careless and dangerous smoking of tobacco', a fashionable habit at the time; they also openly flaunted more liberal patterns of behaviour that they had adopted elsewhere. This was regarded as civil disobedience in

the regions from which they came, as District Councillor Culemann reported in 1749: 'The people live like the Dutch. They become accustomed to a casual lifestyle and they care little or nothing for order and authority. Young men of draft age avoid being mustered into the Prussian army by going abroad for an extended period of time – sometimes even for good. These people have a natural inclination for freedom and a life of peddling. As soldiers they are useless.'³⁷

The Holland migrants' migratory tradition achieved an almost ritualized stability that continued to exert a trend-setting influence on migratory patterns even at a time when industrial options for supplementary and even main income sources in the place of origin were increasingly becoming available. At the time when the North Sea system, and thus also Holland migration, fell into decline, there were reports that labourers from far afield had to be recruited when Georgsmarienhütte was established in the 1850s as a centre for heavy industry in the rural environs of Osnabrück, while in the rural areas in the immediate vicinity of the site the predominant source of supplementary income among tenant farmers was still the journey to Holland.³⁸ Only gradually were the seasonal agricultural migrants replaced by 'industrial hirelings' who shuttled between the agrarian surroundings and the expanding coal and steel industry while their wives stayed at home, as in the days of Holland migrants, and, along with the rest of the family, took over the running of their small estates.

Itinerant trade

Systems of travelling sales and those of labour migration in early modern Europe overlapped in many ways in their geographical movements. In the regions of origin, however, the two kinds of systems were generally alternative forms of non-domestic employment migration. Pedlars from many different backgrounds selling a wide range of products were part of everyday town and country life throughout Old Europe.³⁹ Their sometimes mixed offer of wares and services occasionally blurred the distinction between them and 'vagabonds' or traders without a fixed residential base. The issue that interests us here, as mentioned at the outset, is travelling sales as a supplement to a sedentary, albeit insufficient, subsistence.

Similar to labour migration, a great increase in regional, interregional and cross-border systems of itinerant trade could be observed in rural society as of the mid-eighteenth century as a response to the drastic gap between population development and work opportunities. The roots of such trade are older, however, usually dating back to the seventeenth

century and probably back to the late Middle Ages in many cases, although sources from this period are rare. It can be documented this far back for travelling traders from the Belgium–Netherlands borderlands, known as Teutens, and those from northern Italy, Savoy and Gottschee (Kočevje). Itinerant trade systems were integral elements of business life in many regions of early modern Europe. Hannelore Oberpenning recently conducted a large-scale regional case study of travelling trade in Europe since the eighteenth century which, using a similar approach to Lucassen, also determined common ground among European itinerant trade systems.⁴⁰ Let us follow her findings in a brief overview of the basic structures of itinerant trade in early modern Europe in order to outline selected systems, as with labour migration, before examining one of them more closely in an in-depth longitudinal analysis.

Common ground

Like those of labour migration, the geographical origins of itinerant trade lay in economically depressed marginal zones of old European agrarian society. This pertained, among others, to mountainous and other agriculturally low-yielding regions where proto-industrial cottage industries developed and occasionally became a nucleus around which travelling trade grew. Items that were sold were not so much luxury goods as articles for everyday use. Some were self-produced; others were acquired elsewhere. This included especially household utensils of wood and clay, but also textiles and iron and steel goods, whereby among the textiles some semi-luxuries were also sold, such as lace. Itinerant trade as a system of sale of cottage industrial products functioned especially in places where cottage production was not commissioned work for municipal distributors. Oberpenning therefore described itinerant trade and proto-industrial market production as ‘two interrelated, if not interdependent, systems in the pre-industrial production and circulation process’.⁴¹

Itinerant trade had many faces. It could be seasonal mobility in the off season of agrarian subsistence production for small agricultural landholders or tenants who could not produce enough to support the family. It also existed as the husband’s permanent main occupation outside the home in cases of agrarian subsistence production and, more rarely, in the winter months in addition to domestic or cottage industrial supplementary production by the rest of the family under the wife’s direction. The inevitable division of labour could have a geographical and temporal dimension such that members of the family only rarely saw each other for longer periods of time throughout the year – yet another reason why

further research is necessary on the history of women on subsistence farms. Though less frequent and existing more as an early form, some cottage industrial producers arranged their own sales through travelling members of the family. Following from the group of travelling traders was a diversity of enterprises with fluid boundaries between long-distance trade and a putting-out system and, finally, there were also many low-earning hired pedlars known as ‘packmen’, whose families in the place of origin also lived from their earnings.

Forming the structure for each individual system of travelling trade were manifold interrelations: between periods in addition to, or outside, the work season in the rural sales areas when customers were more accessible; between their own production and sales; and among types of goods, forms of transport and range of business, with the basic rule that all itinerant trade crossed the boundaries of their range of business whenever travel costs or costs for interim storage came too close to the market value of the goods. The larger itinerant trade systems in eighteenth-century Europe were marked geographically by their having regional concentrations of several neighbouring travelling trade villages with interregional ranges of business that sometimes extended throughout or even beyond the borders of Europe. These businesses generally specialized in particular products and traded long distance with goods that were no longer self-produced but purchased interregionally from producers and wholesalers. Their structures were influenced by business or entrepreneurial forms of organization that had developed by the eighteenth century. They ranged from agreements – which were informal, more or less secret and decipherable only through a system of codes which the respective authorities viewed with suspicion – to formal associations in trade societies called ‘companies’ with binding product and market arrangements.

As developments continued from the early nineteenth century to the age of industry and mass markets, these structures were dislocated or destroyed. Successful businesses that had already become relatively prosperous in the regions of origin moved permanently to their sales areas and adapted to the rapidly changing market conditions by growing into urban trading houses, some of which still exist today. Those who remained in the barren places of origin were the ‘labourers’ or ‘boys’, in other words, the hired pedlars who had no family connections with the ‘companies’ enabling them to obtain permanent positions at the new company sites or their sales offices, and who were soon to be replaced by modern means of transportation. Many packmen also stayed behind, as well as small, self-employed itinerant traders. They increasingly lost their markets to small urban competitors who had expanded into the countryside, but especially to competition from large branch stores,

which were growing along with developments in transportation and trade, leaving only niche and bargain sales for rural and urban travelling traders alike.

But events could take a completely different turn, since itinerant trade developments were as diverse as the responses to market expansion in the industrial age, which some pedlars earning low to moderate incomes were able to handle flexibly. Improved transportation could temporarily extend the radius covered by travelling traders and even lead to a rise in their numbers. Regional specialization in current or even new products could increase chances for survival. There were isolated instances of new 'pedlar communities'. Alternatives open to those unable to take advantage of the changing situation were to return to seasonal labour migration in agriculture, shuttle migration, permanent migration to the expanding urban-industrial world or exodus to the New World, where many hoped to regain the Old World they had lost.

Regional examples

From a vast number of traditional itinerant trade systems in early modern Europe, we shall discuss some of Oberpenning's regional examples from the Belgium–Netherlands borderlands, France, Italy and Germany, most of which reached their greatest expansion in the eighteenth century.⁴²

The origins of the travelling Brabant and Loon pedlars known as Teutens from the Kempen region of the Belgium–Netherlands borderlands presumably go back as early as the fifteenth century, yet their history has only been documented since the sixteenth century. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, their home region encompassed about 40 villages with a total of 500–800 travelling traders whose traces stretch from the Netherlands in the west to Russia in the east. A peculiarity of the Teutens was the combination of travelling to offer their services (tinkering, haircutting or animal gelding) with sales of goods they acquired through their services (trade in copper, hair and livestock), on the one hand, and/or buying and selling textile and copper products not related to their services or the door-to-door sale of junk. 'Hair Teutens' cut the women's hair that was needed for wig production and traded it for textiles and haberdashery; exceptionally, this was also done by women, who otherwise stayed home to run the rural household. They generally travelled each year from February to the middle or end of the year, sometimes even longer, and sometimes even for years at a time if warehouses or sales locations had to be supervised in the destination areas. This travelling occupation was born of necessity, yet most Teutens remained economically tied to their rural origins for a long time or

permanently; only a minority could support themselves entirely though travelling trade. The more successful among them later moved to their sales areas, from Alsace-Lorraine to French Flanders and Luxembourg to Friesland, Denmark and eastern Germany, where some had long before established storage depots or small shops. Itinerant trading by the Teutens did not disappear entirely until around the turn of the twentieth century.⁴³

