**E366 Third exercise: surname persistence**

**Summer 2024**

**Description**

The surname persistence method developed by Clark and Cummins benefits from minimal data requirements. It is possible to calculate surname persistence without linking individuals between generations, and the measure can be calculated using a few simple summary statistics. We will first replicate Clark’s results for the persistence of Oxbridge students and then move on to a dataset from southwestern France.

**Replicating Clark**

Use the values given in the table on the PowerPoint to fill in the missing data. What is the range of intergenerational mobility coefficients suggested by this method?

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**Status persistence in Boulazac 1836-76**

Download the Boulazac data for 1836 and 1876. What do you notice about the data? What surnames may indicate elite status? How might we measure elite status?

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**Relative representation**

Calculate relative representation and the implied social status of your chosen group for 1836 and 1876. What is the measure of intergenerational social mobility you derive? Does this value seem high or low?

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**Methodological considerations**

Clark has regularly found that intergenerational social mobility measured by surname groups is lower than when measured using conventional individual linked-data (as we have done previously). Indeed, he claims to have discovered a “social law”, and he has strongly endorsed an explanation that relies on the strong genetic transmission of social status.

Does this seem credible to you? Why or why not? What other factors might be important?

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