

# Demography and Ecology Written Preliminary Examination

## January 10, 2000

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### PART II: AFTERNOON EXAM

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#### IV. Answer A or B

A. Michael Teitelbaum and Jay Winters have recently published a book, **A Question of Numbers: High Migration, Low Fertility and the Politics of National Identity**. Bluntly put, the thesis is that lowering fertility in industrializing countries creates labor shortages that are solved by increased immigration. That immigration leads to political and cultural crises about national identity. Examples discussed in the book are France, Germany, Britain, Yugoslavia, the end of the Soviet Empire, Romania, the U.S., Canada and the Islamic world taken as a whole. How would you go about falsifying this hypothesis? Spell out a study design for data collection and analysis that will enable you to test this hypothesis.

B. In a recent PhD Dissertation, David Bartram from our Department argues that current migration theories fail to explain the impressive degree of empirical variation in the proportion of immigrants (foreign workers) that are part of the labor force in industrialized countries. For example, whereas in Japan there are virtually no foreign workers (less than 1.5 percent), in Germany approximately 10 percent of the labor force is constituted by foreign workers. Critically examine the most important migration theories with a view to evaluate Bartram's claim.

#### V. Answer A or B

A. Give an account of Samuel Preston's PAA address in the 1980s about the changes in intergenerational relation in the US: How had the fortunes of children and the elderly diverged in the United States since the 1970s? Which group was doing better, and which worse? What were some of the reasons Preston cited for the change? If you had to give a PAA address on the same topic today, what issues would you focus on?

B. Current empirical research on families and households in Western Europe and North America has identified signs that lead to statements regarding the withering of a 'traditional' regime of family and household formation

1. Summarize the research findings referred to above and specify how applicable they are;
2. Discuss whether or not the changes detected reflect a move away from a 'traditional' family by first specifying what is this 'traditional' form; then review whether or not the changes detected are in fact drastic departures from the traditional type.

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**VI. Answer A or B**

A. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has been through a long series of discussions and hearings about allowing people to declare themselves of mixed races. What is the current state of these discussions? How will the Census Bureau deal with these issues in 2000? What are the implications of these decisions for research in social demography? Give an example of empirical research and illustrate how at least one of the new alternatives being considered would affect your work on such a problem?

B. "Solving the problems" of Medicare and Social Security appear to be high on the agenda of the United States today. The nature and magnitude of both problems are currently assayed based on demographic estimates of morbidity and survivorship.

1. Discuss the reliability of those estimates.
2. What are the most important things we need to know to improve estimates of the quantities that enable us to judge the nature of each of these problems?