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This paper presents an attempt to elucidate the character and mechanics of population growth among a group that can be loosely equated with the 'whites' or Afrikaners in the Cape Colony in the eighteenth century. Essentially it is an overview, because many of the details which are needed for a full demographic analysis are lacking. Nevertheless, it is hoped that it may be interesting to demographers, for the purposes of comparison, especially since many of the features of the South African population have close parallels in other settler situations, such as French Canada and New England.[1] It is also hoped that this paper will form the beginning of the establishment of the social history of early South Africa on a basis which the concerns of previous historians have not given it.[2]

SOURCES

The precise subject of this study can best be defined operationally. It consists of the demography of those individuals who were assessed for *opgaaf*, a wealth tax levied by the government of the Cape Colony,[3] of those who were included in the second edition of C. C. de Villiers's volumes of genealogies, the *Geslags-registeer van Ou Kaapse Families*,[4] and of those included in J. A. Heese's recent study of immigration to South Africa, *Die Herkoms van die Afrikaner*.[5] The three sets of people are, unfortunately, far from co-terminous, although they overlap to a very considerable extent. Nevertheless, as I shall argue below, between them they define a very real social group; one, moreover, that was dominant within its society, socially, economically and in all other ways.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to analyse the basis of the three sources that I have used. First, there were the figures derived from the *opgaaf* lists, which were drawn up annually by the local officials, the *veldkornets*, as a means of assessing the tax that each property holder had to pay. Thus, they became a very crude census of the population the accuracy of which cannot have been perfect, but was at least reasonable. As I have only been able to consult the aggregated figures and not the original lists, of which only a fraction survive anyway, it is not certain precisely to whom they refer. Nevertheless, it is clear that those who compiled them included all those who were considered as 'Christians' as opposed to 'bastards', 'Hottentots' or slaves. Only the 'Free Blacks' are in an anomalous position, but this group was always small and insignificant.[6] Thus,

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[1] In order not to overburden the references in this paper, I have generally restricted comparisons to four sources, namely E. Gauthier and L. Henri, *La Population de Crulai, Paroisse Normande: Etude historique*, Travaux et Documents de l'Institut National d'études démographiques, Cahier No. 33 (Paris, 1958), J. Henripin, *La Population Canadienne au Début du XVIII^e Siécle*, Travaux et Documents de l'I.N.E.D., Cahier No. 22 (Paris, 1954). E. A. Wrigley, 'Family Limitation in Pre-Industrial England', *Economic History Review*, **19** (1966), pp. 82–109, and P. J. Greven Jr., *Four Generations: Population and Land in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca and London, 1970).

[2] Cf. Shula Marks, 'Afrikaner and African historiography', *Journal of African History*, **12** (1970), p. 447.

[3] I have used the figures tabulated by C. Beyers, *Die Kaapse Patriotte* (Cape Town, 1929), pp. 240–249.

[4] C. C. de Villiers, *Geslags-registeer van Ou Kaapse Families*, 2nd ed., edited by C. Pama, 3 vols. (Cape Town, 1965).

[5] J. A. Heese, *Die Herkoms van die Afrikaner 1657–1867* (Cape Town, 1971).

[6] The only analysis of the situation of the Cape Colony at this period that is of much value is that of I. D. MacCrone, *Race Attitudes in South Africa* (Oxford, 1937). For a trenchant critique of the tradition within which this work stands, see Martin Legassick, 'The Frontier Tradition in South African Historiography' *Collected Seminar Papers of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, Southern Africa*, **2**, (1972). On the composition of the *opgaaf* lists, see J. S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1652–1937* (Oxford, 1937), p. 12, n. 3.

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as there is no reason to suppose that the criteria for inclusion in the *opgaaf* changed over time, the crude figures that they provide may be used, albeit somewhat cautiously and in the absence of anything better, at least to provide a measure of growth.

The worth of the second major source, the *Geslags-registeer*, naturally depends on the manner in which the genealogies were constructed. The work that went into the first edition was described by G. McC. Theal:

'The materials for this work were collected by Mr C. C. de Villiers of Cape Town, assisted by his wife, during many years of close application. All the baptismal and marriage entries of Europeans and persons of European descent in the Church registers of Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Paarl, Tulbagh, Malmesbury and Graaf Reinet, from the foundations of these churches to the close of the eighteenth century, were copied. Unfortunately, these registers are not complete, so in an endeavour to supply what was wanting, the wills and inventories in the office of the Master of the Supreme Court and the documents in the Registry of Deeds were carefully examined and copious notes were made from them. Old family bibles were sought out and yielded some information. The public archives were next turned to, but before the first series of papers in them was completely examined, the indefatigable worker was suddenly struck down by death, and his widow did not long survive him.'[7]

Thereafter, Theal and an assistant took 19 months to arrange the material and put it through the press, and while doing so they received more information with which to fill out the work. Since then it has been checked and re-checked by a host of South African genealogists whose contributions have been included in the second edition of the work, edited by C. Pama and published in 1966. It is from this edition that I have drawn my information.

It is not, of course, a perfect source. Pama commented that the new edition was far from complete and that 'to attain completeness would be impossible anyhow. However, the work aims at reflecting as far as possible the present state of genealogical research in our country'.[8] In particular, there seem to be three major defects. First, and least important, there seems to be a considerable underrepresentation of immigrants' children, at least from 1780 onwards, for in that year a Lutheran Church was founded in Cape Town, which drew adherents away from the established *Nederduitsch Gereformeerde Kerk*. These were in general the newly arrived, often German sections of the population, for older established families seem to have remained faithful to the *N.G.K.*[9] De Villiers did not have access to their records, as is shown by the fact that 20 per cent of immigrants are recorded as having no offspring, as opposed to eleven per cent among the population as a whole.[10] It is possible, of course, that other factors were at work, but because of the strong suspicion of underregistration, I have always tabulated figures relating to the wives and children of immigrants separately.

