CHILD-NAMING PRACTICES AS CULTURAL AND FAMILIAL INDICATORS

Daniel Scott Smith

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Introduction: The quantitative study of mentalities

Writing the history of family attitudes presents major challenges. It would seem that an individual researcher must choose between solid evidence peripheral to the main concern, how people in the past perceived relationships among family members, and interesting speculations supported by snippets of fact. My contention here is that the forenames given to children provide quantitative information directly related to this central concern. Concentrating on child-naming in England and colonial North America, this article outlines the practical problems in dealing with names, suggests some rules for recording and reporting data on child-naming, and indicates how evidence from England can help to resolve an important question that has emerged in the research on families in the latter society. Finally I point out two important topics that those interested in English child-naming patterns might pursue.¹

The pool of names: Content and structure

The number of individual forenames is large and nearly unlimited in principle. A characteristic feature of these distributions is that the total of forenames or surnames appearing only once exceeds what would be expected on the basis of standard statistical distributions.² However, a relative handful of personal names is used by a large proportion of the population. In former times it was a literal handful. In the first half of eighteenth-century England, three boys' names (John, William, and Thomas) and three girls' (Mary, Ann and Elizabeth) comprised a majority. In English-speaking societies today some fifty boys' names and thirty girls' names are required to reach the same fraction.³ The declining share of the most popular group of names is part of the larger process of individuation that has transformed western societies in the last two centuries.

Dating the alterations in the pool of names and identifying their cultural sources can provide measures of attitudinal change. A geographer, for
example, has uncovered a precipitous decline after 1871 in the popularity of an extremely dominant small group of traditional first names in a Swedish region and has related the shift to changes in such indicators as the rate of outmigration and the seasonal incidence of illegitimacy.4

The cultural sources of names can also yield an index of regional differences. Table 1 lists the fifteen most popular names for boys and girls born to Hingham, Massachusetts families formed before 1741, infants born in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England</th>
<th>Boys’ names Hingham</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>Girls’ names Hingham</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. John</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thomas</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. James</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Richard</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Lydia</td>
<td>Hannah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Robert</td>
<td>Benjamin</td>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>Frances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Joseph</td>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>Aiice</td>
<td>Abigail</td>
<td>Elinor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. George</td>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Jane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Henry</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Edward</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>George</td>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Susanna</td>
<td>Dorothy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Samuel</td>
<td>Nathaniel</td>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Catherine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Charles</td>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>Francis</td>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Edmund</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>Jael</td>
<td>Anna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. David</td>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Isabel</td>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Benjamin</td>
<td>Elisha</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Dorothy</td>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>Susanna</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlations 0.21 0.87 0.01 0.52

Sources: See footnote 5.

Rank-order correlation with English list, with all names not appearing counted.

200 parishes in England in 1700, and those baptised in Charles Parish, York County, Virginia, 1648-1699.5 Although John was the most popular name for boys in each sample and Mary ranked first or second, the names most frequently given to these New England children diverge from both the English and the Chesapeake lists. William, Richard, Robert, George, Henry and Edward, which all ranked among the top ten in England in 1700, do not appear among the leading fifteen boys’ names in Hingham.

What these names have in common is that they do not appear in the Bible. Only Joseph among the leading ten names in England is not included among the fifteen most popular male names in the Virginia parish.

That Calvinists in Europe and America turned to the Bible, most strikingly to the Old Testament, for names is well-known.6 Indeed, both sides of the great religious struggle in early modern Europe extended their efforts to encompass the names given to children at baptism. Catholic moralists urged the faithful to select the names of saints rather than naming for kin or relying on personal whim.7 It is possible that the proportion of Biblical names may be used as index of radical Protestantism. It is interesting, for example, that the nearly total use of Biblical names in Geneva did not extend long after the death of John Calvin. In Hingham, by contrast, the long decline from nearly universal Biblical-naming did not begin until the fifth decade of the eighteenth century.8 More research is required to estab-
lish the sensitivity of this index to underlying Calvinist or Puritan sentiments. Although New Englanders beyond Hingham also drew heavily from the Bible in their naming choices, the behaviour of Puritans in England is less certain. Only the last born, Rebecka, of the children of the Puritan minister Ralph Josselin had an Old Testament name, and the Josselins transmitted the non-Biblical names of Ralph (shared with father and great-grandfather) and Jane (shared with mother).³

In this preliminary stage of the study of the cultural meaning of English names it is desirable to preserve as much detail as possible in recording and reporting. The following divisions have appeared in the literature:

(1) Sex. One of the distinctive features of English personal names is that very few girls are given names that have masculine equivalents, e.g., Henrietta and Henry.