Itinerant traders in France in the eighteenth century came largely from poor mountainous regions in the Alps, Pyrenees, the Massif Central and the Jura mountains. Seasonal travelling trade, which started there as a result of insufficient agricultural subsistence production and long remained tied to it, could also be connected with home production and itinerant services. They were predominantly dealers in haberdashery, tinkers or copper goods dealers and itinerant cobblers who were normally on the road from October or November for a few months or until the next year's harvest. Destination and sales regions for itinerant selling, which reached its greatest scope from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, were almost all regions in France, though there were also destinations outside the country, from Belgium and the Netherlands in the north and Germany in the east to Spain and the Balearic Islands in the south. At first mostly haberdashery or household and cooking utensils were sold, as well as cloth and small textile items. These were later supplemented by semi-luxury items such as copper engravings, prints and books from the printing works in Troyes, Caen, Limoges or Toulouse. Pedlars offered their wares from door to door or at markets; some also had shops in the destination regions where they offered merchandise and repairs. Success or failure in the travelling trade led to social advancement or decline. Some travelling traders managed to become leaders (*maîtres*) who directed work brigades (*équipes*) of hired traders (*domestiques*) in purchasing, sales or warehouse supervision; others descended into vagabondage and crime. The decline of itinerant trade in the late nineteenth century meant the end of economic subsistence relief for some; for the successful it simply meant shifting from itinerant to sedentary trade in the form of settling down as merchants in French cities.⁴⁴

In addition to travellers of high standing and, for example, northern Italian labour migrants such as chimneysweeps, stonemasons and construction workers from Alpine valleys and especially Lombardy, evidence of northern Italian travelling traders has been documented as far back as the late Middle Ages and as far afield as Switzerland and southern and western Germany. This was the case from the Thirty Years' War, especially regarding southern fruit dealers. The latter were the largest group in Germany, where they were called *Pomeranzenkrämer* (bitter orange

sellers) or *Comenser*, since most of them came from the economically depressed region around Lake Como and the other Lombardy lakes. Dealers in silk and fashion accessories who had been coming since the eighteenth century, primarily from Savoy and Piedmont and farther north, clearly enjoyed a higher social standing than the *Comenser*. There were also dealers in plaster sculpture, especially from the Duchy of Lucca, rug dealers from South Tyrol, dealers of devotional objects, pictures and copper engravings, especially from Milan, and cosmetics dealers mainly from South Tyrol, Verona and Venice who were known as 'tray vendors' in Germany because of the sales trays they carried around their necks. Thus most of these small pedlars offered what were considered luxury goods at that time. As early as the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth centuries, many of them settled down in their destination areas, in Germany mostly in the cities along the central Rhine and the Main rivers, where records show that at that time about 1,400 Italians immigrated there for the first time. From here, many managed to advance both economically and socially to become wholesalers and long-distance traders or industrialists dealing in chocolate, tobacco (Bolongaro in Höchst) or cologne (Farina in Cologne).⁴⁵

Since the *Tödden* system in the northern Münster region will be presented in detail below, we shall limit our discussion of Germany here to some key terms regarding other systems that existed at the same time in western and southern Germany. Aside from the *Tödden*, in the seventeenth century at the latest there was another itinerant trade system in Westphalia that was equally well established in the neighbouring upper Sauerland, where trade was mostly in purchased products. The individual travelling trade towns in the Sauerland specialized in various goods, especially woollen, wood and hardware products that were produced nearby in cottage industries up to the second half of the nineteenth century. After repeated changes in the selection of goods, they sold mostly iron and steel products made by manufacturers in Bergisches Land, east of Cologne, and Mark County; travelling sales were of central significance for the sale of these items. Itinerant trade in the Sauerland was one of the systems that expanded when transportation improved in the nineteenth century; its widest range reached from the Netherlands to Russia and from Schleswig-Holstein to Hungary. The goods carriers referred to as 'labourers' or 'helpers' by the work brigades stocked the warehouses in the destination regions. From the early nineteenth century, these depots sometimes developed into shops, and consequently a number of pedlars became sedentary merchants in the destination regions.

In southern Germany there were numerous itinerant trade communities and systems, of which only two extreme examples will be

mentioned here. One of the most well known and successful were the Black Forest watch and glass dealers who in the first half of the eighteenth century formed strictly hierarchical companies held together through family relations to organize sales using a division of labour. At the lowest level were the labourers, followed by the mid-level *Rubkamerads* and, at the top, the *Gutkamerads*, equal partners who in turn united to form trade societies for common invoicing and profit sharing based on level of investment. The widest range encompassed not only almost all of Europe but included even an intercontinental sales network of watch dealers from Denmark to Egypt and from North America to Russia.

Among the poorest of the settled poor in itinerant trade were travelling trade villages in eastern Swabia such as Unterdeufstetten and Matzenbach, which emerged in the eighteenth century as a result of population measures to start new settlements, especially by vagabonds. Since they did not own land, the villagers' only alternative to migrant labour was a combination of domestic production (pottery, owing to a nearby clay pit) and travelling trade, whereby the production season took place during the winter and the sales season normally started on 2 February (Candlemas) and lasted until 1 November (All Saints' Day). After a short period of prosperity with intermediate wholesale trade (especially porcelain and stoneware), the villages once again became extremely poor settlements in the nineteenth century.⁴⁶

Unlike the pedlars who moved around selling only or mostly their own products, indirect dealers (*Fremdbausierer*) who bought their goods from other producers or wholesalers often served important functions, not only for market developments in their sales areas but also for commercial developments in their purchasing areas. This was true also in southern Germany, where for example in Württemberg many craftsmen's towns owed their successful development into trade centres to the wide-ranging sales of their goods by travelling traders. As a consequence of industrialization, traditional itinerant trades declined dramatically in the southern German trade communities. Over time, however, in the nineteenth century it led temporarily to a great expansion of new forms of travelling sales in the developing industrial trade centres. Dealers came less and less from poor peasant classes and increasingly from urban lower classes; and trade was linked to a general shift towards a fixed range of goods because of the availability of ready-made goods from factory production. The marked combination of itinerant trade and proto-industrial cottage industries that emerged from rural poverty and often served as collective subsistence relief for entire villages of pedlars was replaced in the industrial age by itinerant sales of industrial products as an individual solution to ensure subsistence.

The Tödden system

The itinerant trade system we will examine in depth in a longitudinal analysis originated in the northern Münster region in the western borderlands of the present-day German states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony. The first evidence for the travelling traders known in the part of Westphalia from where they originated as *Tödden* or *Tuötten* dates back to the time of the Thirty Years' War. This system of trade increased in the late seventeenth century into the beginnings of one of the biggest European itinerant trade systems, which Oberpenning, echoing Lucassen, referred to as the '*Tödden system*'.⁴⁷ Its core regions were in the North Sea system, but the *Tödden* cannot simply be subsumed into the group of Holland migrants, who in part came from the same geographical regions. The travelling trade of the *Tödden* reached considerably farther in its continental dimensions, especially to the north and east. The places of origin of the labour migrants in the North Sea system extended, as noted above, up to 300 kilometres into the hinterland beyond the destination region along the coastal strip that was up to 50 kilometres wide. In the *Tödden* system, however, travelling distances of 500 kilometres were by no means unusual, sometimes extending even twice that far.

The *Tödden* system, like most of the European systems of labour migration and travelling trade, emerged when extreme growth of the smallholder and non-landowning classes intensified the lack of a sufficient economic subsistence base in a rural home region where there was a high proportion of dwarf- and smallholdings on relatively low-yielding land. Cottage textile production as an adequate source of supplementary income was evidently not an option for the *Tödden* and the Holland migrants, although the neighbouring Tecklenburg region became one of the centres of the proto-industrial domestic system in north-western Germany. Oberpenning had good reason to assume a connection between small tenant farm holdings and the cottage weaving industry, on the one hand, and dwarfholdings and labour migration or itinerant trade, on the other. Small tenant farm holdings could guarantee subsistence if supplemented by cottage weaving production. Itinerant trade and labour migration emerged especially in cases where the tenant farm holdings were so small that it was impossible to plant even hemp and flax in addition to the already insufficient cultivation of crops for the family's own subsistence. The Holland migrants' custom, mentioned above, of carrying a skein of cloth into the destination region along with their baggage should not be viewed as a form of travelling trade but as a means to reduce the costs of the journey and their stay during their labour migration.

