Quantifying Indigenous family disruption and resilience at the beginning of the 20th century using historical census data

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous families have been the main target of assimilation policies of forced relocation and children's removal to residential schools but have been, and still are, mostly absent from demographic research and official statistics. In this paper, we fill this gap by taking advantage of the newly released complete count of the 1901 Canadian census, which is considered one of the most thorough enumerations of Indigenous peoples in the world. We apply an innovative methodology, the household configuration approach, that captures the heterogeneity of Indigenous living arrangements rather than imposing pre-defined categories of family structure. By doing do, we find unexpected differences and similarities of Indigenous and non-Indigenous households, which need to be interpreted in light of the complexity of historical censuses and their representational nature as colonial settler instruments.

INTRODUCTION

The family is at the heart of the history, culture, and social organization of Indigenous peoples[1] in Canada (Shoemaker, 1991, 1992; Castellano, 2002; Dawson, 2006). Assimilation policies sustained by Catholic and Protestant missionaries and the Canadian government from the beginning of colonisation to the 20th century specifically relied on family disruption, through the removal of children and their forced relocation to residential schools, "in order to minimize and weaken family ties and cultural linkages." (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015: V) More generally, the Canadian government's failure to respect treaty obligations, restrictions on Indigenous access to land as well as mobility, and reductions in relief payments also jeopardized the well-being of Indigenous families, exposing them to poverty, starvation and disease (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015: I).

Canada's residential school system and its impact on individuals, families and communities had remained hidden from history for over a century, "until the Survivors of the system were finally able to find the strength, courage, and support to bring their experiences to light" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015: V) in the accounts and testimonies that are woven through the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These stories, combined with histories of oppressive colonization policies, speak of the disruption of Indigenous families but also of their resilience to "survive in their traditional multi-generational, extended form." (Castellano 2002: 1) The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the federal government estimate that 150,000 Indigenous children were taken away from their families and passed through

[1] 'Indigenous peoples' refer to the distinct groups of First Nations, Métis and Inuit who claim to sovereign self-determination, even though the term 'Aboriginal' has been used by the Canadian state since the late 20th century.

the residential school system during the first half of the 20th century (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). However, beyond this aggregate figure the devastating effects of government policies on Indigenous families during this crucial period have not been quantified, because historians and family demographers have lacked the necessary microdata and analytical tools.

This paper begins filling this gap by taking advantage of the 100% count of the 1901 census recently made available thanks to the project *The Canadian Peoples*. Our main research question is: how were Indigenous family structures disrupted by assimilation policies at the beginning of the 20th century and in what ways did Indigenous families demonstrate resilience in the face of this disruption? To do so, in this paper we address two specific issues. First, we discuss how we identified and compiled available information on Indigenous to understand how Indigenous family relationships were recorded in this historical census given their complexity and representational nature as colonial settler instruments. Second, we present the results of our analysis of this information that allowed creating a descriptive portrait of family, household and dwelling structures. By doing so, this paper fills a key gap in the unexplored demographic history of Indigenous peoples, and the legacy of residential schools, in Canada. In a spirit of reconciliation, our results provide an important point of reference for interpreting subsequent Indigenous experiences.

BACKGROUND

Family structure as the backbone of Indigenous societies

Starting in the 1980s, an emerging international literature (e.g. Smith, 1980; Normandeau et Piché, 1984; Norris, 1990; Snipp, 1991; Taylor, 1997) documented Indigenous peoples' 'enclave

demographies' as delimited by sociocultural constructions of identity deriving from their shared experience of colonisation (Taylor and Bell, 1996: 153). In North America, the origin of these enclaves can be traced back to the adoption of the 1871 Indian Appropriation Act in the United States and the 1876 Indian Act in Canada. To colonize and re-settle the Western part of the continent with immigrants of European descent, these federal policies intensified measures to forcibly remove native peoples from their land and confine them to reservations. Most importantly, federal policies sanctioned the American and Canadian governments' attempts to assimilate into the 'dominant' society the native population groups that had survived almost three centuries of depopulation after the arrival of the Europeans (Johansson, 1982; Romaniuk, 2014). In Canada, the main measure of cultural assimilation was removing Indigenous children from their families to be 'educated' in residential schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015; Facing History and Ourselves, 2016).