(2) Religious origins.
   (A) Old Testament
   (B) New Testament
   (C) Both
   (D) English or Puritan-meaningfuls⁹
      (1) Hyphenated, e.g., Fear-God¹¹
      (2) Non-hyphenated, e.g., Content, Comfort
   (E) None

(3) Surnames as first names

(4) Variant or ‘pet’ names, e.g., Sally for Sarah¹²

(5) Middle-names or two first-names

(6) Names with specific referents, such as naming for kings, presidents or other non-familial personages.¹³

Detail should be preserved in order to be able to enter a name in more than one category. Some Biblical names, such as James, might properly be classified under an 'English-traditional' grouping.¹⁴ For the cultural historian the important question is the meaning past name-givers had in mind when assigning the name to a child. There are instances in Hingham of obviously literal interpretations, as when a son born to a mother in her late thirties or early forties was named Benjamin, i.e., Last-born.

Ideally tabulations of forenames would distinguish between variant spellings and what were considered to be genuinely different names. But at present we do not know how distinct Beck, Beth or Eliza were from Elizabeth; perhaps we shall never know. In practice the name inscribed in the parish register must be taken as the datum. A conservative approach in tabulation is to adopt radically contrasting assumptions. For example, first consider each name as unique, except for the most trivial differences in spelling, e.g. Anne and Ann; then cluster all the variants together into one group. Depending on the purpose each name can be classified in more than one way. In tabulating the maximum fraction naming for mothers or grandmothers, I grouped Sally with Sarah, but only the latter was counted as a Biblical name.

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Although not so amenable to systematic study, the divergence between baptismal names and the names employed in everyday life is an interesting topic. Williage Gouge, an adviser on the requirements of the proper style for Puritan families, recommended the use of the terms Husband and Master by the wife when addressing her spouse. He warned against the employment of Brother, Cozen, Friend, Man, etc., for such appellations would give visitors the impression of lightness and wantonness in the matrimonial relationship. Disparaging such nicknames as Sweet, Sweeting, Heart, Love, Joy and Deare, as well as Ducke, Chicke and Pigsnie, Gouge also discouraged women from using the Christian names of their husbands or their variants such as Jack, Tom, Will or Hall. Although Gouge suggested that many wives actually used these contracted forms, he argued that 'they are much more unseemly; servants are usually so called.'

No standard procedure exists to report the relative concentration of names in the pool of all names. Usual measures of spread, such as the coefficient of variation (the ratio of the standard deviation to the mean), are unfortunately sensitive to the frequency of names appearing only once, a large category that is heavily influenced by how variant spellings and forms are treated. The fraction of all names that the most popular five, ten, twenty and fifty names comprise have all been employed as indices of concentration. Of course these shares also depend on how the variants of the more common names are reported. These variants of common names in the Hingham data in Table 1 are treated as different; the total for Sarah is not augmented by the number of Sallys.

**Calculating the extent of name sharing**

**A. Names-at-risk**

The incidence of name-sharing among kin is an index that taps the strength of the bonds between relatives. Diaries or letters occasionally provide direct statements identifying the person who was being tied to a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First sons sharing name with</th>
<th>Kin whose names are known</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fa only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Total cases</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Fa only</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) FaFa only</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) MoFa only</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Fa &amp; FaFa</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Fa &amp; MoFa</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Fa, MoFa &amp; FaFa</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) None of above</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For father</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For grandfather</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Fa = father; FaFa = father's father; MoFa = mother's father.*
namesake and the reasons for transmitting that name. Most quantitative studies have depended on the reconstitution of families from parish or other geographically-based vital registers, or on family genealogies that have been compiled by others. That a child was being named for a given kinsperson is an inference from the fact that the two had the same forename.