Secondly, and most unfortunately, the *Geslags-registeer* does not record the deaths of individuals, except occasionally. For this reason it is impossible to produce either crude or age-specific death rates, which are normally of crucial importance in any demographic study. Less obviously, the construction of statistics on fertility becomes a more difficult and crude process, for it is impossible to discover, for instance, whether a woman ceased to bear children because she herself had died, because her husband had died and she failed to re-marry, or because she ceased to be biologically fertile, or through choice. This means that direct comparison with other populations is difficult, although a fairly clear picture can be built up and the probable direction of bias established. For similar reasons, any attempt to answer questions relating to the proportion of

[7] G. McC. Theal, *History and Ethnography of Africa South of the Zambezi before 1795*, 3 vols. (London, 1910), III, pp. 403–404.

[8] de Villiers, *op. cit.*, in footnote 4, p. xxviii.

[9] On this, see J. Hoge, 'Die Geskiedenis van die Lutherse Kerk aan die Kaap', *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 1938, II.

[10] The difference is significant using a χ^2 test. $0{\cdot}001 < P < 0{\cdot}01$.

men and women who never married rests on decidedly dubious assumptions. This is unfortunate because it has been argued that discrepancies in this regard are of considerable importance in the development of South African society.[11]

Occasionally, however, the dates of death of particular individuals are mentioned. Nevertheless, they are only recorded in any systematic fashion for two surnames, de Villiers and Hugo, which have been covered by especially conscientious genealogists since the original compilation. Even here, however, the data are not good enough to base anything on, both because the families appear to have been untypically wealthy and, mainly confined to the original area of Huguenot settlement, in the agricultural districts of the Boland, less than 80 km from Cape Town, and because those whose deaths have been recorded seem themselves to have been untypical by virtue of that very fact. Above all, there was a high incidence of re-marriage among the husbands of women whose dates of death were known, but this was merely because the main evidence for a death was in fact the re-marriage. Thus, they cannot be used as a control to check the degree of distortion.

The reason for this deficiency is quite clear, as it is a consequence of the burial customs in South Africa at the time. Because Calvinism did not consider the funeral service to be a sacrament, nor believe that any ritual was necessary at death to enhance the chances of salvation, it was not thought essential to have the presence of a minister who might have left a record of the event. Moreover, as the churches were few and concentrated in the south-west of the country, there was no incentive to bring the body to them. No one would want to cart a body over what might easily be a distance of 100 miles for theologically valueless ceremonies. Rather, each farm maintained, and in general still does maintain, its own plot of hallowed ground in which its members are buried. Even in Cape Town, where burial in a communal graveyard was obviously necessary, there was rarely any ecclesiastical presence and never a record of the proceedings.[12]

In default of ecclesiastical registration, the civil authorities decided that it was necessary to record deaths. As early as 1714 they ordered the sextons to inform them before they buried a body, but nothing seems to have come of this directive. Then in 1759, they began more concerted registrations, so that death notices survive from that time.[13] I have not been able to consult these documents, but the loss is probably not too great, as they only began late in the period with which I am concerned in this paper and no doubt they are far from complete, with a bias towards town-dwellers, property owners and adults in general.

The third major problem with the *Geslags-registeers* lies in the difficulty of deciding how real was the community to which they referred. They are, as Theal maintained, a compilation of the genealogies of 'Europeans and persons of European descent'. Precisely what this means is unclear, since large numbers of persons who would not now be classified as 'white' were baptized and married by the *N.G.K.* According to one estimate, ten per cent of marriages in the eighteenth century were 'mixed'.[14] How far de Villiers and later genealogists have excised these records from their genealogies and what biases this practice (if it existed) has introduced into the figures derived from them is unknown, but it would be at least arguable that racial ideas since the late nineteenth century have been very different from those of the eighteenth, so that a categorization that refers to no contemporary social reality has been imposed on the data.[15] Against this three points

[11] See below, footnotes 23 and 40.

[12] The dates of the foundations of the earliest South African churches of the *N.G.K.* are as follows: Cape Town, 1656; Stellenbosch, 1686; Drakenstein (Paarl), 1691; Roodezand (Tulbagh), 1743; Zwartland (Malmesbury), 1745; Graaf Reinet, 1792; Swellendam, 1798; George, 1813; Uitenhage, 1817. All the first five lie within 100 km of Cape Town; Graaf Reinet is about 800 km north-east of the town.

[13] See C. G. Botha, *Collected Works*, 3 vols. (Cape Town, 1965), III, p. 134.

[14] Anon., 'The Origin and Incidence of Miscegenation at the Cape Colony during the Dutch East India Company's Regime', *Race Relations Journal*, **20**, 2 (1953), pp. 22–27.

[15] Cf. J. H. Plumb's comment in *The Death of the Past* (London, 1969), pp. 31–32: 'it is interesting, if not surprising, that outbreaks of genealogical fever occur most frequently when new classes are emerging into status, a new faction pushing its way into the ancient aristocracy, or when the established ruling classes feel threatened by the *nouveaux riches*'. The timing of the outbreak of genealogical work in South Africa would seem to lend substance to such a view, coming as it did at the beginning of industrialization and of the growth of an Afrikaner middle class.

can be made. First, it is clear that a very large number of persons of other than pure European ancestry are in fact included in the registers. J. A. Heese's meticulous inquiry into the national origin of the Afrikaner population, which was based to a large extent on the *Geslags-registeers*, established that seven per cent of the Afrikaner gene pool in 1807 was '*nie-blank*'.[16] Secondly, it is fairly clear that the community of those who were baptized and married equates closely with the dominant group within the colony. What later became the division between 'whites' and 'non-whites' began as a division between Christians and non-Christians, and, even after the divisions were more clearly defined by pigmentation, the Christian *rites de passage* remained the sign of acceptance into the community that was putatively white and contained all those with social power within the society. Their importance can be demonstrated by the following description of a social situation given by Sparrman, one of the most reliable of the travellers who visited South Africa in the eighteenth century:

