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Intergenerational Coresidence and Family Transitions in the United States, 1850 – 1880

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Abstract

This study uses a new source of linked census data (N = 6,734) to test theories proposed to explain the high intergenerational coresidence in 19th-century America. Was it a system of support for dependent elderly, or did it reflect intergenerational interdependence? I focus on transitions from middle age to old age, and I assess key predictors of family transitions, including widowhood, retirement, disability, migration, and wealth. The results show that adverse events precipitated changes in the headship of intergenerational families but did not increase the likelihood of residing in an intergenerational family. The findings suggest that 19th-century intergenerational coresidence was not principally a means of old-age support; more often, probably, there was a reciprocal relationship between generations.

Keywords

coresidence; family; family structure; intergenerational relations; living arrangements; social trends

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Three decades ago, scholars discovered that elderly people in 19th-century America usually resided with their children. From the outset, the issue was cast in terms of family transitions over the life course (Chudacoff & Hareven, 1978, 1979; Smith, 1979). The only available data on intergenerational coresidence, however, were census cross sections. As Chudacoff and Hareven (1978) noted, “By necessity, our analysis … is cross sectional by its very nature. We are inferring, therefore, longitudinal patterns from cross sectional information” (p. 218).

Since then, virtually all analyses of the living arrangements of the aged in the 19th and early 20th centuries have relied on analysis of age patterns of coresidence to infer family transitions from cross-sectional evidence (e.g., Elman, 1998; Grattan, 1986; Grattan & Gutmann, 2010; Kramarow, 1995; Ruggles, 2003, 2007). Cross-sectional analysis has proved a powerful approach, stimulating lively debates and enriching our understanding of long-run family change. There are, however, significant limitations to a purely cross-sectional approach. Most important, cross-sectional analysis does not allow for assessment of how transitions in characteristics such as marital status, occupation, and place of residence are associated with particular kinds of family outcomes.

This article assesses transitions in intergenerational coresidence, here defined as residence of an elderly person with an own child. I use new linked samples of the U.S. census to investigate the mechanisms of the high intergenerational coresidence of the 19th century. I focus on transitions from middle age to old age, and I assess the effects of key characteristics including widowhood, retirement, and property. The results provide insight

into debates about the 19th-century family system and have implications for the decline of intergenerational coresidence in the 20th century.

Background

When Chudacoff and Hareven (1978) first discovered the high coresidence of the elderly in 19th century Essex County, Rhode Island, they were careful to point out that it did not appear to reflect a simple system of old-age dependency. The elderly, they argued, typically remained in their own homes. Younger generation members usually shared the home, partly because housing shortages constrained their ability to set up independent households of their own. Accordingly, they argued that the relationship of the old and their coresidents was reciprocal rather than one-way support.

Over the following decades, this interpretation lost favor. Most subsequent writers argued that intergenerational coresidence was a form of old-age support (e.g., Costa, 1997; Elman, 1998; Gratton, 1986; Haber & Gratton, 1994; Hammel, 1995; Kramarow, 1995; McGarry & Schoeni, 2000; Schoeni, 1998; Smith, 1986; Wall, 1995). They maintain that the elderly in the 19th century preferred to live alone—in economic terms, that privacy was a normal good. Thus, they contend, most elderly in the 19th century faced challenges owing to widowhood, poverty, frailty, or sickness, and they were forced to rely on the assistance to their children. Hareven (1996) herself later adopted the dependency thesis, writing in 1996 that coresidence occurred “primarily when elderly parents were too frail to maintain a separate residence” (p. 2).

The dependency interpretation of 19th-century intergenerational coresidence had implications for the formation of intergenerational families. Chudacoff and Hareven initially suggested that coresidence occurred mainly when the younger generation remained in their parental home for an extended period after reaching adulthood. According to the dependency paradigm, however, elderly parents and their children moved in together after residing separately. As Hareven (1994) put it, “When elderly parents were unable to maintain themselves … aging parents had an adult child return to live with them, or they moved into a child’s household” (p. 442). Kertzer (1995) described this pattern as the nuclear reincorporation system.