To assess correctly the proportion of families in which a child shares the name of another person, e.g., the paternal grandfather, a basic concept of demography, that of ‘population-at-risk’, must be utilized.\textsuperscript{16} The names of persons in the category must be known by the investigator in order to be at risk to have a child share them. In the hypothetical example in Table 2 there are twenty-five cases in which we know both the father’s and grandfathers’ forenames; twenty-five other cases in which the father’s and paternal grandfather’s names are known, and fifty cases in which only the father’s name is available to the researcher. The totals in Table 2 indicate that forty per cent of first sons had the same personal name as their father and only twenty per cent shared the forenames of a grandfather. The dashes in the table imply that the latter computation is erroneous. Since we know the names of both grandfathers in only a quarter of the families, the denominator contains only those twenty-five cases. Some twenty-eight percent (14/50) of first sons shared the name of the paternal grandfather and forty-eight per cent (12/25) of those whose grandfathers’ names are known shared the personal name of a grandfather. Since the names of parents rarely appear in Anglican marriage registers, linkage of records is necessary to determine the names of the future grandparents. Since not all persons marrying can be traced to an earlier baptismal record, it is essential to keep track of the kin at risk to have their names transmitted to children.

For the same reason the researcher must control for the number of children of each sex, an especially important datum in studies that compare naming-patterns before, during and after the secular decline in fertility. Parents of five sons obviously have more chances to name a son for a grandfather than parents of an only son. A suggestive finding of my study of child-naming in Hingham was the nineteenth century decline in the incidence of naming for a deceased sibling. The drop in this indicator, I argued, confirmed the increasing emphasis on the unique qualities of children, a development first postulated by Philippe Ariès.\textsuperscript{17} For parents to name a child for a deceased sibling obviously requires that another child of the same sex be born after the death. One must also distinguish between naming for a deceased sibling who had the forename of a parent or grandparent and for one who lacked the personal name of these immediate kin. Although the denominator of the proportion of parents naming for a deceased sibling was limited to those couples having one or more additional children of the same sex, it would be better to control precisely for the number of additional children. Examining only the name of the next same-sex child has the advantage of maximizing the base for the proportion, always an important consideration given the relatively few cases involved in a family reconstitution study.
In sum, the researcher should provide for the diverse possibilities naturally arising in genealogies: not only variations by birth-order and numbers of children of each sex, but also the cases of name-sharing between parents and grandparents, the existence of step-grandparents, deceased, and so on.

B. Correcting for the popularity of names:

Only the extent of name-sharing between individuals within a family can be measured, not the fraction of families in which a child is named for a particular relative. Two names picked randomly from a list of all forenames could be identical and this proportion is larger in populations that draw heavily on a small group of names. If the frequency of each name is designated as \( p_i \), then the chance that two names chosen randomly would be identical is given by the summation of the squares of these frequencies, \( \sum p_i^2 \). Since the square of a small proportion approaches zero, only the most popular names need to be used in this computation. Accepting Wythcombe's data for the shares of the three most popular male names in England in the first half of the eighteenth century, then about twelve or thirteen per cent \( (0.245^2 + 0.200^2 + 0.100^2 + \ldots + 0.001^2) \) of boys' names picked at random would be identical. Thirteen male names in Hingham in families before 1741 were needed to comprise the share of the leading three names in England. In the New England town, therefore, only about three per cent of male names picked randomly would be the same. If sixty per cent of first sons in New England and fifty per cent of first sons in old England shared the forename of their fathers, the adjusted differential in this tendency increases to about twenty per cent.

This example illustrates the potential to exaggerate the extent to which forenames run in particular genealogies. If a son could be named for any of four kinsmen whose names were known to be at risk, and if there were a one-eighth chance of two randomly-chosen names matching, then in approximately forty per cent of the cases \( (1 - 0.875 = 0.414) \), the son would appear to be named for a relative. Certainly one does not want to infer a preference for names of kinsmen when the result could be attained by families selecting names randomly on the basis of their relative popularity in the pool of all names. Since the most popular names in one parish might comprise a larger share of the total than indicated by Withycombe's estimates, the degree of distortion in my calculation is probably underestimated.

C. Naming for whom: Godparents and godchildren

Among the more obscure matters in the history of the Anglo-American family is the role played by godparents. Scholars rarely comment concerning their function or even existence, a situation doubtless resulting in part from their absence from the historical sources. Rarely recorded in Anglican parish registers, seemingly of secondary importance for purposes of property bequests, and perhaps under no obligation to instruct or assist their godchildren, godparents in England surely were less im-
important than, for example, in France.\textsuperscript{19} I know of no positive evidence that godparents existed for the English-origin population of New England. Puritans in England also disliked the practice of godparenthood.\textsuperscript{20}