'I saw two brothers . . . the issue of a Christian man and a bastard negress of the second or third generation. One of the sons, at this time about 30 years of age, did not appear by any means slighted in the company of the Christian farmers, though at this time he had not been baptized. The other, who was the elder brother, in order to get married and settled in life, as then he was, had been obliged to use all his influence, and probably even bribes, to get admitted into the pale of the Church by baptism.'[17]

The third reason why such criticisms can be disregarded is more pragmatic, relating not so much to the content of the genealogies as to the fact that they exist, providing by far the best source for the demographic history of early Afrikaner society – as well as being highly useful in attempts to reconstruct the structure of social life on a more general basis, particularly, as concerns questions of kinship and its obverse, marriage. Moreover, they are surprisingly good, with far fewer limitations than a knowledge of the travel literature would lead one to suppose. For instance, when describing baptism at the Cape, O. F. Mentzel, who was perhaps the best informed of all those who wrote of South African life at this time, commented that because of the problems of transport 'farmers who live in the remote interior come to town so rarely that they bring walking children for baptism and sometimes several at the same time'.[18] If such practices had been at all frequent, the consequences for demographic analysis would have been dire, but occasions of this type would show themselves in the genealogies as multiple baptisms, the proportion of which can be checked. They certainly occur from time to time. Joachim Wepener had all eight of his children by his mistress – who seems, significantly, to have been coloured – baptized on successive Sundays in 1776. Nevertheless, out of a sample of 298 women, only eleven baptized more than one child at a time, making twelve out of a total of 1606 pregnancies, if it is accepted that baptism occurred shortly after birth. These figures are well within the range that might be predicted. Moreover, they make it obvious that baptism was rarely delayed after birth for more than, say, four to six months, as otherwise women who knew that they were pregnant would have been loath to travel to the churches, knowing that the arduous journey would have to be repeated shortly. Travellers have produced conflicting statements on this point. Lichtenstein, for instance, wrote that those who brought children to be baptized at Tulbagh 'do not . . . make a point of coming for this purpose immediately after the child's birth; they wait till the opportunity presents itself, perhaps till they take a journey to Cape Town.'[19] On the other hand, he described the custom of at least one woman in the moderately remote area of the Bokkeveld:

'The good woman of the house assured us that after every lying-in, and this had been an annual

[16] Heese, *op. cit.* in footnote 5, p. 41.

[17] A. Sparrman, *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1785), I, 203–204.

[18] O. F. Mentzel, *A Geographical-Topographical Description of the Cape of Good Hope*, 3 vols. (Cape Town, 1921, 1925, 1941), II, 122.

[19] H. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805* and *1806*, trans. A. Plumtre, 2 vols. (Cape Town, 1928–29), I, 175.

ceremony with her, she went on the second or third Sunday herself with her child, to have it baptized at the church at Roodezand (Tulbagh). She had a very safe horse, she said, which carried her so well over the mountains between her house and Roodezand that she could go and return in the same day.'[20]

Demographically, it is thus possible to establish the age of any individual with an accuracy of no less than 6 months.

The third source, J. A. Heese's *Die Herkoms van die Afrikaner*, is primarily useful because it demonstrates the rate of immigration into the 'white' population of South Africa. It appears to be a very thorough, unbiased and careful piece of work that may be used with few qualms.

TABLE 1. *Gross 'white' population of South Africa (excluding indentured servants)*

Year	Adult men	Adult women	Boys	Girls	Total
1701	418	242	295	310	1,265
1706	513	290	426	412	1,641
1711	545	337	462	412	1,756
1713	517	286	387	585	1,585
1718	691	390	490	482	2,053
1723	679	433	544	589	2,245
1728	737	493	706	777	2,713
1733	793	547	839	895	3,074
1738	901	641	993	1,077	3,612
1743	1,075	700	1,025	1,174	3,972
1748	1,244	830	1,086	1,298	4,508
1753	1,478	1,026	1,396	1,519	5,419
1758	1,563	1,064	1,481	1,467	5,575
1763	1,862	1,278	1,831	1,779	6,750
1768	2,114	1,454	7,084	2,066	7,718
1773	2,300	1,578	2,138	2,269	8,285
1778	2,789	1,587	2,667	2,678	9,721
1783	3,158	2,042	2,821	3,019	11,040
1788	3,481	2,440	3,389	3,351	12,661
1793	4,032	2,730	3,466	3,602	13,830
1795	4,259	2,870	3,963	3,837	14,929

Source: Beyers, *op. cit.* in footnote 3, pp. 240–249.

POPULATION MECHANICS

Throughout the eighteenth century the South African 'white' population was increasing at a great rate. The gross figures, as provided by the *opgaaf* lists, may be seen in Table 1 and are shown graphically in Figure 1. From these it may be seen that in 1701 the population was around 1,250, that it had doubled by 1723, again by 1753 and for a third time by 1783. By the end of the century it had reached 15,000. This represented a gross growth rate of around 2·6 per cent per annum. The only time when population declined was during the smallpox epidemic of 1714, but after that slide recovery was swift, and by 1718 the level was well above that of seven years previously. Another epidemic of the disease in 1755 also produced a slackening in the rate of growth.[21] For the rest of the century there was continuous, cumulative and rapid growth.

