

THE DOMICILES OF SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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During 1957 the domicile of Glasgow university students was analysed geographically as part of a study of the "sphere of influencé", or "hinterland", of the city.¹ For comparative purposes statistics were obtained for the other universities and, considered together, the data may be of wider interest than the original study.² Only Aberdeen university keeps a geographical record of the home residences of students, therefore individual student records had to be examined at the other universities and, since the original task was of some urgency, only those entering first degree courses in October 1956, were taken as a sample. They constitute about 25 per cent of the student body.³ Domiciles were classified by counties, cities and large burghs.

THE "HINTERLANDS" OF EACH UNIVERSITY

Two complementary methods were used: in each case the counties,⁴ including their large burghs, were taken as primary working units, but the smallest were combined with their neighbours in order to avoid dependence on very small figures. The number of students from each county, entering each university, was calculated:—

- (i) as a proportion of the total 1956 population of the counties, and
- (ii) as a proportion of the total number of students from each county entering all Scottish universities.

Method (ii) is cruder than method (i) but avoids anomalies which might arise should age and social structures of the population vary amongst the counties. It was immediately apparent that the hinterlands were remarkably clearly defined and to a considerable extent mutually exclusive. The results were mapped for each university (method (i)) and are shown in Figs. 1 to 4, the counties being shaded arbitrarily to emphasise the variation in the proportion of students to total population.

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Fig. 5 shows the hinterlands as defined by method (ii) and these have been added to Figs. 1 to 4 for comparison.

Each university, except St. Andrews, can be seen to have a tributary region, the inner parts of which (defined as those counties sending at least 75 per cent to one university) send students almost exclusively to the local university. The outer part, defined as those counties sending at least 50 per cent to one university, is shared with only one other university as a rule. Only seven counties—Perth, Kinross, Clackmannan, Inverness, Ross and Cromarty, Sutherland and Caithness—were not dominated by one university. In the case of Edinburgh and Glasgow the exclusive regions met sharply between Lanarkshire and the Lothians and Peebles, but the allegiance of the Solway counties was divided slightly in favour of Edinburgh; the high Glasgow entry from Kirkcudbright is not usual, as was shown by a later check (see note 1). To the north, Stirling sent half of its students to Glasgow, the rest to Edinburgh and St. Andrews. St Andrews University was dominant only in Angus and Dundee; Fife, rather surprisingly, sends more students to Edinburgh than to St. Andrews. Aberdeen University had an “exclusive” region, including the city and county and the county of Banff, and was clearly dominant in Moray and Nairn. To the west and north, in Inverness, Ross and Cromarty, Sutherland and Caithness, the universities of Edinburgh and, to a slightly less extent, Glasgow, took a substantial share of the students. But it is remarkable that St. Andrews received only six students from these counties in 1956, whilst the other universities received 101. It is notable, too, that Glasgow received a far greater proportion of the students from Inverness, Ross and Cromarty than of those from Caithness and Sutherland, a fact which may suggest that if Hebridean students could be distinguished they would be found to show greater allegiance to Glasgow than do those from the mainland. Shetlanders and Orcadians, however, favoured Aberdeen and Edinburgh almost equally.

All but seven counties were dominated by a single university, i.e. sent more than 50 per cent of their students to one university, and from no less than eighteen counties at least 75 per cent of the students went to the “local” university. These figures take no account of any students who might have entered English universities, but the number cannot have been very high, and, since the eighteen counties account for 74 per cent of Scottish students entering Scottish universities, the

