Book Reviews

Michael Anderson, with mapping by Corinne Roughley, *Scotland's Populations from the 1850s to Today* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018). ISBN 978-0-19-880583-0. xix + 458 pp. £85 (h/b).

This issue of *Local Population Studies* focuses on the relationship between regional and local demographic variation and national patterns and trends. It is, therefore, a great pleasure to be able to include in the issue a review of this book, the first single-volume history of Scotland's population since Michael Flinn's *Scottish Population History from the 17th Century to the 1930s* (Cambridge, 1977). Anderson's book covers the period since 1850. This is because he has chosen to focus on the period for which 'reasonably robust statistical material' can be used (p. 5).

The book is based on a detailed empirical analysis of the aggregate-level data in published official statistics. Anderson acknowledges that over the next few decades the availability of digitised individual-level data is likely to permit more sophisticated and bespoke analyses aimed at answering specific questions. However, there is certainly a place for the presentation and initial analysis of aggregate data, not least because it helps to identify what the key questions are. In the case of Scotland, moreover, the aggregate-level tabulations were frequently published at a finer level than they were, for example, in England and Wales, using the 900 or so parishes. In the mid-nineteenth century these parishes had an average population of between 3,000 and 3,500, roughly half that of even the Registration Sub-Districts in England and Wales. So, although this book is an aggregate-level exercise, it is able to identify and describe local demographic variations.

The book is divided into 6 parts and 20 chapters. The first part describes the Scottish context, and considers what is distinctive about Scotland (its physical geography, its economy and its society), focusing on those factors which are likely to have influenced its demographic evolution. In the second part, Anderson explicitly describes regional and local variations, to the extent that he prefers to write of 'multiple Scotlands' and 'Scotland's populations' in the plural. This will be a recurring theme throughout the book. Scotland contains numerous distinctive local economies, which each had its own economic history and which led to differential local and regional demographic developments. When I started to read the book I was vaguely aware that Scotland's population was much more heterogeneous than that of England and Wales in the extent of variations in marriage patterns and fertility, particularly comparing the Highlands and Islands with the central belt. I also knew, for example, that in the twentieth century some of the widest differentials in mortality in the whole of the United Kingdom could be found within the city of Glasgow. But what I did not appreciate was the range of different demographic 'regimes' to be found *within* the Highlands, and the differences between island populations (for example between Bute and

the Shetland Islands); or the existence over long periods of time of distinctive regional patterns of fertility and marriage in lowland Scotland (for example in the small mining towns of West Lothian).

The theme of regional variation is maintained in the three substantive parts of the book, which deal respectively with migration and population structure, fertility and marriage, and mortality. A great strength of these sections is Anderson's keen awareness of the interconnectedness of the components of population change. Thus, for example, high fertility might have led to out-migration from areas that could not expand economically to provide employment for young people; but the out-migration had consequences for the age structure of the population (and hence for demographic measures which are sensitive to variations in the age structure), and its selective nature is likely to have had an impact on future fertility and mortality rates. The interpretation of the numbers also includes clear discussions of methodological issues, such as the confounding of crude rates by age composition, and the need to take into account selection effects.

Another key theme of these chapters is a comparison of Scotland's experience with that of England and Wales and key northern European comparators (notably the Scandinavian countries and Belgium). The comparisons with England and Wales may be especially interesting for readers of *Local Population Studies*, particularly as they include comparisons of the extent of regional variation within Scotland and within England and Wales. Thus, for example, the book demonstrates conclusively that in 1911 county-level regional variation in both nuptiality and fertility within marriage within Scotland was greater than that within England and Wales, but that, if we compare similar counties (on the basis of occupational structure) in the two countries, nuptiality in Scotland was lower, and marital fertility higher, than in England and Wales.

Partly because Anderson is careful to get the demography right, these three substantive parts are not always an easy read. He has assembled a huge amount of quantitative data, which is presented in what, in places, is a rather relentless way (there are 94 tables in the book). There were occasions when, as a reader, I was hoping for a pause in the presentation of empirical material to allow me to take stock of where we were. The conclusions to some chapters are very short (for example the conclusion to the 30-page chapter on marriage and nuptiality is just eight lines long!). However, readers who persevere to the last part of the book will find there a remarkable chapter which manages—in just six pages—to identify and bring together the key findings of the empirical presentation. It turns out that there are elements of its population history which are distinctive to Scotland as an entity. In this last chapter, Anderson summarises these: slow population growth relative to England and Wales and other European countries, high rates of emigration, relatively low nuptiality and high marital fertility, and high mortality relative to other European countries. He also points out that these elements 'were widespread both socially and spatially, and persisted over long periods of time' (p. 428).

