

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters intended for publication in **LPS** should be sent to RICHARD WALL, 27 Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1QA.

Editors' note

LPS readers are reminded that the editorial board is always prepared to offer advice on subjects within the scope of **LPS**. Sometimes queries which have been raised are discussed in print in this section of the journal but there are many others which are not published, so if you think we can help do not hesitate to contact us.

A reply from Jeremy Millard

Dear Sir,

I would appreciate the chance of a reply to the two recent letters printed in **LPS** about my article in **LPS** 28 'A new approach to the study of marriage horizons'.

In **LPS** 30 Nesta Evans takes me to task for lacking clarity of expression and the use of the jargon of sociology. The use of jargon is always a problem especially when there are no suitable alternatives. All I can say here is that I do believe I have sufficiently explained those that I found it necessary to use. Lack of clarity of expression is a more difficult criticism to counter as ultimately this is a personal interpretation. The style I adopted, which incidently I would not have used five years ago, perhaps appears on first reading long winded and complicated. I have found that this is a useful approach, however, given that the audience, as in this case, have no background in quantitative techniques. This may sound contradictory, but my experience does show that such a style is very effective if things are taken slowly and one step at a time. Not to explain and discuss the various necessary steps in using a technique would be less than honest as it would give the reader a false sense of mastery without any real awareness of the many problems of application and interpretation. I have successfully used this style, both written and oral, with many adults lacking a quantitative background. I am therefore prepared to stand by my exposition, apart from the omission of some labelling from fig. 4 which does, I accept, make the text difficult to follow at that point (page 27).

I regard Bessie Maltby's critique **LPS** 31 as the more serious because it appears to be a more general comment on the usefulness of the techniques themselves. She seems to be under the impression that the 'complex' means employed are ones which I myself have developed. That this is not the case will be obvious from a reading of the article.

There are numerous references to other articles many of which have, in fact, used even more 'complex' techniques to analyse similar data. Above

all, of course, are the references to Leslie Bradley's '**A glossary for Local Population Studies**' which discusses all the techniques I refer to, and was explicitly written for **LPS** readers. What I have attempted to do is to use some of Bradley's techniques within a specific context to show both their rich possibilities as well as to fully discuss the problems associated with their use.

I am very surprised that Bessie Maltby implies that techniques such as these are only for the analysis of what is 'a very small feature in the much wider picture of migration of populations'. The article is clearly just one example of the use of these techniques, which are with others used in a wide range of migration and other studies.

Whether or not the value of the 'historical conclusions' reached is, or is not, commensurate with the 'complexity' of the means employed is a debate that cannot be entered into here. The article, as stated, is primarily about means not ends. All I would say is that the use of percentages, which Bessie Maltby contrasts with these techniques, although very useful in itself as I tried to indicate, cannot for example take account of different sample sizes, nor assess the strengths of any relationship, nor give any indication of the significance of the results. In trying to achieve greater historical understanding, which I believe is a more realistic aim than reaching historical conclusions, considerations such as these can be of great importance.

The attitude that these techniques are too difficult for the readers of **LPS** (whether or not my exposition is suitable) is I think at best defeatist and at worst negligent. Of course there will be many who will not wish to use them and who can nevertheless make important contributions to our understanding. But others can and should be encouraged to use these and similar techniques and thereby make complementary contributions, if — and the 'if' is important — they use them with full appreciation of the problems involved. Sometimes a hammer is necessary to crack a nut — if it is the only means. Hammers do, of course, come in many different shapes and sizes, so why should they remain the exclusive tool of the professional?

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Millard,

Aarhus Universitet, Vennelyst Boulevard 8, DK-8000 Arhus C, Denmark.

Vaccination at Basford School, Nottingham

Dear Sir,

It is not only in Leicester (**LPS 30**) that there was public resistance to vaccination in the late nineteenth century, as is clear from this extract from the diary kept by Miss Mary Harwood when teaching infants in Basford School:

Wednesday, June 15th, 1881 Lovely morning, enjoyed the walk to school. Just before 10 o/c there were some women came to School in a ? saying there was a rumour that there were some Doctors coming to Vaccinate all the School children. We told them we knew nothing about it and the headmistress said supposing anybody did come, they should send the children home (for the Parents are up in arms at the idea of their children being vaccinated in that way) and would not be responsible for such a proceeding. Mrs. Harris talked to the women and told them the children should certainly be sent home if there was any cause, and they went away apparently satisfied — but returned again in a few minutes with renewed forces saying they should take their children home — not only women came but men. The children suspecting something was wrong grew frightened and a **sweep** coming in brought things to a climax. The children began to scream and cry, it was quite piteous to see them and we could not pacify them, the poor babies were particularly frightened. It put me about dreadfully to see them. I told the Mothers they would frighten the children to death. There was no peace until all the children, girls and infants, had gone and then the parents waited for their boys. Mr Young would not give way at first, but he was obliged to let the boys go. Thro' the uproar we got a day's holiday ...

I am indebted to the owner to publish this extract from his grandmother's diary.

Yours faithfully,
P. M. White,

122a Outwoods Drive, Loughborough, Leics. LE11 3LU.

Chrisom Children

Dear Sir,

The **LPS** supplement **Population Studles from Parish Registers** contains an introduction which on page XXII suggests that so-called 'Chrisom' children shown in burial registers are unbaptised children. However, in the 1549 Prayer Book the priest at baptism is commanded to clothe the child in a white 'Chrisom' or 'Crisome' robe. This robe was kept by the child until the mother returned to the church for her purification when it was given back to the church. This ritual was abolished in 1552 but it would seem likely that the memory and/or practice of it remained and that such deaths refer not to unbaptised babies but those whose mothers had not yet returned the Chrisom robe or had not yet been churched.

I should be grateful of your comments on this point.

Yours sincerely,
Miss E. Morrison,

25 Westwick Gardens, West Kensington, London W14 0BU.

Editors' comment

Leslie Bradley in his **A Glossary for Local Population Studies** writes: **'CHRISOM.** This term sometimes used in parish registers, does not always bear the same meaning. In some parts of the country the Chrisom or christening robe, was one of the "customary offerings" made by the mother to the church at her "churching" about a month after the birth of the child. If, however the child died before the churching, the chrisom was often used as the shroud. Such children were known as chrisom children. Chambers Encyclopedia (1783 edition) states that, in the Bills of Mortality, chrisom children are taken to be children dying within one month of birth, and the term is sometimes so used by demographers. In some parts of the country the term was used for children dying before baptism.

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