My own interpretation, based on analysis of cross-sectional census data, differs significantly from the prevailing dependency paradigm (Ruggles 2003, 2007). As did Chudacoff and Hareven, I have concluded that most 19th-century intergenerational families probably formed when one child remained in his or her parental home after reaching adulthood. I have also argued that, although such families were usually mutually beneficial, the younger generation was probably more often dependent than was the older.

This article exploits a powerful new source to reexamine these hypotheses. Was 19th-century intergenerational coresidence a system of support for dependent elderly kin, or did it reflect intergenerational interdependence? This debate is critical for theories of family change. Implicit or explicit assumptions about historical change underlie virtually all social theory of the family (Therborn, 2004). Understanding the dynamics of intergenerational families in traditional American society is essential if we hope to unravel the dramatic reconfiguration in the living arrangements of the aged during the 20th century. By identifying the factors associated with key family-status transitions of the aging population in the later 19th century, I hope to shed light on processes of intergenerational family formation and dissolution.

Method

Integrated Public-Use Microdata Series – Linked Census Samples

Because this article represents the first application of an unusual new source, it is important to provide some detail on the construction of the data sets. Between 1980 and 1998, volunteers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) devoted some 12 million hours to the creation of a massive machine-readable transcription describing more than 50 million people: the entire population of the United States enumerated in the 1880 Census of Population. The Minnesota Population Center (MPC) converted this transcription of the census into a source suitable for demographic research by correcting errors and coding millions of different alphabetic strings describing population characteristics into numeric categories (Goeken, Nguyen, Ruggles, & Sargent, 2003).

The complete-count LDS database created an opportunity to link the 1880 census to the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) (Ruggles et al., 2010). The IPUMS is a harmonized series of U.S. census microdata samples spanning the period from 1850 to 2000. The samples range in density from 1% to 5% of the population, and for the period before 1940, they include names and addresses as well as the characteristics of each individual. Because the IPUMS samples are independent of one another, it is not feasible to link individuals from one sample to the next. It is practical, however, to link the complete-count LDS database for 1880 to each of the IPUMS samples. This yields a set of linked samples covering pairs of census years: 1850 – 1880, 1860 – 1880, 1870 – 1880, 1880 – 1900, 1880 – 1910, 1880 – 1920, and 1880 – 1930. Thus, these are not longitudinal files with many observations of the same individual; rather, there are just two observations of each individual.

The linked census records project employed record-linkage and data-mining technology to maximize representativeness and minimize error. Although historical demographers have employed record linkage for more than half a century (Rosenthal, 1997), recent research in data-mining techniques has opened new opportunities to create more powerful linked historical datasets than were previously possible (Ruggles, 2006). The IPUMS linking strategy builds on those innovations.

The IPUMS record linkage did not focus on maximizing the number of accurate links. Instead, the procedures are designed to maximize the representativeness of the linked cases. Because the linked samples are designed to allow for study of social mobility, migration, family change, and life-course transitions, the procedures avoided using any information that could bias the sample with respect to those changes in characteristics. Accordingly, the IPUMS record linkage relied on five characteristics that should, at least in theory, remain unchanged over the life course: birth year, state of birth, given name, surname, and race.

This approach often yielded multiple potential matches for a given individual. For example, the 1880 census lists 48 White men named John Smith who were born in New York State in 1848. Because the software allows for inexact matches of age and name, there are actually hundreds of potential matches for an individual with this set of characteristics. Under the IPUMS linking procedure, whenever more than a single potential match was found, all potential matches were eliminated from consideration. This leads to disproportionate exclusion of ethnic groups that have comparatively low diversity in names—most notably the Irish—a problem that can be corrected only through proportional weighting. Other than ethnicity, there is little relationship between name commonness and census characteristics such as occupational status or education (Goeken, Vick, & Lenius, in press). Previous record linkage studies have used other information on the record—such as place of residence, occupation, or names of children—to resolve ambiguities. By eliminating such cases

instead, the IPUMS linked samples aim to minimize selection bias with respect to key transitions. Thus, the approach sacrifices some links to maximize representativeness.