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

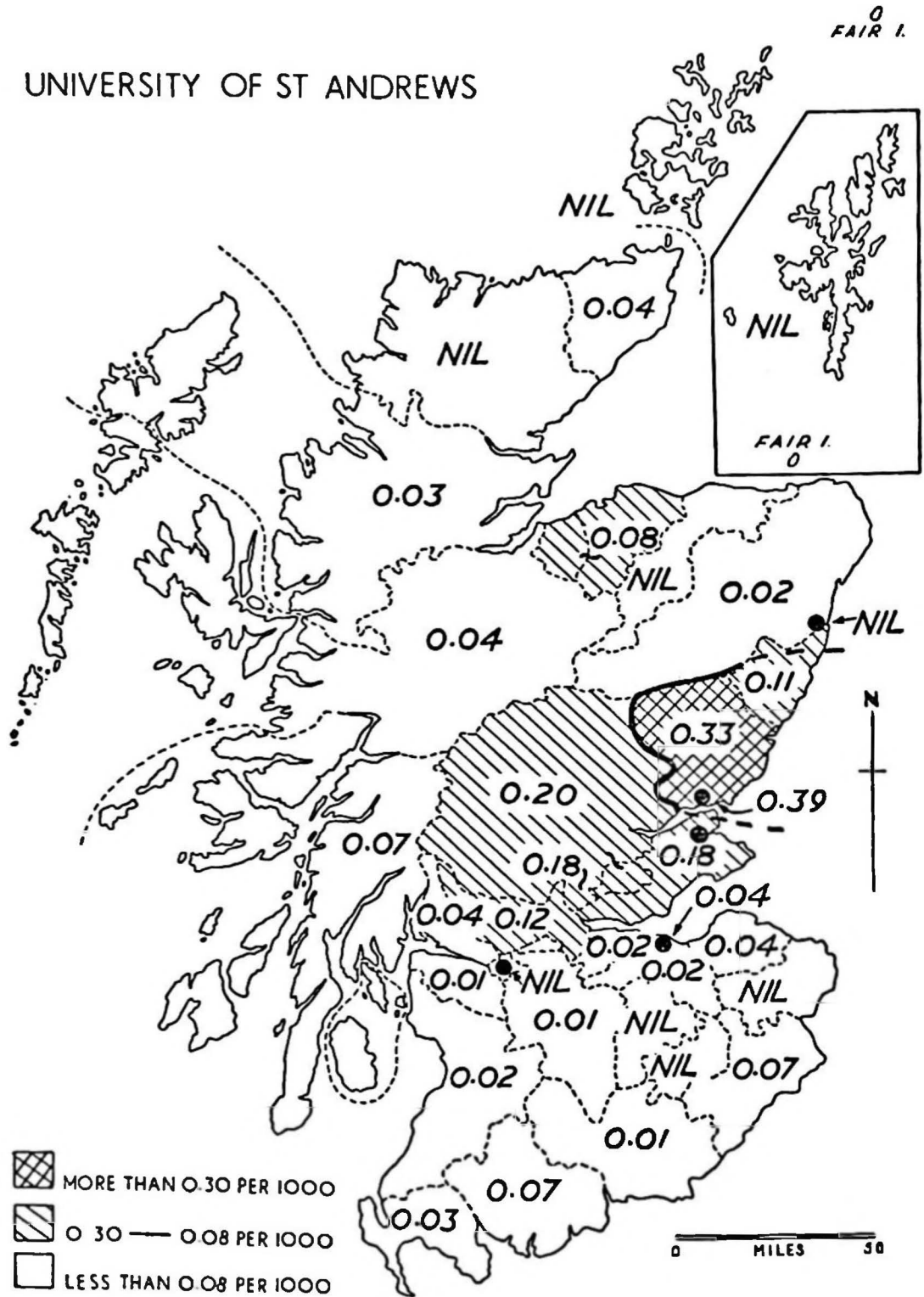


FIG. 2.—The number of students, per 1000 of the total population of each county, entering first degree courses of the University of St Andrews in October 1956. The heavy black line demarcates the "hinterland" of the University as defined in fig. 5.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