Godparents were involved in the child-naming process in several distinct ways. First, they formally gave the name to the child during the baptismal ceremony. Second, the child often could be the namesake of one of these special witnesses. Finally, kin often served as godparents. In one system, grandparents acted for the first-born son and daughter, uncles and aunts for younger children. The relative incidence of naming for different categories of kin may directly reflect the roles of these persons in the ritual of baptisms.\textsuperscript{21}

Table 3 reveals an important difference in kinship priorities between colonial Hingham and Middlesex County, Virginia that may derive from the absence of godparents in the former population. First children in Middlesex were considerably more likely (fifty-five versus thirty-five per cent) to share names with grandparents than first children in the New England town. Children in the Chesapeake county also were more likely to be named for aunts and uncles.\textsuperscript{22} In Hingham, by contrast, the tendency to name a child for his father or her mother was extremely strong. Five of six fathers of sons and four of five mothers of daughters in families formed during the colonial period named a child for themselves. That parents alone, unaccompanied by godparents, presented the child for baptism in New England probably is the proximate cause for this difference in child-naming choices.

The Hingham pattern very likely is the deviant one. The Biblical-revolution in the sources of names suggests an innovative spirit. Yet the naming-pattern of Hingham might possibly be traced to regional peculiarities within England. A high proportion of the permanent settlers of the town derived from East Anglia, and a substantial fraction of these emigrated from the English parish of Hingham (Norfolk). Further the preference for grandparental names for the first-born son and daughter may be more a Mediterranean than a northwest-European practice. The first-child pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Named for</th>
<th>First son Middlesex</th>
<th>daughter Hingham</th>
<th>Second son Middlesex</th>
<th>daughter Hingham</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather only</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of sons</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother only</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandmother only</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of daughters</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: See footnote 22.
of Hingham was not unknown in Europe. Without English studies of child-naming practices, we will not be able to interpret these variant patterns within the American colonies.

D. Assessing the importance of name-sharing between kin

While the calculation of the extent of name-sharing between children and different kinds of relatives provides an indicator of kinship priorities, we also need to know just what the linkages indicate. Are names of kin chosen, to use a common distinction, primarily for symbolic reasons or are material considerations sometimes important? An interesting group in this regard are those childless or sonless men and their married brothers who may choose to name a son for the uncle without direct heirs. In Hingham these heirless men responded in a mixed fashion in their wills; some designated the homonymous nephew the principal heir, yet others ignored their namesake in their bequests. Although some married brothers did not bother to preserve the forename from extinction within the family, others transmitted the name after the death of the childless uncle. Whether children are more likely to be named for living or deceased grandparents is another test to determine the mix of expressive and instrumental considerations in name-transmission.

While historians generally concur that Anglo-Americans had, by comparative standards, a rather narrow and shallow understanding of relevant kin, the study of child-naming is all the more valuable precisely because it is sensitive to the weak signals of kinship emitted by persons in English cultures. Over the course of the nineteenth century in Hingham, parents were progressively less likely to name children for parents, grandparents and deceased siblings. When they did transmit a familial forename, they often added a distinguishing middle name. Although data on the kin composition of households are very scarce before the middle of the nineteenth century in the United States, it is unlikely that marked changes in this indicator occurred before the twentieth century. Despite the stability in household composition, Hingham families radically altered their child-naming tendencies. This disparity in familial indicators points to the sensitivity of the child-naming indices to those subtle meanings that kinship had for Anglo-Americans in the past.

Two concluding suggestions

In the initial stage of the study of English child-naming it is important first to produce a sense of the outline of the patterns over space and time. The sharing of names among kin could be tabulated from published genealogies of families that resided in different regions of England. Were there distinct regional variations in, for example, the tendency to name first children for parents or grandparents? Similarly, a study based on parish registers might begin by reconstituting the earliest (sixteenth and early seventeenth century) and latest (early nineteenth century) parts of the record in order to ascertain whether there were any changes over the entire period covered by parochial registration. Is it true, for example,
that naming for deceased siblings disappeared in England by the late eighteenth century?\textsuperscript{26}

Broader coverage over time and among places can be achieved by identifying the names of the parents for only those couples whose marriage can be linked to the baptism of a first child and by limiting the study to first children; this research design also yields statistics on the incidence of pre-nuptial pregnancy. Such a study would be feasible as a class project for one or more students. The crucial methodological admonition for students to remember is that they must record which kin are at risk to have their names transmitted to a child.