In part, this growth was due to immigration. The received orthodoxy is that immigration to South Africa ended in 1706, when the Dutch East India Company changed its policy of

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 616.
[21] M. W. Spilhaus, *South Africa in the Making, 1652–1806*, (Cape Town, 1965), p. 110.

encouraging the settlement of the tip of the continent by family units, and did not restart until the government took over at the beginning of the next century.[22] Now, it is true that most of the *stamvaders* of the more numerous of modern Afrikaner families had reached the Cape by 1700. Certainly, the large Huguenot contingent had arrived, as had such well-known Afrikaner family names as van der Merwe, van Dyk, van Wyk, van Zyl, Pretorius and Smuts. On the other hand, many notable Afrikaners were descended in the male line from men who arrived at the Cape

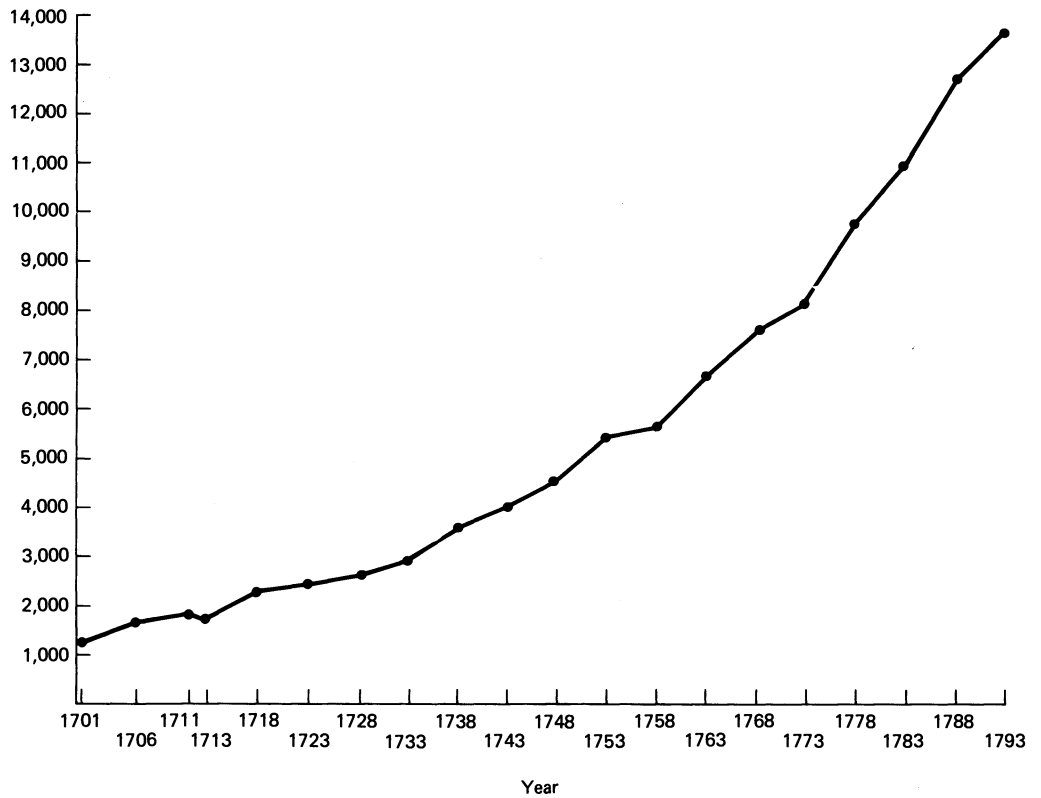

FIGURE 1. Total white population.

TABLE 2. *Immigrants marrying into the South African 'white' population*

Period	Men	White women	Non-white women
1657–87	63	53	8
1688–1717	300	156	50
1718–47	317	91	72
1748–77	565	49	145
1778–1807	738	64	205

during the middle and later years of the eighteenth century. Examples of these are the Hertzogs, Hofmeyers and Graafs. In fact, it is clear that throughout the century there was a continuous stream of immigrants into the South African 'white' population. Many of the members of the Cape garrison left the service of the Company to work as servants for the farmers or townsmen,

[22] See, e.g. E. A. Walker, *The History of Southern Africa*, 3rd ed. (London, 1957), pp. 76, 88.

before setting up on their own. In all the *opgaaf* lists, this category contained about 100 men, until the 1780s, when war made the Company less willing to allow its soldiers to take civil employment. Moreover, many men seem to have entered the South African 'white' population without having gone through this initial process of indenture.

The immigration that did take place was very largely male, especially after the earliest years of the settlement. Heese has listed the marriages in which one or both partners were first-generation 'whites' either in the geographical or in the social sense. In total, the structure can be seen in Table 2. The effects of the sexual imbalance in immigration can be seen in Table 1. Adult females were constantly outnumbered by males, in a ratio which varied between a high of 100 to 180 in the aftermath of the smallpox epidemic in 1713, to a low of 100 to 144 in 1755.[23] For children, not surprisingly, there was no clear sex pattern, with girls outnumbering boys rather more often than not. Thus, the immigrants cannot have had a particularly great effect on population growth, for many of them, failing to find mates, would have left no legitimate offspring in the society. Moreover, as can be seen from Figure 1, even when the surplus men in the population are left out of account, which would have the effect of discounting the great majority of immigrants, the general trend still shows almost continuous growth at a high rate. Therefore, the extension of the area of 'white' settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, which proceeded throughout the eighteenth century – and indeed, at least until the 1860s – resulted mainly from the natural increase of what was originally a small but nevertheless healthy and fertile 'white' population at the beginning of the century.

In order to specify more exactly the mechanisms at work, I took a sample from the *Geslagsregisteers* of ten per cent of those women who were born at the Cape before 1760 and who were ever married.[24] This amounted to 298 individuals, for whom, ideally, information was available to show the dates of their baptism, their various marriages and the baptisms of their husbands – providing these were not immigrants – the dates of baptism and the sexes of their children and whether their children married. Obviously, such data are not invariably available, and some individuals had to be discarded from the consideration of some topics, while it was occasionally possible and necessary to estimate the date of a birth or a marriage from those of siblings or of the first child. Nevertheless, it is clear that the information recorded is generally complete and of a reasonably high order of accuracy.