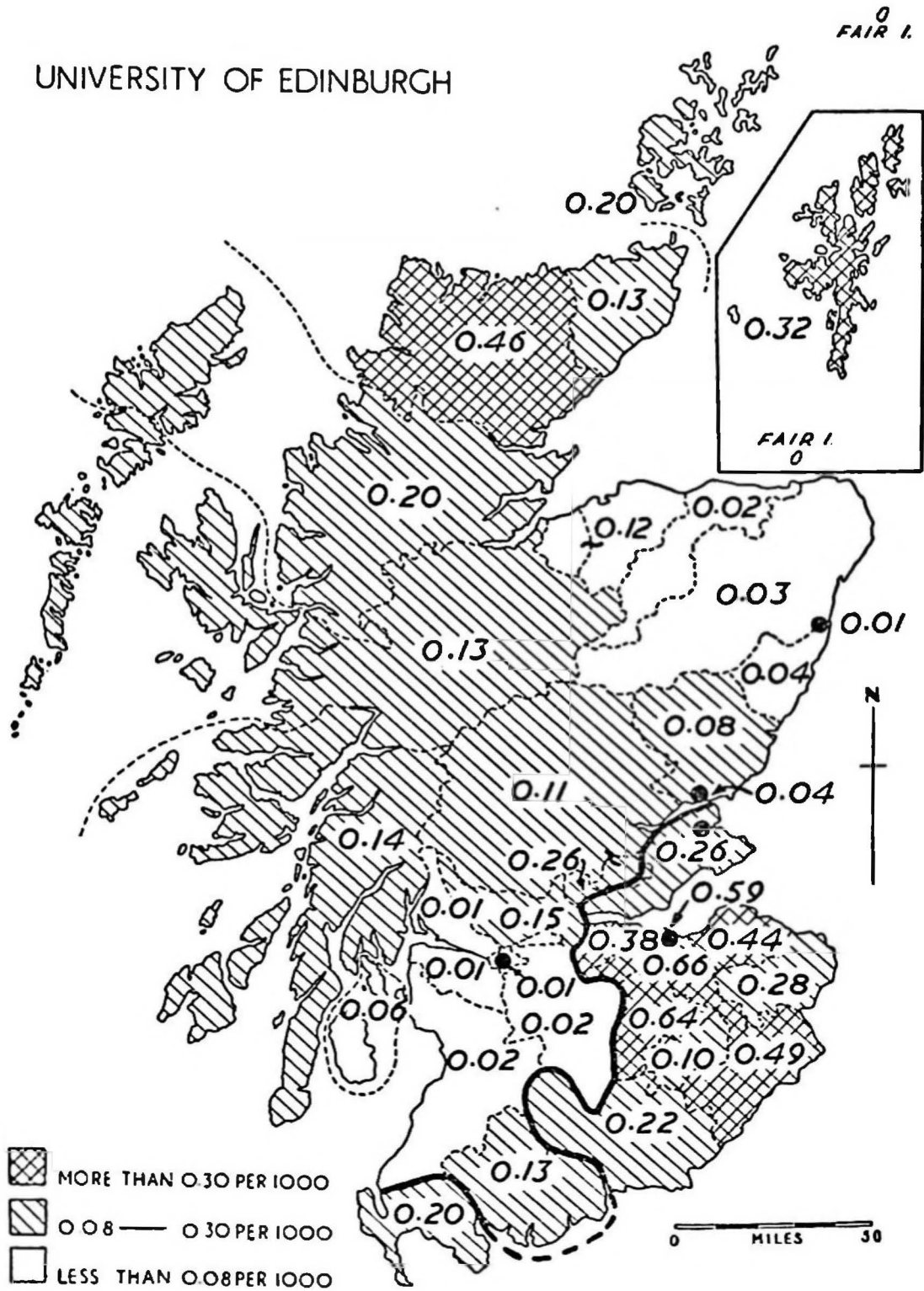





FIG. 4.—The number of students, per 1000 of the total population of each county, entering first degree courses of the University of Edinburgh in October 1956. The heavy black line demarcates the "hinterland" of the University as defined in fig. 5.