The record linkage relied on two data-mining software systems: the Freely Extensible Biomedical Record Linkage (Christen, 2008) and the Library for Support Vector Machines (Chang & Lin, 2009). Using high-performance computing facilities of the Minnesota Supercomputing Institute for Advanced Computational Research, we compared every person of a given birthplace, race, and sex with every other person that shared those characteristics and created a similarity score based on first name, last name, and age. The machine-learning software was "trained" with a set of hand-linked data developed by IPUMS staff. When there was more than one potential link, the case was excluded. The linked sets were weighted to make them as representative as possible of the entire population that had the potential to be linked. Full documentation of the procedures and the linked data sets themselves are freely available on the IPUMS Web site (Ruggles et al., 2010).

Study Population and Analytic Approach

After 1880, intergenerational coresidence of the elderly began to decline rapidly (Ruggles, 2007). To understand intergenerational coresidence before the onset of this decline, we must turn to the earliest linked IPUMS samples. Accordingly, this analysis uses samples of the 1850, 1860, and 1870 censuses linked to the 1880 LDS database. The censuses from 1850 to 1870 are especially appropriate for investigation of intergenerational dependency, as they included a question on the real property held by each individual, a key indicator of economic power in an era when most of the population resided on farms.

The IPUMS samples for 1850 – 1880 include the entire population of the states and all territories that later became states, with the major exceptions of "Indians not taxed" and the slave population. The study population is a clearly defined subset of the IPUMS census samples. The analysis is limited to persons first observed at ages 30 – 59 in 1850, 1860, or 1870 and observed a second time in 1880 at age 60 or older.

The analysis focuses on persons who were first observed as married household heads and their wives residing with at least one of their own children. This generally excludes persons who never had children; although there were a substantial number of childless in the 19th century, they did not have the opportunity for intergenerational coresidence and therefore are outside the scope of this analysis. The study population is restricted to persons with a spouse present at the first observation because this allows for assessment of the impact of the loss of a spouse on living arrangements. Focusing on persons who were married at the first observation is especially important for assessing the family transitions of women, as such analysis depends on information about husband's property and occupation. Finally, the study population is limited to persons who were heading households or who were married to a household head, at the first observation. The loss of headship status, I hypothesize, is a key indicator of dependency. To assess whether the transition to old age was associated with a loss of headship status, it is essential to limit the analysis to persons who had achieved household headship by the first observation.

The IPUMS samples for 1850, 1860, and 1870 include 68,786 persons who meet all these criteria: persons aged 30 – 59 at first observation and aged 60 or older in 1880; and persons married, household head or wife of head, and with at least one child present in the household. Mortality was high in the mid-19th century; only about 32,983 of these persons would be expected to survive until the 1880 census (calculated from Hacker, 2010; Haines, 1998). The IPUMS-linked samples provide 6,783 cases that meet all the criteria, for an estimated linkage rate of 20.6%. The linkage rate for women was 16.9%; women who were

widowed and subsequently remarried cannot be linked from census to census because their names changed upon remarriage. The linkage rate for men was somewhat higher, at 23.9%. These linkage rates reflect the priority of maintaining representativeness and accuracy rather than maximizing the number of links. Although the number of linked cases is small relative to the size of the IPUMS samples, it is sufficient to provide robust results.

The analysis merges data from three linked censuses (1850 – 1880 – 1860 – 1880, and 1870 – 1880), so the interval between first and second observations is 10, 20, or 30 years. I focus on three possible outcomes: (a) remaining as head of household with a child present in the household, (b) residing without a child, and (c) becoming a parent (or parent-in-law) of a household head. Figure 1 shows the distribution of outcomes by sex and age at final observation.

For women, the overall percentage of the population residing with children (as either heads or parents) declined until ages 70 – 74 and then increased, peaking at age 80 – 84. Among men, the percentage residing with children reached a low point at ages 75 – 79 and rose slightly for those who survived to 80 or older. The upturn in overall intergenerational coresidence for both sexes at the oldest ages could reflect both nuclear reincorporation and a greater propensity to coreside among cohorts born at the end of the 18th century (Ruggles, 2003).

Pooling the data from the linked samples, I use multinomial logistic regression to assess the factors associated with each transition. Following procedures described in Davern, Ruggles, Swenson, Oakes, and Alexander (2009), I use Taylor series linearization to adjust for the complex sample design and obtain reliable variance estimates.