The ultimate goal of federal assimilation policies was to break the backbone of Indigenous communities, that is, the spiritual and cultural context that emphasizes shared childrearing responsibilities by the birthparents and the larger kin group (Halverson et al., 2002). Since the pioneering work of Lewis Henri Morgan in the United States, historical and anthropological literature has shown how family functioning generates from this context so that the structure of both the family unit and its network (kinship) represents the central unit of Indigenous societies (John, 1988; Shoemaker, 1991; Snipp, 1991; Halverson et al., 2002; Dawson, 2006; Macdougall, 2015). Sioux anthropologist, Ella Cara Deloria, in speaking of the Sioux *tiyospaye* (camp circle or family structure), noted that her people defined humanity itself as being a part of a large family structure (Deloria, 1998, cited in Macdougall, 2015).

Even if forced assimilation policies had a devastating effect on Indigenous peoples and communities, family and kinship ties expressed in diverse family structures such as multi-generational households, customary adoptions and honour kin have been their inherent source of strength and resilience (Castellano, 2002; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015; Tam, Findlay & Kohen, 2017). Our earlier research (Bignami et al., 2019) indeed indicates that, by the mid-1990s, living arrangements extending beyond the nuclear family represented less than 5 percent of all Canadian families, but 16% of First Nations families living on reserves and 15% Inuit families. In this paper, we extend this analysis back the beginning of the 20th century in order to understand Indigenous household configurations after many decades of colonization in the newly-established Canadian nation.

The unexplored demographic history of Indigenous families

The events that disrupted the structure of Indigenous families at the beginning of the 20th century, and the ensuing historical suffering that they face still today, have been brought to light through family stories and traumas, "that begin in a particular place, with real persons, in the way knowledge is constructed in an Aboriginal world" (Castellano 2002: 1). Yet the configuration of Indigenous family structures, and how it was impacted by colonization, has not been studied at the population level. The main historical source of information on Indigenous family relationships is the census. As records for the 1851-1921 censuses were released[2], Dillon and other Canadian

[2] Census records for the beginning of the 20th century have been released to researchers at periodic intervals beginning in 1993, conforming to *Privacy Act* regulations which allow the distribution of these records after a 92-year period (Statistics Canada, 2000).

scholars have created various sample micro databases to make them usable for research purposes.[3] However, with the exception of the 1881 100%-count data, these datasets do not include Indigenous samples large enough for analysis, particularly for the Métis and Inuit (Goldmann, 2014). *The Canadian Peoples* (TCP) project (thecanadianpeoples.com) has recently made available, for the first time, individual-level records for all enumerated residents of Canada in the 1901, 1911, and 1921 censuses. These data create the opportunity to study Indigenous family structures and their evolution at the beginning of the 20th century.

The enumeration of Indigenous peoples and their families in the Canadian census

In Canada, the debate about the measurement of 'race' is as old as census-taking, and it is well-known that the concept of 'racial origin', adopted in censuses prior to the introduction of identity in 1951[4], was problematic for Indigenous peoples (Andersen 2008; Goldmann, 2014; Fryxell et al., 2015). In 1901, enumerators were instructed to measure racial origin of "Indian, Eskimo, Negro, Chinese, Japanese and East Indian" by using the criteria of "color" (Urquhart and Buckley, 1965: 6). While the paternal line continued to be the determining factor for the transmission of identity for Euro-Canadians, an additional instruction in the 1901 census stipulated that "the

[3] Samples of the 1831 Quebec and 1851/2 Census of Canada and a complete-count census database of 1881 Canada were prepared by the Programme de recherche en démographie historique, of which Dillon is the director. In separate projects, the Canadian Historical Social Mobility Project, the Historical Data Research Unit of the University of Guelph and the Canadian Families Project produced samples of the 1861, 1871, 1891 and 1901 Censuses of Canada (see Sager and Baskerville, 2007).