A second major topic for investigation is the extent of class differences in English child-naming patterns. A principal criticism of works on the history of familial attitudes is that the evidence derives overwhelmingly from elite groups while the conclusions pretend to cover the entire social structure. Parish registers are especially valuable because they encompass the whole spectrum of society, although those who migrated after marriage and before the baptism of their first child may differ in socio-economic characteristics from residentially stable couples. An investigation of class differences in child-naming obviously requires a proxy indicator for class; a marriage register that lists the occupation of the groom is the most usable source. Alternatively, one could compare parishes with radically different economic histories and resulting differences in occupational distributions.\textsuperscript{27} These studies of child-naming will provide systematic evidence on the homogeneity of the English family system.

NOTES


5. Daniel Scott Smith, 'What's in a Name?: Child-naming Patterns and Family Relationships in Hingham, Massachusetts, 1641 to 1880,' Journal of Social History, 18, 1985 Summer, forthcoming; the English and York County, Virginia figures are in Dunkling, pp. 75-76.


10. The latter term is Stewart’s, ‘Men’s Names,’ p. 124; these names have an obvious and direct meaning in English.


12. For a list of these ‘pet’ names, an eighteenth-century phenomenon, see Dunkling, First Names First, pp. 78-79.

13. For an illustrative study see Peter Karsten, Patriot-Heroes in England and America: Political Symbolism and Changing Values over Three Centuries, Madison, Wisconsin, 1978, pp. 5-6, 83-86.


17. Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life, New York, 1962. A nice statement of the current sensibility comes from an American advice columnist known as ‘Dear Abby,’ who told a grieving parent whose child had died when sixteen days old: ‘I know how desperately you want to replace the child you recently lost, but please don’t give him the same name. The new baby shouldn’t be thought of as a “replacement.” He will be another child in his own right and should be treated as one.’ Chicago Tribune, June 30, 1976, Section 3, p. 4.


20. It is difficult to prove conclusively that a practice did not exist. The most direct evidence comes from a satirical verse, ‘A West-Country Mans Voyage to New-England,’ in Merry Drollerie Complete, London, 1870; reprinted in W. Howland Kenney, Laughter in the Wilderness: Early American Humor to 1783, Kent, Ohio, 1976, pp. 36-38. Indirect support is indicated by the action of the consistory of a Huguenot church that chided the fathers (who) are renouncing the custom of godmothers and godfathers which is accepted in France, and imitate it by themselves presenting their children in baptism, February 3, 1689, Records of the French Church at Narragansett, 1686-1691, New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, 71, 194, Op. 53. (I am indebted to Jon Butler for this reference.) Evidence for English Puritan hostility may be found in F.D. Price ed., ‘The Commission for Ecclesiastical Causes in the Dioceses of Bristol and Gloucester, 1574,’ Publications of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 10, 1972, pp. 75-76. (I thank Keith Thomas for this reference.) Godparents were not required by the Directory of Public Worship (1644), but the practice revived after the Restoration. One group claimed that ‘the far greater number of Persons baptised within these twenty years last past had no God-fathers nor God-mothers at their Baptism,’ Exceptions of the Presbyterian-Brethren against some Passages in the Present Liturgy (1661), cited in Oxford English Dictionary, compact edition, p. 1169.


22. Smith, 'Child-naming Patterns.' I wish to thank Darrett B. and Anita H. Rutman for permission to use their figures for Middlesex, County: Portrait of a Chesapeake Community, 1650-1750 (Ms., October 1980), Appendix 6, Table A-14.


24. For details, see Smith, 'Child-naming Patterns.'


26. For this claim see Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, London, 1977, p. 409. Incidentally the oft-cited example of the historian Edward Gibbon who claimed 'that in the baptism of each of my (five) brothers, my father's prudence successively repeated my Christian name of Edward, that in the case of the departure of the eldest son, the patronymic appellation might still be perpetuated in the family,' is erroneous. Only one of his five younger brothers, all of whom died in infancy, was Edward, and he was baptised Edward James Gibbon. Edward Gibbon, Memoirs of My Life, ed. Georges A. Bonnard, London, 1966 p. 28. For information from the parish register, see D. M. Low, ed., Gibbon's Journal to January 28, 1763, New York, 1929, p. xxix. (I am indebted to David Jordan for this reference to the Low volume.)

27. This approach is exemplified by David Levine's Family Formation in an Age of Nascent Capitalism, New York, 1977.

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