Variables

Table 1 describes the variables in the analysis. The dependent variable, family outcomes, is listed first. Overall, about 61% of cases remained heads or spouses with children at the second observation, 27% became empty nesters without children, and 11% became parents or parents-in-law. Just 0.4% of the study population fell outside one of these three groups, and I excluded them from the analysis.

The second variable listed has 14 categories designed to capture interactions among gender, farming, marital status transitions, and retirement. Gender had powerful effects on 19th-century living arrangements. Because widowed women usually wielded less economic power than did widowed men, they had less bargaining power with their adult children (Shammas, Salmon, & Dahlin, 1987). I grouped married men and women in together, as they ordinarily shared the same living arrangements.

The decline of farming could be the key factor in the decline in intergenerational coresidence after the mid-19th century (Ruggles, 2007). In particular, with the rise of well-paid wage-labor alternatives to farming, I hypothesize that the younger generation had less and less incentive to remain at home. Moreover, elderly people who had worked for wages could not offer the prospect of agricultural inheritance to their children. If this is correct, farming should be a powerful predictor of family transitions. The availability of the linked data allows for identification of two categories of farmers that are invisible in cross-sectional analysis: widows of farmers and retired farmers. We know from cross-sectional studies that widowhood and retirement are key determinants of the living arrangements of the aged (e.g., Ruggles, 2003, 2007). Retirement was still comparatively rare in this period, and most people who retired probably did so because they were no longer capable of working. Accordingly, retirement can provide a test of the dependence thesis of intergenerational

coresidence (for discussions of the meaning of retirement in the 19th century, see Costa, 1998; Graebner, 1980).

Categories identified as “farmer” either had an occupation of farmer or were married to a farmer at the first observation. The retired are those with no occupation (or no husband’s occupation, in the case of women) at the second observation and persons identified as working are those who listed a job title at the second observation. For widows, retirement information is not available, so the widows are classified only according to the occupation of their former husband. Women who remarried cannot be linked because they changed their names, so remarried women are excluded from the analysis.

The migration and urbanization variable identifies persons who migrated across a county line between the first and second observations, and it distinguishes migrants who went to urban places from those who went to rural places. Mid-20th century sociological theorists frequently argued that small conjugal households are especially suited to cities (e.g., Burgess, 1960; Cowgill, 1974; Goode, 1963; Wirth, 1938). Others maintained that rising residential mobility led to the loss of family cohesion and a decline of extended households (Litwak, 1960; Parsons & Bales, 1955). The linked data allows for assessment of these hypotheses by examining the interaction of geographic mobility and urbanization. I classified nonmigrants according to their urban or rural status at the first observation, so nonmigrants in rural places that became urban between observations were considered rural. Following census definitions, urban places are those with 2,500 or more inhabitants.

The information on real property is of central importance to the old-age-dependence hypothesis. From the earliest sociological discussions of 19th-century family structure, the transmission of agricultural property has been considered a central motive for intergenerational coresidence, and it remains a leading interpretation (Berkner, 1975; Fauve-Chamoux & Ochiai, 2009; Le Play, 1884). The property variable is measured as the real property owned by the husband and wife at the first observation, measured in 1870 dollars. The price adjustments were based on the historical Consumer Price Index in Carter et al. (2006).

The variable on chronic illness or disability provides a direct test of the thesis that elderly resided with their children when they became unable to care for themselves. The 1880 census asked five separate questions to identify disabilities: blind, deaf and dumb, idiotic, insane, or “maimed crippled, bedridden, or otherwise disabled.” In addition, the 1880 census had a unique question on sickness: “Is the person [on the day of the enumerator’s visit] sick or temporarily disabled, so as to be unable to attend to ordinary business or duties? Is so, what is the sickness or disability?” (U.S. Census Office, 1880). The chronic illness or disability variable identifies an affirmative response on any of the disability variables or a chronic illness or disability identified in the sickness variable. The responses to these questions were probably underreported; the 1880 instructions caution enumerators that respondents “are disposed to conceal, or even deny, the existence of such infirmities” (U.S. Census Office, 1880). Nevertheless, the enumeration of the “defective and dependent classes” was substantially more thorough in 1880 than in any other census of the period (Gorwitz, 1974; U.S. Census Office, 1888), and if there were a strong association between infirmity and coresidence with children, this variable should detect it.