[4] In the 1901 census, the concept of 'racial or tribal origin' replaced a more general question on ancestral ethnic origin that had been employed from 1852 to 1881, although in 1891 no specific ethnicity question was asked apart from a single question to identify French Canadians. 'Tribal' was eventually dropped starting in the 1931 census (Green, 2014).

children begotten of marriages between whites and any one of the other races will be classed as red, black or yellow". These instructions "brushed aside classifications that signified Métis distinctiveness as a people in favour of a racialized 'Indian-or-white' dichotomy." (Andersen, 2008; 354-355) Moreover, in many instances the census was administered to Indigenous peoples by Hudson Bay Company factors or agents of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) rather than enumerators, whom might have applied their own legal definitions of Indians rather than the census definitions.

The study of Indigenous families via historical censuses poses additional problems of definition. Enumerators who encountered polygamous households, matrilocal female-headed families, the presence of half siblings or a mix of kin and non-kin or distinct dwelling structures may or may not have inscribed these features of Indigenous family life in the preconceived format of the census. The vocabulary used by particular tribes to describe family relationships may not have translated well to census English or French, kin and non-kin residents may have been conflated, honour relationships and customary adoptions left unrecognized and seasonal variations may have gone unobserved (Shoemaker 1991: 331; Shoemaker 1992: 7; Hamilton, 2007: 74-75; Tam, Findlay & Kohen, 2017).

These issues of definition were compounded by the state's overarching approach to the census enumeration of Indigenous peoples at the beginning of the 20th century. By then, the census was established as a crucial practice of governing the state (Anderson, 2008: 356-357). As Kahnawà:ke Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson observes, "[t]he desire for land produces 'the problem' of Indigenous life that is already living on that land" (2014: 19). To reckon with this problem, the census served as inventory of Indigenous presence in the West, intended to be used to as an

instrument of erasure and assimilation of Indigenous peoples and their families (Tascherau Mamers, 2017).

Census microdata reflect, line by line, every encounter between enumerator and respondents. In recent years, historians have used these data to uncover and understand how the totalizing effort of the census enterprise intersected with bottom-up resistance to categorical impositions. Census-taking indeed implies often-difficult interactions between enumerators and census subjects (Ruppert, 2014: 54). Enumeration procedures could break down in the face of tribal chiefs who refused entry to census takers, or when enumerators failed to record complete information on age (Shoemaker, 1992: 5; Hamilton, 2007; Dillon, 2008: 88). Hudson Bay representatives averred that their counts were incomplete, some reserves were omitted entirely, while DIA representatives and court decisions to deny certain aboriginal persons of their treaty status could change their declared ethnicity from one enumeration to the next (Hamilton 2007: 71-72; Hamilton and Inwood 2014: 209-210). Indigenous families may have specifically minimized the reporting of children to the DIA representatives, since they were also responsible for the removal of children to residential schools (Hamilton, 2007). These issues demonstrate that census (mis)reporting is a research subject in its own right. Historians have identified age under- and over-reporting, early declarations of "Canadian" as a language, and self-identification as "widow" to conceal marital breakdown, thus learning how census respondents adapted their answers to better reflect their own sense of identity. This micro-level detective work has not yet been undertaken for Indigenous peoples across multiple complete-count censuses, especially with respect to family structure.

The significance of quantitatively studying Indigenous family structures and their evolution at the beginning of the 20th century stems precisely from the fact that the census, as one of the main instruments of colonization, is the neglected root of the "cultural genocide" perpetrated

against Indigenous peoples for over a century, as "the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to cause (…), through a process of assimilation, Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada." (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015: 1). Census enumeration was one of the main processes through which settler colonial policies 'made invisible' (Tascherau Mamers, 2017) the lives of Indigenous peoples and their families. Indeed, the minimal visibility of Indigenous families in official statistics and demographic research today is perhaps one of the most hidden vestiges of colonization (Bignami and Simard, 2020). By bringing to light the stories and traumas of Indigenous peoples, their children and their families as told by census records, our paper envisions more than an academic contribution to the existing historical and demographic literature. In a spirit of reconciliation, it also promotes awareness of the harm that this 'indirect symbolic violence' (Tascherau Mamers, 2017) has inflicted on Indigenous peoples and seeks ways to redress this violence via microdata analysis to lay bare the processes of census categorization as well as respondent resistance. This re-evaluation of the 1901 census ultimately improves the 'statistical representation' of Indigenous household structures, which is key to develop appropriate policies and services and build a successful shared future.