The analysis of the lives of these women proves what a general knowledge of the travel literature and of similar sources would lead one to suspect, namely that Afrikaner women generally married young, had children at regular and short intervals thereafter, and remained fertile well into middle age. The combined consequences of these three factors meant that they had very large families. Moreover, a considerable proportion of these children survived the rigours of infancy, childhood and adolescence and themselves reached maturity to breed at the same high rate. Each of these points will now be substantiated in turn.

MARRIAGE

The age at which women reach puberty cannot be determined for obvious reasons, but by their middle teens girls seem to have been considered ready to marry. The youngest age at which any girl is known to have married was 13 years 4 months, a figure that might have to be increased by up to six months to allow for late baptism. After that age, however, women were married quickly. Of the 279 women in the sample whose ages at marriage could be determined, 147 (53 per cent)

[23] This is a frequent pattern in colonial and frontier situations. See, e.g. H. Moller, 'Sex Composition and Correlated Culture Patterns of Colonial America', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, **2** (April, 1945), pp. 113–153, and R. Thompson, 'Seventeenth Century English and Colonial Sex Ratios: a Postscript', *Population Studies*, **28** (March, 1974), pp. 153–165.

[24] Since the registers were not complete after 1800, there was a fair chance that children born to women after this date would be missed by the compilers, hence distorting the pattern.

were married before they were 20, and another 88 (33%) before the age of 25. In gross terms, the mean age at marriage was 21 years, the median 19·6 and the calculated mode 17 years,[25] figures which do not seem to have differed significantly for those born before or after 1730. As can be seen in Tables 3 and 4, there was a slight tendency for those women who married immigrants to be older than those who did not, but the difference was not significant statistically.[26]

TABLE 3. *Age at first marriage for women*

	Born before 1730		Born after 1730		
	Husband immigrant	Husband non-immigrant	Husband immigrant	Husband non-immigrant	Total
Number	48	61	42	128	279
Mean	21·3	21·5	21·3	20·6	21·0
Median	20·0	19·5	19·6	19·3	19·6

TABLE 4. *Distribution of ages of women at first marriage*

Age	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35+
No.	5	4	27	23	29	33	25	29	17	19	14	8	13	9	6	2	1	5	2	1	5	2	4

TABLE 5. *Age of men at marriage*

Age of wife	No. of husbands older	No. of husbands younger	Mean age of husbands	Median age of husbands	Mean difference between spouses*
Under 20	85	6	25·2	23·5	+93
20–24	32	15	25·3	24·9	+33
25–29	3	7	23·9	22·6	−48
Over 30	1	8	26·9	24·6	−114
Total	121	36	25·3	23·10	+66

* Age in months. Positive values indicate that the husband was older.

In general, women tended to marry men who were older than themselves, the mean difference in age between husband and wife being five years and six months, so that, as is shown in Table 5, the mean age at marriage for men was 25 years three months. To a certain extent this was due to the imbalance in the sex ratio, but it could be argued that a far greater divergence might have been predicted, in view of the fact that in many societies such a gap between male and female ages at marriage occurs despite a balanced sex structure.[27] Moreover, it has been argued that male ages

[25] These may be considered low figures, but not exceptionally so, cf. values of 22·3 years for second-generation women in Andover, Mass., and 24·5 for third-generation women in the same place (Greven, *op. cit.*, in footnote 1, p. 120) 25·1 years at Crulai (Gauthier and Henry, *op. cit.* in footnote 1, p. 84) and 21·9 in French Canada for those women who married men who had not been married before (Henripin, *op. cit.* in footnote 1, p. 96).

[26] Using a Kolmogorov-Smirnov one-tailed test, $\chi^2 = 3{\cdot}34$. Therefore $0{\cdot}20 > P > 0{\cdot}10$.

[27] For example, although the sex ratio had evened out in French Canada by the early eighteenth century, men were still marrying five years later than women, as they were in Andover at about the same time (Henripin, *op. cit.*, Greven, *op. cit.*, in footnote 1). Even more extreme divergence was found in Belgrade early in the eighteenth century, where most men were 'nearly ten years older than their wives' (Peter Laslett 'Age at Menarche in Europe since the Eighteenth Century' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 2 (1971), pp. 227–234). When the sex ratio has become badly unbalanced an even greater difference in the ages of spouses can be found. Among the ruling families of fifteenth-century Tuscany, where the sex ratio lay between 110 and 158 men to 100 women, husbands were on average 13 years older than their wives. See C. Klapisch, 'Household and Family in Tuscany in 1427' in Peter Laslett and R. Wall (eds.) *Household and Family in Past Time* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 272.

at marriage are remarkably 'sticky', remaining in the middle to late twenties for almost all European populations, while female ages at marriage fluctuate much more greatly in reaction to economic circumstances.[28] The South African evidence could thus be used to support this claim, showing the extent of conservatism within the culture pattern which could not be displaced even by transportation to the Cape. On the other hand, the relatively young ages at marriage for men at the Cape provide further evidence for the hypothesis that the majority of men were able to escape from the control of their parents at a relatively young age and set up on their own.[29]

TABLE 6. *Age of men at marriage by age of wife*

Husband	Wife under 20	Wife 20–24	Wife over 25	Total	%
Under 20	8	2	2	12	8
20–24	48	25	10	83	52
25–29	16	16	5	37	23
30–34	11	3	4	18	11
Over 35	6	2	1	9	6
Total	89	48	22	159	100

TABLE 7. *Remarriage*

	No.	No. remarrying	Proportion remarrying
Women marrying immigrants	95	21	22%
Women not marrying immigrants	201	33	16%
Total women	296	54	18%
Men immigrants	82	18	22%
Men non-immigrants	173	35	20%
Total men	255*	53	21%

* The number of men included is smaller than the number of women as only those men whose marriage to a woman in the sample was their first were included.

