

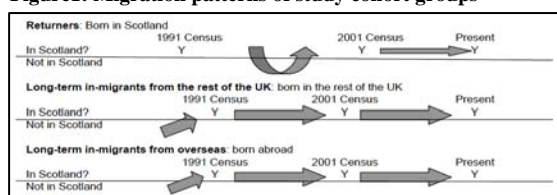
The Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile of Return Migrants and Long-Term In-Migrants in Scotland: Evidence from the Scottish Longitudinal Study

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Introduction

Population growth is a key contributor to, and consequence of, a more vibrant society and dynamic economy. However, Scotland's overall population is ageing, whilst its population of working age is forecast to decline. A modest rate of natural increase (births minus deaths) means that Scotland is heavily reliant on in-migration as a means to achieving its Population Target. However, little is currently known about the nature of migration flows into Scotland or the characteristics of the individuals involved. This research makes use of the Scottish Longitudinal Study (SLS) to explore the nature of some return and other migration flows to Scotland by investigating the characteristics of those who constitute them. Three groups are explored: return migrants, long-term in-migrants from the rest of the UK and long-term in-migrants from abroad. Figure 1 illustrates the migration patterns of these groups in relation to their presence in Scotland at the 1991 and 2001 Censuses.

Figure 1: Migration patterns of study cohort groups



Findings

This report describes the characteristics of a particular group of return migrants, i.e. those born in Scotland who left and returned in the ten years between 1991 and 2001. It found that these Scots return migrants typically left and returned to Scotland at an early stage in their working lives. They were slightly more likely to be in work and less likely to be economically inactive than the general Scottish population. However, when compared to members of the general Scottish population of the *same age*, they generally had slightly *lower* employment and full-time education rates, and slightly *higher* unemployment and economic inactivity rates. Nevertheless, they were more likely to have a degree or professional qualification, and those who were working tended to hold better jobs, than their general population age equivalents.

This report also describes the characteristics of long-term in-migrants to Scotland - people who were born elsewhere in the UK or overseas, but have lived in Scotland continuously since 1991 or earlier.

Long-term in-migrants from the rest of the UK had economic activity rates, qualification levels and socio-economic occupational classifications that generally compared favourably against the Scottish population as a whole.

Long-term immigrants to Scotland from overseas generally came to Scotland at an early point in their working lives. They had a similar profile to the general Scottish population of the same age in terms of economic activity levels. However, they tended to be more likely to have a degree or professional qualification than the Scottish population of the same age, and less likely to hold jobs at the bottom end of the occupational hierarchy.

Policy-Implications

Overall, the return of Scots and the settling of in-migrants from elsewhere are likely to have positive economic impacts for Scotland. This analysis therefore supports policy efforts to encourage Scots living elsewhere to return and encourage new in-migrants into Scotland from the rest of the UK and from overseas.

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Further-information

This article is based on a report compiled by Dr David McCollum (D.J.McCollum@dundee.ac.uk) whilst undertaking an ESRC PhD student Internship at the Office of the Chief Researcher in the Scottish Government. The full report has been published by Scottish Government Social Research and is available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/341539/0113589.pdf>