

example, the extent of Western influence by considering the level of education, it is by far preferable to include additional and more specific questions on this dimension. In fact, Morroe Berger in his study of civil servants in Egypt constructed and administered a Guttman scale on "exposure to the West."⁴ Also similar types of questions were included in an investigation of mass communication in Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries.⁵

Of course, one must admit that Yaukey's questionnaire was already too lengthy and complex; but, with the advantage of hindsight, one can say that some of the questions which yielded results of dubious value could have been sacrificed in favor of additional items on family structure, exposure to Western influence, and even, perhaps, on social mobility.

Yaukey's study, in addition to providing valuable insights into the reproductive behavior of an Arab population, has cleared much of the underbrush for the benefit of future investigators. Any new field study of fertility in the Middle East will have to take into account both the successes and the failures of Yaukey's pioneering investigation.

One final and short note: the author missed adding an exotic touch to his monograph by not reproducing the Arabic version of his questionnaire.

GEORGES SABAGH

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BIRTH RATES OF THE WHITE POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES, 1800-1860*

SEVERAL students coming under the influence of Professor Simon Kuznets for purposes of Ph.D. dissertations, concerned themselves with the series of historical data for the

⁴ BUREAUCRACY AND SOCIETY IN MODERN EGYPT, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957, pp. 221-223.

⁵ Lerner, Daniel: THE PASSING OF TRADITIONAL SOCIETY: MODERNIZING THE MIDDLE EAST, Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1958.

* Yasuba, Yasukichi: BIRTH RATES OF THE WHITE POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES, 1800-1860: AN ECONOMIC STUDY, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962, 198 pp.

United States on fertility ratios in relation to different variables. Among the resulting studies have been one by H. Y. Tien¹ and one by Bernard Okun.²

The most recent study of this type is the one under review, Yasuba's BIRTH RATES OF THE WHITE POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES, 1800-1860.

The first major objective of this study is to ascertain beyond a doubt whether the birth rate in the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century was considerably higher than in Europe and whether the fall in the birth rate in the United States started earlier than in most European countries. (p. 18)

Older hands at the trade will recognize at once the desirability of more specificity in such an hypothesis since there doubtless was considerable difference between areas of Europe with respect to birth rates in 1800 and to the incipience of decline. In fact, in recording his findings the author stated, "It is also made clear that the birth rate in the United States in the period 1800-1860 was much higher than in *Western Europe*." (Reviewer's italics.) As for the United States, the author also found that there were marked differences between the *old* and *new* states with respect to levels and trends in fertility.

Despite these complexities the author appears to be satisfied about the validity of his first hypothesis:

These demographic facts established, our next task is to explain why, or how, the birth rate in the United States was higher than in Europe and why, or how, the birth rate in the United States started to fall earlier than in Europe. (p. 19)

In the pursuit of answers to these questions the author first gives some attention to "the effects of age distribution and marriage customs—the age at and the incidence of marriage." He finds, he says, "that much, though not all, of the difference between the refined birth rates of America and Europe in the

¹ Tien, H. Yuan: A Demographic Aspect of Interstate Variations in American Fertility, 1800-1860. The Milbank Memorial Fund *Quarterly*, January, 1959, xxxvii: 49-59.

² Okun, Bernard: TRENDS IN BIRTH RATES IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1870, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1958, 203 pp.

late eighteenth and early nineteenth century can be explained by a difference in marriage customs." (p. 20)

The author's use of the term "refined birth rate" is rather unconventional. Actually he deals mainly with ratios of children to women and by "refined birth rate" he means "number of white children under 10 years of age per 1,000 white women aged 16-44." (p. 18) Since this index depends upon mortality as well as fertility, the author devotes a chapter to trends and geographic differentials in mortality from 1800 to 1860. As expected, anything approaching hard data for this period are very meager and the author's conclusions are understandably indeterminate. "It is well known that mortality declined during the last half of the nineteenth century. What happened during the first half is much less certain." (p. 101) The analysis throws virtually no light on the question of impact of child and maternal mortality on levels and trends of fertility ratios during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In the last chapter the author is concerned with the relation of fertility ratios to certain broad economic variables such as industrialization, urbanization, availability of easily accessible land and density of population. In these analyses states or other geographical areas are used as units. Indices are based upon the (frequently unsatisfactory) quantitative data available such as the proportion of workers in nonagricultural pursuits and the proportion of the population that is urban.

As for general evaluation, the reviewer must first take off his hat to a student who undertakes a Ph.D. dissertation on a topic involving historical statistics in a country with which he is not familiar. The difficulties of this type doubtless are particularly encompassing when an oriental student attempts to fathom the statistics for our country during the period of its expanding frontier. The volume does not advance our knowledge of demographic history of the United States very much, but that is mainly because of deficiencies of the data rather than deficiencies of analysis. Under the doubtlessly rigorous but friendly tutelage of Kuznets the author has patently received good training in research on a problem involving economic and demographic relationships. Hopefully, we will hear from him again.

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