The full distribution of these ages is shown in Table 6. Remarkably, it appears that there was no relationship between the age of the man at marriage and that of his wife. Whatever their ages, men were just as likely to marry women of a particular age, and *vice versa*.

Once married, men and women were very likely to remain with the same partner while both were alive. At least one traveller reported that divorce was easy,[30] but it seems to have been rare. Only one example was found in the sample. On the other hand, the re-marriage of both widows and widowers was quite common and swift, and was significantly more frequent among men than among women, as can be seen in Table 7. It is not known whether this was due to higher mortality

[28] See the discussion in Wrigley, *loc. cit.* in footnote 1, p. 88.

[29] This point has often been made with regard to the pastoral farmers. See John Barrow, *An Account of Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, 2 vols. (London, 1801–04), II, 398. It is more difficult to find similar evidence either for Cape Town or for the agricultural districts of the Boland. Indeed, one might predict that men would in fact marry older in these districts than on the *platteland*.

[30] C. P. Thunberg, *Travels in Europe, Africa and Asia between . . . 1770 and 1779*, 4 vols. (London, 1795), II, p. 217.

among women which, given the dangers of childbirth and the relative absence of deaths in war, was very likely – or because a man in middle age was more likely to be an eligible partner than a woman of the same age – despite an inheritance pattern which divided the property of the couple equally between the surviving partner, irrespective of sex, and the offspring of the marriage.[31] On balance, no doubt, both processes were at work. As against this, women who married immigrants were more likely to re-marry than those who did not, as the postulated greater age of immigrants at marriage and the difficulties of adaptation to the climate took their toll.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the length of the interval between widowhood and re-marriage, although it is generally, and probably with reason, assumed that the gap was short, often as little as a year or less, as can be shown by many cases when a man re-married within a year of the baptism of his previous wife's last child.

FERTILITY

Once married, women began having children almost immediately. Precisely how many had children less than nine months after their marriage cannot be ascertained with any accuracy, as there would have been an incentive to delay the baptism of children who had obviously been conceived before marriage. Nevertheless, the interval between marriage and first baptism was less than nine months in 20 cases out of 197 in which the figures are known. Of these, only two actually occurred before the marriage and in another three instances a couple were married on the day their first child was baptized. None of the women are recorded as having more than one illegitimate child, but this was perhaps because the *N.G.K.* clergymen demanded the presence of the father to acknowledge his child before they would christen the infant.[28] Although this custom was mainly designed to regulate admissions to the Christian free community of the offspring of slave or Khoisan women and white men, it must have exerted considerable pressure towards marriage on those who were already within the Christian community.

At the other end of the scale, only 38 out of 197 fertile women for whom this information is available had a first child baptized more than two years after marriage. The mean interval between marriage and the baptism of the first child was 18 months. Once women had entered the breeding stock, it was evidently normal for them to start their families quickly. Nor was there any significant difference between women who married early and those who waited until they were 25 or older.[32]

Once the family had been started, further children were born at short intervals, until the woman ceased to bear them, for whatever reason. The mean interval between births was 26 months, a figure which did not vary with the age at which women married, although as might be expected those who had nine or more children had them at significantly shorter intervals than those who had fewer than nine.[33]

At this stage it should be pointed out that all figures which relate to the birth of children, whether relating to birth intervals, the ages of women at the birth of their last child, or family size must be regarded as minimum estimates, since it is highly probable that children who died in early infancy would not have been recorded in the genealogies. They would have passed out of the community without the community noting their membership by baptism. This is particularly true with regard to figures relating to the age of a woman at the birth of her last child, for, in general, as a woman grows older the likelihood that her child will die in infancy increases. Unfortunately, it is not possible to quantify the extent of this underestimate, and hence to allow for it.

[31] See E. F. Watermeyer, 'The Roman Dutch Law in South Africa' in E. A. Walker (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Vol. VIII, South Africa, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 870–871.

[32] Cf. a value of 16·3 months ± 2·4 for Crulai. Gauthier and Henry, *op. cit.* in footnote 1, p. 138.

[33] In Crulai the interval varied between 22·4 months for the first inter-birth interval and 39·7 for the last, *ibid.*, p. 141.

The age at which women ceased to have children is difficult to ascertain, for although it is relatively easy to discover the age at which a woman had her last child, in the absence of information on deaths it is impossible to be sure why she ceased childbearing. Nevertheless, some points can be made, particularly when consideration is restricted to those women who neither re-married themselves, nor died in time to allow their husbands to re-marry. Thus, on the one hand it can be shown that 62 out of 138 such women (44·9 per cent) were over 40 when they had their last child. On the other hand, if it is assumed that the age at last birth was distributed unimodally, and if information were available as to which marriages lasted beyond the menopause and consideration were restricted to them, the modal age of this hypothetical group should correspond