Theoretical approaches to the historical study of Indigenous family structure

Today, family demography --one of the most important subfields of our discipline-- is primarily concerned with the study of individual behaviours, attitudes and norms leading to family *change* (Seltzer, 2019). However, the origins of family demography can be traced back to the studies carried out in the 1950s around the question of the historical appearance and distribution of specific family *structures*, notably nuclear vis-à-vis extended or complex households. Early debates

centering on the response of household structure to industrialization and urbanization (see, for instance: Goode, 1963), the durability of nuclear household formations (Laslett, 1965, 1972, 1983; Hareven, 1994) and the predominance of neolocal household formation (Hajnal, 1982; Reher, 1998; Hartman, 2004; Thornton, 2005) gave way to long-term analyses which interpret household structure in the light of demographic and economic opportunities to form particular households. By taking advantage of U.S. historical census microdata developed at the University of Minnesota—now the well-known IPUMS (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series)—over the past twenty-five years Steven Ruggles has empirically tested the predictions of social theory and thus gained important insights in the secular transformation of family structures in North America and other Western societies (Ruggles, 1994; 2003; 2007; 2009; 2015). Ruggles' research shows that the nuclear family was already the predominant living arrangement in the U.S. at the turn of the century owing to high mortality and fertility levels which reduced the 'demographic opportunity' for residing in multigenerational families through the limited availability of elderly kin. A similar decline in intergenerational co-residence is observed in Canada between 1871 and 1901 (Wargon, 1979; Burke, 2007; Darroch, 2014), particularly among elderly women (Dillon, 2014). Although reductions in mortality and fertility over the course of the demographic transition increased the opportunity to form three-generational households, intergenerational coresidence began decreasing with the rise of male wage labor beginning with the industrial revolution, and the corresponding decline of the patriarchal, corporate family that had dominated most of the nineteenth century. The secular trend of atomization of the family continues today along the lines of the second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa, 1986; Lestaeghe, 1995; 2010).

The evolution of the Indigenous households' living arrangements during the 20th century may have taken a very different path, influenced by the traditionally important place of kinship in

Indigenous cultures, but also by the violence, dislocation and impositions of colonization. In absence of appropriate studies, it remains unclear whether the 20th-century evolution of Indigenous households in Canada featured a transition from predominantly multi-generational to nuclear households or a more complex, multi-stage process. Theoretical perspectives from the fields of psychology, history and Indigenous studies offer guidance for this exploration. Tam et. al. uses the concept "family boundary ambiguity", or "the inability to consistently report on who is considered to be a part of the family since this is not necessarily a static entity", to explore ways Indigenous family structures differ from settler family structures, including multi-generational households, non-kin co-residence, skip-generation families and multi-household nodes (Tam, Findlay & Kohen, 2017). Psychologists define intergenerational trauma as experiences that are "often transmitted across generations, affecting the children and grandchildren of those that were initially victimized" and clarify that Indigenous peoples in Canada and the United States manifest significant inter-generational trauma resulting from the residential schools and the Sixties Scoop (Bombay et. al. 2009: 6, 14). Gendered perspectives on colonialism and indigeneity argue that colonial powers reorganized Indigenous societies in keeping with patriarchal norms to further destabilize Indigenous families and effect assimilation (Leigh, 2009). At the same time, resilience concerns those factors and conditions that help indigenous individuals, families and communities cope with previous and ongoing traumatic events, notably self-government, "belief in traditional culture and values and participation in cultural practices." (Bombay et. al. 2009: 13; Fast & Collin-Vézina, 2010: 133-134). Together, concepts surrounding family boundary ambiguity, colonization and patriarchy, intergenerational trauma and resilience will help us to reframe and re-interpret historical census microdata for the study of Indigenous family structures.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data source

Our study leverages the resources of the CFI-funded project *The Canadian Peoples* (TCP; thecanadianpeoples.com), partly based at the Université de Montréal. TCP has recently made available cleaned, coded and documented datasets which include 100% of individual records for Canadians enumerated from 1852 to 1921.[5] Since we use census data, in this paper Indigenous family structure is studied through the lens of households' living arrangements. Nonetheless, since the 1901 census enumerated dwellings and households, we can capture households' co-residence and their ties.

