BOOK REVIEWS

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This history of modern mathematical statistics retraces their development from the “Laplacean revolution,” as the author so rightly calls it (though the beginnings are to be found in Bayes’ 1763 essay(1)), through the mid-twentieth century and Fisher’s major contribution. Up to the nineteenth century the book covers the same ground as Stigler’s history of statistics(2), though with notable differences (see infra). It then discusses developments through the first half of the twentieth century: Fisher’s synthesis but also the renewal of Bayesian methods, which implied a return to Laplace.

Part I offers an in-depth, chronological account of Laplace’s approach to probability, with all the mathematical detail and deductions he drew from it. It begins with his first innovative articles and concludes with his philosophical synthesis showing that all fields of human knowledge are connected to the theory of probabilities.

Here Gorrouchurn raises a problem that Stigler does not, that of induction (pp. 102-113), a notion that gives us a better understanding of probability according to Laplace. The term induction has two meanings, the first put forward by Bacon(3) in 1620, the second by Hume(4) in 1748. Gorroochurn discusses only the second. For Bacon, induction meant discovering the principles of a system by studying its properties through observation and experimentation. For Hume, induction was mere enumeration and could not lead to certainty. Laplace followed Bacon: “The surest method which can guide us in the search for truth, consists in rising by induction from phenomena to laws and from laws to forces”(5). To my knowledge, he never cited Hume, though Hume’s work had been translated into French by 1758. For Laplace, probability was a new way of reasoning, on the basis of partial knowledge of the phenomena under study. His “rise-of-the-sun” example should of course be understood in connection with the hypothesis that that phenomenon has only been observed for five thousand years. But as Laplace clearly indicates, knowledge of the regulating principle behind the phenomenon enables us to make a much more precise estimate. Moreover, the assumption here of a uniform \textit{a priori} distribution is not a blind metaphysical assumption, as Gorroochurn seems to think, but always a reasonable one, and Laplace uses non-uniform \textit{a priori} distributions in other examples (cf. Stigler 1986, pp. 135-136). Here, since there are only

(3) F. Bacon, 1620, \textit{Novum Organum}, London, J. Bill.
(5) [Laplace, \textit{A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities}, trans. F. W. Truscott and F. L. Emory, New York, Dover, 1951, p. 182.]
two possibilities (the sun will either rise tomorrow or it will not), the principle of indifference applies perfectly. None of the critics Gorroochurn cites seems to have understood this point; all seem to have accepted Hume’s understanding of induction.

Part II, “From Galton to Fisher”, focuses on how a fundamentally frequentist approach was adopted, an approach opposed to Laplace’s and based on Hume’s induction principle, though the author does not clearly state this. The researchers who developed it were trying to devise a statistical approach in the biological and social sciences. Though they were interested in several areas in them, Quételet and Lexis can be associated with population science, Galton and Pearson with the study of heredity and biometry, Edgeworth and Yule with economics, Fisher with biology and genetics, and so forth.

Laplace’s methods were applied either to astronomy or geodesic data, fields that had already been theorized, or to simple data for which the probability law had already been established, such as sex ratio at birth (binomial law). In the life and social sciences, the problem is linked to the mass of causes of the phenomena under study and their nontrivial effects: given that the hypothesis of population homogeneity is untenable, how can we take account of observation complexity? The entire effort of these statisticians was to devise tools – correlation, regression analysis, multivariate analysis, contingency tables, and others – to disentangle causal ties. This analysis culminated in Fisher’s theory of statistical estimation, which Gorroochurn describes in great detail, including the different disagreements between Fisher and a number of other statisticians: Bartlett, Jeffreys, Pearson and Neyman, to name a few. For Fisher, probability represented the limiting frequency of the event under study in a hypothetically infinite population. The point was to state the properties through a simple enumeration rather than to discover the principles behind an event. Ultimately, then, a frequentist probability theory was most suited. Fisher was decidedly an objectivist, and he stood opposed to Laplace, whom he criticized repeatedly in his writings.

It is interesting to note that neither Fisher nor Gorroochurn ever cites or discusses Kolmogorov’s axiomatisation of objective probabilities, whereas Part III presents Ramsey’s, de Finetti’s and Savage’s subjective probability axioms in detail. Kolmogorov’s axioms bear on the occurrence of events that are likely to be repeated in what are judged identical conditions but that are not usually associated with a general theory. Though this definition is slightly different from Fisher’s, it comes very close to it.

Part III, shorter than the others, explores the extensions of Fisher’s theory of statistical estimation and the renewal of Bayesian methods to the early 1960s.


First, as Gorroochurn judiciously remarks, Fisher was opposed to the “mathematization of statistics” (p. 593) and his own demonstrations were sometimes lacking in “mathematical rigor”. A number of the statisticians Gorroochurn cites devoted themselves to demonstrating Fisher’s ideas with greater precision and to extending them. Here we may cite the author’s discussion of Wald’s statistical decision theory, which generalizes Fisher’s estimation problem and connects up with the discussion of the Neyman-Pearson hypothesis test. However, the author defines Wald’s approach as entirely frequentist whereas Wald himself described his decision rules as “Bayesian strategies”.

The return of Bayesian methods in the 1920s, a time when Fisher’s frequentist theories were enjoying great success, marked the beginning of a new period, but one that only came into its own fifty years later, with the beginnings of computer technology, which made inference possible for all \textit{a posteriori} parameters through the use of simulation methods involving a great number of calculations. Here the author cites Keynes, Ramsey, de Finetti, Jeffreys, Savage and Robbins for the period 1920 to 1956, discussing Ramsey’s, de Finetti’s and Savage’s axiomatisations but leaving aside that of Jeffreys, already cited at length in Part II in connection with his disagreement with Fisher.