More than any book I have read in recent years, Anderson's history of the populations of Scotland successfully blends the description of a national picture with the elucidation of

the many distinctive regional demographies that combine to produce the overall numbers. It is a masterly demonstration of what can be achieved by writing the population history of a nation with a keen eye for the local and regional perspective.

Andrew Hinde
University of Southampton

Daphna Oren-Magidor, *Infertility in Early Modern England* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). ISBN 978-1-137-47668-5. xv + 195 pp. £72 (h/b).

While readers of *Local Population Studies* will be familiar with many aspects of fertility (both legitimate and illegitimate) the topic of infertility has received much less attention, in part because the absence of an event (in this case a birth) is often difficult to research. Up to ten per cent of couples had no children in the early modern period, others experienced considerable problems conceiving and some unfortunate women suffered a succession of miscarriages and stillbirths. Infertility therefore permeated early modern society and the various responses to it reflect the importance of reproduction to early modern marriages and illuminate many aspects of early modern life. Oren-Magidor's thesis is that for many couples, 'infertility sat at the centre of a web that tied together a providential religious outlook that saw illness and health, fertility and infertility as directly ordained by God, with a highly gendered social order that had the nuclear family as its foundation' (p. 3). Her book reflects a growing interest in this topic in recent years and is to be welcomed.

Infertility employs a range of sources, from personal ones such as diaries, letters and memoirs, to fiction and poetry, legal proceedings and medical texts such as midwifery manuals. It is therefore biased towards the literary elite and, as with many aspects of early modern life, the poor are all but silent. The personal experiences of infertile couples are discussed in Chapter 2 and we are introduced to many characters, some famous, others less so. For example, Elizabeth Pepys had a childless marriage, Lady Margaret Hoby went through three marriages childless and Queen Anne had no trouble conceiving, but her seventeen pregnancies resulted in only three infants who survived beyond their first few hours and even these children predeceased their mother. Each has their own story to tell, although that story is limited by surviving sources. Thus, we know about Elizabeth from her husband's diary where—perhaps uniquely—he seeks advice about his childlessness from a group of women who had attended the birth of his godson (p. 133). Lady Margaret Hoby never spoke directly about her infertility (p. 17) while Queen Anne corresponded with Sarah Churchill about her problems (p. 32). We are also introduced to Mary Whitelocke, whose unique spiritual memoir—written for her eventual son—illuminates many aspects of infertility in this period. Mary's first 14-year marriage to Rowland Wilson was happy, but childless. Following Rowland's death and after some consideration she accepted a proposal from Bulstrode Whitelocke, who already had ten children from his previous marriage, in part because she looked forward to becoming a step-mother believing that she might 'be in a cappassity to doe some good amongst those children' (p. 13). Mary continued to pray for a child and, even when her first pregnancy ended in a miscarriage, she interpreted this 'as a sign that only

acceptance of God's will might result in the child she desired' (p. 152). Although Mary had taken 'physic' to cure her problem, it was only after subjecting herself to God's will that she was eventually to give birth and this was the message that she wanted to pass on to her son. Incidentally at no point in her memoir does Mary consider that her first husband might have been responsible for her infertility (p. 165)—a modern reader may differ, however. The various examples given in Chapter 2 and throughout the book together provide a rich portrait of infertility in this period.

Each chapter is thematic with Oren-Magidor arguing that there was little change in how infertility was perceived and understood in the early modern period. In addition to Chapter 2 there is a short introduction and chapters on Explaining Infertility, Society and Infertility, Treating Infertility and a short conclusion. Throughout the book Oren-Magidor argues that infertility was, with few exceptions, essentially as a female disorder (p. 100) with emphasis being placed on the view that childbearing was a religious duty and 'the significance of religion to women's experience of infertility cannot be underestimated' (p. 39). Chapter 3 explains that, apart from certain physical deformities, infertility was understood via humoral theory whereby conception was prevented because the body was out of balance and the many, largely ineffectual, remedies that were proposed, including some magical ones, in effect were attempts to remedy that balance. Both medical (male) and lay (largely female) practitioners were consulted, but Oren-Magidor argues that the effectiveness of any treatment was dependent on the recipient's devotions since 'the providential world view saw medicine as God's own creation, a gift to mankind, that could and would help to cure ailments, as long as this was according to God's plan'. Chapter 5 provides details of many of these treatments which include various forms of medicine, taking the waters at spas and above all prayer and devotion.