In addition, the Holland migrants worked in their destination regions primarily in agriculture or as peat labourers, thus remaining tied to their insufficient agricultural income base in their place of origin and migrating in accordance with seasonal cycles determined essentially by that base. As the *Tödden's* itinerant trade system expanded throughout Europe, however, many of them increasingly detached themselves from the context of the family subsistence economy operated by their wives and families as a supplementary source of income. The *Tödden* usually spent nine or more months a year in their distant sales areas, where many later set up a second household. In many cases they returned home only twice yearly, as a rule on Christian holidays in the summer (St James's Day) and winter (Christmas), when they also stocked up on new merchandise. Some also returned at harvest time, though this was less to supervise the small subsistence operations run by the rest of the family than because their rural customers in the sales area had no time to discuss sales during the harvest. When the sales season resumed after the harvest, this apparent seasonal cycle, too, had less to do with the households in the place of origin than with sales opportunities in the destination regions; in other words, after selling the harvest, farming customers had more money to purchase goods. Moreover, the schedules of the trade fairs where trade goods were bought had an influence on migratory cycles. In contrast to most Holland migrants, therefore, many *Tödden* were not at home in one place and foreigners in another, but locals and foreigners in a number of places at the same time.

Centres of *Tödden* pedlars were the parishes in Lingen County and the Hopsten parish in the prince-bishopric of Münster, with more than one thousand registered pedlars around 1750. Of these, 213 came from the community of Hopsten alone, with a population of about 2,000; the town was significant beyond the region due to the fact that the wealthiest wholesalers among the *Tödden* could be found there. Travelling trade remained the predominant sector of community business life in the county of Lingen and in Hopsten into the nineteenth century.

In contrast to many other, generally similarly structured, European itinerant trade systems, the wholesale and retail companies of the *Tödden*, also organized by family associations, were very complex and hierarchical as early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This is why even the Prussian General Directorium spoke in 1797 of the *Tödden* having a 'trade system'. It was notable that particularly lucrative vertical concentrations developed because individual wholesalers became involved in retail trade as well through an extensive sales network of pedlars hired for a wage. Travelling, working and living in groups, the *Tödden* had mutually aligned or separated sales areas within their itinerant trade system covering north-western, northern and north-eastern

Europe. The sales areas were passed down from generation to generation, developing into permanent migratory traditions in the family associations. The range of the itinerant trade network of the *Tödden* from Hopsten was the most extensive: from northern France to Sweden to Russia. Organizational structures of *Tödden* trade were flexibly adapted to conditions in the respective destination regions. Thus the restrictive mercantile dirigism in the part of Prussia east of the Elbe River differed greatly from the long-standing, relatively free development opportunities that let the Netherlands develop into a kind of itinerant trade paradise.

Textiles and metal goods were the two main areas of proto-industrial market production. These dominated in *Tödden* trade, which was characterized by extreme specialization in the selection of goods offered. The *Tödden* from Hopsten, for example, dealt exclusively with textile products, especially cloth, and notably Bielefeld linen produced in the county of Ravensberg. Conversely, the knife vendors of Lingen were known for a wide variety of metal goods, especially hardware products. Different conditions and regulations in the destination areas influenced not only the specific selection of goods offered, but the purchase of goods as well. Prussia in particular sought to instrumentalize *Tödden* trade through a mixture of concerted market demands and restrictions in the interest of its mercantile trade policies.

Social stratification in the *Tödden* system, like many other European itinerant trade systems, resembled a large business and social pyramid within which numerous smaller pyramids existed. Differences that applied in the large pyramid emerged owing to an enormous differential in economic status and social standing. Anchored at the top were the roughly two dozen families whose wholesale companies dominated the wholesale and itinerant trade market in the county of Lingen and in Hopsten, in some cases for centuries. This social group was prominent through its lifestyle of conspicuous consumption, and even today we are reminded of them through numerous impressive *Tödden* concerns in the communities where they originated. Names of companies either in cities in the greater area of origin or in the pedlars' former destination regions are known beyond the region, throughout Europe and even worldwide. The best-known example is the 'C & A' company, named after the two company founders, Clemens and August Brenninkmeyer; the company has been in Dutch hands for generations but was originally from the *Tödden* community in Mettingen in the northern Münster region.

Smaller pyramids that overlapped at diverse points protruded from the broad base of the large business and social pyramid in the *Tödden* system. Within these, medium-sized, small and very small retailers with largely self-sufficient smallholding and leasehold subsistence livelihoods

strove upwards, so that the social standing of the lowest of these often overlapped with that of the hired pedlars who worked for a wage. At the top of the small pyramids, in turn, were independent company or work brigade supervisors, some of whom managed to establish small businesses that developed a long family tradition, whereas the climb from the broad base of hired pedlars working for a wage appears to have been extremely difficult. Statistics dating back to 1780 show that in Lingen, about 75 per cent of travelling pedlars belonged to the sub-peasant class of tenant farmers and landless, among which the landless dominated with 52 per cent, all of whom were unmarried. About 19 per cent had dwarf- or smallholdings (*Kötter*, or cottagers, new farmers, and *Brinksitzer*, or land-poor at the town's edge); only 4 per cent came from peasant backgrounds.

However, the income of retailers in itinerant trade who came from the group of smallholders or non-landowners was incomparably higher than any possible returns from alternative sources of income in their home region. The annual earnings of a well-paid agricultural labourer in the county of Lingen, for example, were about 14 Reichstalers in 1750, and that of a journeyman tradesman about 18 talers. The mean yearly income of an average pedlar was about 150–200 talers, or more than ten times as much. For those able to make the difficult break out of the dependent status of travelling traders working for wages and become independent pedlars, this led to an income range that broke the conventional social order. Their wealth and consumption level in their place of origin had far greater economic significance than that of the Holland migrants among the Bramsche clothmakers. In addition, there was a dual entrepreneurial function at work regarding the *Tödden*. On the one hand, they were buyers from wholesalers in the place of origin, from cottage industry producers or at trade fairs; on the other hand, they were 'market creators' in the rural areas and towns of their destination regions.

In the destination and sales areas of the *Tödden*, situations repeatedly arose that threatened their livelihoods. Such threats came not only from state regulations on itinerant trading. Justus Möser, an Enlightenment thinker from northern Germany, for example, had filed a 'complaint against the packmen' which both attacked and, in some ways, defended them. As pedlars gradually moved from rural trade into the cities, there was also a threat from obstructions by city merchants fearing competition caused by the pedlars' greater flexibility and cheaper wares. Many *Tödden* traders knew how to avoid such risks, especially in the Netherlands, by acquiring civic rights and joining guilds, often only on paper. Owing to other circumstances, the primary income earners' centre of economic subsistence as well as their main living base had often already moved to the sales areas in any case, but this further contributed to

shifting the weight in that direction, although the place of origin nevertheless remained the family's residence and home community for generations.

The long-term and fluid transition that started in the late eighteenth century from itinerant trade with long periods of absence, ultimately interrupted only by short stays in the home region, to definitive emigration and immigration processes was reinforced when Dutch trade regulations were made more stringent. They required the *Tödden* registered there as residents to set up households liable to taxation starting in the late eighteenth century. In Prussian sales areas, an ordinance aimed at strangling itinerant trade had the same effect. A licence for an 'open store' was required along with obtaining civic rights and abandoning itinerant trade. Step by step over the course of the nineteenth century, while itinerant trade continued and municipal trade centres became established in destination regions, businesses and ultimately families gradually moved to the destination areas from their places of origin, albeit without breaking off contact with their former home. Many returned to their previous home communities after retiring from active business life in order to spend their old age and be buried there, while the next generation continued the business in the pedlars' former destination region.

In the late eighteenth century, travelling trade by the *Tödden* had already passed its peak, and by the mid-nineteenth century it had decreased to a minimum. Various factors combined to create a hopeless crisis situation in the place of origin for most wholesale and retail businesses. Aside from the restrictions in the destination regions noted above, obstacles to long-distance trade connections arose on account of the European wars that continued almost without interruption from 1792 to 1814. Yet the Napoleonic Continental system also served to protect the trade products of cottage industries from English competition.

With peace in 1815 came the end of what had been a favourable border situation for *Tödden* trade in the place of origin, since the parish of Hopsten was incorporated into the Prussian county of Tecklenburg, to which the *Tödden* parishes of Mettingen and Recke had already belonged since the eighteenth century. More importantly, inexpensive English textile products started flooding the market in 1815, and in the 1830s this was followed by industrial products from continental European competition. The end finally came when cotton, which was generally less expensive, began pushing out linen and other traditional fabrics of the proto-industrial domestic system, the ultimate collapse of which meant the loss of major items of *Tödden* trade, especially linen.

Tödden practices became lost in economic and social contrasts. For many *Tödden* families whose economic standing was strong at the top of

the large and even the smaller social pyramids, prevailing circumstances accelerated the transition that was in the offing from rural itinerant trade to urban entrepreneurship in the destination regions. Acquiring civic rights and setting up businesses in the cities cost money, a commodity that was in short supply for small, independent retailers, with their falling profit margins, and non-existent for wage-dependent hired pedlars. But many wholesalers and medium-sized *Tödden* businesses who had remained in the home regions in the hope of better times ultimately missed their chance and collapsed with huge debts in a wave of bankruptcies. The wholesale community in Hopsten suffered an economic nose-dive that had disastrous social consequences; within a short period of time, it was transformed from a well-off rural wholesale trading centre into a farming village with bankrupt commercial enterprises. A business registry of 1811 from what had become the French *arrondissement* of Lingen suggests that there were only about five wholesalers in the entire *Tödden* region.