While the discussion of subjectivist epistemic probability seems to me a welcome contribution, relatively little is said on logicist epistemic probability. This last approach, followed by Jeffreys and axiomatized by Richard Cox, is perfectly compatible with Laplace’s and provided his theory with a solid foundation. Jeffreys returned to Bacon’s notion of induction, explaining that it leads to postulates or axioms drawn from all the information available to the researcher at the moment they are made, the difference being that that information no longer pertains to events, as in Kolmogorov’s thinking, but to propositions.

In direct contrast, subjective probability has continued to follow Hume’s definition of induction, specifically his notion that an individual is free to adopt any evaluation of the probability of an event from zero to one and that “each of these evaluations corresponds to a coherent opinion”.

In conclusion, this book offers a richly detailed presentation of the work of statisticians over two centuries. Indeed, I would go further than Gorroochurn and call his thinkers probabilists, for many of them have enhanced our view of that more theoretical discipline. It is regrettable, however, that the author chose to discuss the issue of induction – a crucial one in probability – on Hume’s terms, which suggest that probability and statistics involve little more than listing the

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properties of a supposedly infinite population. Those disciplines go far beyond such enumeration; they developed a new type of logic, based on reliable axioms, for understanding an empirically observed population.

Daniel COURGEAU
The title of this volume in the Advances in Sociology series edited by the Population Knowledge Network, a European collective of historians founded in 2011, is somewhat misleading: the book’s subject is in fact the scientific, social and political history of population in the twentieth century. In French academic study, history of “knowledge” and history of “doctrines and policies” are kept relatively separate, whereas here they are closely linked. The aim is to expose the “circumstances under which scientific knowledge about ‘population’ was produced, how demography evolved as a discipline, and how demographic developments were interpreted and discussed in different political and cultural settings” (blurb). To this end, the book goes well beyond presenting annotated primary sources. In addition to the general introduction, there are eight highly informed essays, complete with historiographical clarifications and selected bibliographies for further reading.

By opting to problematize the readings, and skilfully engaging dialogue between the sources and the critical essays, the authors have avoided presenting a flat series of monothematic sections. And readers can use the index fairly easily to find more detailed information on the various areas discussed, which include demography, eugenics, migration, urbanization, social and economic policies, family planning movements, contraceptive technologies, colonial policies followed by development policies, and environmental protection movements. The sources are of very different types – scholarly writings, statistical documents, press articles, publicity campaign material, political or activist speeches, and even excerpts from oral history interviews – and in many cases their eloquence makes them well adapted for teaching purposes, though the quality of some iconographic reproductions is poor.

In addition to being a textbook, the book endorses a number of strong positions, the first of which is that “population” in the sense we understand it today is essentially a twentieth-century construct whose emblematic event was the 1928 founding of the International Union for the Scientific Investigation of Population Problems. The introduction, written under the auspices as it were of the British historian Eric Hobsbawm and the French philosopher Michel Foucault, lays down a two-part context: the “age of extremes” and the emergence of renewed “governmentality” based on self-discipline and norm interiorization. Each of the contributions then illustrates in its own way the continuing vigour of this vast research field and helps us to get our bearings in the great proliferation of writings.

To their credit, the authors do not present essentialized monsters such as eugenics, colonization, or demography itself, but rather a kind of choral history, swarming with actors – individuals, groups, states, national and transnational organizations – a history in which spontaneous perceptions and objectified
knowledge, ideological blindness and the need to work scientifically combine in constantly changing ways. The authors’ constructionist approach to population, their concern to take into account the often uncontrolled effects of “demographic engineering” on individuals and societies, does not lead them to ignore morphological realities (particularly the population explosion). However, their strongly externalist bias may submerge “demographic thinking” somewhat in the (largely transnational) political meanders of how that thinking was produced and used, at the cost of effacing the scholarly activity itself (cf. the little attention given to such authors as Landry, Lotka, Henry, Hajnal and others). While it is entirely justified to focus the study on the twentieth century, the number of references to Malthus clearly shows that the authors had a longer-term history of knowledge in mind. The book therefore does not fully cover the question, but does provide enough material and “thought” to be of great value, particularly in training students.

Fabrice CAHEN
Richard Cantillon’s *Essai sur la nature du commerce en général* is one of the major works of Enlightenment political economy. It is also one of the most fascinating given the circumstances in which it was published and the extraordinary adventures of the Irish banker who wrote it. Cantillon (ca. 1680-ca. 1734) lived in France for many years, getting rich when Law’s system was in effect, before settling in London.(1) The *Essai* is his only work. It was disseminated in Europe through many and highly diverse channels. This variorum edition by Richard van den Berg is an ambitious synthesis of research since the late nineteenth century. It also offers crucial information for retracing the complex history of the work. There are eleven different versions of it, and the labour of comparison here is truly impressive. For the first time, we have an edition that enables us to measure how much of the work was published in English in the mid-eighteenth century, as van den Berg reproduces all English excerpts in their entirety. He also reproduces H. Higg’s 1931 translation(2), which, despite its faults, has the virtue of being a complete English version of the treatise(3). In his introduction van den Berg retraces the history of each version of the text, pointing out the questions they raise, some of which have never been resolved. Last, he recalls the impact of Cantillon’s thinking, whether acknowledged or not, on several economists, including Adam Smith and François Quesnay.

The *Essai sur la nature du commerce en général* is the French version printed in 1755, some twenty years after Cantillon’s death, by the Paris bookseller Pierre-André Guillyn. Van den Berg uses this text to identify variants in the other versions(4). Differences between the three later French editions (two in 1756, one in 1769) are purely stylistic.