Oren-Magidor has collected information from a wide range of sources which together provide a well-balanced picture of the impact of infertility in early modern society. However, at no point in her narrative does Oren-Magidor suggest that the remedies suggested as cures for infertility would have had little effect nor is there any discussion of what may have caused the women's infertility in the first place. As to her overarching view of the importance of religion to infertility, it is perhaps not surprising that this was the case, given the importance attached to religion throughout early modern society. Moreover, such a view is also perhaps reinforced by the types of sources that available, with some, such as Mary Whitelocke's memoir, being especially created for that purpose. *Infertility in Early Modern England* is engaging and well written; it contains much interesting and useful detail and it will provide worthwhile reading for all students of early modern social history.

Chris Galley

S.A. Shave, *Pauper Policies: Poor Law Practice in England, 1780-1850* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2017). ISBN 978-0-7190-8963-3. xii + 330 pp. £75, £25 (h/b, p/b).

Samantha Shave's book examines the policies of both the Old and New Poor Laws. Her exploration deals with how these were constructed, implemented, and their outcome. It

deals with a subject we thought we were familiar with, and presents new research and insights.

The rationale for *Pauper Policies* is that there has been a recent trend in the historiography to focus upon individuals receiving relief and their acts of pauper agency. Shave argues that by 'ignoring the administrative context, historians could unintentionally underplay the role that welfare claimants themselves played in particular aspects of the administration of the poor laws, such as the development of pauper policies' (p. 24). To remedy this, she adopts a policy-centred approach to provide an additional aspect to the topic, which has been missed by those adopting a welfare approach. As a result, she reveals gaps in our knowledge of the operation of the poor laws from 1780, and provides a 'framework for exploring less tangible, and therefore less obvious, developments in pauper policies' (p. 25).

By giving a localised view, concentrating on the counties of the South West—Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset, Wiltshire and West Sussex—a region which is absent from the literature, Shave rebalances the South-East-heavy focus, arguing that the policy makers hoped to make the most impact in the west. Using source material from this area, through five thematic chapters, Shave unpicks 'the complicated nature of social policies under the poor laws' (p. 10), and evidences that policy implementers and those in receipt of poor relief could both influence the shape of the poor laws. The varied sources consulted in the research have been brought together well, as Shave has constructed a picture of the policy process from minute books, letters, reports, relief lists, newspaper articles, amongst many other sources, to fully build her case for stating the different ways in which information was exchanged concerning the implementation of the poor laws.

Although focussing on the administrative aspects of the poor laws, Shave has managed not to lose sight of the pauper voice. Throughout she has provided examples of how policy changes affected those in receipt of poor law relief, and how paupers could affect policy. Through examining the series of permissive acts introduced in the years leading up to 1834, she demonstrates how individual circumstances were considered, and how these led to the altering of accepted policies. Shave emphasises the importance of both individuals and groups in the policy making process, arguing that it is 'more "pluralist" than has hitherto been acknowledged' (p. 261).

In the period after 1834, Shave examines the effect that knowledge gained through networks, and local scandals had on policy implementation. Here, she reinforces the importance of the continued dialogue conducted between parishes to further their knowledge of what to consider 'best practice' when enforcing pauper policies, despite the creation of the Poor Law Commission. Similarly, she places importance on welfare scandals, and the conversation encouraged between the anti-New Poor Law movement and policy-makers in shaping a centralised welfare system, arguing that 'scandals are important feedback mechanisms' (p. 198).

The strength of the book is that it presents the social policies of the poor laws as fluid entities, as they were constantly altered, and often diverted from their original intentions. In consequence, Shave shows that even those who lacked decision-making power could

influence policy and its outcomes. She asserts that our understanding of the poor laws needs to be reconsidered, as we should view the administrators and the recipients of welfare together, rather than separately, as recent literature has tended to do.