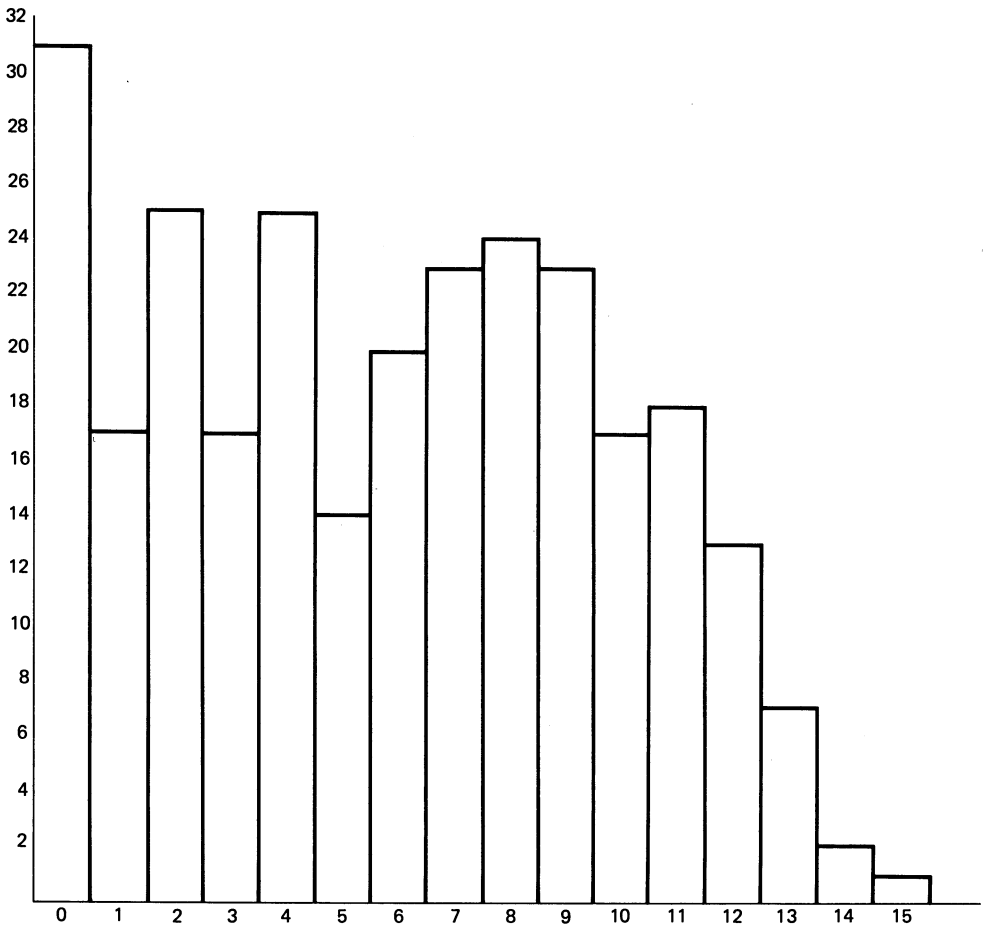

FIGURE 2. No. of women in the sample having 0–15 children (without regard to any extraneous factors).

to the modal age of the observed sample, as the number of marriages which were terminated by death should increase monotonically with age. As can be seen from Tables 8 and 9, this figure lay in the early 40s, while computation gives a value of 42·3 for the mode.[34] Moreover, there is a definite relationship between the age of a woman at marriage and the birth of her last child, as those who married before they were 20 ceased to be fertile about five years before those who remained unmarried into their 20s. With this *caveat* then it can be stated, albeit tentatively, that

[34] The mean age at the birth of the last child was 37 years nine months and the median 39 years three months. The mode was calculated by the formula Mean–Mode = 3 (Mean–Median).

Afrikaner women in the eighteenth century remained fertile into their early 40s, other things being equal. In a sizeable minority of cases, of course, other things were not equal, and this produced the distribution shown in the Tables.[35]

TABLE 8. *Age at last birth by age at marriage*

Age at marriage	Mean	Median	Mode
Under 20	36·3	36·8	37·8
20–4	40·3	41·3	43·3
Over 25	40·1	41·0	42·1
Total	37·9	39·3	42·3

Note: Only those women who did not remarry, and whose husbands did not, are included.

TABLE 9. *Age of women at the birth of their last child*

Age at marriage	under 30	30–34	35–39	40–44	over 45	Total
Under 20	16	8	23	18	6	71
20–24	6	5	9	18	6	44
Over 25	3	3	6	12	4	28
Total	25	16	38	48	16	143
Percentage of total	17	11	27	34	11	100

FAMILY SIZE

The consequence of the pattern of early marriage, frequent childbearing and a relatively long fertile period was naturally that families became very large. Unfortunately, it is not possible to construct figures for the size of completed families, for, by definition, a completed family is one in which the marriage has not been broken, by death or by divorce, before the age of, say, 45. In the circumstances of eighteenth-century South Africa, it is not possible to determine this. Nevertheless, rather crude formulations are possible, as it is known how many children any individual woman had, even if we cannot guess why she ceased childbearing. Figure 2 shows the total spread, without regard to any extraneous factors. Thus, the mean number of children of all married women was 5·8 and the median six. If the sample is restricted to those women who took at least one non-immigrant husband, thereby eliminating a certain amount of underregistration, then the mean rises to 6·5 and the median to seven. On the other hand, those who married immigrants tended to have fewer children anyway, even when they were registered with the *N.G.K.* Thus the mean number of children born to women who had at least one was 6·6, but it was 7·0 for those who married at least one non-immigrant husband and 5·6 for those who only married immigrants.

Recorded in another way, the probability of any bride having seven or more children was 0·47. If she married Cape-born men, the probability rose to 0·52 and if she had had at least one

[35] The impression produced by these figures corresponds closely to more definitive work done elsewhere. Thus, at Crulai the mean age at the birth of the last child was 40·0, when the family was 'complete' in the sense that both parents lived beyond the fertile period, Gauthier and Henri, *op. cit.* in footnote 1, pp. 134–135. In French Canada, the equivalent figure was 41 years, but was 31 in those cases where the duration of the marriage was not known (Henripin, *op. cit.* in footnote 1, p. 54).

child the probability of having seven or more was 0·56. On the other hand, if she married an immigrant, the probability was 0·39, unless she is known to have had at least one child, when the chance of having at least seven was 0·51.

Naturally, the number of children that a woman had was likely to depend on the age at which she married. This is particularly so because, as has been shown, the age at which women ceased to have children did not bear a strong relationship to the age at which she started her family. As is set out in the next paragraph it may be shown that those who married before they were 20 had significantly more children than those who married later. The same holds true for women who married before they were 25. On the other hand, no difference was found between the family sizes of those women who were born before or after 1730.