Family identification and reconstitution of Indigenous family structures is not one of TCP's activities. In earlier research, we have used the case study of Manitoba to discuss the advantages and limitations of the TCP data to study Indigenous households' living arrangements in 1901 (Trudeau-Laurin et al., 2023). Following a similar approach, in this paper our starting point is to identify the households of individuals who were recorded as 'Native Indian or Eskimo origin' or who can be classified as Indigenous according to the criteria of colour. We then explore and, if needed, reclassify, the household relationships and statuses declared for all Indigenous persons, examining the diversity of responses, the extent to which complex and multi-generational relationships are indicated and whether settler patriarchal notions (such as household head) or Indigenous concepts (such as matrilineality or informal adoptions) are encoded in the census vocabulary.

[5] Published population counts indicate that the 1901 census enumerated 127 941 people of 'Native Indian or Eskimo origin'.

Methodological approach to describe Indigenous family structures

To create a portrait of Indigenous family structures in each census, we apply an innovative methodology developed by Bignami (Bignami et al., 2023). This methodology does not impose any a priori classification of family structure. Rather, individuals' relationship to the household head are used to identify the statistical frequency of all living arrangements found in the population, thus capturing well the diversity of Indigenous households' living arrangements.

Results are presented for Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians at the national, provincial and regional level. The unit of analysis is the household, but results are also presented at the individual level to distinguish between First Nations and Métis peoples as well as between different First Nations bands.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, our preliminary results for Manitoba show a high prevalence of lone nuclear families, that is, nuclear families living in a dwelling with no other individual (related or not). Close to half of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous households lived in lone nuclear households, the corresponding percentage for multihouseholds being slightly more than a third and slightly less than a third, respectively. Regardless of their configuration, Indigenous households are slightly larger than non-Indigenous ones.

For non-Indigenous peoples, our results are in line with the fact that the colonization of Manitoba, begun in the early 19th century, had revolved around the settlement of nuclear families. By the late 19th century, the European family model of the nuclear family "had emerged as a means to stabilize labour force patterns and social relationships based on high economic

productivity and mass consumption of commodified good and services" (Gaffield, 1990, cited in Wotherspoon and Satzewich, 2000: 83). As a result, "the process of settlement and land cultivation [in Western Canada] involved the assumption, sometimes stated explicitly, that the nuclear family system composed of a legitimately married male and female and their direct offspring, would prevail." Indeed, when the Scottish Earl of Selkirk acquired property rights over 300,000 km^2 from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1811 – the area that would become known as Red River Colony, at the heart of today's province of Manitoba –, it was with the explicit stipulation "within ten years, to settle within the tract one thousand families" (Morris, 1880: 10).[6]

The high prevalence of lone nuclear households for Indigenous peoples may seem surprising considering their "traditional multi-generational, extended form" (Castellano 2002: 1) is well-documented in the historical and anthropological literature. Nonetheless, when interpreting this result for Manitoba in 1901 one must bear in mind three key issues. First, although the 1901 census is considered the first complete enumeration of Indigenous peoples, this does not mean that all the Indigenous peoples living in the newly-established Canadian nation in 1901 were enumerated in the census. Mobility is the most important reason for incomplete coverage, especially in the West and in the northern territories. Groups in areas that had not yet been settled were more likely to be nomadic and therefore only estimated as they were difficult to track. Similarly, groups engaged in traditional activities may have been away at the time of the census, as Hamilton (2007) observed in the United States. The extent to which this incomplete or

[6] Selkirk's settlement (Red River Colony or Assiniboia) remained the only non-native settlement on the Northwest Prairies for most of the 19th century. Following a treaty between the Earl of Selkirk and five Indian chiefs in 1817, the Red River Colony quickly expanded from a total population of 2,390 in 1831 to 6,691 in 1856 (Statistics Canada, 2000). Due to intermarriage, during this period a growing proportion of families living in the Colony had an Indigenous head of household ("native or half-breed") according to censuses taken by the Council of Assiniboia (Statistics Canada, 2000). The long history of the settlement's mostly Métis population culminated in the Red River rebellion of 1885.

inaccurate coverage may have led to under-enumeration of specific household types remains unknown. Second, First Nations living in Manitoba in 1901 were a small and heterogenous groups. Although their number is small, the Ojibway's households we found in the 1901 census of Manitoba resulted to have the highest percentage of multihouseholds, in line with Shoemaker (1991)'s analysis of the 1901 US census sample for the same Indigenous group[7].

