

FAMILY SIZE IN THE UNITED STATES:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF TRENDS*

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The processes of industrialization and urbanization have been and are frequently cited as significant factors in bringing about the decline of the extended family system. An important aspect of this contention has been the acceptance of the family system as a dependent, reaction system within society. This paper focuses upon one aspect of the familial system--family size--and attempts to explore the relationship of family size to the process of industrialization and urbanization. Data collected from original U.S. Census manuscript schedules for 1850 are compared to 1960 U.S. Census data on family size. It was necessary to apply a recounting procedure to the 1850 original Census manuscript schedules to determine family size because the aggregate reports initially issued by the U.S. Census Bureau did not distinguish between household size and family size. Many households surveyed contained non-family members. The results indicate that the majority of families surveyed in 1850 were similar in size to contemporary families and these families were too small to permit adherence to an extended pattern. This challenges the supposed influences of industrialization and urbanization upon the family and lends support to Levy's contention that several structural aspects of the family remain virtually identical for the majority of the population, in any society, cross-culturally and historically.

A commonly held generalization in the field of family sociology is that, as a society experiences the processes of industrialization and urbanization,

*Some of the material and the 1850 data, collected in 1969, presented in this paper were originally a part of an unpublished research report which partially fulfilled the requirements for a Master of Arts degree granted by Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Ill., in 1969. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the Midwest Sociological Society in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April, 1973. A special thanks to Professor Frank E. Jones, Professor Herman R. Lantz, Jean Seward and Lewellyn Hendriz for assistance and criticisms which contributed to the completion of this paper.

large extended family structures tend to be replaced by smaller family structures which are usually termed independent, nuclear or conjugal types. In this relationship the family merely plays a dependent role by reacting to the processes of industrialization and urbanization. This paper will explore the relationship between these two processes and one family aspect--family size.

Various sources support the contention that the family has changed as a result of the impact of industrialization and urbanization. Popular literature (cf. Hunt, 1971:116-118), numerous introductory sociology textbooks (cf. Broom and Selznick, 1963:358; MacIver and Page, 1949:238-266; and McKee, 1969:365), as well as much of family literature (cf. Kirkpatrick, 1963:137-139; Leslie, 1967:273), present the stereotypic view of the family changing from the large, influential, extended unit to the smaller, independent, nuclear unit. As a result, the contemporary family is a more specialized unit which is structurally isolated (cf. Parsons, 1964:58-63) but compatible with "modern" society (cf. Kephart, 1961:73).

This common perspective, despite the many works which support it, has not gone unchallenged. These challenges include the following: One notes the importance and viability of the nuclear family throughout history and cross-culturally (cf. Murdock, 1949:7; Parsons and Bales, 1955:9-11; and Spiro, 1954:839-846). Another documents the extent and significance of kinship relations in urban and industrial areas and shows the viability of the extended family (cf. Litwak, 1960:385-394; Sussman, 1959:333-340; and, Sussman and Burchinal, 1964:170-176). The third notes structural exceptions to those stated in the common perspective, e.g., the predominance of the nuclear family in pre-industrial societies (cf. Greenfield, 1961:312-322; Laslett, 1965:89-94; and Seward, 1973: 58-70). Another one cites the existence of behavioral patterns in pre-industrial society widely presumed to be a result of industrialization (cf. Lantz, Snyder, et al., 1968:413-426; and Furstenberg, 1966:326-327). The final approach emphasizes that, because of external forces, family structures have been relatively constant over time and cross-culturally, regardless of ideal expectations (cf. Burch, 1967; Levy, 1949; Levy, 1965:1-63; Wozniak, 1972).

By exploring the relationship between family size and the processes of industrialization and urbanization, this paper will attempt to reduce some of the ambiguity that has been a part of generalizations concerning this relationship and provide direction for further research.

Problem

This paper will use as a basis for analysis Levy's challenge to the common perspective regarding family change. Levy (1965:40-63) argues that because of economic and demographic limitations, certain structural aspects of the family have remained fairly constant over time and cross-culturally. Levy sums up his argument in the following proposition:

The general outlines and nature of the actual family structures have been virtually identical in certain strategic respects in all known societies in world history for well over 50 percent of the members of those societies (Levy, 1965:41).