The entire region of origin and its environs got caught in a devastating spiral of crisis. As a result of agrarian reforms, tenant farmers lost their small auxiliary incomes from the collective use of common land. The collapse of *Tödden* trade, on the one hand, and, on the other, the decline in domestic industry in the eastern part of Tecklenburg County and adjoining areas (not discussed here) buried traditional ways of countering the disproportionate relationship between population growth and available work, and increased the mass poverty known in pre- and early industrial times as 'pauperism'. Poverty turned to squalor when in 1846–7 the '*type ancien*' (Ernest Labrousse) agrarian and trade crisis – the last in Germany – erupted and the former *Tödden* villages turned into a depressed area that encompassed the communities of Recke, Mettingen and Ibbenbüren. These were to become rural centres of revolution in 1848.

In response to crisis, distress and the decline of their economic base, the communities in proto-industrial regions differed from those in which *Töddengang* and Holland migration had been more prevalent. The areas with a disappearing proto-industrial domestic system in the north-eastern Münster region became out-migration areas for increased overseas emigration. During parts of the nineteenth century, they were among the regions in Germany with the highest migration intensity (ratio of emigrants to total population). In the former *Tödden* villages, however, the picture was one of reagriculturization and a stepwise shift to the coal and steel industry that was expanding in the greater vicinity and to the growing cotton-processing textile industry in the German–Holland borderlands. Areas that had traditionally concentrated on Holland migration continued this primarily agricultural seasonal migration into the

1850s, though with a generally downward trend in the first half of the century. Aside from those who emigrated overseas, the migration trend from the 1860s then finally turned around from agricultural to labour migration in the coal and steel industry, which for a time remained determined by agrarian seasonal cycles for 'industrial hirelings' with small subsistence landholdings.

The magnets for labour migration in north central Europe changed totally in the mid-nineteenth century, and the directions of movement in some cases turned around completely. The North Sea system, with its declining attractive force, was replaced in importance by the Ruhr system based in the coal and steel industry. As regards the agrarian seasonal migrations in north central Europe, on the other hand, the decline in Holland migration in the west was replaced by a rise in Prussia migration in the east (see chapter 2, section 1).

2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, POPULATION GROWTH AND URBAN AREAS OF IN-MIGRATION IN THE PROCESS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

The 'long nineteenth century' in European history lasted from the end of the Napoleonic wars to the First World War.⁴⁸ In terms of migration history, it was marked above all by proletarian mass migrations that were largely free to take their own course in the age of liberalism in the European and Atlantic realms. These mass migrations came as a consequence of the critical shift from agrarian to industrial societies in Europe, the development of the Atlantic economy, and the pull of the New World.

The historic change in the material culture of Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is usually described as a transition from an agrarian to industrial to post-industrial age (or the age of services), or as the path from primary to secondary to tertiary civilization. The paradigm outlined by Jean Fourastié and usually discussed in Anglo-Saxon scholarship as the Fisher-Clark model⁴⁹ applies only for the economic and social history of Europe, however. Only in Europe did the long road from agrarian to service societies lead through such a clear-cut intermediate stage capable of being described as an 'industrial society', in which the proportion of workers in the industrial sphere more than outweighed those in the agrarian and service sectors.

The European path from an agrarian to an industrial society was characterized by a wide diversity of economic, population and migratory developments. At one end were countries in which the industrial 'take-off', the sudden rise in net investment rates in industry to a level that remained at that high plateau, came early on (England and Wales around

1820, Germany around 1850) and led to a dominance of highly developed industrial structures with corresponding opportunities for employment. At the other end were countries such as Italy, Spain and Greece where this shift did not take place until after the First or even the Second World War.

Yet even within individual developing industrial states in Europe there were sometimes regional differences in development. In France, for example, there were distinctions between the more industrialized east and the regions west of the Cherbourg–Marseilles line, where agriculture and small trade continued to dominate; in Italy, between the entire south and the industrial regions of the north, especially in and around Milan, Turin and Genoa; in Germany among, for example, the urban-industrial conurbations in western and central Germany, the mixed agrarian-commercial regions of south-western Germany, and Bavaria, which was primarily agrarian.

Based solely on total figures relating to changes in occupational patterns in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe, according to which the agricultural sector was still just about the main area of work even in the period following the Second World War, the ‘epoch of the European industrial society’ lasted only from the 1950s to the 1970s.⁵⁰ Such a perspective would even out much of the tension between different levels of development within the process of industrialization. Yet this is precisely what led to the determining forces that defined economically and socially motivated migratory processes, both interregional and international, that radically changed the face of the European professional and social worlds within only a century.

Employment structures, population developments and migratory forms

Employment structures

As the leading sectors in the industrial revolution, the textile and coal and steel industries were the driving migratory forces. The textile industry pushed out cottage textile production, in some regions as early as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in others not until the decades after the mid-nineteenth century. This forced people who had previously supported themselves partly or even entirely from domestic textile production to seek a new basis for subsistence. In the second half of the century the coal and steel industry moved progressively to the foreground. Its rapidly expanding centres for mining and iron and steel production became magnets for migratory movements. The construction industry also developed strong attractive forces. In civil engineering it

was railroad construction, which was closely tied to the coal and steel industry, as well as road and canal construction. In structural engineering it was the truly explosive rise in residential and factory construction in the rapidly growing industrial cities. These cities attracted labour migrants who built or expanded them and worked in their industries, in urban working and living environments that gradually became the permanent residences of the emerging industrial proletariat.

Based on the development of employment and real net output, in Germany for example there was a transition from an agrarian state with a strong industrial sector to an industrial state with a strong agricultural base between 1889 (employment share) and 1904 (net output share). This shift in the period of high industrialization was connected to a high level of migration.⁵¹ Political economist Werner Sombart imaginatively described the situation as an anthill into which a hiker thrust his walking stick.⁵² With respect to Germany, Steve Hochstadt has observed that geographical mobility increased from a high level in the pre-industrial era to a peak during the process of industrialization, only returning to the high pre-industrial plateau in the course of the twentieth century.⁵³

A highly mobile phase of 'industry-intensive employment' (Horst Matzerath) could be observed in this form only among the leading European political economies, in particular England and Germany. It was not very pronounced in the economic history of various other European countries, such as France, and did not exist at all in the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Greece.⁵⁴ With the population growth of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the absolute number of those working in rural and agricultural spheres also grew, while their proportion of total employment already started to decline. Not until the twentieth century did the deagriculturization of the labour market in absolute figures follow, in which again the European states that were farthest along in the industrialization process led the way.

The shift from the agrarian to the industrial age was not a one-way street, however. Instead, it displayed a diversity of paths, stages and transitional forms. On the one hand, as we have already seen in the context of the history of labour migration and itinerant trade in early modern Europe, even during the agrarian age there were already significant proto-industrial regions dominated by cottage industry production. Their economic forms and the corresponding main and secondary bases for earning a subsistence income were pushed out early on by less expensive factory and machine competition in some areas. Elsewhere, they did not disappear until after a varied transitional phase that sometimes lasted into the second half of the nineteenth century. In both cases this served to mobilize a potential labour force. On the other hand, working-class households in the industrial age were characterized by a varied mixture in the

composition of their household income, with portions coming from employment in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. The link was, aside from cottage industries, usually intersector shuttle migration. Even the major shift in employment structures in the process of industrialization, often misleadingly described as ‘countryside–city migration’, tended to have the character of a definitive direct migration from rural to urban working and living situations only in exceptional cases. In fact, as will be shown, it took place as a rhythmic or rotating process, an animated transition in which personal life histories often went through multiple temporary movements back and forth until permanent settlement finally occurred.⁵⁵

In natural population developments in Europe, the transition from agrarian to industrial to service societies was determined by changes in generative structures. This ‘demographic transition’⁵⁶ started with population structures associated with agrarian societies, characterized by high fertility rates, that is, large families, but also high infant and child mortality rates. It ended with a prolonged low reproduction level associated with structures of modern industrial societies in the national welfare states of the twentieth century, in which provisions for old age were no longer dependent on having large families. In between lay manifold transitions.

Changes in generative structures followed those in economic structures, but with a phasal shift. They started in different European industrial states at different times, progressed at different speeds, and took different courses. In France, for example, the start of the transition came early and forcefully in the early nineteenth century; after a relatively long transitional phase it was concluded at the end of the century. In Germany the process did not come to an end until the 1920s.

