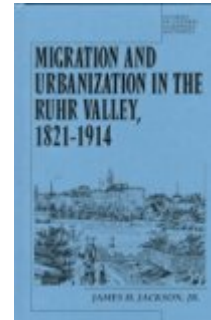


**James H. Jackson.** *Migration and Urbanization in the Ruhr Valley 1821-1914.* Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1997. xix + 452 pp. \$85.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-391-04033-5.



**Reviewed by** Dieter K. Buse

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Between 1845 and 1904 the population of Duisberg--at the junction of the Rhine and Ruhr rivers--increased from 10,607 to 106,770. During the same time 724,421 individual arrivals and departures were registered by local officials. The figures reflect the increase from an average migration rate of 21 percent in the 1850s to one of 45 percent at the beginning of the twentieth century. The gender differences too are of a high magnitude: "In the late nineteenth century, young men made eleven of their expected twenty-four lifetime moves between their fifteenth and twenty-fifth birthdays. Women, on the other hand, could anticipate ten moves in a lifespan, about five of which were made in these early adult years" (p. 209). Such is a sample of the rich information on migration which James H. Jackson presents in this solid study.

Though the title refers to the Ruhr Valley and the book provides copious information on German demographic trends, the focus is on the town and later the heavy-industry city of Duisberg. The table of contents reveals the organizational pattern and the coverage offered in six chapters: Mi-

gration and Urbanization in nineteenth century Germany, Duisberg before Industrialization, Duisberg in the Era of Heavy Industry, Duisberg's Mobile Masses, Myths of Marginality and Structures of Stability, and Duisberg and the German Migration Experience. Only 330 pages are explanatory text, of which over 80 pages are dense endnotes. The other 120 pages contain five appendices which analyze Prussian censuses, the evolution of residency registration records, the classifications of occupations, the geographic order of German cities, and the sources of demographic and economic data. More than a hundred tables and figures, plus maps and photographs, are integrated in the text. The sources frequently allow Jackson to provide comparative statistics for 1810, 1843, 1867 and 1890 on Duisberg. The result is a thorough presentation of migration patterns in one locale set in a larger context.

The study reviews German, then Ruhr migration rates. As a collection of information, this is the best overview for Ruhr regional urban growth and migration flows. Duisberg becomes the medium to demonstrate continuity (of migration pat-

terns and effects) and change (magnitude and types of movement). After discussions on how German reformers, statisticians and historians treated migration, Jackson claims that the Duisberg case challenges five "commonly held preconceptions" regarding migration (p. 23). The first, which other migration studies (especially as summarized by Leslie Mout) have also challenged, is that pre-industrial society was marked by low rates of mobility. Second, not change but a strong continuity exists as to who--young, skilled males--migrated in the pre-industrial and industrial eras. Third, not the individual but the household "became the nexus of migration decision making" (p. 24), a finding based on migration patterns and life-cycle information. Fourth, migration had fewer de-stabilizing effects than previously thought because migrants rarely lost contact with the social networks from which they came. Finally, internal regional migrations are found to be much more important than movements abroad or between regions. Since Jackson claims that he wants to tell the story of ordinary people, the chapters on Duisberg's Mobile Masses and on the Myths of Marginality become the crux of his argumentation. However, the manner in which he presents information to correct the first, second, and last preconceptions is more convincing than on the third and fourth.

A few examples can show the richness of Jackson's information. Peak years and peak times of year for migrants are carefully defined and graphed as are sex-ratios, illegitimacy, reported abortions, household status, occupational stratification, migration rates by religious affiliation, length of stay, martial status--to name some of his indicators. If numerical information exists, Jackson has recovered and plotted it. For instance, he shows that the distances moved was less than 25 kilometers for a third of the migrations even in 1890; the average distance increased from 105 to 118 kilometers for out-migrants and 86 to 96 kilometers for in-migrants between 1867 and 1890.

When Jackson turns from behavior that can be quantified, the work becomes thinner. What is one to make of the following, if no specific subculture is explored: "The characteristics that individuals brought with them to Duisberg--gender, kinship ties, life-cycle stage, occupational background, personal values, previous residential history, among others--located them in a city's social space and helped them select a particular subculture. As distinctive subcultures intensified, the result was often increased antagonism between groups which was based on clashing cultural values, linguistic heritage, kinship groups, occupational habits, and political loyalties" (p. 282)? He might have examined the case of Social Democracy--there is no hint that it existed in Duisburg--to see who were in its political associations, its choral societies, and its bicycling, theatre or free-thinker clubs. By 1907 the SPD won the local Reichstag seat. Without looking at such organizations and the values they espoused, can one claim that migration to fill the workplaces in the mines and industries had little destabilizing effect on the society? Jackson suggests that rooming houses helped maintain family ties and provided support. Yet, can one speak about these lodgers without noting, as contemporaries such as the mayor of Duisberg did, that the housing conditions--whether with relatives or with persons personally known to the migrant--drove workers into the pubs? In other studies Jackson has shown the consequences of the continuing housing crisis in Duisberg, but he does not integrate that information here. No specific individuals' cases demonstrate, for instance, how "the link between the old and the new, as well as possible sources of aid for the new arrivals" functioned (p. 283). Though the large increase of nominal Catholics is noted, nothing of the intensity of faith during an era of secularization appears; there are only numbers, no persons who voice motives and intentions.

In the nineteenth century, so many people were changing places of residence and work that Jackson rightly asks what happened to local and

regional attachments. Were novel attachments created at each new locale for each generation? Specifically one might add, how did the increasing nationalistic fervor of late nineteenth century Germany relate to the uprootedness of the population? Did the nation substitute for other values and what had been altered? Jackson acknowledges that "Throughout the late nineteenth century, political separatism, hometown sentimentality, denominational allegiance, chauvinistic pride, and militaristic enthusiasm contended for the loyalties of Rhinelanders" (p. 220), but he provides no example of how any of those conflicts worked themselves out. Were any of the many patriotic leagues of the 1890s present in Duisberg, and if so, who populated them, the stable middle class or the migrants? A workers' newspaper reported in 1897, when workers' organizations were not allowed to use certain pubs for meetings, "Hopefully the workers will remember these pub owners and leave them alone with their [middle class] veterans, gymnastic and choral societies, as well as with their police officials." [1]

Delineating the varieties and intensities of the mobility among people helps to understand social patterns and motivations. Though central to studies of urbanization, emigration, and demographic shifts, the methods and tasks of migration studies are difficult. Sometimes the statistical work is exceedingly painstaking. Can good graphs and tables compensate for having a massive amount of information that is otherwise difficult to present? Jackson's multitude of graphs, figures and tables are clear and woven into the text. But the writing style could be more engaging. Nearly every part of each section lists a first, second, third or fourth aspect, and one-two-three-four reasons, factors, or items follow. These short shopping lists detract from the information and ideas that are organizationally well structured.

Together with Steve Hochstadt, Jackson is recasting nineteenth century German migration studies. No one has done such thorough work

since David Crew's chapters on Bochum's geographic and social mobility. However, Jackson does not get inside Duisberg in the way that Richard Evans did for Hamburg and certainly not inside the migrants' heads—perhaps that is not possible given the sources to which he limited himself. For to speak of sub-cultures without showing how they operated leaves the work incomplete. Likewise, the theses about stability and the positive effects of social networks on migration and urbanization require further testing.

Note:

[1]. Cited in M. Pojana and M. Will, eds., *Trotz alledem!: Arbeiteralltag und Arbeiterkultur zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik in Duisberg* (Duisberg: Klartext, 1992), 252.

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