We know of three manuscripts of the *Essai*, all in French. The first is complete and kept at the municipal library of Rouen; it was discovered by Takumi Tsuda, who established its precedence over the print edition and published it in 1979. The other two are incomplete, containing only the chapters from Part I; they are among Mirabeau’s working papers, preserved at the French National Archives.(5) Van den Berg lists all significant variants from the print edition found in these

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(3) Since then a new, high-quality translation has been published; cf. A. E. Murphy, *R. R. Cantillon, Essay on the Nature of Trade in General*, Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, XXII-153 p.
(4) The printed edition of 1755 was the reference for the modern editions published by INED in 1952 and 1997, in the Classiques de l’économie series.
three sources. Most turn out to be formal corrections that obfuscate rather than clarify the text. Nonetheless, they give us an idea of the immense amount of work that went into preparing the text for publication. As van den Berg notes, the work primarily involved getting a text full of “Anglicisms” and “imperfect French formulations” into good French. This does not call into question the well-known role of the circle of Vincent de Gournay in publishing the Essai(6).

As there is no manuscript in English, van den Berg judges that the Anglicisms in the Rouen manuscript (of which there are not, in fact, very many) do not clearly indicate which language the text was originally written in, whether it was translated and if so by whom. As he recalls, Mirabeau was the only contemporary to have stated that Cantillon himself had translated a text in “primitive” English for a friend. I would agree with van den Berg when he suggests that the Rouen manuscript is a very rare – if not the only – copy of the manuscript to have circulated at the time. The fact that no other copy was found is not a strong argument, and it is not clear that the one Mirabeau owned for a time was in fact the Rouen manuscript. Indeed, Mirabeau was one of the first persons to read Cantillon, and he drew heavily on his thinking in writing L’Ami des hommes, ou traité de la population [The Friend of Man, or Treatise on Population] (1756-1757), the first draft of which is an annotated transcription of the first chapter of the Essai. The Marquis had received the precious manuscript from a friend that van den Berg has managed to identify thanks to a note by the Abbé Pluquet(7) in the Traité philosophique et politique sur le luxe (1786) that had gone unnoticed: a certain Francois-Olivier de Saint-Georges de Vérac (1707-1753), whom Mirabeau met around 1737 and with whom he was very close until his death. This interesting discovery considerably increases our knowledge of the initial circulation of Cantillon’s manuscript within the continent in the following years.

The Essai sur la nature du commerce en général was not published in English until 1931, in H. Higgs’ translation. However, entire passages of the work – without mention of their source – were diffused in eleven entries of Malachy Postlethwayt’s Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce, published in sections from 1751 to 1755. The “Labour” entry is made up almost entirely of such borrowings and is a faithful representation of Cantillon’s theoretical advances. Fragments from the Essai amount to 1% of the Dictionary. Given the publication dates, van den Berg figures that Postlethwayt must have had a (now lost) manuscript of Cantillon’s at his disposal, probably in English. One of the primary contributions of this variorum edition is to establish that those fragments represent only 36% of the Essai and therefore cannot give us an overview of the whole, contrary to what Higgs suggested. Furthermore, there are significant variations between the French edition and the English fragments. According to van den Berg, some

passages with no equivalent in French can very probably be attributed to Cantillon. Postlethwayt’s manuscript seems to have been considerably different from the French at points. Still, it is difficult to distinguish what can reasonably be thought of as Cantillon’s thinking from what is due to his plagiarist.

One of the merits of van den Berg’s work is to draw attention to a second English source, one that had very little resonance at the time and long went unnoticed by Cantillon specialists: *The Analysis of Trade, Commerce, Coin, Bullion, Banks and Foreign Exchanges*, written and published in 1759 by one Philip Cantillon, a relative of Richard’s. Contrary to Postlethwayt, Philip Cantillon informed his readers that the principles expounded in his book had been drawn primarily from the manuscript of a “very ingenious gentlemen”, since deceased and who he left unnamed, and that he himself had adapted them to the situation of the time. Philip Cantillon was close to his cousin Richard’s wife at the time Richard died, and so very probably had access to Richard’s papers; he may have waited until the executors of Richard’s will died before using them. In the 1750s, in fact, he was experiencing financial difficulties and perhaps hoped he could profit from the papers. Forty per cent of Philip’s work is borrowed from his cousin’s *Essai sur la nature du commerce en général*. Van den Berg stresses the incompleteness of certain theoretical arguments, particularly the section on monetary analysis. He therefore favours the hypothesis that Philip Cantillon was working from an earlier manuscript of the *Essai* than Postlethwayt’s or the French copies, though other passages seem to belie this.

Van den Berg’s variorum edition provides us with complex material open to several interpretations. Take, for example, Chapter XV of Part I of the *Essai*, “La multiplication et le décroissement des Peuples dans un État dépendant principalement de la volonté, des modes et des façons de vivre des Propriétaires des terres” [in Higgs’ translation, “The Increase and Decrease of the Number of People in a State chiefly depend on the taste, the fashions and the modes of living of the proprietors of land”], an essential text for understanding Cantillon’s population theory. That chapter is totally absent from Postlethwayt’s version. And Philip Cantillon offers a much-diminished version, positioned further along than in the *Essai*, in the general economy section of *The Analysis of Trade*. Did the manuscript he was using have a chapter that was yet to be filled out, or did he choose what seemed to him the most important and timely material? The absence of any reference to Petty noted by van den Berg and which he interprets as evidence of a less developed version could just as easily be interpreted as a sign of the publisher’s refusal to reproduce a controversial passage. The question of vocabulary is capital for this chapter. *Essai sur la nature du commerce en général* was written between 1728 and 1733, at a time when the term “population” was used in neither French nor English; it did not come into use before the 1750s. In French Cantillon only used the equivalent expressions of his time. But

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(8) Cf the work’s subtitle: “Taken chiefly from a Manuscript of a very ingenious Gentleman deceased, and adapted to the present Situation of our Trade and Commerce”.

