

The Life Table

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The Life Table

Modelling Survival and Death

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« One by one they were all becoming shades »
(James Joyce, *The Dead*)

To the memory of Gérard Calot and Emil Valkovics

Preface

Guillaume Wunsch, Michel Mouchart, Josianne Duchêne

This book is an outcome of the activities of the *Working Group on Health, Morbidity, and Mortality Differentials* of the *European Association for Population Studies*, which was chaired for some years by one of the present editors (G. Wunsch). In collaboration with the Institute of Statistics and the Institute of Demography of the University of Louvain, this Working Group held a workshop in Louvain-la-Neuve a few years ago on the use of life tables in Europe, taking into account problems of data collection, methods, and models. Some of the participants in the workshop were then invited by the present editors to improve, develop, or in some cases thoroughly modify their papers in order to transform them into chapters of a book on life tables. Though life tables are one of the oldest tools in demography, and every textbook on demographic methods deals with the topic of life table construction, few books have dealt with the subject in depth. It is the hope of the editors that the present volume will fulfill to some extent this need. Though primarily written by and for demographers, this book will also be of use to actuaries working in life insurance, and to epidemiologists dealing with morbidity and cause of death. Furthermore, a topic such as competing risks theory should also be of interest to statisticians.

The editors wish to thank the other authors of this volume for their involvement and patience. They also express their gratitude to the *European Association for Population Studies* for its continued interest and support during the preparation of this book. Financial assistance for the initial workshop was provided by the European Union, the French Embassy in Brussels, the National Bank of Belgium, and the University of Louvain. Without the assistance of all these sources, the present volume would never have taken shape.

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