The interconnections between agricultural economy and population developments that were typical for agrarian society began to break down during the transition to the industrial age. Population structures associated with agrarian society in Old Europe showed high birth and death rates that could counteract each other under the pressure of perpetual cycles of famine, epidemics, and especially *type ancien* agrarian and trade crises. This ‘old type’ of crisis usually began after crop failure as a crisis of scarcity and rising prices in agriculture. Trades were soon drawn into this spiral, since all money had to be spent on food. Ultimately, anyone lacking material goods or savings was affected by starvation, desperate attempts to survive through migration and, not infrequently, hunger riots. The early modern state tried to anticipate this situation by opening granaries and strictly enforcing exportation bans and price limitations, which in turn intensified the crisis for the producers, since the only way for them to cover their own obligations in the face of low harvest yields was to raise prices.⁵⁷

In the 'hungry forties' in Ireland, death through starvation, social poverty, overseas emigration and the already prevalent migration to England, Wales and Scotland became mass experiences; in Germany they culminated in the crisis of 1846–7. This was the last of the 'old' agrarian and trade crises, which was then superseded in central and western Europe by economic developments that were decisive for the emerging industrial age. Improvements in nutrition, in medical, sanitary and public hygiene, and especially the decline in epidemics initially led to a lowering of the mortality rate in the nineteenth century. Cities usually led the way, especially those which had a strong service sector. The combined impact of declining mortality rates and, lagging a short way behind, decreasing birth rates led to a rapid rise in population starting in the mid-eighteenth century, despite mass overseas emigration of more than 50 million Europeans in the nineteenth century. This was due not to more babies being born but to their living longer as infant, child and childbed mortality went down and average life expectancy rose.

In the 'industrial population explosion' (Wolfgang Köllmann), the population of Europe grew approximately 43 per cent in the first half of the nineteenth century, and around 50 per cent in the second. It rose – in spite of the mass overseas exodus – from around 187 million in 1800 to about 266 million in 1850 and roughly 468 million in 1913. The distribution of population growth was varied: the average annual growth rate by country from 1800 to 1910 was highest in Britain, where the population quadrupled. The rates at this time were also high in Denmark, the Netherlands and Finland, where the population increased threefold, whereas in Germany, Sweden, Austria-Hungary and Belgium the populations doubled. Only two countries experienced unusually low growth rates or even a population decline: in France the population figure for 1910 was one and a half times what it had been in 1800; and Ireland, which had a population of 5 million in 1800, registered only 4.4 million in 1910.⁵⁸

The demographic–economic relationship was dependent on regional options for employment. Thus its impact in Ireland and Italy, for example, was considerably greater than in Germany, which experienced an abrupt rise in employment options in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Overseas emigration and emigration and labour migration within Europe – for example, Irish going to the United States, England, Wales and Scotland, or Italians going to the United States, South America, Germany and France – long offered only limited social relief.

France was a special case where development progressed more smoothly. From 1789 to 1870 the population grew from 24.8 million to 38.4 million (about 154 per cent), which was clearly below comparable values in neighbouring countries. Up to 1911, the year of the last pre-war

census, the population had increased to only 39.6 million. Nowhere else in Europe were the birth rates so low. This was due to a voluntary birth limitation that was unique in Europe; in the course of the nineteenth century it spread to more and more social classes. Those who were first and most affected were small families in the French middle class. Birth rates were especially low among salaried workers, who tried in this way to improve their social advancement and that of their children. Compared with them, the birth rates of the working class as well as those of the economic middle class and the elite initially remained high. In the course of the nineteenth century, the middle-class ideal of the small family spread downwards and upwards in the social pyramid. Starting in the late eighteenth century, the child mortality rate also began to decline as a result of medical and public hygiene measures. Children were increasingly seen as individuals in need of care; their upbringing appeared more important and expensive, so that birth control was considered the flip side to responsible parenting. The average number of children in a French family in 1896 was 2.2; in 1911 it was only 1.9. The French defeat in 1870–1 and the large increase in the population of their enemy in the war, Germany, led to widespread public discussion centred around fears of a general population decline.⁵⁹

Forms of migration in the process of industrialization

In the period of early industrialization, the disproportionate gap between population growth and employment options that induced migration initially increased to a decisive degree. While the population grew, a number of critical factors that varied from region to region choked off sources of work. From enclosures in England to peasant liberation in Prussia or land reform in Sweden, agrarian reforms brought to an end all kinds of dependency. However, the increasing concentration in land distribution literally took the ground, and thus the means of support, from under the feet of subsistence smallholders and leaseholders. The advancement of capitalist agrarian operating structures and intensive forms of production created agricultural labour markets with high employment during the season and shortages of employment in the off season. The process of industrialization, on the other hand, initially influenced labour opportunities more negatively than positively. The victory march of cotton and the advancement of industrial mass production sent manufacturers' prices crashing for household products such as woven and knitted wares or hardware products. Consequently, many proto-industrial subsistence bases and income combinations were destroyed. Over time this intensified pre- and early industrial pauperism, which had been caused by the accelerated growth in population. Despite the social safety valve of mass overseas emigration,

the gulf between population growth and employment options opened ever wider. With the exception of France, where there were also no waves of mass overseas emigration, it added further fuel to the Malthusian nightmare of an accelerated decline in the ability to obtain sufficient food relative to population growth (see chapter 2, section 3).

The tension of supply and demand on labour markets was often not reversed in central and western Europe until the period of high industrialization. This was the background leading to the increase in transnational labour migration within Europe that was soon to affect millions, especially in the south–north and east–west directions, which will be discussed later in greater detail (see chapter 2, section 1). Within this basic threefold pattern of development of industry, population and migration during the evolution from agrarian to industrial societies, dramatic differences also existed among the most rapidly advancing countries of central and western Europe.

In the British Isles there was generally high population growth; England and Wales went through an early and rapidly accelerating process of industrialization with a strong attractive influence on migration and, at the same time, a high level of overseas emigration during the era of high industrialization prior to the First World War. But the greatest interregional and transatlantic mobility was experienced in Ireland. Ireland's population declined during the 'hungry forties' from 8.2 million in 1841 to 6.5 million in 1851. Between 1845 and 1855 about 2.1 million people left the island, 1.5 million of them emigrating to the United States and roughly 300,000 to Canada. During this time approximately 200,000 to 300,000 Irish went to England, Scotland or Wales; their main destinations were the industrial regions in western England or south-western Scotland. In 1851 there were almost 730,000 native Irish living in England, Scotland and Wales, the number rising to 806,000 by 1861 and then dropping back (1901: 632,000). It has been estimated that between 1840 and 1914 about 5 million Irish migrated to other parts of Britain. In 1914 two-thirds of all Irish-born were living abroad.⁶⁰

Germany also experienced increased population growth, although its industrialization process did not start until later. From the early 1840s until the early 1890s millions went overseas in a mass exodus. In the era of high industrialization in the late nineteenth century, overseas emigration became increasingly replaced by massive internal migrations from rural, agrarian areas of work to urban industrial areas, which made up the 'greatest mass movement in German history' (Wolfgang Köllmann). Starting in the 1890s, there was also dramatic growth in the employment of foreigners, making Germany in the decade prior to the First World War the 'greatest labour-importing country in the world' (Imre Ferenczi), after the United States.

In France, as mentioned, there was no such tension between population growth and employment options resulting in mobilization for migration, since the industrialization process there did not progress quite as hectically. The agrarian basis remained stable for longer and the population grew relatively slowly, which is why no mass overseas emigration took place. Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, however, immigration from abroad into France grew at a magnitude comparable to the Irish migration to England, Scotland and Wales. It began in the 1840s with a flow from Flemish-Belgian areas that had been hard hit by the collapse of the linen industry, crop failures and famine. Flemings migrated at first to work in French agriculture on the harvest, and then increasingly to the industrial centres of northern France.⁶¹ In the mid-1880s there were roughly half a million Belgians living in France. As we shall see, the labour migration of Italians and finally also of Poles grew parallel to these developments (see chapter 2, section 1).

Labourers were attracted or even recruited to travel ever-greater distances in Europe, increasingly across national borders, starting in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The advancing 'internationalization of the labour market'⁶² applied not only to secondary and tertiary areas of work, in which a divided labour market with a clearly defined higher 'national' level and a strongly 'international' lower one quickly developed, but also to the agricultural labour market. It came about as a result of the sizeable number of foreign workers who not only undertook seasonal labour, but also substituted for local labourers who went to work in industry or in better-paid agricultural jobs or who emigrated overseas. Before the emergence since the late nineteenth century of national welfare states that distinguished between their 'own' and 'foreign' workers in terms of benefits and job offers, a sort of unregulated European labour market had developed in the age of liberalism. Labourers crossed national borders with fewer restrictions than merchandise did, with the exception of the anti-Polish migration and labour policies in Prussia, to be discussed later (see chapter 2, section 4).