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“population” occurs several times in the excerpts published by Philip Cantillon in 1759. This is evidence that Philip knew how to use the word; it is also highly probable that he had modernized his cousin’s vocabulary, as “population” also figures in a digression that Philip himself is believed to have written.

In conclusion, this new edition is a precious, indispensable tool for informed readers. It marks an important phase in research on Cantillon, and there can be no doubt that it will help renew that research.

Christine Théré
Steven L. Kaplan is one of the most important historians of his generation. His research on eighteenth-century and contemporary France is characterized by great thematic unity, as nearly all of his many publications are on the same two subjects: trading in grain and derived products (bread), and the world of work and corporations. In this book, a companion to the second edition of his celebrated 1976 work, *Bread, Politics and Political Economy*, he explains the genesis of that book and his initial aims in writing it and engages in a kind of a retrospective historiographical assessment. Reading his introduction to *The Stakes of Regulation*, we readily perceive its originality; it does not fit into any existing category. Though Kaplan describes his intellectual sources in detail as well as particular moments in the development of his thinking, this is in no way an *ego-histoire*. Nor has he merely actualized *Bread, Politics and Political Economy*. The book is rather a highly personal discussion of seven subjects that he says were at the core of his undertaking: “This companion volume is conceived as a commentary on and dialogue with *Bread, Politics* and with fellow researchers who have written in and around the concerns of that book” (p. xxxviii).

The exercise was a perilous one, as it could have been used primarily to express self-satisfaction given the immense impact of the 1976 work, which greatly exceeded the chronological and disciplinary frame of the history of Old Regime France. Among many others, Michel Foucault (see the Collège de France lectures, 1977-1978), the American critical theorist Bernard Harcourt (*The Illusion of Free Markets*, 2011) and, more modestly, myself have all found considerable food for our own thought in Kaplan’s work. But the danger is skilfully skirted, and the introduction, in which he sketches out his intellectual autobiography in order to resituate *Bread, Politics* in the context of his overall research project, is immediately reassuring on this count. In thirty or so pages, he presents with great clear-sightedness the path that led him, via the *Annales* school and particularly the work of Braudel, to conceive a project around a total history of bread and the grain market. The first part of this ambitious programme was *Bread, Politics*, which analyses the deregulation of that market in the early 1760s and its drastic economic, social and political effects.

In the first of the seven chapters, Kaplan analyses several books that have discussed the issue of regulating the grain market in the Enlightenment eighteenth century and early in the twentieth. In the second, he does the same with recent studies on eighteenth-century economic developments in French agriculture. The third is longer and more complex; it “discusses some of the debates generated by attempts to account for the behavior of that abyssal entity known (or unknown) [1]

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(1) To measure the impact the work had on historians of Old Regime French society and economy in the decades following its publication, we have only to reread Daniel Roche’s in-depth analysis in *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations* 35(6), 1980, pp. 1290-1296.
as ‘the people’” (p. 96), namely in the case of scarcity, either real or presumed. In Chapter 4, he discusses studies of “Parlements in the Age of Economic Enlightenment”, while Chapter 5 focuses on the opposite camp: the king’s government. Chapter 6 explores recent developments in the historiography of French political economy during the Enlightenment. The last chapter is on recent analyses of famine.

It would make no sense here to present the chapter content in detail; the chapters are structured as a set of more or less extensive reviews of recent works (3-15 pages), at times interspersed with original thoughts. I would just mention here a fascinating discussion of about ten pages on Necker and his idea of “the people” (pp. 136-146) and another commentary (pp. 250-263) on a conflict between the local government of Dijon and the state controller-general on how to respond to a sharp rise in grain prices. Kaplan’s various asides are all addenda to his original work.

Above and beyond the specific reviews, it seems to me that this work is “haunted” by three recurrent themes, the first of which is “public opinion”, a theme imposed by historians of Old Regime France such as Keith Michael Baker and Mona Ozouf. Their methodological options were directly opposed to Kaplan’s; it is therefore not surprising that he should explain, wherever the opportunity presents itself, what he sees as the difficulties involved in a concept too vague to be relevant in historical study. The criticism is justified, as public opinion is a notoriously elusive concept socially: it is extremely hard to determine, for example, what social categories it was composed of.

The second notion that Kaplan returns to several times is “the people”. Here he acknowledges with great intellectual honesty (as suggested by the above quotation) that he cannot really decide which of the many uses and social realities the term refers to are most relevant. Contrary to his criticism of “public opinion”, this relative failure does not seem to him to preclude further discussion; on the contrary, the term’s ambiguity is an invitation to investigate and theorize – an essential heuristic device.

The third recurrent notion is liberalism. It provides Kaplan with a thematic link between his research on the eighteenth century and his more recent studies of post-World War II France. He is less interested in liberalism as a technology of power, a point developed by Foucault and researchers after him, including Harcourt and Skornicki, than for the economic deregulation it may imply and the destructuring effect that deregulation has on social space. We cannot but notice Kaplan’s profound scepticism with regard to the possibility of liberalism being applied in a historical society without creating the conditions for its own failure.

The Stakes of Regulation is an indispensable work for anyone interested in the economy of Old Regime France, the role of subsistence in the economy over the long period, and interactions between the social and the economic.
The *Annales de démographie historique* has accustomed its readers to full-fledged books rather than traditional journal issues. This second, 2014 publication follows that rule. From diverse and always interesting angles, the issue studies the role played by population sciences in Europe’s major totalitarian enterprises, taking into account the most recent advances in our knowledge on the subject. In fact, those advances are the unifying thread in the book’s investigations: in each we are given not only a professional historian’s perspective on demography under dictatorship but also an analysis of the demographic impact of institutional actions.