The only available indicator of education is illiteracy. Because of stigma, illiteracy may have been underreported, but nevertheless, persons identified as illiterate would certainly have had lower education on average than persons identified as literate. The race and nativity variable distinguishes Blacks and immigrants from native Whites. Whites and Blacks are the only racial groups included in the linked samples, as before 1880m the census enumerated

too few Asians or American Indians to construct useful linked data sets. Moreover, the census never identified slaves by name, so only free Blacks can be linked to censuses taken before the Civil War. For those reasons, just 3.7% of the linked study population was Black. If economic hardship was associated with intergenerational coresidence, we would expect the White and native-born to reside with children less frequently than the rest of the population.

The remaining variables are demographic controls. The year of initial observation determines the interval between observations, which in turn affects the opportunity for transitions. The number of children present at the first observation affects the opportunities to reside with children. In some cases, children died between observations, and in other instances, additional children were born. Although we cannot directly measure the demographic opportunities for coresidence at the second observation, the number of children present at the first observation is the best available proxy. Birth cohort captures the effects of age of the older generation in 1880. Coresidence can be affected not only by the age of the older generation but also by the age of their children, so the model also includes the age of the youngest child present at the first observation, expressed in years of age at the second observation in 1880.

Results

Table 2 presents complex sample multinomial logit regressions of family status transitions on the independent variables described in Table 1. The model compares transitions from head with children to residence without children and from head with children to parent of head. The results are presented as odds ratios.

The left column of Table 2 describes the factors associated with the departure of children. If the dependence theory of 19th-century coresidence were correct, we would expect to find that the elderly who had gone through adverse transitions—such as widowhood, retirement, or infirmity—would be likely to reside with their children. Moreover, we would expect that the older population with the most resources—the wealthy, literate, and the native whites—would be the most likely to live independently from their children.

None of these predictions holds true. For women, widowhood had no significant effect on continued residence with children. Widowed and remarried men were comparatively likely to lose their children, except for widowed or remarried farmers who remained in the workforce. Among married people, retirement was clearly associated with the departure of children.

The more property held by couples when they were middle aged, the less likely the couples were to reside without children when they became old. Thus, the elderly with the most resources were the ones most likely to remain household heads with children. This is the opposite effect that one would expect if privacy were a normal good, but it is exactly what one would expect if the prospect of agricultural inheritance provided a major incentive for children to remain in the parental home after reaching adulthood.

Chronic illness and disability, race and nativity, and illiteracy had no significant impact on residence with children. Accordingly, these findings provide no support for the dependence model of 19th-century intergenerational coresidence.

Migration to cities had no appreciable impact on intergenerational coresidence, but migration to rural areas—still the dominant destination in this period—was associated with the departure of children. Among nonmigrants, urban residents remained with their children substantially more often than rural people, which suggests that mid-20th-century

assumptions about the impact of urban living on the family were mistaken. As Chudacoff and Hareven (1978) argued, the high coresidence of urban nonmigrants may reflect a housing shortage in rapidly growing cities, which made it difficult for young people to leave home and establish independent residences.

The right column examines the odds of transition from household head to parent of the head, and the results are striking. Farm wives who lost their husbands were about 127 times more likely to reside as mothers or mothers-in-law than were farmers and their wives who remained married and working. Women who had been married to nonfarmers and women who remained married to retired men were also extraordinarily likely to lose the household headship and become parents of the head. Among farm men who were both widowed and retired, the transition from head to parent was even more pronounced: They were 177 times as likely as married working farm couples to reside as parent or parent-in-law. Being either retired or widowed dramatically increased the odds of a transition, and the effect of retirement was substantially greater for farmers than for nonfarmers.

The fact that the effect is as strong for men as for women means that the transition in headship is not just a response to the death of the patriarch. Headship transitions depended on widowhood and retirement for both men and women. A shift from household head to parent or parent-in-law of the head was also encouraged by low property holding at the first observation, but none of the other indicators of potential need—illiteracy, chronic illness and disability, race or nativity—has a significant effect on the transition.

