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**Luigi Lorenzetti, Anne-Lise Head-König, and Joseph Goy, Eds.** *Marchés, migrations et logiques familiales dans les espaces français, canadien et suisse, 18e-20e siècles*. Bern, Switz.: Peter Lang, 2005. 321 pp. + illustrations, graphs, and tables. \$59.95 (U.S.). ISBN 3-03910-497-7.

Review by Mary Dewhurst Lewis, Harvard University.

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At least since Louis Chevalier published his *Formation de la Population Parisienne* and *Classes Laborieuses et Classes Dangereuses à Paris*,<sup>[1]</sup> scholars of France have been interested in the connections between urban and rural life in the modern era. Did economic development “uproot” rural peasants, force them to shed their rural superstitions, and transform them into an urban proletariat? Did Paris, the quintessential “capital of the nineteenth century” owe its form and character to the culture and conflicts brought there by rural migrants? Every generation or so, these debates get renewed; each time, new methods are brought to bear on the question and new insights are gained.

In 1977, Yves Lequin’s monumental *Les Ouvriers de la région lyonnaise* exploded the urban worker/rural peasant dichotomy that lay at the heart of many analyses of working-class development. A few years later, Leslie Page Moch’s *Paths to the City* uncovered the intense activity of rural France in the long nineteenth century, where temporary moves between city and countryside testified to a system of constant population exchange within a region.<sup>[2]</sup> Unlike Eugen Weber, whose 1976 *Peasants into Frenchmen* had depicted a static, backward and inward-looking peasantry which was forced to become modern by “roads, roads, and still more roads,”<sup>[3]</sup> Lequin and Moch [BOTH] showed that nineteenth-century urban and rural life were not so much opposed to one another as they were integrated into regional economies. Unlike Lequin, Weber was not interested in proletarianization as such, but he shared with the objects of Lequin’s critique the sense that economic development led to an “uprooting” that was both dramatic and permanent. While Weber’s peasants were “ill at ease in urban dwellings” and his city dwellers “did not understand the rural language,”<sup>[4]</sup> Moch showed that regional dialects may have united new arrivals in the city with those already present.

The latest round of polemics surrounding what is often called France’s “rural exodus” resurfaced in the 1990s, thanks in part to new technologies that allowed scholars to create enormous databases tracing the trajectories of individuals and families over several generations. Paul-André Rosental’s important *Sentiers invisibles* (invisible paths), for instance, combined a quantitative study of 3,000 families with a qualitative analysis of ninety-seven “ligns” to show the intensity of migration in nineteenth-century France. Studies that concentrate on urban arrival rather migrants’ own departure points, Rosental contended, render this migration “invisible.” Focusing on family lines, by contrast, highlighted both the importance of intra-regional migration and the slow widening of migratory circles to include further destinations.<sup>[5]</sup>

The anthology of articles under review here, *Marchés, migrations et logiques familiales dans les espaces français, canadien et suisse, 18e-20e siècles*, although about towns and farms, rather than large cities, is situated within these debates. Eight of the collection’s twenty articles, including the overall introduction, explicitly reference Rosental’s work. Alluding to the debate elicited by the publication of *Sentiers invisibles*, Gérard Béaur sums up the central question of the conference that led to this publication: “Yes or no, were preindustrial populations set in their sedentary ways or frenetically mobile? The question is not innocent and it has even become central for historians of society, given how ideologically charged it is” (p. 263). This apt remark could have come earlier in the collection; it helps

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establish the importance of the research in the entire volume. The book's major contribution to these debates is to deepen the inquiry in time (to the eighteenth century) and broaden its geographic scope (to Switzerland and the Americas, with some articles also making an occasional foray into Italy and Spain).

Unlike some of the work done in the 1990s on this subject, the twenty authors featured here do not deploy fancy computerized databases to illustrate their collective point that migrants are not an "independent variable" (p. 9) in the history of social mobility, as reductionist economic approaches might have it. Rather, migrants' choices—and particularly their "strategies" or "tactics" of family reproduction (pp. 17-18)—are crucial to understanding migration over the long nineteenth century, whether short or long in distance or term. To demonstrate this, the authors use social-historical methods of the most traditional sort; their conclusions are based on painstaking research in census and marriage records, probate files, property transactions, agricultural surveys, notarial records, electoral registers, and so on.

In his contribution to the volume, Luigi Lorenzetti, like many of the authors, overturns received ideas about the relationship between economic development, migration, and family life. According to Lorenzetti, industrialization in Lombardy "preserved more than it destroyed the family model..." (p. 43). In particular, women's employment in industries such as in clockmaking, "likely put a brake on permanent departures while favoring the perpetuation of their husbands' periodic migrations" (p. 53). So much for the myth that women's employment destroys family values.