PROPORTION OF STUDENT POPULATION
ENTERING ANY ONE UNIVERSITY

-  more than 75%
-  50%—74%
-  less than 50%

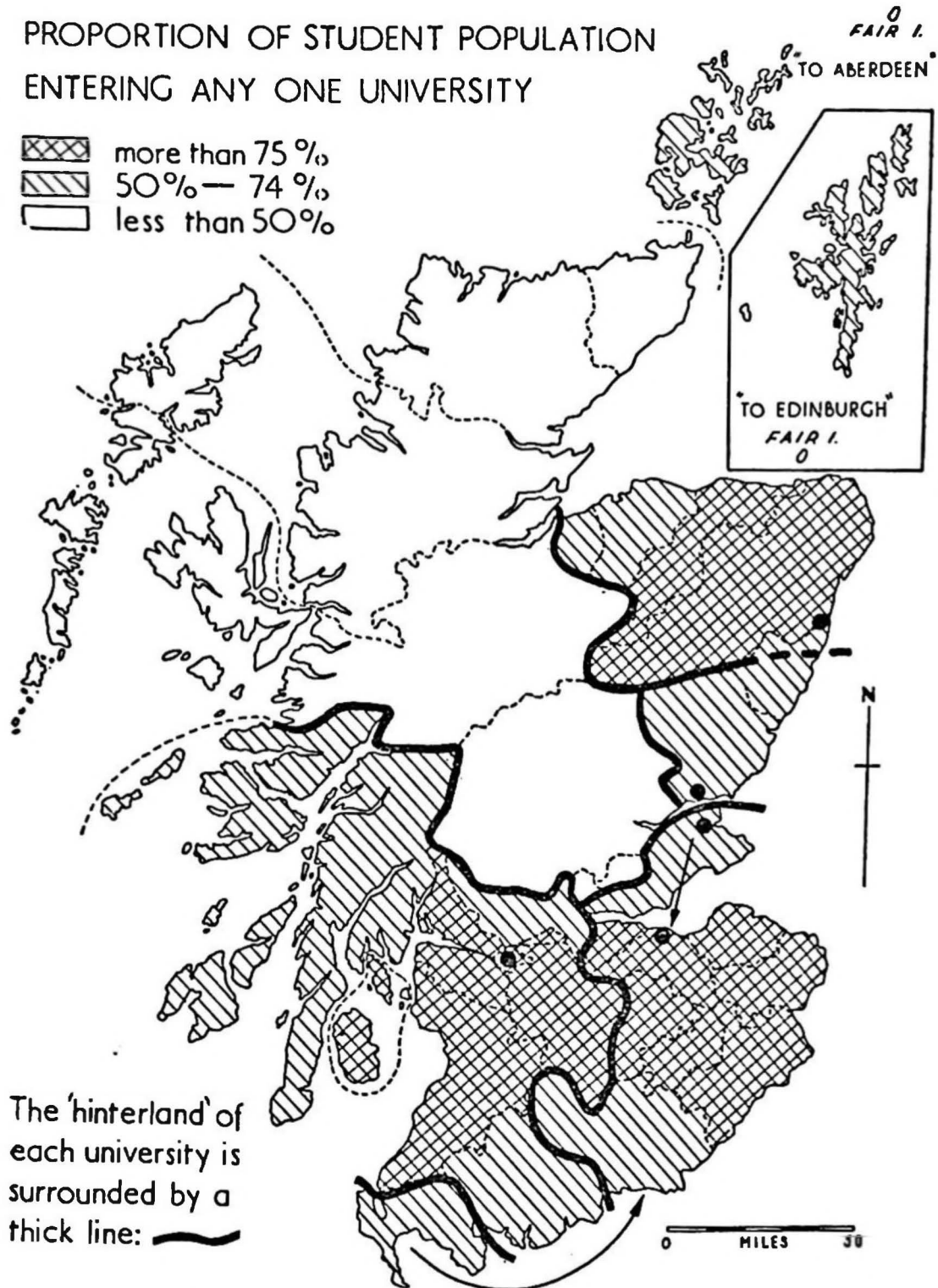


FIG. 5.—The hinterland of the four universities. The "student population" of each county is taken as the number of students entering Scottish universities only. In examining the figure it is relevant to note that whilst Scottish domiciled students made up 91 per cent. of the first entries at Glasgow, the corresponding figures for the other universities were Edinburgh 63 per cent., St Andrews 47 per cent., and Aberdeen 86 per cent.

degree of "parochialism" is high. In particular, Edinburgh and Aberdeen cities provided 39 per cent and 40 per cent of the entrants to their respective universities, 34 per cent of those entering the University of Glasgow had their bases in the city and 24 per cent of those entering the University of St. Andrews came from Dundee. The policy adopted in awarding bursaries had probably been influential in this respect: a student wishing to study at a "remote" institution when the "nearest" offers the same facilities is often unable to obtain assistance towards the extra cost. Moreover there are a number of students who do not qualify for bursaries and, unless their families are particularly wealthy, most of these will naturally attend the university which can be reached daily from their homes. These factors become most effective in the Glasgow region where nearly half the population of Scotland lives within daily travelling distance of the city. Whether the lack of residential accommodation is a factor, too, or whether it is the result of this situation, is not clear, but, whatever the cause, this "parochialism" and the tendency to reside at home which goes with it, is neither in accordance with centuries' old tradition nor does it help to promote a corporate spirit amongst undergraduates.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN OF STUDENTS

When, for each county, the entrants to all four universities are taken together, one can obtain a picture of the contribution of the various parts of Scotland to the Scottish undergraduate population. This was tabulated as students per 1,000 of the 1956 population (Table 1, col. A), and the variation from county to county was found to be so great that some explanation was sought; it seemed unlikely that the range was due to some inherent geographical variation in intelligence, and this was confirmed by mapping, which failed to show any orderly pattern. In view of the strong tendency to enter the nearest university already described, one might perhaps have expected that the remoter counties would contribute a smaller proportion than the nearer ones; but Inverness, Ross and Cromarty and Shetland send a remarkably high proportion of their populations, whilst some of the lowest figures are shown by Perth, Glasgow and West Lothian. Certainly, all the Border counties show low figures; this, however, may reflect a slight "leakage" of students to the universities of the north of England which cannot readily be demonstrated. Regional variations in age

structure in Scotland are considerable; to test the influence of this possible factor the numbers of students were proportioned to the numbers in the 10 to 14 quinquennial age group for each county as recorded in the 1951 Census⁵ (Table I, col. B). Little material change in the positions of the counties was found. Similarly student population showed scarcely any correlation with regional variations in the distribution of "Social Groups" as defined in the 1951 Census; see Table I, col. C for example.