A new topography of cross-border migration thus emerged in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The main regions of origin were in southern, eastern and south-eastern Europe, especially Italy, the Russian partition in central Poland and Galicia in Austria-Hungary, and to a lesser extent also Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden. The main destination regions for migrants were in central and western Europe, above all Germany (especially Poles and Italians, followed by the Dutch and Ruthenians) and France (especially Italians and Flemish Belgians, followed by Poles); to a lesser extent they went to Denmark (mostly Poles) and Switzerland (Italians).⁶³

European migrations within the process of industrialization overlapped in many ways and, as we shall see, were closely tied to Atlantic migration history. As a rule, events were not determined by individual, clearly distinguishable migratory movements; instead, areas of movement were highly complex and changing, with diverse, overlapping subsections, subsystems, and secondary and counter-streams that were both large and small, and constantly growing or shrinking. There were diverse cause-and-effect relationships among them, in which migrants and migrant groups encountered one another on the labour market, serving substitute or supplementary functions or temporary buffer functions in the fluctuation of crisis and upswing.

Urban-industrial migration destinations

The most powerful expressions of this interaction between changes in employment structures and geographical population movements were urban growth and the increase in urban-industrial economic conurbations. The process of urbanization in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe comprised many elements; of particular relevance were the growth and consolidation of old and newly founded urban working and living spaces through migration to and between cities, the different forms of natural population growth within their borders, and the extension of these borders through administrative reforms.⁶⁴

The rapid increase in urban magnets in the secondary and tertiary sectors in the industrialization process is reflected in local, regional and national figures. At a local level there was accelerated growth of towns to small cities and then to major cities and metropolises, while at the same time new cities emerged from industrial settlements and 'industrial villages'. In 1800, there were 23 major cities in Europe with populations over 100,000; a total of 5.5 million people lived in them. A century later, there were 135 major cities with a total population of over 46 million. In a European comparison, the cities of the Ruhr valley showed dramatic growth rates; in the six decades from 1850 to 1910 the population of Essen grew from 9,000 to 295,000, and that of Düsseldorf from 27,000 to 359,000. While there had been only two genuine German metropolises in 1800 (Berlin and Hamburg), in 1910 there were no fewer than 45.⁶⁵ In regions with growing urban aggregations, major urban landscapes grew together in a process that Leslie Page Moch has fittingly described as 'mushrooming'.⁶⁶ In Germany this applied above all to the Ruhr valley area, the Saar and Berlin-Brandenburg regions, and Silesia and Saxony. In England it applied to the large conurbations around London, Manchester,

Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield; in France to Paris, Marseilles, Lyons and Bordeaux.

At a national level, the proportion of people living in cities grew constantly during the process of industrialization. In 1801 in England and Wales, about 31 per cent of the population of 8.9 million lived in communities with a population over 2,000, only 16.9 per cent in cities over 20,000, and only 9.7 per cent in cities with populations exceeding 100,000. The population had grown explosively to about 36 million by 1911, with the corresponding figures of 78.1 per cent in towns over 2,000, 60.6 per cent over 20,000, and 37 per cent in cities over 100,000. Roughly 15 per cent of the total population lived in the Greater London area around the turn of the century. In Prussia, where the population shot up from about 10 million in 1816 to about 40 million in 1910, there were only 11 cities with populations of 20,000–100,000 in 1817, but 155 in 1910, comprising 4.1 per cent of the total population in 1817 and increasing to 14.7 per cent in 1910. In 1817, Berlin was still the only Prussian city with a population over 100,000 (1.8 per cent of the total population); in 1910 there were 33 such cities, in which 22.5 per cent of the total Prussian population lived.

In France the population growth from 1811 to 1911 was comparably moderate, from around 29 million to roughly 39 million. The percentage of those living in communities with over 3,000 inhabitants was 14.3 per cent in 1811, increasing to 34.9 per cent in 1911 (the share of the population living in communities over 2,000 in 1911 was 44.2 per cent). The Netherlands showed a clearly different growth pattern; because of its much earlier urbanization process with strong tertiary work areas concentrated mostly in trade and shipping, 28.5 per cent of the total population of 2.6 million already lived in communities with populations over 20,000 in 1830. By 1909 the population had increased to about 5.8 million, of which 40.5 per cent lived in cities over 20,000. If we assume the statistical definition of a city as a community with a population of at least 2,000 as an indicator for urbanization, then almost 80 per cent of the Netherlands was urbanized in 1869, increasing to 90 per cent before the start of the First World War.

The general population growth in the course of industrialization definitely served the cities far more than it did the countryside. But urban growth parallel to general population growth does not necessarily mean migration from rural areas in the sense of depopulating the countryside. Instead, as previously noted it can be traced back to the diversified interaction of migrations from the countryside, increasing interurban migrations and natural population growth through an urban excess of births over deaths. The differences that thus arise can be exemplified here based on research by Horst Matzerath in a comparative overview of Prussia, Sweden and France.

In Prussia the ratios of urban and rural populations to the total population at the turn of the century were entirely reversed; the urban population grew from one-third in 1867 to two-thirds in 1910. More than half of this urban growth can be traced to an excess of births over deaths in the cities from 1875 on, almost one-third to gains due to in-migration and the rest due to administrative changes, such as incorporations. Developments in Sweden were very different, where the rural population of about 2.2 million in 1805 increased to 3.9 million in 1890. The urban share of the population grew only from 10 to 19 per cent in the same period, though there was a rising excess of births over deaths in the cities and urban in-migration gains outweighed out-migration losses in the countryside, not to mention heavy overseas emigration. The situation was again very different in France, where population developments in the second half of the nineteenth century were characterized across the board by high out-migration from the countryside, that is, high in-migration to the cities, especially Greater Paris. From 1891 to 1898, for example, the population growth of French cities was almost entirely due to in-migration surplus (1.1 million), which also took up the natural population growth from rural areas, the population of which dwindled to half a million. With a continued trend in 1901–6, urban growth here was in fact due to internal migration from the countryside to the cities.

It is generally true that in-migration gains in major cities or cities with peak growth, and especially in the newly formed industrial areas, were highly significant. Only 15 per cent of the aforementioned growth in the population of Paris from 1821 to 1890 can be attributed to an excess of births over deaths. Aside from incorporations (21 per cent), in-migration was the most significant factor (57 per cent). In the Silesian city of Breslau, in-migration was responsible for an even larger share (79 per cent) of total population growth. And in Berlin, too, only 27 per cent of its population increase was due to an excess of births over deaths. St Petersburg is an extreme example with a 27 per cent excess of deaths over births, which meant that population growth was attributed entirely to in-migration and incorporations. On the other hand, no less than 85 per cent of the population gain in Greater London from 1850 to 1890 was due to natural growth. And in Copenhagen, the ratio of in-migration and incorporations to natural growth was almost balanced; 57 per cent of the city's population gain from 1801 to 1890 could be traced back to in-migrations and 43 per cent to excess of births over deaths.⁶⁷

In comparing different cities in the urbanization process, Horst Matzerath and Leslie Page Moch⁶⁸ have distinguished between three urban development types in weighting growth due to migration or to an excess of births over deaths. Service cities had low birth rates and growth due

mainly to in-migration; the share of women was dominant owing to the number of domestic servants. Textile cities had high birth rates – decreasing after 1870 – and in-migration mostly from the direct vicinity with an extremely high proportion of women. Coal and steel cities had the highest volume of migration, with high male in-migration and high birth rates. These distinctions are purely for heuristic purposes and should not be confused with historical reality, as evidence of exceptions is just as plentiful as that which proves the rule. Even this ideal type differentiation might appear problematic, since while there were textile cities that lacked major coal and steel industry areas and vice versa, there were no cities without service sectors; and as the Dutch example shows, trade and service cities existed which totally or largely lacked industrial areas.

Growing cities and urban-industrial conurbations with their expanding secondary and tertiary employment options functioned as magnets of varying ranges, attracting labour migrants and permanent immigrants. Assuming the old rule of thumb, recently reaffirmed by Page Moch, the range of the attractive force was largely related to the size of the city and the dynamics of its growth. Small to medium-sized rural cities attracted labour migrants and immigrants from the villages of the local and regional vicinity; medium-sized to large cities had regional to interregional radii of pull; and major cities and national metropolises had an interregional, national and, increasingly, international range. Among European metropolises, London grew 340 per cent in the course of the nineteenth century; Paris, 345 per cent; Vienna, 490 per cent; and Berlin a staggering 872 per cent. In the late nineteenth century, 68 per cent of Paris's population had been born outside the city; in Vienna, 65 per cent; and in Berlin, 59 per cent.⁶⁹ The attractive pull of temporary and permanent urban work options corresponded with mobilizing forces in the regions of origin, especially the collapse of cottage industry subsistence bases and of combined agrarian and proto-industrial subsistence, and the advancing proletarianization of the agricultural labour force.