For the authors, the main stumbling block to be avoided – without neglecting or ignoring it – is Foucauldian emphasis on the concept of biopolitics, a historiographical fashion that, as they see it, should, like all fashions, be resituated in the context in which it was produced and flourished, in this case the 1980s. The vulgate holding that the population’s “body” is under hegemonic state control does not take fully into account what we know of individual behaviour: individuals in a dictatorial regime have shown, at least in some cases, that they know how to slip the grip of the precepts, orders and collective representations imposed by the powers-that-be. And it is precisely such pockets of autonomy in the area of demography that the studies in this volume focus on. Analysed in these terms, the population and family policies found in dictatorships are no longer mere reconstructions developed out of an exclusive belief in Foucault’s “panoptic state”.

The point, then, is to discuss how individuals responded to the demographic policies of dictatorships in Romania under the communist regime (1948-1989); Uruguay under the authoritarian governments that followed the military coup d’État (1973-1985); Spain during the Cold War, when the United States had military bases in the country; Biscay under Franco; Italy during the fascist period; and Portugal under Salazar – varied contexts, different situations, but all involving the implementation of authoritarian policies.

The study of Romania takes a long-range historical perspective and disqualifies the notion that communist policy radically changed or degraded the traditional family. The authors show that the dictatorship was not a uniform bloc during the period under study and therefore was not always “identical to itself”. The new Family Code adopted in 1954 was a specific piece of legislation that went together with a process of social modernization linked in turn to urbanization and industrialization as well as progress in education. It was Nicolae Ceaucescu’s natalist obsessions that explain the impact of the Communist dictatorship’s demographic policy, whose measures included tighter regulations on divorce, prohibiting abortion for women under 45 who had not already had at least four children, and various directly pro-birth measures.

The situation in Uruguay resembled Romania’s only in its active combat...
against mortality. The economic crisis of the 1960s led a country that stood as a paragon of democratic life in the eyes of its neighbours to question a population growth model based on immigration. In the state terrorism that followed the military takeover of 1973, massive imprisonment, torture and exile of opponents became commonplace. Uruguay therefore underwent two radical upsets over a short period: the end of the European migration cycle and the country’s transformation into an emigration zone. Of particular interest is the fact that in this country the powers-that-be had no clear-cut demographic agenda; demographic variables were most strongly affected by political and economic measures.

The case of Spain is different once again. As early as 1939 the military junta launched a raft of policies to protect the family as a Christian, patriarchal institution understood as the only form that conformed to nature. The Francoist dictatorship therefore prohibited civil marriage, divorce, contraception and abortion. The understanding was that the “Spanish race” could only be regenerated through natalist measures. Hopes of obtaining advantages through an alliance with the “American friend” were soon disappointed. Various situations described in this chapter on the installation of the American military base at Rota, near Cadiz, expose the contradiction between government policies and reality.

The second contribution on Spain discusses the demographic behaviour of individuals in the north of the country (ria of Bilbao) in conjunction with dictatorship policy, which did not have the intended effects, actually resulting in a fall in large families from 1940 to 1960 and in informal labour participation by married women.

Similar to the two Spanish studies is the chapter analysing four towns in different regions of Fascist Italy. Mussolini’s population policy, first implemented in 1927, set the goal of 60 million inhabitants by 1950, to be attained by combating the decline in fertility – an approach used by several European states at the time. The battle was on against infant mortality, and to improve conditions for achieving maternity, encourage births, curb emigration and control internal migration. But even though the Catholic Church approved those measures, particularly the ones promoting maternity and large families, the demographic results were long in coming, and a new set of measures was implemented in 1937. What was their impact on the towns studied? The authors observe, for example, that not only did fertility fail to rise but it actually fell as a function of the woman’s social stratum. They conclude that the Fascist pro-birth policy had little impact at the individual level and were statistically non-significant.

The book’s last contribution focuses on Portugal under Salazar. As in Spain and Italy, the Portuguese regime’s first priority was to protect the family and stimulate population growth. But its particular vision of the “demography problem” brought about a hiatus between maintaining the traditional oligarchy, church and army, and citizens’ behaviour, behaviour that in turn called into question the political-ideological foundations of the Portuguese rurality myth and contradicted the regime’s family policy, as attested by the early fall in fertility.
in the 1950s in the southern part of the country and considerable migration to the cities.

The coherence and value of this volume is clear. Despite the different methodological approaches used to apprehend what accounted for the harmony or dissonance between local individual behaviours and state population policies, despite the differences in areas studied, the diversity of their histories and their contrasting political-economic situations, we can only conclude that overall, those population policies – nearly all of which aimed to defend the traditional family, high birth rates and populationism – had limited impact on individual behaviours. Individuals, then, clearly showed a degree of resistance to the authoritarian measures decreed and applied with considerable brutality in some cases.

These contributions raise a general question: Could the conclusion regarding demographic policies apply under other regimes, those, for example that claim to follow democratic principles? Would we find the same kind of resistance, the same discrepancy between individual behaviours and the norm or law? That general question – fundamental in demography – concerns population policies, their nature, semantics and pragmatics. Though it is not raised here, the dossier remains extremely interesting.

In addition to the “Démographie des dictatures” file, this issue includes an article on the internal contradictions in and exclusions from France’s family reunification policy from the post-War years to 1984. As well as the usual set of book reviews and substantial bibliographies – always precious information sources.

Jean-Marc ROHRBASSER
More than half a century after African countries obtained independence from France, colonialism – its mechanisms, operation and effects – continues to be a busy research field. Historians especially have patiently worked to deconstruct the myths validated not only by the colonial political and administrative apparatus but also the world of science. This book – a detailed and documented monograph on a drug called lomidine [in the French colonies and perhaps better known as pentamidine] that became the focus of European imperialist ambitions to rid Africa of sleeping sickness – attacks the latter. The inglorious reality of the situation, recounted and meticulously dissected by Guillaume Lachenal, is that French (and Belgian) colonial doctors not only refused to admit they had not found a cure but also used a method that was both ineffective and dangerous.