The articles that draw on nineteenth-century agricultural studies reach similarly nuanced conclusions. Revisiting the 1866 agricultural survey, an important source chronicling the "rural exodus," Bernard Derouet deconstructs the report, exposing not only its biases but also the rich details it provides of the variety of circumstances in which this alleged "exodus" occurred. As Derouet demonstrates, the "scarcity" of agricultural labor, whose origins the survey endeavored to uncover, lay not only in migration to cities but also in the fact that many former agricultural laborers were becoming small landowners (p. 91). What got cast as an exodus of a desperate underclass, in fact, was at least in part a redistribution of property ownership within a rural community. The survey also suggests that, despite subsequent assumptions to the contrary, the advent of farm machinery did not displace peasants; rather, farmers began using machinery in response to the departure of agricultural workers (p. 94). Nadine Vivier, working with similar data, insists that interpretations of the "rural exodus" should depend on their chronological reference points. If responses to parliamentary inquiries in 1848 indicated bad harvests as one reason for departures to cities, by the 1850s, after a return to more prosperous times, records indicate that cultivated areas expanded, agricultural methods intensified, and the need for labor grew (p. 110). From the 1860s to the First World War, the demand for agricultural workers continued to outstrip supply, despite increases in salaries. To the extent there was a rural exodus in this period, then, it was not due to lack of work or depressed wages in agricultural regions (p. 112).

Anne-Lise Head-König offers still another motivation for migration. In her study of the Lucerne valley in the second half of the nineteenth century, she shows how changing marriage laws, which had the effect of lowering the age of marriage, combined with declining infant-mortality rates to put increased pressure on land in an area where small-parcel ownership already prevailed. This led those who could not acquire land or whose land was too small to provide for their families to supplement their incomes, often through economic activity that involved short-distance migration, especially of young women. Head-König's contribution is important for the emphasis it places on what she calls "micro-mobility," including several moves within a single village or area in one's life. As per the theme of all the articles in this collection, Head-König thus dispels the myth of the quiet countryside. The connection between family reproduction and migration patterns was, however, contingent on context: For Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, a Pyrenean family's strategies for avoiding partible inheritance and maintaining the family property intact affected the mobility and marriage prospects of all the children. While Fauve-Chamoux shows how property maintenance affected intrafamilial relations, Marc St-Hilaire

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demonstrates the inverse: that marriage affected property acquisition. Examining Québécois migration patterns in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, he finds that couples were more likely to be willing “pioneers” in Canada’s rural hinterlands than were single persons, for whom the structure of cities was more attractive (p. 245).

By examining the trajectories of individuals from such a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, the authors show that family mattered for the propertyless often as much as it did for the propertied. For instance, not only do the authors demonstrate that industrialization was not accompanied by a decline in kinship relations, but also a number of them find that working-class men—those so often depicted as pulled inexorably away from rural life by the laws of the market—were often more sedentary than their wealthier counterparts. As Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga shows in her article on Basque families, sons of renters tended to move short distances, and their “homogamous” marriage patterns helped them acquire work in agriculture or as artisans (p. 187). By contrast, sons of property owners tended to stay single longer and remain unmarried as they traveled to the Americas hoping one day to return and buy a farm. Only when emigration agencies started providing the means for people with more modest incomes to cross the Atlantic, did children of renters start to migrate longer distances. For Arrizabalaga, this finding destroys the Basque myth of migration as driven by poverty (p. 185). By contrast, John A. Dickinson finds that, in Normandy, sons who were likely to inherit property were more sedentary as well as more likely to marry late than were day workers who were propertyless and more exogamous (pp. 199-202).

One of the freshest pieces in the collection is Gérard Béaur’s examination of probate records in Lower Normandy. Béaur finds that the admittedly “snapshot” image (p. 266) provided by probate records shows that 41 percent of a deceased’s descendants had already left their parents’ property by the time of the death, mostly (for two-third of them) for very nearby areas. Béaur’s piece is especially salutary for its lucid discussion of methodological concerns and his willingness to ask questions that some of the other authors take for granted. Faced with his finding of 41 percent, for instance, he asks “Is that a little? Is that a lot?” (p. 269). Either way, he acknowledges that the goals of the migration often remain mysterious. “Does one go far away in order to never return, in transition until things settle down, or in order to come back?” (p. 277) Béaur’s willingness to question the meaning of his conclusions only makes his reflections all the more compelling.

These few examples should give a glimpse into the rich panoply of family and migration histories that await readers in this volume. Other articles address such varied cases as Auvergnat bakers in Madrid, French gold prospectors in California, stock-breeders in the Morvan, herders in the Tarentaise, Bigourdans in Paris, fur salesmen in Canada, the decline of “co-inheritance” in the Languedoc between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the impact of voluntary cessions of property on kinship relations in Burgundy, chain-migration patterns in Québec’s St. Lawrence River valley, and the impact that liens on property had on mobility in this region.