Indeed, the last and most important issue to bear in mind when interpreting our results is that most Indigenous households enumerated by the census were Métis households, of which little is known during this period. Local censuses carried out between 1831 and 1856 for Red River Colony indicate that the proportion of families without a married couple at their core did not exceed 20% (Statistics Canada, 2000). At the same time, due to intermarriage, during this period a growing proportion of families living in the Colony had an Indigenous head of household ("native or half-breed") according to censuses taken by the Council of Assiniboia (Statistics Canada, 2000). The 1856 census of Red River Settlement in Manitoba enumerated 1,094 families, of which 78% were headed by a "native or half-breed" and less than 20% by a "foreign-born" (Statistics Canada, 2000). Our results for the corresponding census subdistrict of Selkirk in the 1901 census show that close to 20% of 5,723 households then had an Indigenous head (the majority, 16.5%, a Métis head). This dramatic drop raises questions about who was enumerated, and how.

Indeed, the main challenge when interpreting our results is due to the inherent representational nature of historical census data as colonial settler instrument. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the census was established as a crucial practice of governing the newly

[7] The three Indigenous groups in Shoemaker's analysis are the Seneca, Yakima and Ojibway. The Ojibway, Cree and Sioux were the main Indigenous peoples known to inhabit the region of today's Manitoba in the early 19th century (Morris, 1880: 9).

established Canadian nation (Anderson, 2008: 356-357). As Kahnawà:ke Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson observes, "[t]he desire for land produces 'the problem' of Indigenous life that is already living on that land" (2014: 19). To reckon with this problem, the census served as inventory of Indigenous presence in the West, intended to be used to as an instrument of erasure and assimilation of Indigenous peoples and their families (Taschereau Mamers 2017). Even in modern Western census there is a tendency to identify first the nuclear family and then define the rest of the members of the household by their relationship to this nuclear family, which might not reflect the real social dynamic of the household (Bignami-Van Assche et Simard 2020; Hertrich et al. 2020). One might expect that this was even more so at the beginning of the twentieth century, when enumerators were not familiar with non-Western household living arrangements. Indeed this could be difficult to do for dwellings that did not correspond to the enumeration definition, and the Indigenous kinship systems did not necessarily fit with the kin relations expected by the census (Canadian Families Project 2002). This has been observed in modern censuses and survey as well. In a study on remote Indigenous households in contemporary Australia, Morphy (2006) observed that while the census recognized the fact that a dwelling could count more than one household, it did not acknowledged the fact one household could be spread through more than one dwelling. Hertrich (2020) also finds that in censuses conducted in Mali that were centered on nuclear families, individuals who were not tied to any nuclear families were more likely to not be counted. The lack of trust was also a problem, as Indigenous peoples may have worried that the. information given to the enumerator would be used against them. Indigenous families may have specifically minimized the reporting of children to the DIA representatives, who often administered the census instead of enumerators, and who were also responsible for the removal of children to residential

schools (Hamilton, 2007). The lack of trust could also come from, or be amplified by the language barrier, that made it difficult for the chief to understand the purpose of the census (Hamilton, 2007).

Bearing these issues in mind, our results allow drawing the first portrait of living arrangements for all households in Manitoba in 1901. Using existing census samples, McCann et al. (2007a; 2007b) had found a similar prevalence (more than 70 percent) of nuclear families across Manitoba's seven census districts as we do, and identified it was the highest level in Canada. However, McCann et al.'s analysis also identified a higher prevalence of extended families (more than 15 percent) than our analysis does. The authors attributed this finding to local economies and fertility patterns, but our analysis rather suggests potential biases of the 1901 census sample, which lead to an over-representation of larger, complex households. Existing census samples for 1901 were indeed not meant to be representative at the household level (Ornstein, 2000). The possibility to analyse the structure of all households enumerated by the 1901 census thus represents a key opportunity of the TCP data to study family dynamics at the beginning of the 20th century.

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