To summarise, Shave's book is a welcome addition to the study of poor law administration, as her research gives an unexplored region of Britain worthy representation. In doing so, we gain an understanding of the people that held the decision-making power over the lives of the poor, and how their position could frame pauper policies. This book will be valuable reading for scholars of poverty and welfare throughout the period, and also to those researching the South West, to gain an understanding of the figures that prevailed over those belonging to the lowest classes. In addition, the book will help direct future research of the poor laws to encompass other geographically absent areas, and to apply the policy-process approach to other areas of legislation and reform.

Cara Dobbing
University of Leicester

Website

https://www.populationspast.org

This website is one of the outputs from the *Atlas of Fertility Decline in England and Wales* project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Isaac Newton Trust (Cambridge). The project is based at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure (CAMPOP).

The first thing to say in reviewing this website is that it is about far more than merely fertility decline between 1851 and 1911. If your interests are in population density, age at marriage, levels of celibacy, infant or early childhood mortality rates, number of doctors per head of population or teachers per child, the distribution of lone parent or single person households and households with kin, boarders or co-resident servants, dependency ratios, sex ratios, migration, socio-economic status, social class, women's work and children's work, then there is material here that you will find relevant.

The second strength is that all the variables are calculated and displayed at the level of the registration sub-district (RSD). Previous attempts at displaying demographic variables have been done at county level or at best at the level of the registration district. This pioneering work enables truly local populations to be studied and compared. The population of a RSD is likely to be more nearly homogenous than that of a registration district since registration districts were deliberately designed to be comprised of a mixture of types of places, often a market town and its rural hinterland. This homogeneity has enabled the project members to assign each RSD to one of eight types according to the population density and predominant occupational structure, which will make it easier for local population historians to choose areas of the same type for their studies.

On opening the website the eye is immediately drawn to the maps and there is much here to explore. All the features work smoothly. There is a place search facility. It is possible to

zoom, drag, hover or click. The key box provides a clear explanation of the colours representing the data ranges. The panel to the right enables selection of the different variables and different years. The one disappointment is that few variables are available for 1871, because the underlying data are still not available. Thus for many variables selecting the year 1871 results in an undifferentiated map. The variables that it has been possible to calculate for 1871 appear on the panel in white, with those unavailable in grey scale. Beneath the variable-level maps are background map layers with a choice of two historic and two modern maps. In the top right-hand corner is the facility to see two maps on the screen at once comparing different places, different variables or different years. I enjoyed comparing the historic features of the area where I currently live with the area where I used to live, and made some surprising discoveries.

It would be a mistake to view this merely as an atlas, despite the name of the project from which it has emerged. Much more information is revealed either by clicking on the question marks in the right- hand panel to read a full description of that variable or by opening the Overview tab. This explains clearly, with a minimum of technical language, how each variable has been calculated and provides a useful introduction to the basics of demography, similar to the Sources and Methods series of articles that appeared in this journal a few years ago. For example, for the total marital fertility rate there is a definition, a description of the method of calculation, an overview of how the rate changed between 1851 and 1911 and how it varied across different types of place, supplemented by very clear graphs. This aspect of the website will be invaluable to students new to the subject of demography and those running courses on demography. The other tab that teachers of demography will find useful is Resources. Here, in addition to the User Guide, they will find the first of what it is hoped will be a series of worksheets for schools. The worksheet currently available is about population density in Liverpool. With a little ingenuity this could easily be adapted for other places than Liverpool and other variables than population density. Unlike many websites or data-sets the User Guide is not a multi-page text document to be waded through but a single sheet PDF of a screen shot pointing out the key features: another useful 'see-at-a-glance' aid for students.

Welcome aspects of this website are that it is free, unlike Ancestry or Findmypast, and that access is not limited to people with institutional affiliation, unlike the web site of the Integrated Census Microdata project. Everyone can explore and learn from it. It is genuinely interactive and offers far more than it 'says on the tin'. I have no hesitation in recommending www.PopulationsPast.org both to experienced demographers and those new to the field. There is much that we can all discover from it and I look forward to reading future articles in this journal based on the new insights into the study of local populations facilitated by this project.

Christine Jones