The "certain strategic respects" are enumerated as follows: (1) size of membership; (2) age composition and relationships of the membership through time; (3) composition by sex; (4) generational composition; (5) number of marital pairs; and (6) number of siblings (1965:41). Regardless of variation in ideal family and kinship structures, in practice, the majority of the people in all societies have lived in families that are virtually the same with regard to these "strategic respects".

Levy notes three known ideal family types in terms of their vertical and horizontal proliferation. The traditional Chinese family represents ideal proliferation in both directions--vertical and horizontal--, the stem family represents the intermediate form which involves maximum proliferation vertically but none horizontally, and the nuclear family is the final form which lacks both horizontal and vertical proliferation. Levy (1965:49) argues that regardless of a society's ideal family type the degree of proliferation, whether horizontal or vertical, is approximately the same in all of these societies.

Levy supports his basic proposition with three different types of societies. The first type includes pre-industrial societies which are "devoid of modern medical technology" and have an extremely high mortality rate (1965:49). The high mortality rate restricts the proliferation of actual families in this societal type regardless of its ideal type of family (extended). The second type includes societies which have "highly developed modern medical technologies as part of generally high levels of 'modernization' (1965:49)." Because these modern industrialized societies lack demographic limitations operating upon family proliferation, there is little variation from the ideal family patterns (nuclear). The third type includes societies which are transitional because they "have imported some modern medical technologies but have not yet achieved stable high levels of modernization in general respects (1965:45-59)." In these societies, because of recently achieved low levels of mortality, the possibility exists for a greater range of variation in actual family structures.

Although Levy's proposition applies to all societies--historically and cross-culturally--it has only been tested using contemporary cross-national data. Burch (1967), in an initial examination, and Wozniak (1972), which updated Burch's study, observed that large residential families and extended families did not predominate in any of the societies studied (N=27). Also those nations having the larger, household (family) size averages (4 to 6 persons) are examples of Levy's transitional societies; hence, these large averages do not contradict Levy's proposition. The lack of "baselines" and the incomplete nature of historical family data appear to be major deterrents against testing Levy's proposition historically (cf. Seward, 1973:59; and Wozniak, 1972:6).

The focus of this paper is upon the "strategic respect" of family size and shall observe the change, or lack of it, with regard to this aspect over time in one society. A comparison will be made between the family size of two contrasting periods in the history and development of the United States. Each of these two periods represent a different type of society as presented by Levy. Data yielding family size, representing a pre-industrial period or Levy's first type of society, was obtained from the 1850 United States Census manuscript schedules. In the development of the United States the Civil War is usually considered the beginning of (or at least the bringing

about of) a rapid acceleration and spread of the processes of industrialization and urbanization (Schneider, 1957:51-71; and Wilensky and Lebeaux, 1958:49). In 1850 about two thirds of the labor force were farmers (United States: Bureau of the Census, 1960:72), only one-sixth of the labor force was engaged in manufacturing or construction industries (1960:74), over four-fifths of the population resided in rural areas (1960:9), and a relatively stable period, lasting five decades, for the mortality rate ended (Taeuber and Taeuber, 1958:269). Therefore, data taken from the 1850 Census manuscript schedules are considered representative of the pre-industrial period, albeit the end of that period.

Comparable family size data was taken from the 1960 United States Census reports to represent the second type of society that Levy notes. United States society at this point in time certainly had obtained the highest levels of "modernization" including industrialization and urbanization known to man (Levy, 1966:36).

In this study the operational definition of family used will be family of residence. Hence, any aggregate of two or more persons related to one another by blood, marriage, or adoption who share the same dwelling unit are considered a family unit. How does this operational definition compare to the definition used by the U.S. Census Bureau? The U.S. Census Bureau has published a statistical series (1949; and 1960) which provides historical data on the family. In Table 1 some of the historical statistics are presented for families (see note a under Table 1) in the United States. These figures appear to support the original contention that declining family size is concomitant with the development of industrialization and urbanization and to challenge Levy's proposition. But closer examination of the family definition used by the census bureau reveals that the definition has not been constant over time and very often has included individuals in addition to members of the family of residence. Hence, the above interpretation of Table 1 is not warranted.