The most dramatic urban growth in Europe took place during the industrialization process in the Ruhr valley. As James H. Jackson and Steve Hochstadt have shown,⁷⁰ it resulted from migration – from rural places of origin – that became permanent, although initially intended as only temporary. In fact, for a long time there had been diverse smaller or larger migratory cycles between rural and urban regions, in which labour migrants spent increasingly longer periods of time in the cities, ultimately staying there permanently. These migratory cycles ranged from neighbourhood commuter migrations to regional labour migrations of intermediate distance to long-distance interregional migrations. The length of time migrants stayed for work in the destination regions varied,

sometimes only weeks or months, sometimes a season or even years. Migrants often went through a number of different migratory cycles. There were also different forms of migrations in stages or phases from and one job to another, and increasingly also from one place of residence to another, often in a progression from village to the closest town to a city and from there further on to other cities or major urban conurbations.⁷¹ In cases of interregional long-distance migrations, first-generation pioneer migrants sometimes returned to the rural environment in their old age, in order to realize the dream of a better life in traditional surroundings with savings from 'the city', while the next generation that was born or raised in the urban-industrial world found its home there.

The stages of such transitions, sometimes over generations, can be more clearly described with respect to interregional long-distance migrations than for shuttle migrations and movements over short distances. By examining three migrations to urban-industrial and tertiary sectors of work, we can gain a better understanding of these contexts. Example 1 depicts long-distance internal migrations; example 2, a transnational immigration to the metropolis of Paris; and example 3 shows east-west long-distance migrations to the Ruhr valley, specifically dealing with the 'Ruhr Poles'.

Example 1

Migration from the Auvergne region developed from temporary labour migration to chain migrations to permanent settlement. It played a significant role in migration to Paris in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Intensive exchange and migratory relationships to the rural home regions continued in many cases even after the family residence and main living base had long since moved to the metropolis. Little by little such migration networks of rural families with a second generation working 'in the city' developed into urban families with parents or grandparents who remained 'in the countryside' or who returned there when they retired.

At first it was primarily male labour migrants who came, while their families remained at home in the Massif Central to run their small farms. Gradually they remained for longer periods in the city, and chain migrations developed. In the course of the first half of the nineteenth century, large numbers of self-employed small merchants and their wives from the Auvergne also started arriving in Paris. But the goal of migrating to the city was for many still to return home with savings. Children were often sent back to the home region for their schooling and did not return to Paris until they had reached working age. Work stays in Paris were increasingly prolonged, so that visits to the 'old home' appeared as a

limited interruption of work. In the second half of the century, the Paris-born children of the pioneer migrants started remaining in the city and visiting their parents during school vacations, although the first generation of Paris migrants often still dreamed of returning to the Auvergne region, if no longer to farm the land, then at least to retire in the homeland of their youth. Not until after the First World War was the integration process complete; *Auvergnats* had become permanent residents of the metropolis, generally with close family ties to the rural place of origin.⁷²

Example 2

At the same time in Paris up to the 1880s, there was also a working population of sub-proletariat to petty bourgeoisie who had migrated from Germany. Contemporaries estimated that there were about 50,000 Germans living in Paris in 1825, and more than 100,000 by the 1850s. German labour migrations to France, especially Paris, led to a stable lower- to lower-middle-class social environment for several generations, starting in the Bourbon Restoration period (1815–30). This differed from the famous Parisian colonies of German furniture makers in the eighteenth century and their descendants, as well as from the Germans in earlier courtly and later bourgeois environments, which partially overlapped with the political refugees from the Germany of restoration and reaction (see chapter 2, section 4).

A kind of temporary foreign sub-proletariat lived in Paris, working for the lowest of wages and in the worst of working and living conditions. There were street-sweepers from Darmstadt in Hesse; factory, construction and excavation workers, as well as rag-and-bone dealers from the Palatinate; and German and Alsatian maid servants. As early as 1845 a status report by German clerics sent to care for this wretched migrant group declared that ‘no railroad or canal is built where there are no German day labourers and workers streaming in *en masse*. All the streets from Germany to Paris are alive with German emigrants and travellers’. Most of the sub-proletarian Germans in Paris had intended to come only for a limited time. They settled in various German colonies, sometimes according to their place of origin. Those from Rhineland-Palatinate lived at the Barrière Fontainebleau, where they worked in the surrounding quarries; the Hessians from around three dozen upper Hessian villages initially lived in the St Marcel quarter between the Panthéon and the Val-de-Grâce and later also in northern Paris. Many had come to work and live in the most pitiful conditions in order to save money to improve their even worse living conditions in their home region. These movements increasingly developed into chain migrations. Small businessmen

and salaried workers also started to arrive, from the upper Hessian village of Burggemünden, for example. Letters from Paris to the home villages formed a kind of informational bridge and stabilized the transnational migratory tradition. Genuine integration problems began to emerge across the generations, as the German clerics reported: the first generation of migrants spoke little or no French, whereas their children soon spoke better French than German.

The history of the sub-proletarian German colonies in Paris came to a relatively abrupt end in the 1880s; in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1, the French government issued a decree after the battle of Sedan demanding that all German men leave the city within three days. The Hessians returned to Paris from the mid-1870s, but in the 1880s French street-sweepers were hired in place of Germans against a background of economic crisis, and soon only French were allowed to perform municipal services. Most Hessian street-sweeper families, who were the poorest of the poor among the Germans in Paris, returned to their homeland, where their paths then partly continued on either to the Ruhr valley or the United States.⁷³ But small businesspeople, salaried workers and traders also returned to Germany from Paris. In some cases this completed interregional and international migratory cycles, for example for the Lichtenfeld and Sehrt families from the Hessian villages of Roda and Burggemünden. The son, Heinrich Lichtenfeld, could not inherit the farm in Roda in Burgwald and migrated in the 1870s from his village to the rapidly expanding industrial city of Essen. He became a blacksmith for the Krupp company, where two of his brothers already worked, moved up to a supervisory position in his field and returned to his village after his retirement, where in 1915 he bought a farm and the accompanying estates with the money he had saved. One of his sons, who shared his father's first name, stayed in Essen with his brothers and married Maria Sehrt, who had returned from Paris to the upper Hessian town of Burggemünden as a child. She was the daughter of a small businessman who had migrated further to the Ruhr valley with his family after migrating back from Paris.⁷⁴

Example 3

In a curious intermediary between interregional and transnational migration, the story of the 'Ruhr Poles' emerged in the urban coal and steel migratory region of the Ruhr valley. In some ways they were related in terms of labour migration, chain migration, colony formation and definitive immigration. But the history of the Ruhr Poles from East Prussia also showed remarkable peculiarities; it was about the integration of a national, cultural minority in a true immigration situation, not in a legal sense but in a social, cultural and psychological one.

The history of the Ruhr Poles started shortly after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1, when the first miners were recruited from the Polish minority in eastern Prussia, especially Upper Silesia.⁷⁵ This was part of an effort to import strike-breakers during the boom of rapid economic and industrial expansion that took place in Germany from 1871 to 1873, a period also characterized by politicized strikes. Under the pressure of the economic crisis that began in 1873 (*‘Gründerjahre’*), strike activities came to an abrupt end; in the mid-1870s, there were lay-offs for the first time in the coal and steel industry and in-migration initially began to flag. The first phase of this international ‘trend period of economic growth disturbances’ from 1873 to 1896 (Hans-Ulrich Wehler) had been overcome by 1879. A second crisis followed from 1882 to 1886, and the third, the weakest of the three in Germany, from 1890 to 1896. In the 1880s east–west migration heading from East Prussia to the Ruhr valley was already growing steadily, at first through deliberate recruitment and then through subsequent chain migrations. It encompassed not only miners from Upper Silesia but increasingly Polish agricultural labourers as well, especially from East Prussia, West Prussia and Posen (Poznań). About 500,000 people from eastern Prussia made up the Polish-speaking minority in the Ruhr valley on the eve of the First World War. They were generalized simply as ‘Poles’ in the coal and steel industry of the west, although they also included about 150,000 Mazurs (discussed in chapter 2, section 1) from southern East Prussia. The Catholic, Polish-speaking Ruhr Poles, who were suspected of having ‘anti-Reich’ Polish national ambitions, settled in relatively isolated works colonies set up by the companies. They were allowed yards for small domestic animals and vegetables for some subsistence planting, but plant managements also increased social controls, in that the cheap accommodation was dependent on the place of work. Despite the tension between integration and segregation, the Ruhr Poles increasingly became integrated prior to the First World War, though Polish clubs, the Catholic church, their own press and even their own union also played a significant role. From 1906 on, there were also Prussian-Polish representatives in individual city and local parliaments in the Ruhr valley.