The book recounts what is a forgotten history, hidden away in colonialism's dry administrative reports and golden legends. It is not the author’s intention to deny that colonial medicine had any successes or made any contributions or, conversely, to analyze the situation from an exaggerated Foucauldian biopolitics perspective wherein science is understood as merely an instrument in the service of the colonizer. He aims instead to find a middle path by recalling that history is neither linear nor unequivocal and that health policies can only be understood and assessed by carefully documenting the context in which they were applied. Indeed the power of Lachenal’s book and its great interest lie in his clear portrayal of the “failures of the imperial machine” and above all, how those failures fit into the colonial system as a whole. Lomidine did not fail to cure sleeping sickness despite the colonial system but because of it; the error was not incidental but an effect of colonial medicine itself.

In reading the story of pentamidine, a molecule developed from chemical compounds discovered in Hungary between the wars, studied at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, synthesized for the first time in East London in 1937 and produced in mass quantities at Vitry-sur-Seine from 1947, we follow how colonial medicine developed at the international level, involving what would become major pharmaceutical companies (just getting starting at the time), voluntaristic states concerned about their image on the international stage, and major figures in medicine, concerned about their place in history. As this book makes crystal clear, colonial medicine was a meeting place for personal ambitions and the means to realize them, far from the safeguards and precautions that were standard practice in metropolitan France.

The drug that “was supposed to save Africa” – called lomidine in French – was used to treat Trypanosomiasis or sleeping sickness, a perfect symbol, with its famous tsetse fly, of the suffering of Africa. The battle against the disease was part of colonial propaganda; also of the “race to defeat microbes” that was under
way between the different European states. This explains to a large degree the
dogged persistence in trying to get a technique to work that simply did not, or
not really; in any case that could not work as its proponents wanted to believe
it could. This technique, called chemoprophylaxis, involved turning a drug into
a preventive treatment, a chemical compound into a vaccine, a remedy into a
public health policy – with no theoretical or clinical understanding of the
mechanisms involved. Sick people were treated and whole populations vaccinated
to eradicate sleeping sickness. A series of tests conducted by the colonial powers
during the war (first the Belgians and English, then the French) seemed to give
leave to believe that the immunization campaigns, soon dubbed “lomidinization”,
would work like a charm.

The large-scale vaccination campaigns – that is, injecting the entire population
of a given region (a shot in the buttocks) – were not as glorious as the propaganda
painted them. But above all, the painful and in many cases incapacitating side
effects, not to mention the occasional serious accidents, planted the seeds of
doubt. The accident in Yokadouma, Cameroon, which killed 28 persons and
wounded hundreds on 13 November 1954, is described in detail on the basis of
information from the administrative reports. Lachnal shows the reactions of the
different actors and how this policy action temporarily destabilized the colonial
order; also how that order was quick to upright and re-establish itself on the
basis of an administrative investigation that rationalized the incident, distributing
blame (much on the natives) and approval (primarily for the local administrators
writing up the investigation report). What this example shows is that the method's
effectiveness was never questioned: if it didn't work that was the natives' fault;
they were primitive and uncooperative. Resistance on the part of local populations
appeared as both a symptom of the deeper crises shaking the colonial world and
a perfect excuse for the colonial administrators' failures. It was in fact evidence
of the inherent contradiction of the colonial project and therefore its impossibility.

We now know the real situation. Lomidine has no preventive powers; it can
cure patients of sleeping sickness but cannot immunize. The “miraculous” results
of the 1940s experiments were due to the complexity of the disease and the
difficulties of detecting it: a considerable share of disease carriers were not
identified as such by the techniques of the time. People who had the disease but
did not know it were therefore not immunized against it by lomidinization but
cured, a fact that simultaneously led physicians to believe in its preventive powers
and reduced the virus' natural reservoir. In the short run, there were indeed
fewer cases of the disease, but no one had been immunized, and in the long
term, the vaccination campaign had no effect, or perhaps an adverse one in that
it increased resistance to the virus. All in all, an absurdly low level of protection
at a high human cost in terms of immediate and later suffering, as well as deaths.

Historians of science, particularly of medicine, must always be careful to
steer clear of the teleological approach that would lead to analysing and possibly
judging yesterday's technologies and those who used them by the standards of
current knowledge. We readily criticize physicians’ ignorance, but weren’t they doing the best they could with the means available at the time? In the case of lomidine, a superficial (or complaisant) analysis might lead to this conclusion. But Lachenal uses the comparison judiciously to show how, in this case, the available knowledge was “partial” in both senses of the word. Lomidine was forced on indigenous populations but not on European travellers: “The official instructions, though confidential, were quite clear: lomidine was dangerous and painful for Europeans; for Africans it was compulsory, including for infants, pregnant women and elderly persons (except in case of very poor general health)” (p. 118). The reluctance of the English to use the drug, like the reservations about administering the substance to Europeans, clearly shows that the dangers associated with it had been assessed and were already familiar at the time. But when it came to the natives, those dangers were simply not mentioned.

In the end what counts here is less what physicians and colonial administrators did in the colonies than the way they did it. The point here is not only the limitations and failures of modern science but the fact that all science is part of a social context and fits into existing power relations. In this respect, the colonial world is at once an extreme and an extremely revealing example.

The physicians’ surprise at how very effective their method was – it cured both the control group and those who actually received the injection – recalls the curious results of controlled deworming experiments(1), which led to a soaring increase in controlled experiments conducted in the service of economic interests. Times have changed, but the impossible quest for a miracle remedy to all problems (those of Africa and the world, development problems) subsists. This book reminds us of the complexity of colonial policies and colonial history, too quickly and too readily forgotten. And beyond that, the complexity of the world altogether. In this respect it is indispensable reading for anyone interested in colonialism or working on health policies, either of yesterday or today.