The census bureau has, in fact, used three different definitions of the family and only the most recent one is parallel to the family of residence. Prior to the 1930 census, with the 1790 and 1900 censuses being the only exceptions, the family was defined as "any group of persons sharing a common abode, or a person living alone (1949:18)." This resulted in many institutions and quasi-households--boarding houses, hotels, army barracks--being counted as family units. Although the 1790 and 1900 censuses only counted private families, they did include any lodgers and other non-relatives residing in the household as members of the private families. Thus, all but two of the censuses prior to 1930 counted as family units a number of non-private dwelling units, and every census prior to 1930 included individuals as family members who were non-relatives but household residents. After 1930 the family definition was changed to include only "the head of a household and all other members of the household related to the head (Glick, 1957:210)."

Using this definition, the head of a household living alone was counted as a family, but a related group of lodgers or resident employees, residing in the household, were not considered a family unit. Resulting from these discrepancies, the definition was again revised in 1947 to the following: "a group of two or more persons who live together and who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption; all such persons are regarded as members of one family even though they may include a 'subfamily' (1957:210)."

Thus, the figures representing family size presented in Table 1 refer only to the number, distribution by size, median size, and mean size of households. In order to compare family size between 1850 and 1960, the 1850 data must be revised to be parallel with the 1960 data.

Procedure

When attempting to trace the family structure over time in any given society, adequate data--accurate, detailed, and comparable--do not exist. As a result we cannot establish the historical baselines necessary to measure the extent of familial change over time (cf. Goode, 1963:366-367; and Lantz, Snyder, et.al., 1968:428). But the existence and availability of original census manuscript schedules for the U.S. population provides a basis for the reconstruction of individual family units for the last half of the nineteenth century. From all of the 1850 census manuscript schedules available a purposive sample was chosen to determine the family and household sizes for all households on the selected schedules. The intent of the purposive sample was to determine the tenability of Levy's argument without concern over the randomness of the sample. Data from the purposive sample was compared to the data from the 1960 census reports representing information for the entire population of the United States.

The purposive sample was composed of the manuscript schedules from two different areas in the state of Illinois. One area consisted of the northern district of Jackson county in which no established communities existed and the other area was the community of Quincy located in Adams county. In the former area, with very few exceptions, the occupations of the household's head were linked with agriculture. In the latter area occupations were primarily concerned with either producing a product (saddler, cabinet maker, brewer, etc.) or providing a service (innkeeper, teacher, domestic, etc.). No attempt was made to make this sample representative of all the 1850 census schedules but there were two important considerations in its selection. First, an effort was made to avoid "atypical" areas in its selection. Also, the attempt was made to represent both a rural and an "urban" area (Quincy's pop. was 6,902). After consideration the two selected contrasting areas seemed to fulfill the above expectations as well as any in the judgment of the writer.

The next step was to apply a recount procedure to the household units in the selected areas for the 1850 census. As originally recorded, all persons residing in each household were listed on the manuscript schedule by name. Under the family definition initially applied in the 1850 census, all household members, regardless of their relationship to one another, were considered a part of the same family unit. To enable a valid comparison for family size between 1850 and 1960, the data must be made parallel. The manner in which the 1850 census data was recorded makes it feasible to apply the latest family definition used by the census bureau--family of residence--to the households recorded on the 1850 manuscript schedules.

All of the households recorded on the manuscript schedules for the sample areas were used in the recount. The basic operation was one of establishing the membership for the primary family--containing the head of the household--

and for any secondary families in the household, plus the elimination of all those individuals--if any--not related to any family unit in the household.

The basic criteria for making the necessary distinctions was family or common surname; although additional clues led to a greater reliability of the recount. For the majority of households recorded, the head of the household--usually the eldest male--was listed first, followed by his wife and then, in chronological order, his children. The total of these individuals composed the primary family unit. There were cases, that included in the list of children, subfamilies--a nuclear family which does not include the head of the household. Also included in the primary family unit, when present, were adult relatives and their families who were usually listed following the children of the head. Thus, the result was not just a count of nuclear family size but included extended family structures when they were present and discernable--had the same surname as the head of the household. In addition to the primary family any group of two or more members in the household who had the same surname but one different than the primary family's were counted as a separate family unit--secondary family.

