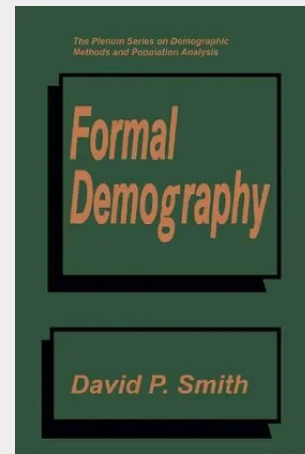


Formal Demography

This book is intended as a relatively nontechnical introduction to current demographic methods. It has been several years in preparation, beginning from occasional class handouts I wrote to elaborate on essential points of demographic methodology. Its growth from scattered notes to an integrated text was a natural process, if a gradual one. The content of the book addresses three objectives. First, I have tried to avoid demographic methods that are now dated. In some chapters, that has meant concentrating on formulas most demographers recognize. In the chapters on life tables, it meant testing competing formulas on a variety of real and synthetic data sets, and dropping or relegating to footnotes those that were least accurate. Second, I have attempted to give readers a sense of the limits of different formulas and methods. I am a terse writer, however, and for the reader that means most sentences carry weight. Chapters should be read attentively, with careful regard to commentary as well as to formulas and examples. Finally, I have tried to make the principal methodologies of the book accessible, by offering explanations for formulas that are not obvious, by keeping examples to the forefront, and by placing relatively specialized topics in chapter appendices.

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