TABLE I
Domicile of Students Entering First Degree Courses at Scottish Universities, October 1956

Column A: Students per 1,000 of total population, 1956.
Column B: Students per 1,000 of the 10-14 years of age group (1951 Census)
Column C: Males in Social groups I and II as per cent of all occupied males (1951 Census).

	A	B	C		A	B	C
Aberdeen City	0.75	10.5	16	Renfrew	0.51	6.5	17
Argyll and Bute	0.68	9.2	23	Kirkcudbright*	0.50	6.4	22
Dunbarton	0.68	9.9	17	Dundee City	0.50	6.8	13
Midlothian	0.68	9.5	11	Angus, Kincardine	0.49	6.8	21
Shetland*	0.64	9.3	33	SCOTLAND	0.49	6.6	...
Edinburgh City	0.63	9.6	19	E. Lothian*	0.48	6.0	12
Ross & Cromarty*	0.60	7.9	23	Fife	0.47	6.9	12
Inverness	0.60	8.3	25	Lanark	0.44	5.2	12
Aberdeen Co.	0.60	8.5	27	Ayr	0.43	5.7	15
Clackmannan*	0.59	8.3	12	W. Lothian*	0.41	5.3	9
Stirling	0.56	7.1	13	Glasgow City	0.40	5.1	12
Roxburgh*	0.56	8.1	18	Wigtown*	0.40	4.7	20
Moray, Nairn, Banff	0.53	6.6	...	Dumfries*	0.39	5.6	20
Caithness, Sutherland*	0.52	6.7	30	Perth, Kinross	0.38	5.5	21
Orkney*	0.51	7.2	47	Peebles, Selkirk,* Berwick	0.30	4.4	20

* Indicates counties sending fifty, or less, students to all Scottish universities.
N.B. Counties include the large burghs.

Unfortunately the nature of the data originally extracted does not permit a full analysis according to rural and urban domiciles but, for the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and St. Andrews, representing 87 per cent of all entrants, the proportion of students originating in cities (37 per cent), large burghs (18 per cent) and other areas (45 per cent) was almost identical with the general distribution of population (38 per cent, 16 per cent and 46 per cent respectively). However some light may be thrown on the problem if we examine the individual large burghs as shown in Table II.

Some of the figures are small and will no doubt vary from

year to year: for this reason one should perhaps ignore the figures for burghs sending less than fifteen students. Apart from these the probable variation from year to year is not large: Perth, for example, would have to double its number of students in order to rank above Falkirk, whilst Rutherglen would have to send eight instead of twenty-six in order to rank as low as Greenock. This table does show that many of the industrial burghs produced fewer students than the others, but there is no general rule; Falkirk, Hamilton, Dunfermline

TABLE II
The Large Burghs: Students Entering First Degree Courses,
October 1956
 (All Scottish Universities)

Burgh.	No. of Students	No. per 1,000 population
Rutherglen	26	1.05
Falkirk	29	0.78
Arbroath	15	0.75
Hamilton	31	0.75
Inverness	18	0.65
Dunfermline	26	0.57
Airdrie	18	0.56
Paisley	47	0.49
Motherwell and Wishaw	30	0.45
Ayr	19	0.44
Coatbridge	21	0.41
Perth	17	0.41
Stirling	11	0.41
Kilmarnock	17	0.39
Clydebank	19	0.39
Kirkcaldy	18	0.35
Greenock	24	0.31
Dumbarton	8	0.31
Port Glasgow	4	0.17

and Airdrie all sent more than the Scottish average, whilst Kilmarnock, Stirling, Perth and Ayr all sent less. It is notable that some of the high ranking burghs have secondary schools of outstanding repute, but Glasgow's several well-known fee-paying schools do not lead to the city's ranking high. In this case the adjacent suburban "county" areas of Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire probably provide proportionately more pupils for these schools than does the city itself. Also, in a commercial city such as Glasgow there are probably more alternative careers, particularly in family offices and warehouses, for youngsters of university calibre, than there are in outlying districts. The lack of other opportunities certainly

leads to a considerable influx from crofting districts to the universities. Some of the burghs with low student populations are those with large Roman Catholic populations; this does not imply a direct co-relation, but large families and relatively low family incomes often make it essential that wage-earning begins at the earliest possible age. Moreover, in industrial