Those household members not presented in the expected order (an additional indication that the individual or individuals were not part of a family unit) who had a different surname than the primary family unit or any secondary family units in the household were eliminated as members of any family unit. Another indication of non-family membership was the type of occupation listed for individuals. Almost forty percent of those individuals classified as non-relatives, who were eliminated from family units, had an occupation which either helped to maintain the household (e.g. domestic) or were independent of the household (e.g. laborer). These non-relatives along with the primary family and secondary families, under the definition of the family used originally for the 1850 census, were considered part of one family unit. Hence, these individuals increased the "family" size (in reality, household size) originally reported for the 1850 census. Although much more accurate the recount procedure applied here slightly underestimates family size because a family member with a different surname than the head's was eliminated from the family unit. However, indications are that this was possible for less than a fifth of the households in the sample and was an infrequent pattern when possible.²

Results

From the recount of the 1850 purposive sample, the size of each household was recorded and when warranted, the household was broken down into the primary family unit, any secondary family units, and individuals not linked to a family unit. Table 2 presents the number and size of both the households and the families found in the purposive sample.³ The first column--household size--would have been presented as family size under the definition used to determine family units for the 1850 census. The second column presents data on family size resulting from the recount procedure. The recount results in a significant reduction from the figures originally presumed to be family size.

The implication is that the average for "family size" originally reported by the Bureau of the Census was exaggerated by roughly one person or by about 20% (19.1). This exaggeration resulted from the existence of two elements in

the primary family's household which are almost non-existent in the contemporary household. About 30% of the households in the sample contained one or more individuals who were lodgers or domestic employees but at the same time they were not primary family members. Also in about 12% of the households these lodgers and/or domestic employees composed a separate family unit--a secondary family unit. Thus the separation of these individuals from the primary family meant a reduction in family size in two different ways. First those non-relatives who were originally included as family members were eliminated. Second when a group of these non-relatives composed a secondary family unit in the household these family units tended to be much smaller on the average than primary families. They typically were family units just getting started--recently married with no or few children--or broken families with only one parent present and his or her children. Thus counting these as separate families reduced the size of the primary household family and increased the proportion of small families.

Both Burch (1967:353-358) and Wozniak (1972:8-9) note that for the vast majority of nations surveyed their average household size fell within the range of 3 to 6 persons. Also there was a tendency in Burch's later data (1955-1963) and Wozniak's data for the distribution of the nations' household sizes to be bimodal. The developed or more industrialized nations had averages between 3 and 4 and the underdeveloped or less industrialized nations' averages were between 5 and 6. Thus the household size figure (5.4) for the United States in 1850 is similar to those figures reported for the less industrialized nations. These latter nations are characterized by Burch and Wozniak as being examples of Levy's transitional type of society. Thus they argue the difference between the two modes in the distribution does not necessarily violate Levy's proposition as in these societies the mortality rate has dropped while the birth rate continues at a high level only to drop at a later time. The result is, for which Wozniak (1972) provides support, larger or increased household sizes that are due to increased survivorship. This means one of two things for the 1850 data presented here. One is that 1850 was in fact not representative of a pre-industrial society but a part of the transitional phase. Two, that household composition might be significantly different historically in the United States than for those less industrialized nations that Burch and Wozniak observed.

The first suggestion has been argued both ways. Using the indices mentioned above the 1850 data were considered to be pre-industrial but there is no doubt that it is at the very end of this period. As a result it has also been regarded as part of the beginning of the industrialization period (Rostow, 1960:38). The establishment of 1850 in a particular phase is obviously debatable but becomes less important if the other suggestion is explored.

In Burch and Wozniak an underlying assumption is that the primary family unit composes almost all of the membership of every household. As Burch (1967:359) points out for some of the developed and undeveloped countries he observes, in every nation the primary family makes up on the average at least 80% of total household size. Also if the three nations' statistics providing the biggest discrepancy between household and family membership are eliminated the figure increases to 95%. As mentioned above for the 1850 U.S. data the percent (80) was substantially lower. Thus historically for the U.S. a distinction between household size and family size becomes much more important in testing Levy's proposition. Hence,

despite the household size figure for 1850 which is very similar to those reported for the underdeveloped countries and because the family (primary) makes up a much smaller proportion of the household in 1850, only family size data should be compared to test Levy.

Because the family definition used in the recount was the same as that used in the 1960 census, the two sets of data are comparable (See footnote 2). Table 3 compares the 1850 data on family size obtained from the sample and data obtained for the entire population from the 1960 Census reports. After the recount, the size of the family unit in the 1850 sample does not appear to be all that different from the 1960 reported data.

