The Decline of the Extended Family


Steven Ruggles


Frédéric Le Play
(1806-1882)






## 84 Rector's Book.





## Laslett-Hammel Classification

Simple family


Extended family


Multiple family


## English Demographic Conditions, ca. 1725

Life expectancy at birth

Females
34.8

Males 32.5
Median age at first marriage
Females
25.2

Males 26.1
Mean generation length 34.7
Percent females celibate
14.1

Total fertility rate 4.6

## Population Pyramid






# Confessions of a Microsimulator 

Problems in Modeling the Demography of Kinship

## Steven Ruggles <br> Department of History <br> University of Minnesota

I could not, without effort, constrain myself to the task of either recalling, or constructing into a regular narrative, the whole burthen of horrors which lies upon my brain.
-Thomas DeQuincey, Confessions of an Opium Eater

Wver since Peter Laslett and John Harrison (1963) disdcovered that multigenerational households were rare in preindustrial northwestern Europe, historians and demographers have been trying to estimate the effects of preindustrial demographic conditions on the potential for multigenerational households. Starting with back-of-the envelope calculations by Ansley Coale (1965), David Glass (1966), and E.A. Wrigley (1969), the techniques for assessing the effects of demography on historical kinship patterns have become more and more elaborate, culminating in complex demographic microsimulation models consisting of many thousands of lines of computer code (Wachter, Hammel, and Laslett 1978; Ruggles 1987; Smith 1987).

All demographic models incorporate simplifying as-
pendent of one another. That is, the characteristics of one member of a group of kin are assumed to be entirely uncorrelated with the characteristics of other members of the kin group. I call this the Whopper Assumption. ${ }^{1}$
Because of the Whopper Assumption, models of kinship will produce less variation in the frequency of kin of any particular type than would occur in a real population. Our models will generally underestimate both the proportion of people with many kin and the proportion of people with few kin. As I will show, the magnitude of error is potentially large. In addition, the Whopper Assumption can affect the expected number of kin in a population.
What follows is presented in the terms of demographic microsimulation models-currently the technique of choice for analyzing the demography of the family and kinship-but most of my comments would apply equally to other kinds of kinship models. In brief, microsimulation involves creating a hypothetical population by randomly assigning demographic events-births, deaths,

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## Demography of Kinship

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Tamara Hareven (1994):
"Multigenerational families were rare, and only resorted to in cases of necessity, primarily when elderly parents were too frail to maintain a separate residence."


David Kertzer (1995):
"Nuclear Reincorporation Theory"


Percent deviation in intergenerational coresidence of each occupational group from nonfarm average:
Men aged 30-39 residing with parents, U.S., 1850-2000


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Percent of elderly (65+) residing with adult child (18+): United States, 1880



Percent of elderly (65+) with children:
Estimating the impact of Social Security



## Thomas H. Eliot: Council for the committee that drafted the Social Security Bill, 1933

"In the old days, the old-age assistance problem was not so great so long as most people lived on farms, had big families, and at least some of the children stayed on the farm."



Integrated Public Use Microdata Series - Internati
census microdata for social and economic research

IPUMS-International is a project dedicated to collecting and distributing census data from around the world. Its goals are to:

- Collect and preserve data and documentation
- Harmonize data
- Disseminate the data absolutely free!

35 countries . 111 censuses . 263 million person record



1973 Census Tapes arrive at Muller Media (New York) via Barcelona





IPUMS Participating Countries



## Northwest European and North American Exceptionalism



Table 1. Measures of living arrangements of individuals and couples aged 65 or older

|  | Percent residing with: |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Any kin | Descendants | Three generations |
| Nineteenth century |  |  |  |
| $\quad$ Britain | 62.3 | 50.2 | 23.5 |
| Nordic Countries | 48.7 | 46.4 | 14.5 |
| $\quad$ North America | 73.3 | 66.4 | 32.3 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Twentieth and twenty-first centuries |  |  |  |
| $\quad$ Latin America | 71.8 | 59.1 | 33.9 |
| $\quad$ Middle East | 52.8 | 47.3 | 26.2 |
| $\quad$ Sub-Saharan Africa | 78.1 | 66.9 | 46.5 |
| $\quad$ East Asia | 79.8 | 69.6 | 45.9 |
| $\quad$ Northwestern Europe | 34.4 | 27.1 | 11.2 |
| $\quad$ Eastern/Southeastern Europe | 42.4 | 38.7 | 19.1 |
| $\quad$ United States | 39.7 | 32.1 | 12.5 |
| Overall mean |  |  |  |
| Standard Deviation | 60.6 | 51.6 | 28.2 |
| Number of census samples | 20.2 | 17.6 | 14.0 |











## Percent of persons aged 65+ residing with descendant




## Table 2. Independent variables

| Name | Description | Mean | Std. Dev. |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | ---: |
|  |  |  |  |
| Agricultural employment | Log of percent of men aged 18-64 employed in agriculture | 2.8 | 0.9 |
| Percent elderly | Percent of population aged 65 or older | 7.3 | 4.2 |
| Marital fertility | Age-standardized marital fertility ratio | 64.8 | 21.7 |
| Female marriage age | Singulate mean age at marriage for women | 23.2 | 1.8 |
| Male marriage age | Singulate mean age at marriage for men | 26.3 | 1.6 |
| Unmarried elderly women | Percent of 65+ who are women without spouses | 44.7 | 4.5 |
| Elderly couples | Percent of 65+ who are residing with spouse | 38.4 | 4.8 |
| De jure census | De jure census enumeration rule | 0.6 | 0.5 |

Table 3. OLS regressions of agricultural employment and demographic characteristics on living arrangements of the aged

|  | With kin |  | With descendants |  | Three generation |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Std. Error |  | B Std. Error |  | B | Std. Error |
| Agricultural employment | 7.7 | 1.4 *** | 8.04 | 1.10 *** | 6.44 | 1.13 *** |
| Percent elderly | -4.1 | 0.3 *** | -3.83 | 0.28 *** | -3.21 | 0.29 *** |
| Marital fertility | -0.2 | 0.1 ** | -0.15 | 0.05 ** | -0.18 | 0.05 *** |
| Female marriage age | -1.7 | 1.0 | -2.70 | 0.78 ** | -1.99 | 0.80 * |
| Male marriage age | 2.6 | 1.0 * | 4.35 | 0.82 *** | 2.76 | 0.84 ** |
| Unmarried elderly women | 0.6 | 0.3 * | 1.16 | 0.21 *** | 1.60 | 0.22 *** |
| Elderly couples | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.95 | 0.18 *** | 0.88 | 0.18 *** |
| De jure census | -6.3 | 1.7 *** | -3.39 | 1.40 *** | -4.15 | 1.43 ** |
| Constant | 12.7 | 23.2 | -71.61 | 18.26 | -83.55 | 18.72 *** |
| Adjusted R Square | 0.85 |  | 0.89 |  | 0.81 |  |
| N | 97 |  | 88 |  | 88 |  |












> Frédéric Le Play (1806-1882)