TABLE III
Counties including Large Burghs. Students Entering Scottish Universities, October 1956

County	No. of Students	No. per 1,000 population
Dunbarton	91	0·94
Argyll	44	0·77
Renfrew	92	0·68
Midlothian	71	0·67
Sutherland	9	0·67
Zetland	12	0·65
Peebles	9	0·65
Moray & Nairn	35	0·61
Ross & Cromarty	36	0·61
Aberdeen	85	0·60
Inverness	34	0·60
Clackmannan	23	0·58
Orkney	11	0·55
Bute	9	0·53
Kirkcudbright	15	0·50
E. Lothian	25	0·49
Stirling	62	0·49
Angus	37	0·48
Fife	107	0·48
Banff	23	0·45
Ayr	105	0·43
Roxburgh & Selkirk	27	0·41
Caithness	10	0·41
W. Lothian	38	0·41
Wigtown	12	0·40
Perth	35	0·39
Kincardine	9	0·33
Dumfries	19	0·32
Lanark	103	0·32
Berwick	7	0·29

districts in recent years, the high wages which could be earned after very little training must have exerted a powerful influence against delaying wage-earning for four or five years.

The extraction of the large burghs modifies the position of some of the counties (Table III) and so helps to explain some of the peculiarities shown in Table I. In particular, whilst Renfrew and Dunbarton *whole* counties contributed students at the rate of 0·54 and 0·68 per thousand respectively, the rates for the large burghs were very much lower, leaving those

for the "remainder" of the counties (i.e. small burghs and landward areas) 0.68 and 0.98. This high level is certainly a function of the social status of the population of these areas, dominated as they are by middle and upper-middle class suburban districts. The low status of Perthshire is not so readily explained, the rates for the whole county, the large burgh of Perth and for the "rest" of the county, being 0.38, 0.41 and 0.39 per thousand. In the case of Stirling, however, the extraction of the large burghs reveals a "rest of the county" area which sent only 0.49 students per thousand of the population, compared with 0.56 for the whole county.

Returning, finally, to the county Table (Table 1), and ignoring the counties which sent only small numbers of students to Scottish universities in 1956, it still seems most remarkable that, for example, Aberdeen city should produce almost twice as many students, in proportion to its population, as Glasgow, and that Dunbarton county should send almost twice as many as Perth and half as many again as Lanark or Glasgow city. One is driven to the conclusion that either some counties send far fewer students than they could, or that others send more than they should! If Glasgow, for example, had sent as many students per 1,000 of its population as were sent from Scotland as a whole, 130 more Glaswegians would have entered the university. Do the educational systems of the counties and cities vary so much in their abilities to produce students? Is attendance at a university to some extent a social custom, varying from district to district without rational explanation? Or could it be that the over-riding factor is the freedom, or otherwise, with which some authorities award grants and scholarships? The need for more people with university training is widely recognised. These figures suggest, though necessarily tentatively, that some Scottish counties are not contributing as many as they might, even at current standards. Further investigation, based on examination of records over several years, might yield valuable results, but the extraction of the statistics would be a heavy task. Is it too much to hope that the four universities might co-operate?

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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NOTES

- ¹ Moisley, H. A., "Glasgow's spheres of influence." In *The Glasgow Region*, 285-301. Glasgow 1958.
- ² The only previous Scottish study, known to author, is O'Dell, A. C. and Walton, K. ; "A note on the student population of Aberdeen University." *Aberdeen University Review*, No. 101 (1949) : 125-127.
- ³ Statistics available for Aberdeen are for arbitrary regions, usually small groups of counties; student numbers for each county were distributed according to total population. The probable range of error is not large. Since this paper was drafted a geographical analysis of all students attending Glasgow University has become available; in general this confirms the validity of the sample.
- ⁴ Here, and subsequently, the four cities are treated as counties.
- ⁵ This is the quinquennial group most appropriate in age at October 1956.

ILLUSTRATIONS

All illustrations in this article were supplied by the author.