Based upon the commonly held contention of the extended nature and high fertility of the pre-industrial family, a larger discrepancy between the family sizes for 1850 and 1960 would be expected. The difference is reduced to less than one individual per family--a mean difference of .72 and a median difference of .66. In addition almost 60% of the people living in family units in the 1850 sample resided in family units of four members or less. With a family size of four or smaller being the dominant type, it is impossible for the ideal extended type of family, expected to predominate in pre-industrial societies, to exist in any significant numbers (Burch, 1970; and Wozniak, 1972:10). Also the most commonly observed family unit in the sample consisted only of a married couple and their children, which adds further support to the dominance of the nuclear family type during 1850.

Also whereas the household size figure is similar to the figures for the underdeveloped nations that Burch (1967:353-359) reported the family size figures are not. In fact for those nations for which Burch (p. 359) presents both an average household and family size figure, the U.S. 1850 family size figure is larger in only two cases. In both of these cases the countries are developed ones (Netherlands and United States). Thus there is less of a discrepancy between family size historically than Burch or Wozniak suggest or demonstrate cross culturally. Hence these results for family size seem to even be more supportive of Levy's proposition. Although it must be remembered that Burch and Wozniak claim that their societies with the larger sizes are transitional ones.

Thus, the data on family from the 1850 sample, as compared to the 1960 data appear to provide support for Levy's contention in regard to family size. First the very large (10 or more) extended family unit did not exist in any great number in 1850. In fact the 1850 figures are much closer to the contemporary figures than traditional contentions often suggested. Second it is suggested that the figures presented by the census bureau to represent the family have, due to the household composition of the time, exaggerated the family size statistics by about 20%. Correcting for this makes the 1850 and contemporary data seem even more similar. Finally for both 1850 and 1960 the majority of families (over 60%) were composed of four members or less. Also a more detailed comparison between the percentage distributions of family size for the two periods reveals that the distributions are nearly identical in all but two categories.

The two categories providing exceptions are the smallest--2 person families--and the largest--7 or more person families. Although the majority of families have always been small--4 persons or less--these percents indicate a trend for an increasingly higher percent of smaller families. Whereas 60%

(59.7) of the 1850 families were composed of 4 persons or less by 1960 the percent had increased to 74% (74.2). Most of the increase (14%) is accounted for by the increase in 2 person families which from 1850 to 1960 increased by 12%. These increases were made possible by the disappearance of larger families especially those made up of 7 or more persons which had declined in 1960 by 9% from the 1850 figure.

It has been suggested by both Burch (1967:361) and Wozniak (1972:12) that the differences in family size between the nations observed is due primarily to differences in the birth rate because the mortality rate decline occurred first. In fact Burch suggests that the demographic transition possibly has its "microdemographic parallel in family and household structure." Also Glick (1959:592-597) in regard to the United States attributes much of the decline in average household and family size to long-term decline in the birth rate. However as Glick notes there are other factors which have played a role in this decline. In particular a number of factors explain the sharp increase in 2 person families which are not the result of fertility. One factor is that in 1960 there were a larger percent of two person families composed of couples whose children had already left home. This resulted from a number of conditions including the following: couples were getting married younger, couples were having fewer children and they were usually spaced closer together, children had an increased tendency to leave home at an earlier age, an increase in the life expectancy of the couple, and an improved economic ability of older persons (parents) to maintain a separate home. Also many children were leaving home to get married and the chances were better in 1960 that these newlyweds would also set up a separate residence. This of course reduced the size of their parental home while they themselves increased the proportion of smaller families. Thus the emergence of new living arrangements and these other factors played an important part in the increase of smaller families in 1960 especially two person families. Hence this cross-sectional comparison of data tends to exaggerate the differences between these two periods that occurred in regard to completed family size. Thus again there is more evidence to support Levy's contention of family size being "virtually identical" over time.

There is no doubt that some important changes have taken place in regard to family size between 1850 and 1960. However, the differences have often been attributed to the wrong or too few factors and greatly exaggerated. In fact there were several similarities between the two periods although not always for the same reasons--different levels of mortality, different compositions of the household, etc. It would appear then that a number of non-family household components tended to exaggerate "family size" in 1850. Also returning to Table 1 it is realized that those statistics must be adjusted. It would be a simple matter if the amount of exaggeration (20%) were the same for each census. However, as the number of households containing lodgers and domestic employees, (some of which were secondary families) have declined, so has the exaggeration factor. While in 1850 30% of the sample households contained lodgers and resident employees and 12% contained secondary families, in 1960 only 3.8% of the households contained lodgers and resident employees and only 0.2% contained secondary families (United States: Bureau of the Census, 1963). Thus part of the decline in size observed in Table 1 is the result of the decline in these exaggeration factors. Then while some of the censuses for the latter half of the nineteenth century have presented a family size figure exaggerated by one

person this declined rather rapidly in the twentieth century (Glick, 1957: 21-23).