One final association is noteworthy. As expected, the number of children present in the household at the first observation was strongly positively associated with coresidence; it makes sense that the more children available, the greater are the odds of living with one of them. Not expected, however, was the inverse association between number of children and residence as a parent. Perhaps having more children to choose from gave the older generation more bargaining power, thus allowing them to retain the household headship longer.

Discussion

Most of the extensive literature on living arrangements of the aged in the 19th century has viewed intergenerational coresidence as a form of old-age support. Investigators have generally assumed that it was normal for the children to leave home when they reached adulthood and for the elderly parents to move in with their children when they became widowed, impoverished, or infirm. This interpretation is anachronistic, projecting modern ideas about old-age support onto an era that was very different. We should be wary of the assumption that older people who live with their adult children are necessarily doing so because of poverty or disability. Even today, there is substantial evidence that intergenerational coresidence often, and perhaps usually, results more from the needs of adult children than from the needs of their elderly parents (Aquilino, 1990; Choi 2003; Crimmins & Ingegneri, 1990; Kotlikoff & Morris, 1990; Smits, Gaalen, & Mulder, 2010; Spear & Avery, 1993; Ward, Logan, & Spitze, 1992; cf. Moehling, 1995).

Under the patriarchal system of the 19th century, there were especially good reasons for the younger generation to remain in the parental household. Old men had disproportionate control over valuable assets—not just farms but also workshops, retail stores, and other businesses. In this context, the younger generation had powerful incentives to remain behind and work on the farm or business with the expectation of eventual inheritance. For residents of high-density, rapidly growing towns and cities, housing shortages provided an additional motivation for the younger generation to remain with their parents.

The linked data allow us to identify factors associated with the departure of children from the parental home. Other than the number of available children, the most important predictor of the empty nest was lack of property. At least for men, being widowed or retired was also associated with residing without children. If the elderly moved in with their children when they were sick, impoverished, and widowed, we would find that those who lived independently from their children were the ones with the fewest challenges. In fact, those facing the fewest challenges were the most likely to reside with children. This is not to say that the elderly never moved in with their children for old-age support. Nuclear reincorporation certainly did occur on occasion, and it was doubtless fairly common. The evidence nevertheless indicates that reincorporation of dependent elderly parents was not the dominant pattern; more often, probably, the younger generation never left home.

Although adverse events did not increase the likelihood of intergenerational coresidence, such events did precipitate changes in the headship of intergenerational families. In particular, transitions from head to parent were closely associated with widowhood or retirement. This was true for both sexes, and the impact of widowhood was as dramatic for men as it was for women: Those who lost a spouse and did not remarry usually lost the household headship as well. It appears likely that people often made the transition from head to parent with no intervening period of separate residence.

It is important to acknowledge limitations of the analysis. The linked data samples are not adequate to completely describe 19th-century family transitions. We do not have continuous residence histories but just two observations for every individual. We cannot, therefore, track every change of status, and we cannot be certain about who moved in with whom. Although the linked data represent a marked improvement over the cross-sectional quantitative sources used in the past, they barely hint at the rich complexity of family relationships reflected in diaries, letters, novels, and the prescriptive literature of the period. Nevertheless, the data do provide important new results that enrich our perspective on 19th-century transitions, and the results presented here have significant implications for our understanding of American families before the great transformations of the 20th century.

The first quantitative description of the high frequency of intergenerational coresidence—Chudacoff and Hareven's (1978) analysis of Essex County, Rhode Island—seems more and more plausible. Intergenerational coresidence in the 19th century does not seem to reflect a simple system of old-age dependency. As Chudacoff and Hareven (1978) suggested, the elderly probably did, for the most part, remain in their own homes, and the younger generation shared the home. As they argued, the relationship of the old and their coresident children was probably reciprocal: In particular, the young contributed labor essential for the functioning of the household economy, and the old contributed productive assets. Upon widowhood and retirement, household headship generally shifted from the older generation to the young. Only a minority of the 19th-century population, however, ever experienced the empty-nest phase of the family life course that is nearly universal today; especially among property-owning farm households, one child ordinarily remained coresident until the older generation died.