Lionel KESZTENBAUM

(1) On this subject see, for example, http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/w/worms.html
The models developed by Hajnal and Laslett (1) to account for the various forms of European family structures over history have been much debated since they were presented in the 1960s and 70s. The studies in this book belong to that line of inquiry; the book bears the name of the June 2010 conference at London University’s Institute of Historical Research where they were presented. Part I offers an overview of the “commonalities and diversities” between family structures in various geographic regions of Europe. Beatrice Moring investigates the notion of family, attempting to grasp family dynamics on the basis of indices other than those generally used – e.g. co-residence as apprehended by censuses. This enables her to examine the mutual economic assistance ability of families in different circumstances such as old age and widowhood. Violetta Hionidou analyses family organization on the Greek island of Kythera on the basis of eighteenth-century population censuses conducted by the Venitian administration and nineteenth-century censuses conducted under the British protectorate. She observes the effect of migration on households, the opposite of what is usually observed: here household composition was metamorphosized to enlarge the family by playing on age at marriage, for example, while preserving the principles of “equitable distribution among sons” that had always characterized family practices on the island.

The other two chapters of Part 1 concern Serbia. Mirjana Bobić, studies poll tax records to identify and reconstruct households in the region of Brankovic, under Ottoman rule, in 1455, while critically analyzing Laslett’s categories and the difficulty of applying them to the case under study. Siegfried Gruber draws on data from the 1866 census to examine regional differences in household structure in nineteenth-century rural Serbia. He manages to discern significant regional variations and the factors that may explain them, precisely mapping differences in household complexity from one locality to another. His conclusions are quite stimulating.

Part 2 focuses on the roles of church and state in family dynamics. Daniela Lombardi retraces changes in marriage practices in Europe and the decisive role played by Catholicism and Protestantism from the late Middle Ages to the start of the early modern period. She emphasizes the importance of reputation as constructed by neighbours’ judgments; reputation could play an important role in lawsuits, which often concerned woman; specifically their honour and respectability (which encompassed that of the family) at the time of marriage.

Guido Alfani highlights “the divergence in social structures and social behaviours” created by the eleventh-century schism between Catholicism and Orthodoxy and later by the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation followed

by the seventeenth-century Counter-Reformation. This long-term perspective enables us to see how the role of spiritual kinship evolved within each religious community. And because godparenthood is a freely chosen tie between individuals and families, it could play a major social and economic role in family strategies. This in turn meant that the religious authorities were at pains to frame and control practices – by drastically limiting the number of godparents a child could have in the case of Catholics, for example, and seeking to abolish godparenthood in the case of Calvinism.

In the following chapter, Judit Abrus applies Laslett’s categories to data from the “family books” kept by the Calvinist church in Transylvania from the second half of the nineteenth century. She follows changes in household structure over time, also questioning the relevance of that undertaking given that the residential unit did not always coincide with the unit of production or consumption, especially if other aspects, such as surface area available for farming and relations between family members, are taken into account. She also uses the family books to follow developments in such practices as cohabitation before marriage, which she identifies as a sign of weak community social control.

In the first chapter of Part 3 on family strategies, Piotr Guzowski studies Polish court rolls from the period 1419 to 1609 to explore the circumstances under which Polish peasants put an end to their economic activity. He examines how long they could continue managing the farm and analyses their retirement options, which depended on family situation and property. These included selling their property to children or other family members and ceding it in exchange for housing and care. The author also looks at women’s inheritance and widows’ ability to take over farms.

Women and their economic activities are also at the heart of Marta Verginella’s contribution. Studying wills made by inhabitants of the region of Breg, near Trieste, many of them Slovenian peasants, she explores the differences between men and women in economic life in the nineteenth century, specifically in connection with property transmission. Early in the period, women enjoyed remarkable entrepreneurial independence as well as the right to dispose of their wealth as they saw fit, including purchase and sale of land and money lending and borrowing. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, under the pressure of industrialization and the church, the model changed: women now had to devote themselves to their household and children. They became legally dependent on their husbands, including in areas where they were previously entitled to make their own decisions, notably wills.

In the last chapter, Alice Velková draws on population registries, cadastres and other sources to study the impact of a 1787 change in legislation in Bohemia: before that date the family holding was reserved for the youngest child; the new law designated the eldest son as heir. Velková analyses what caused this change, which, combined with longer life expectancy, gave heads-of-household much greater freedom to decide at what moment they would turn over farm management.
to their heir. Rather than working to the end of their lives, they could now enjoy retirement, often taken on the occasion of their eldest son’s marriage.

This book undeniably enhances our knowledge of family structures and their specificities. However, the title suggests a comparative history of families and households at the scale of Europe as a whole, when in fact the book presents a set of monographs – often extremely interesting, but never extending beyond the local or regional level. Likewise, the impression left by some chapters is that the author was more attentive to the families themselves than the historical contexts in which they were formed. Family structures and behaviours are closely linked to those contexts, be they legislative, economic, social, etc.

The real history of European families and households, the one that will move us beyond strictly disciplinary or local approaches to a general synthesis, Laslettian or otherwise, has yet to be written.