The biggest discrepancy with regard to size, between these two periods, occurs for the household unit. Table 4 presents the household sizes for the sample and census data for 1960. The reduction in household size (2.07) between 1850 and 1960 is almost three times greater than the change (.72) that took place for family size. Also the distribution indicates much more change for household size for every category. As with family size the biggest change is in the smallest and largest size categories; however the changes are much more dramatic for household size. This is especially true for the smallest size category; for example, with family size the percent of 2 person families increased by 56% in 1960 as compared to 1850 but for household size the one person household increased by 1.378% in 1960 and the two persons household by 193%. Thus the data suggest the possibility of a much stronger inverse relationship between household size and the processes of industrialization and urbanization, than between these two processes and family size. Such factors as a higher standard of living, which allowed couples to purchase or live in their own home and reduced the necessity of taking in boarders for economic support; the separation of work or occupations from the home, including the disappearance of resident employees and apprentices in the family's household; and an increasing number of dwelling units available help account for the inverse relationship (Bloomberg, 1971:33). These factors, resulting from the processes of industrialization and urbanization, were more important to a reduction in household size, than to a reduction of family size.

Summary

The data presented here challenges the contention that the processes of industrialization and urbanization have brought about dramatic changes in the American family structure. The basis of this challenge is that in regard to family size, historically there has been a minimal amount of change. First the average family in 1850 was much smaller than traditionally presumed. Second the difference between the average family sizes for a pre-industrial and a post-industrial period in the United States is less than one person per family. Finally in both periods the clear majority of individuals were a part of family units containing less than 4 persons. Also related to this last figure is the fact that the extended family, expected to occur in great numbers, could not and did not predominate in this pre-industrial period. These results would suggest further examination of the often accepted belief that the family is a very flexible or passive agent in regard to societal change. Finally, the family data appears to support Levy's argument that family units have remained virtually identical in some respects for at least 50% of the population over time. In fact there was less variation found here than for the cross-national tests that have been made of Levy's proposition.

Before closing two points must be clarified with respect to this work. First, the "family" studied here applies only to those family members maintaining a common residence. Hence, nothing can be stated or implied with respect to the family of interaction--family or kinship structures defined in terms of interaction and reciprocal responsibilities regardless of residence pattern. This does not deny the reality or the importance of the interactional aspects in kinship relationships but this limitation was imposed by the source of data used--census manuscript schedules.

Second, despite the desirable precision achieved by Levy's argument, one important phrase is not operationalized--what he means by "virtually identical." Although, after the recount, the mean and median differences between 1850 and 1960 were reduced and the majority of the family units in both periods were composed of four or less members, the remaining differences are still statistically significant due to the large N's used. In this case "practical" significance (cf. Pryor, 1967:7) is more important in determining whether or not certain family aspects have remained virtually identical over time. The various aspects of this problem are beyond the scope of this paper, but must be considered in further investigations of Levy's argument.

This study has some implications that apply to the basic concerns of sociologists beyond the family area. Investigations of this type are important to an understanding of the growth and development of a social structures within the social system. In addition this relates to a very basic concern with the relationship between developments in the social system (e.g. industrialization and urbanization) and the social structures that compose the system. Most explanations of contemporary social phenomena are based upon the assumption of a close tie between these social developments and alterations in the system's social structures. The processes of industrialization and urbanization have been frequently cited as the "key independent variables" bringing about many and unique changes in the system's social structures, in particular, the institutional structures. This investigation questions this assumed relationship and implies that at least one institution's structure has not varied to any "significant" degree or at least to the degree expected. This questions the validity of current explanations of social change and has implications for further investigations of the factors which have presumedly brought about social change. There is a need to reexamine the relationships between social processes and social structures and a need to reexamine the changes, or lack of them, that have occurred in each of these structures.

Footnotes

¹The usefulness of the U.S. Census manuscript schedules from 1850 to 1890 for family research was first brought to my attention by Professor Herman R. Lantz. Numerous other social scientists have either utilized (Thernstrom, 1964:241-242) or expounded upon the usefulness of (Lathrop, 1968:79-101) these census manuscript schedules.