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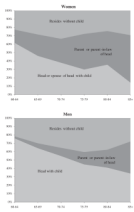

Figure 1.
Living Arrangements of Study Population, by Age at Final Observation: U.S. Linked Samples, 1850 – 1880.

Table 1

Variables Incorporated in the Analysis

Categorical Variables	Percentage
Family outcomes	
Head with child (no change)	61.3
No coresident child	27.2
Residing as parent of head	11.5
Gender, widowhood, farming, and retirement	
Widowed women	
Nonfarmer at first observation	7.1
Farmer at first observation	8.0
Widowed men	
Nonfarmer, retired	1.1
Farmer, retired	1.6
Nonfarmer, still working	4.3
Farmer, still working	3.1
Remarried men	
Nonfarmer, retired	0.8
Farmer, retired	0.7
Nonfarmer, still working	6.8
Farmer, still working	6.7
Married women and men	
Nonfarmer, retired	4.4
Farmer, retired	5.0
Nonfarmer, still working	21.1
Farmer, still working (reference category)	29.2
Migration and urban residence	
Migrant to urban place	10.3
Migrant to rural place	23.8
Urban nonmigrant	12.9
Rural nonmigrant (reference category)	53.0
Real estate at first observation (1870 dollars)	
None	27.7
$1 – $4,999	41.0
$5,000 – $9,999	16.8
$10,000+ (reference category)	14.5
Chronic illness or disability	0.6
Illiterate	8.6
Race and nativity	
Black	3.7
Immigrant	22.8
Native White (reference category)	73.5

Categorical Variables	**Percentage**	
Year of initial observation		
1870	3.7	
1860	22.8	
1850 (reference category)	73.5	
Covariates	Mean	Std. Dev.
Number of coresident children at first observation	3.9	2.2
Birth cohort	1,813.5	5.5
Age of youngest child in 1880 (based on first observation)	28.0	7.5
N (unweighted)	6,734	

Table 2

Multinomial Complex Sample Logit Regressions of Family Transitions on Selected Characteristics: Linked Sample Populations, 1850 – 1880 (Odds Ratios) (n = 6,783)

	No Coresident Child	Residing as Parent of Head
	(vs. remaining as head/spouse with child)	
Categorical variables		
Gender, widowhood, farming, and retirement		
Widowed women		
Nonfarmer at first observation	1.11	74.50***
Farmer at first observation	1.42	127.31***
Widowed men		
Nonfarmer, retired	1.91	70.20***
Farmer, retired	3.21**	177.66***
Nonfarmer, still working	2.10*	41.65***
Farmer, still working	0.62*	9.04***
Remarried men		
Nonfarmer, retired	2.14***	6.92***
Farmer, retired	3.44***	10.93***
Nonfarmer, still working	1.16**	0.67
Farmer, still working	0.93***	0.64
Married women and men		
Nonfarmer, retired	2.82***	25.10***
Farmer, retired	2.82***	30.30***
Nonfarmer, still working	1.62***	5.73***
Farmer, still working (reference category)	1.00	1.00
Migration and urban residence		
Migrant to urban place	0.91	1.01
Migrant to rural place	1.44***	1.96***
Urban nonmigrant	0.60**	0.78
Rural nonmigrant (reference category)	1.00	1.00
Real estate at first observation		
None	1.87***	1.67*
$1 – $4,999	1.74***	1.76**
$5,000 – $9,999	1.37*	1.45
$10,000+ (reference category)	1.00	1.00
Chronic illness or disability	1.23	2.45
Illiterate	0.97	1.52
Race and nativity		
Black	1.33	0.93

	No Coresident Child	Residing as Parent of Head
	(vs. remaining as head/spouse with child)	
Immigrant	0.89	0.77
Native white (reference category)	1.00	1.00
Year of initial observation		
1870	1.94***	0.90
1860	2.19***	1.47*
1850 (reference category)	1.00	1.00
Covariates		
Number of children at first observation	0.87***	0.87**
Birth cohort	0.95***	0.91***
Age of youngest child	1.24***	1.15*
Age of youngest squared	1.00*	1.00*
Intercept	93.96***	157.66***
Nagelkerke R^2	0.38	

*** $p < .001$.

** $p < .01$.

* $p < .05$.