Claudia CONTENTE
Since the 2000s in France, the notion of “race” has made a comeback by way of genetics and certain kinds of population studies. Whether or not it ever disappeared from biology and medicine after the Second World War, as is commonly claimed, is in fact open to question. The modern understanding of the notion would seem instead to have been reached through a process of continual change in the fields of politics and science. This is what the historian and philosopher of science Claude-Olivier Doron suggests in his book, which encourages us to examine the present with the historian’s analytic tools despite the fact that its specific focus is the period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. The book is first and foremost a history of the notion of “race” that is not focused on the issue of racism. It is also a history of the uses and circulation of the term “race” in multiple discursive areas, including nobiliary and pastoral narratives and natural history. As the author sees it, the book is first and foremost “an epistemological history that takes race seriously as a positive concept.” The question driving it is how “race” gradually came to be conceptualized first as an object of knowledge, later as an object for power practices, though in fact the author stops short of a full investigation of this last point. Last, it is a history of “race” as understood by means of the less familiar notion of degeneration – the book’s real subject.

For the book’s real purpose is to show the historical and theoretical importance of that idea. Contrary to notions of racism as an attitude toward radical difference, notions based on anatomical classification logic, the author highlights a genealogical type of reasoning, on the basis of which we can discover another history of race, rooted in what he calls “differentialist universalism.” His programme is ambitious. The first task he sets himself is to demonstrate that the most important thinkers on racism may not be the ones we thought. Whereas historians have tended to emphasize polygenist race theorists, the author claims on the contrary that what produced the understanding that one “race” could legitimately dominate was inclusive humanism. His second task is to show that a biology-based conception of race developed only relatively late in the day and that there was no reason to think it would be readily accepted in natural history. Degeneration – or the degradation of that which is the same – is the key word here, he explains, as it enables us to understand these counter-intuitive claims. In this thinking, human diversity was explained as the result of a process by which a degraded state was transmitted from a single original identity across generations. This genealogical approach was entirely alien to polygenist thinking, where the assumptions were that biological differences between “races” had existed from the start and were definitive.

The book is divided into four parts, followed by a substantial “epilogue”. Part I discusses the first uses of the genealogical notion of race. Through a study
of nobiliary narratives, pastoral narratives, and practices, Doron shows how the degeneration mechanism came to be cited and circulated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to explain cases of behavioural deviance from a norm of origin, while legitimating a mode of domination founded on the argument of a “degenerated self” incapable of self-government – the perfect example being colonial domination.

The next two parts seek to answer two interrelated questions. First, how, starting in the eighteenth century, did the notion of “race” become an object that was just as important to politics and policy as to science? The mid-1750s represent a genuine break in the history of the notions of race and degeneration. On the political side of the race issue, the question was modelled on agronomy and late seventeenth-century breeding practices. Detailed knowledge had been acquired on animals’ “race”-specific qualities and how to perfect them through crossbreeding. Second, the moral problem that followed from the understanding that God ruled Nature gave way to a strictly nature-related question about how to govern men, one that required knowledge of the laws of nature in the areas of transmission and reproduction. The norm founded on origin gave way to a norm of the ideal type that could be used to measure degradation in animal species and, from the eighteenth century, in the human species as well. Agronomy and breeding practices furnished a model for producing knowledge that would make it possible to associate an ideal type of animal with a set of living conditions that would be ideal for it (climate, region, etc.). This was then transposed to humans to explain, for example, the high mortality rate among colonial settlers. The word degeneration ceased to denote a process by which the high(er) quality of immediate ascendants came to be degraded and came to denote a process of deviation from the ideal type of the species. This in turn opened the way in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for practices of governing or managing abnormal human beings and regenerating and perfecting the human species (through race mixing or race preservation, etc.). It was in this connection that race became a political – and policy – concern.

Part III studies the scientific side of the race notion. After genealogical reasoning was introduced into the natural sciences in the mid-eighteenth century, a science of race developed, though this required a great number of conceptual transformations. The author draws his arguments here from texts by monogenist naturalists, discovering a fully developed body of thinking in which races were ranked by degree of development and degeneration. Genealogical reasoning – which supplanted the classificatory reasoning that dominated in natural history – brought concepts and types of reasoning into that discipline that were totally alien to it. Conversely, the natural history perspective led to ridding monogenism of any Biblical or metaphysical narrative on the origins of Man. “Race” and “degeneration” became scientific concepts and elements of what the author calls “degradation racism”, of which there were two sorts: “deviation from the primitive”, where the point was to apply aesthetic criteria to establish how different a given
man was from a primitive archetype; and “development fixation”, where the point was to rank men on the basis of how perfectible and adaptable they were. In the latter system, the political notion of “civilization” – an idea associated with “expansionist racism” – found a home: the species had to be educated, civilized. The primitive was no longer an ideal being but a roughhewn, brutal one instead. To natural historical classification was added the principle of position in a hierarchical structure, a notion that attained its apogee in the nineteenth century.

Part IV focuses on the epistemological conditions for introducing the notions of race and degeneration into natural history. Here the author raises two questions: How, despite all the epistemological obstacles, did genealogical reasoning take over in natural history? And how did the notions of “race” and “degeneration”, initially posited for exploration in the field of agronomy, end up penetrating natural history? The author puts forward three hypotheses. First, it was necessary for natural history’s classificatory style to yield to genealogical thinking. Second, naturalists had to have deemed it necessary to introduce an additional classification level in between species and variety: race. Third, the theory of preformation, according to which living beings realized forms chosen by God – a theory that was incompatible with the possibility of character transmission implied by the notion of generation – had to have been contested.

In his study of how the notions of race and degeneration circulated from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century in distinct discursive fields, Doron often emphasizes the conceptual changes those notions underwent, some of which involved continuity, others breaks in same. While he denies that this is history of ideas, the fact is that he says little about actors’ practices. Likewise, though he does help us understand how race became a focus for science, the conditions under which it became an “object of power” are less clear. The author presents the logical rather than practical consequences of these developments; the latter seem rather disembodied. Furthermore, can we be sure that the political object “race” followed from the scientific conceptualization of race? Might not uses have preceded concept? It is not at all clear which brought about or influenced which, and it would seem important to study that question as well.

Marine Dhermy-Mairal