²With the procedure used all kin of females, who were either the household head or the spouse of the household head, or a married daughter of the head because they would have a different surname than the household head, were not counted as part of the family unit. However, this type of exclusion was possible only for less than 18 percent of the households in the 1850 sample.

³A comparison between the household mean sizes for the sample areas (Quincy, $\bar{X} = 5.33$ and the northern district of Jackson County, $\bar{X} = 5.53$) and the household mean size for the entire U.S. population (5.55) suggest that at least in this regard the sample areas were relatively consistent and typical for 1850. In regard to family mean sizes for the sample areas (Quincy, $\bar{X} = 4.09$ and the northern district of Jackson County, $\bar{X} = 4.99$) a much larger difference occurred between the sample areas.

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TABLE 1

FAMILIES--NUMBER AND SIZE: 1790 TO 1950 (AS REPORTED BY THE U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS)^a

Year	Number of Families	Median Size of Families	Mean Size of Family
1950	42,857,335	3.05	3.52
1940	34,948,666	3.15	3.77 ^b
1930	29,904,663	3.40	4.11 ^b
1920	24,351,676	--	4.34 ^b
1910	20,255,555	--	4.54 ^b
1900	15,963,965	4.23	4.76 ^b
1890	12,690,152	4.48	4.93 ^b
1880	9,945,916	--	5.04 ^b
1870	7,579,363	--	5.09 ^b
1860	5,210,934	--	5.28 ^b
1850	3,598,240	--	5.55 ^b
1790	557,889	5.43	5.79 ^b

^aInitially reported as family units but more recent reports termed these units households (United States: Bureau of the Census, 1960:16).

^bObtained by dividing total population by number of families; hence not strictly average size of private families because total population includes an appreciable number of persons who are members of quasi-households. Source: United States: Bureau of the Census (1949:29; and, 1960:16).

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES, AND PERCENT
DISTRIBUTION BY SIZE: PURPOSEIVE SAMPLE 1850

Size of Units	Households	Families
All units	1,866	2,122
Percent	100.0	100.0
1 person	.9	a
2 persons	9.6	20.9
3 persons	15.0	20.8
4 persons	16.7	18.0
5 persons	15.9	14.9
6 persons	13.0	9.7
7 persons	10.0	5.9
8 persons	7.6	4.9
9 persons	4.7	2.7
10 persons	2.9	1.3
11 persons or more	3.9	.9
Modal size	4.00	2.00
Median size	4.99	3.96
Mean size	5.40	4.37

^aNot relevant under definition used.

Source: United States: Bureau of the Census, 1850 Census Population Schedules Illinois, Microcopy number T-6, Rolls number 74 and 82.

TABLE 3
 NUMBER OF FAMILIES, AND PERCENT DISTRIBUTION
 BY SIZE: 1850 AND 1960

Size of Family	1850	1960
All Families	2,122	45,128,397
Percent	100.0	100.0
2 persons	20.9	32.7
3 persons	20.8	21.6
4 persons	18.0	19.9
5 persons	14.9	12.8
6 persons	9.7	6.7
7 persons or more	15.7	6.3
Modal size	2.00	2.00
Median size	3.96	3.30
Mean size	4.37	3.65

Source: United States: Bureau of the Census, 1850 Census Population Schedules Illinois, Microcopy number T-6, Rolls number 74 and 82; and, United States: Bureau of the Census (1964:1-465).

TABLE 4
 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS, AND PERCENT DISTRIBUTION
 OF HOUSEHOLDS BY SIZE: 1850 AND 1960

Size of Household	1850	1960
All Households	1,866	53,019,457
Percent	100.0	100.0
1 person	0.9	13.3
2 persons	9.6	28.1
3 persons	15.0	18.9
4 persons	16.7	17.2
5 persons	15.9	11.1
6 persons	13.0	5.9
7 persons	10.0	2.7
8 persons	7.6	1.4
9 persons or more	11.2	1.5
Modal size	4.00	2.00
Median size	4.99	2.95
Mean size	5.40	3.33

Source: United States: Bureau of the Census, 1850 Census Population Schedules Illinois, Microcopy number T-6, Rolls number 74 and 82; and United States: Bureau of the Census (1963:21).