The end of the First World War, the re-establishment of a Polish state and the option to choose between German or Polish citizenship provided for in the Versailles Treaty marked a deep break in the integration of the Ruhr Poles. Christoph Kleßmann has assumed that out of a total of approximately 350,000, two-thirds either returned to the new Polish state or migrated further to the coal-mining areas in northern France, while a third remained in the Ruhr valley. With firm and lasting connections to the home region in the east, the integration process continued despite violent oppression during the Second World War. By the 1950s

the only obvious reminders of the former Ruhr Poles' background and the significance of club life for their integration were the many names ending in 'sky', especially those belonging to successful football teams.

The migration of the Prussian 'Poles' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the Ruhr valley with its coal and steel industry was part of the powerful internal east-west migration during the imperial period that grew into a mass movement in the 1880s.⁷⁶ It first pushed forwards to the industrial centre of Berlin, reached the industrial areas in central Germany in the 1870s, and to a lesser extent the Rhineland and Westphalia as well. The 1880s saw the beginning of massive coal and steel labour recruitment on the agricultural labour market in the region of East Elbia, while the railroads brought inexpensive mass transport. Since then, and especially since the 1890s, internal intersectoral east-west movement was characterized by long-distance migration to the Ruhr valley from the eastern Prussian provinces.

German long-distance migration from east to west was synonymous with a mass transformation of sub-peasant classes from the rural into the industrial proletariat. With the concentration on mining work and semi- and unskilled industrial work, 86 per cent became part of the secondary sector labour force in the Rhine Province and 94 per cent in Westphalia. East-west long-distance migration from the north-eastern regions of Germany represented the most clear-cut socio-historical break in the shift of lifestyles during the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society in imperial Germany. It developed into a kind of internal counterpart to overseas emigration, in terms of acculturation and assimilation problems in the destination regions, and was more similar to overseas emigration in some ways than to other forms of internal migration.

In the parallel history of immigration to the United States, certain settlement regions and areas of work could be related for the most part to certain national immigrant groups. This largely applied also for the settlement and labour structures of the German-born immigrant population, whose family members were soon known in their home country as 'Americans', but, owing to their lifestyles in the new country, they were often still regarded as 'Germans' there, even in the third generation. The immigration process in the United States led to colony-building not only because of language barriers, but also because of socio-cultural discrepancies in the broadest sense between the countries of emigration and immigration. During the immigration process, which was at the same time a process of identity crisis and ethnogenesis, common ground shared by the 'immigrant aliens' as regards material culture, lifestyles and outlook was revealed all the more clearly; in many cases, immigrants became aware of this common ground for the first time. And yet immigrant groups were by no means as homogeneous in their settlement priorities

as it might have seemed from the outside. Apart from internal social stratification, this could be expressed within the German-born population in the United States in the clear-cut local separation of settlements according to regions of origin. The regions of origin or 'home towns' in the Old World kept their ties to the New World, sometimes for generations, through networks based on transatlantic migration traditions and a corresponding form of transatlantic communication ('emigrant letters').

There are numerous examples proving that intersectoral long-distance east-west migration led to a genuine immigration process in the destination region, based on the form of settlement and employment as well as on the structure and level of job offered to the sub-peasant classes streaming in from the east. The choice of town, occupation and even place of work for 'newcomers' in the Ruhr valley and especially the Emscher region, as in the Germans' main overseas immigration destination, had features of stable colony-building that sometimes continued into the 1920s ('Westphalian Eastern Marches', 'Little East Prussia', 'New Mazovia', 'Little Allenstein'). This continued to hold together the second generation of migrated 'East Prussians', whose parent generation had already been considered 'Westphalians' in their place of origin. Just as Gelsenkirchen, for instance, was the domestic New York for the East Prussians, serving as the 'East Prussian distribution centre', the 'new arrivals' who landed there by mass transport 'on recommendation' went straight to 'their' districts of the city and 'their' plants of the coal and steel industry. Certain East Prussian regions populated certain urban districts in the Ruhr valley in the course of long-distance east-west internal migration, while certain eastern provinces still sent workers to particular coal mines in the 1920s. Whereas the earlier migrants or those from areas closer to the industrial sites had achieved their social advancement in a literally spatial sense, that is, out of the coal seams, the 'new arrivals' also came in, literally, 'at the bottom', that is, underground, or began as unskilled industrial labourers at the lowest, least respected levels of heavy industrial work. On the other hand, old-established or older migrant groups and migrants from the direct vicinity of the industrial sites frequently worked, as in the United States, as group or brigade leaders, as foremen, masters and pit foremen. These levels were just as hard to attain for unskilled 'eastlings' without means – for reasons of language (Prussians 'Poles') as well as finances (mining school for pit foremen) – as was advancement to tertiary spheres of work.

The designation of 'Polish colonies' or 'Polish mines' in the Ruhr valley of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was more of a generalized assessment by the settled outside populace than an accurate description of the actual internal structure of colonies or work-

forces at mines – similar to perceptions of immigrant colonies in major American cities. ‘Newcomers’ from ‘the east’ were often, with sceptical reserve, simply considered ‘Poles’, and at first were generally avoided as such in settlement areas and workplaces. Mazurs, who migrated from eastern Prussia, however, responded with hostility to the derogatory as well as historically and linguistically incorrect label ‘Polack’. Similarly, Germans from the eastern Prussian provinces who immigrated to the United States during the time of the rising ‘new immigration’ from eastern and south-eastern Europe did not like being mistaken for ‘East Europeans’, which they were not, although the groups might have seemed related based on their lifestyle, way of thinking and heavy accent. What for US trade unions – who pushed for organization, control and, ultimately, severe immigration restrictions – were the mostly rural, unskilled immigrants in the era of high industrialization were, for German industrial unions, the ‘*wulackers*’,⁷⁷ ‘wage-cutters’ or even ‘scabs’ from the eastern provinces of Prussia. While migrant groups from the same eastern provinces were separated on the coal and steel labour market of western Germany into ‘Prussians’ and ‘Poles’, they were thrown together on the industrial labour markets on the east coast of the United States. Urban-industrial development dynamics in the Ruhr valley, and especially the Emscher region, took on ‘American’ proportions in migratory processes, and so the area became a kind of domestic immigration country with all the characteristics of a socio-cultural melting pot. During industrialization it brought about what Wilhelm Brepohl described as the ‘creation of the Ruhr people in the course of the east–west migration’, which was an internal migration and yet at the same time a kind of internal emigration and immigration.

The strength of the Ruhr valley’s attraction for migrants can be understood if we look at Lorraine, France’s coal and steel centre, whose swift expansion started in the late nineteenth century. The rapid growth there with minimal regional labour force potential led to an increasingly urgent labour shortage. The number of foreigners rose. At first many Belgians were taken on in the coal and iron mines, but they often left these jobs in the summer to work in agriculture or construction. In their efforts to obtain a regular workforce, companies tried to recruit other foreign labourers. Recruitment aimed especially at Poles and Italians proved unsuccessful, since German competition from the Ruhr valley, as well as the German part of Lorraine and along the Saar River, won the battle for jobs with the offer of higher wages. Only a few hundred Poles came at first to the Lorraine industrial region. The number of Italians recruited mostly at the Franco-Italian border was higher, but here too after a short period of time many of those recruited went across the border to Germany. After the First World War, however, when the economic situation

in France was favourable and German competition lost its significance, the Lorraine coal and steel industry finally became an important destination region for Polish and Italian labour migrants.

None the less, some urban-industrial conurbations with a large number of foreign workers also developed in Lorraine, in particular Longwy. This rapidly expanding centre of the northern Lorraine iron ore basin near the Belgian and Luxembourg borders had the highest concentration of foreigners in France prior to the First World War. The impetuous boom of the iron and steel industry in Longwy, which did not have the advantage of an adequate regional labour pool, entailed severe social problems: miserable living conditions, high mortality, epidemic diseases, alcoholism and violence. Gérard Noiriel described this situation in the boomtown of Longwy as France's 'Wild West'.⁷⁸

Urban immigration regions such as the Ruhr valley, Lorraine and the Paris basin offered constantly growing, permanent employment options, even over long distances, during the process of industrialization and urbanization. Temporary work and labour migration became less significant in the face of permanent employment and definitive immigration. The major cities and urban agglomerations created more than just growth of a permanently working populace. In the course of building and expanding them, as well as providing for their inhabitants, temporary industrial labour migration and agrarian seasonal migrations also increased.