With each case study being so highly specific, the collection will probably be of greatest use to scholars whose work intersects with any of the many regions, kinship systems, or types of property-holding that the individual articles address. Taken as a whole, the articles make a welcome contribution to studying migration in its totality—as emigration and as immigration. In so doing, the authors collectively undermine countless stereotypes, not only about the classed and gendered character of migration, but also about the nature of social life in the long nineteenth century. Because this is a collected volume, these stereotypes are mentioned not just once, but many times. This left me to wonder: this being at least the third generation of scholars to debunk the received ideas of nineteenth-century life in France, why are these stereotypes so enduring? To answer this question would, I suspect, require broadening one’s scope from the methods used here.

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**LIST OF ESSAYS**

- Luigi Lorenzetti, "Migrations, marchés et reproduction: bilan historiographique et nouvelles perspectives"
  - Francine Rolley, "Reproduction familiale et changements économiques dans le Morvan du nord au XIXe siècle. Les familles morvandelles confrontées à la migration"
  - Luigi Lorenzetti, "Emplois industriels, pluriactivité, migrations. Une expérience tessinoise parmi les modèles sudalpins lombards, 1850-1914"
  - Jacques Rémy, "Une vie de remues ménages. Mobilités agropastorales en Tarentaise"
  - Rolande Bonnain-Dulon, "Les Bigourdans à Paris en 1900. Migrations individuelles ou trajectoires familiales"
  - Bernard Derouet, "Migrations, famille et marché du travail au miroir de l'Enquête de 1866"
  - Nadine Vivier, "Migrations, familles et marchés dans la France des années 1848-1914. Quelques éléments de réflexion"
  - Annick Foucier, "Origines familiales, migrations et financements. Les Français et la ruée vers l'or de Californie (1849-1860)" Thomas Wien, "Carrières d'engagés du commerce des fourrures canadien au XVIIIe siècle"
  - Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, "Stratégies individuelles et politiques de reproduction familiale. Le perpétuel ajustement intergénérationnel des destins migratoires à Esparros (XVIIe-XXe siècles)"
  - Anne-Lise Head-König, "Saturation de l'espace foncier et logiques migratoires dans la campagne lucernoise, 1850-1914"
  - Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, "Migrations féminines--migrations masculines: des comportements différenciés au sein des familles basques au XIXe siècle"
  - John A. Dickinson, "Capital d'exploitation, âge et mobilité au mariage en Normandie au XVIIIe siècle"
  - Rose Duroux, "Compagnies commerciales de migrants français en Espagne (XVIIIe-XIXe siècles)"
  - Marc St-Hilaire. "Familles et migrations: le rôle de la famille selon les contextes de départ et de destination des migrants dans le Québec des XIXe et XXe siècles"
  - Christian Dessureault, "Famille, structure sociale et migration dans une paroisse rurale de la vallée du Saint-Laurent: le cas de Saint-Antoine de Lavaltrie 1861-1871"
  - Gérard Béaur, "Mobiles ou sédentaires? Les familles rurales normandes face au problème de la migration au XIXe siècle (Bayeux, 1871-74)"
  - Jean-Paul Desaipe, "Etre vieux et survivre: la démission de biens en Basse-Bourgogne (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)"
  - Elie Pélaquier, "Famille, terre et marchés en Languedoc rural: la mutation du système successoral du XVIe au XVIIe siècle"
  - Jean Lafleur/Gilles Paquet/Jean-Pierre Wallot, "Quelques propos sur la variance du prix de la terre dans la région de l'Assomption (1792-1835)"
  - Joseph Goy, "Postface"
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## NOTES

[1] Louis Chevalier, *Formation de la Population Parisienne au XIXe Siècle* (Paris: Publications Universitaires de France, 1950); idem, *Classes Laborieuses et Classes Dangereuses à Paris, pendant la première moitié du XIXe siècle* (Paris: Plon, 1958).

[2] Yves Lequin, *Les ouvriers de la région lyonnaise (1848-1914)*, 2 vols. (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, n.d. [1977]); Leslie Page Moch, *Paths to the City: Regional Migration in Nineteenth-Century France* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1983).

[3] This is the title of Weber's chapter 12. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).

[4] Weber, *Peasants*, 6.

[5] Paul-André Rosental, *Les Sentiers invisibles: Espace, familles et migrations dans la France du 19e siècle* (Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1999); See also Jacques Dupâquier, et al., *La Société française au XIXe siècle: tradition, transition, transformation* (Paris: Fayard, 1992); Jean-Luc Pinol, *Les mobilités de la grande ville: Lyon, fin XIXe - début XXe* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1991).

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