The only indication given in the sources that a marriage ended before the end of the fertile period is when one or other of the couple re-married. The occurrence of the second marriage evidently shows that the first had ended some time before. It is obviously not a foolproof method of discovering when marriages have ended, for many widows and widowers doubtless did not re-marry, while, on the other hand, a few marriages are excluded from consideration by this criterion because the husband re-married although his first wife survived to the end of her fertile period. For instance, Allewyn Smit's first wife was at least 49 years old when she died (her twelfth and last child was born then), but, nevertheless, she is not included in the following calculation because Smit re-married, incidentally fathering another twelve children, the last being born when he was 85. Nevertheless, imposing such criteria on the data gives some indication of the degree of bias that their particular quality imposes, as compared to standard procedures. Thus, the mean number of children born to those women in the sample who neither re-married nor left widowed husbands who re-married was 6·1, and the median seven. This figure varied with the age at which women married in a similar way to that of the equivalent figure when no such criterion for inclusion was imposed, though at a higher rate, the mean number of children born to women married under 20, between 20 and 24, between 25 and 29 and over 30 being 7·4, 5·1, 4·5, and 3·4 respectively. The probability of any of these women having seven or more children was 0·52, a figure made up of a probability of 0·64 for those married under the age of 20 and 0·22 for those who were over 25 when they married.[36]

In passing, it is no doubt worth noting that the general pattern of fertility and of family formation, in so far as it can be reconstructed, corresponds closely to the hypothetical model of natural fertility. There is no indication that women attempted to restrict their fertility once they had borne a 'target' number of children, rather they continued to bear children for as long as they were biologically able to do so. In the conditions of early South Africa, of course, this is not surprising.[37]

REPLACEMENT

It is theoretically possible that the large family size of the Afrikaners might have been offset by a correspondingly high mortality rate among infants, children and adolescents. For any population not to decline, in the absence of large-scale immigration, each married woman must have at least one daughter who marries and begins breeding. Thus, the rise in the South African 'white' population was ultimately due to the fact that each generation more than replaced itself. The 282 women in the sample for whom full information is available between them produced 814 male and

[36] Although it is impossible to provide figures which are fully comparable to the South African ones, the following examples, all of which refer to completed families, may be useful. At Crulai, the mean family sizes of women marrying under 20 and in successive five-year intervals were 8·84, 6·52, 5·07, 3·25, and 1·75 (Gauthier and Henry, *op. cit.*, in footnote 1, p. 126). In Colyton, even in the period of the highest fertility, mean family size for women marrying under 25 was 7·3, decreasing to 5·7 and 2·7 for those married in subsequent five-year intervals. The successive generations after the foundation of the town of Andover produced 8·3, 8·7 and 7·6 children respectively (Greven, *op. cit.* in footnote 1, p. 201). In French Canada, the mean size of completed families was 8·39, but fell to 5·65 when incomplete families were brought into consideration (Henripin, *op. cit.* in footnote 1, p. 50).

[37] For a discussion of this, see Wrigley, *loc. cit.* in footnote 1, pp. 106–108.

824 female children. Of these, 563 boys and 527 girls married. This means that each married woman had, on average, 1·87 married daughters. Even this figure is, artificially low, because the marriages of many of the daughters who were born late in the century were no doubt missed by the compilers of the genealogies, as their work became much less complete after 1800. If, therefore, only the daughters of those mothers who were born before 1730 are brought into account, the ratio rises to 2·75. As all the women in question would have been at least 30 years old in 1800, this must represent the true replacement rate of the population.

It will be seen that a rather smaller proportion of men than of women married. If it is assumed that there was no difference in mortality between males and females before puberty, that the five-year differential in the mean age at marriage may be left out of account and that all women married, then it can be shown that ten per cent of adult Cape-born men failed to find legitimate wives.[38] This was evidently the result of the imbalance in the sex ratio of immigrants. Now, in a society in which there was a large number of Hottentot, slave and bastard women,[39] all of whom were doubtless subservient to the whites, it is unlikely that such a high proportion of men would have remained celibate. Rather, they appear to have entered unions with women categorized as 'coloured', which might or might not have been stable, and might or might not have been legitimized by marriage, but which almost certainly resulted in at least the male offspring being cast out of pukka Christian society.[40] The demographic study of early South Africa reveals, therefore, not only the immense population growth that forced and enabled the great expansion of the territorial area of 'white' South Africa, but also suggests a continual process of re-casting and re-defining the lines of social stratification within the greater society of which the population with which this paper has been concerned formed the dominant section. Generation by generation, so it would seem, the poorer and less well-connected male members of the Christian community were pared off into the mass of 'non-white' underlings, for no doubt it was these people who were least able to acquire white wives. So began the process of equation between economic and racial stratification that has bedevilled South Africa ever since.

[38] The rationale for these figures was as follows: if all these conditions had been met, then, as can be seen from the figures quoted above, there should have been 517 married men. Only 463 were observed. Therefore, 54 of these, or ten per cent of the total, failed to find wives within the community.

[39] It should be pointed out that the sex ratio among the slave population was even more unbalanced than among the white, as a high proportion of the slaves imported were males and as the slave population did not reproduce itself, to any great extent. The *opgaaf* lists show that the number of adult male slaves per hundred females decreased throughout the century from 600 in the wake of the smallpox epidemic to 252 in 1793. Also, there was generally a preponderance of males among the slave children. See Beyers *loc. cit.* in footnote 3. It should be pointed out that there is a possibility of underregistration in these figures, but what effect this would have is unknown.

[40] I have expanded this argument, in a paper entitled 'Speculations on the origins of South African ideology' in Shula Marks and A. Atmore (eds.), *The Societies of Southern Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (in press).